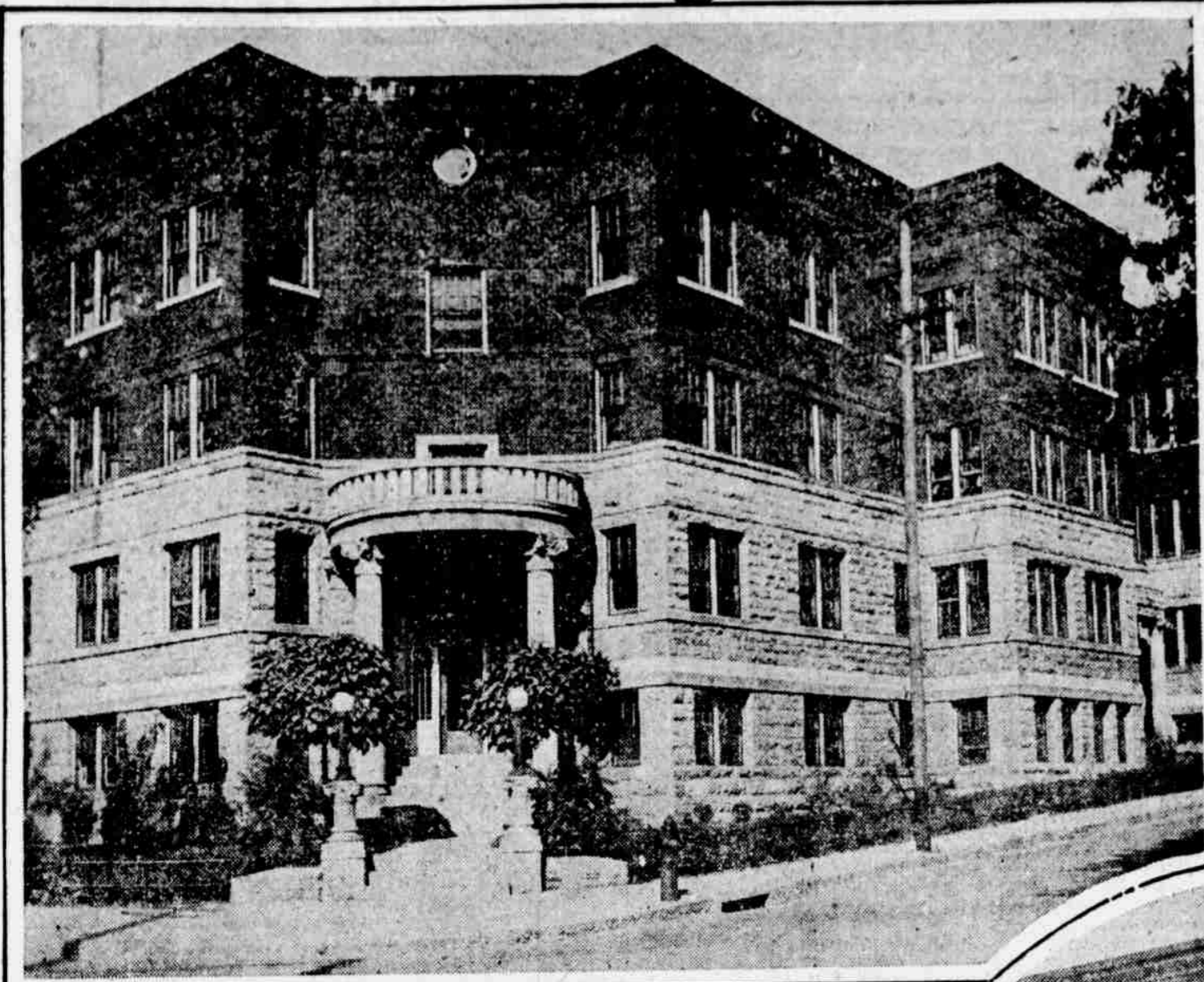
