property from Princess Street to Market Street, from Wright's Alley back to the river wharf, including a portion of the wharf owned by the Kuck and the Calder estates, which gives us one of the most desirable plots for a new custom house at the very small cost of $69,000, the present value of which is estimated at more than double that sum.

When this ground was bought the appropriation for the purchase and for a new building was $300,000. To secure this amount Collector Keith had made persistent effort, supported by the congressmen and senators from the State. Representative H. L. Godwin, of the district in which Wilmington is situated, and Representative Charles R. Thomas, of the Third Congressional District, were particularly helpful, Mr. Thomas, as a member of the House Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds and of the sub-committee having in charge all authorizations for public buildings in North Carolina, being able to write into the section of the bill which finally became a law the item for the Wilmington Custom House and to push the matter in the full committee. To him is very largely due the credit for securing the initial appropriation of $300,000. The amount remaining after the purchase of a site, however, was entirely inadequate for a building and the plans for one were withheld until appeal could be made to Congress for an additional appropriation. At a hearing before the House Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds, December 13, 1912, Representative Godwin, Collector Keith, and Mr. Joseph W. Little, of Wilmington, testified to the need of an additional amount, and the supervising architect of the Treasury, Mr. Wenderoth, who was present, named the amount required. Mr. Keith gave a graphic description of the old building, held together by iron rods to keep it from falling down, and of the lack of facilities for handling the business of the port, which he stated had probably increased more than that of any other port of the Atlantic coast. His remarks included the very pertinent statement that many business firms wanted to come to Wilmington to make it a distributing point, but were unable on account of inadequate facilities. Some difficulty was experienced later in securing the desired amount, but the collector and others kept up their untiring efforts, and eventually, on March 4, 1913, the law was passed which raised the appropriation for the Wilmington Custom House to $600,000.

In retiring to private life with clean hands Mr. Keith is

entitled to the commendation of well done by an appreciative public.

The contracts for the erection of the new custom house were awarded April 15, 1916, the building to cost $368,400 and the mechanical equipment, $37,746. These contracts call for completion within twenty-two months from April 15, 1916. The Secretary of the Treasury states that the plans call for one of the most complete buildings that he has ever had the pleasure of approving, and it is stated by the supervising architect that the room to be used by the United States Court will be one of the handsomest in the entire country; so that Wilmington may justly be proud of the building when completed.

James Walker Memorial Hospital.

By Dr. Robert B. Slocum.

James Walker, stonemason, contractor, and builder, was born at Douglas, Lenarkshire, Scotland, April 29, 1826. He came to this country when twenty years of age and settled in Washington, where he was engaged with his brother, aged 22, upon one of the wings of the Capitol building, later, upon the old Smithsonian building and other important public structures. The two brothers erected several public buildings in Petersburg and other cities of the South, where they were engaged prior to the outbreak of the War between the States.

In 1857 James Walker was sent from Washington to erect the United States Marine Hospital, which is still a prominent building in Wilmington, after which he made his home here, and during the war was engaged in erecting salt works on the sounds near Wilmington, there being a great scarcity of this necessary commodity in consequence of the Federal Blockade of all the Southern ports.

He became a useful citizen, and was regarded as a quiet, wise, and capable master builder. He erected the First Presbyterian Church, the D. R. Murchison residence, on Third Street, and many other notable buildings in Wilmington, and was engaged for nearly ten years upon that model State institution for the insane at Morganton.

A year or two before his death, March 15, 1901, he conferred with his physician, Dr. W. J. H. Bellamy, and with other friends in reference to his desire to establish a public park as a gift to the city of Wilmington, but he was induced to supply