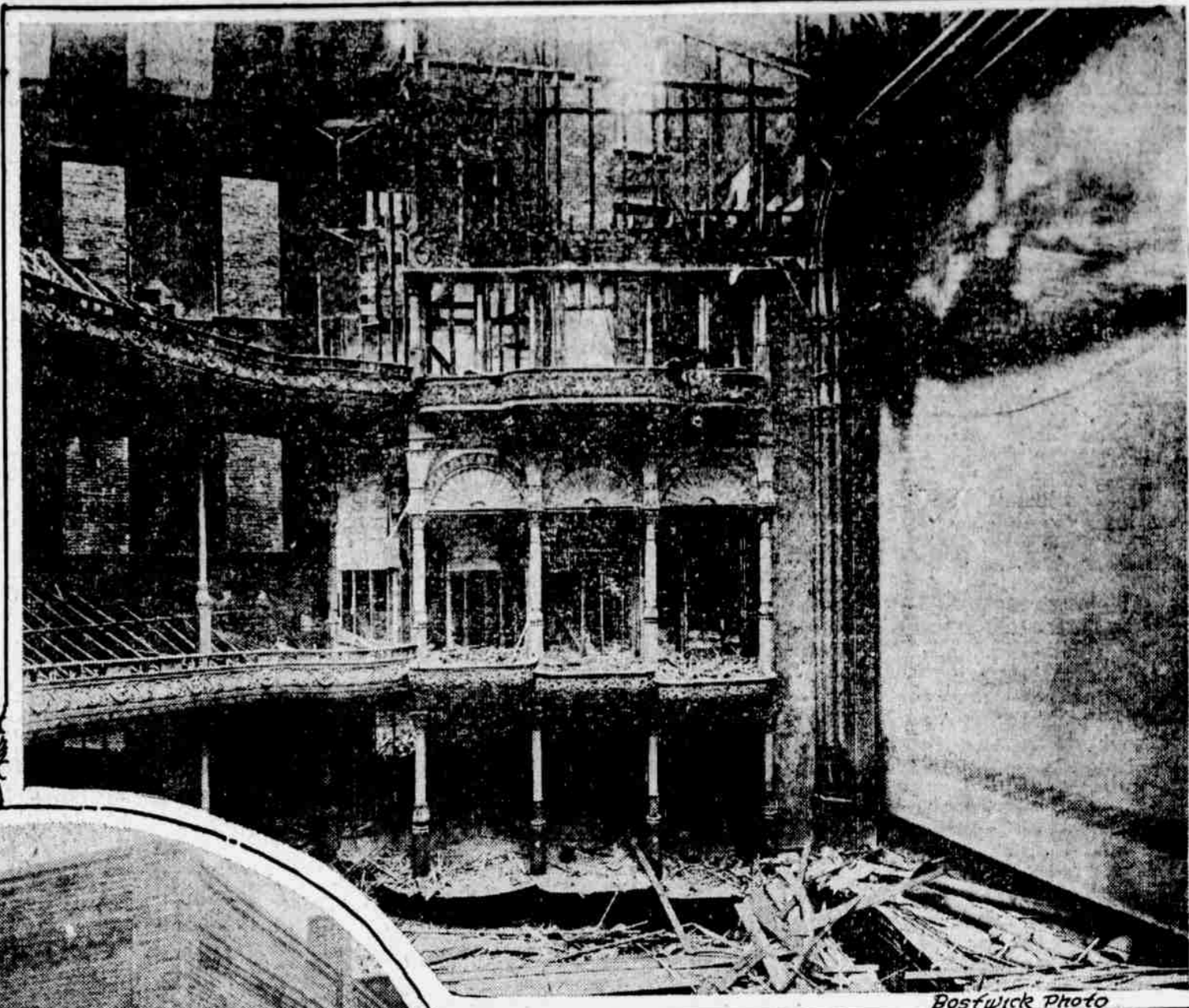


Old Buildings Live Again In New

Salvage, Conservation and Progress are Synonymous, Omaha Wreckers Say.

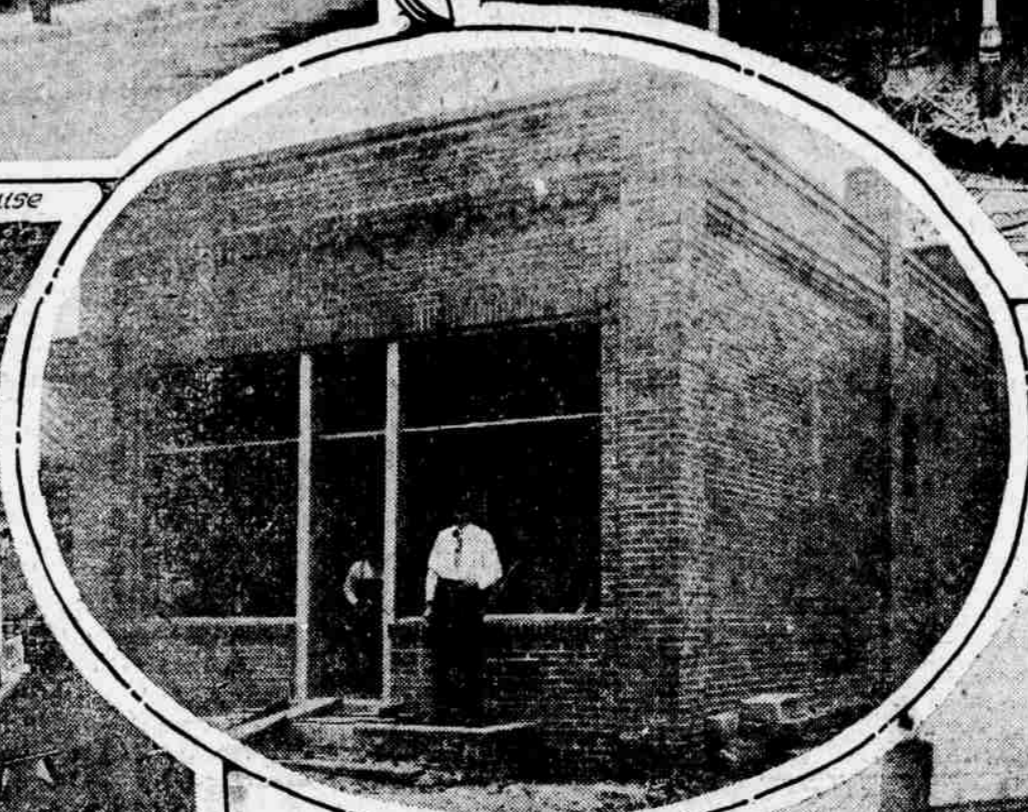


Stone in handsome "Chiodo" once reposed in Douglas county court house



Bostrwick Photo

Even stage curtain and scenery from wrecked Boyd theater pressed into service elsewhere

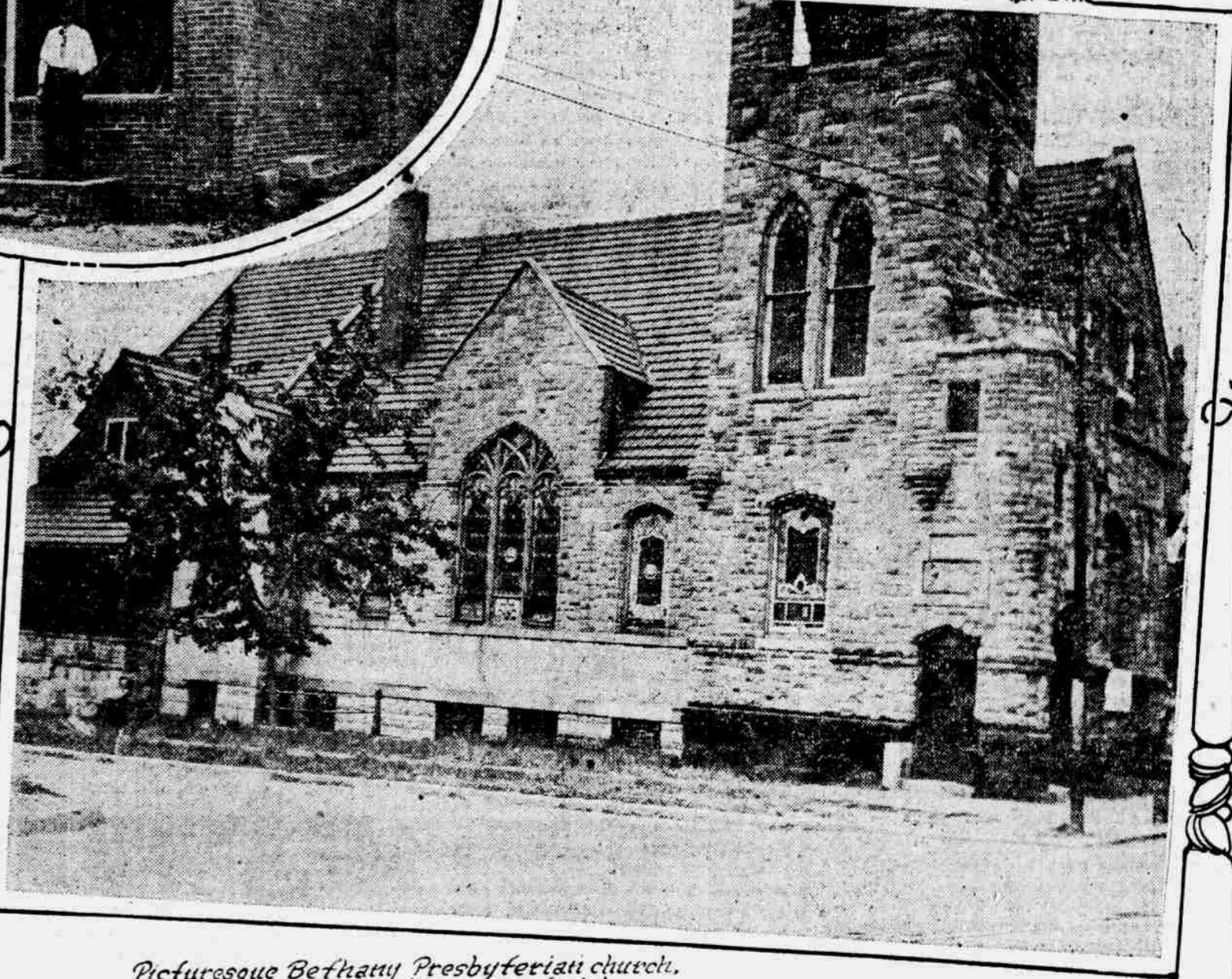


center picture Old sidewalk and high school building used in this new structure erected by salvager Chris Jensen.



Bostrwick Photo

There's still plenty of good material left after the wreckers get through.



Picturesque Bethany Presbyterian church, built from salvaged material.

By J. T. ARMSTRONG. Using material salvaged from old buildings in the construction of new buildings is a common and a profitable practice in Omaha. So systematized has this salvaging become that practically no material from torn down buildings is discarded. Some contractors contend that much of the older material is superior to new. As a result, apartment buildings, store buildings and at least one church have been constructed largely from wood, steel, brick or stone from old structures. There is a bit of romance in this business of wrecking old structures and in re-using the salvaged material. Homes once considered palatial fall before the onslaughts of wrecking companies. Walls mellowed with age; walls which have sheltered merriment and joy, visions and ambitions, beauty and love, sorrow and death, totter and fall as Progress waves his wand. Pays \$12 for Building. Thirty-five years ago young Christ Jensen came to Omaha. He was possessed of \$35 and plenty of ambition. Today Mr. Jensen

is considered wealthy. It was through wrecking buildings and selling the salvaged material that he acquired his wealth. "I bought the first building I wrecked for \$12," said Mr. Jensen. "It was a three-room house at Eleventh and Chicago streets, owned by Thomas Meldrom. The transaction took place in 1886. "I got enough lumber from it to build a kitchen for my own home and sold enough more to bring me \$29. It was then I realized the possibilities of the wrecking game." All dimension lumber from old buildings is as good or better than lumber that can be obtained today. It is seasoned and won't shrink, as will some new lumber. Interior Lumber Valuable. "In homes built 20 years ago, the door and window casings and other interior finish lumber are valuable. We sell it to those who are remodeling old homes, built about the same time the wrecked buildings were constructed. The patterns of this old lumber often match that of the home being remodeled. Modern mill equipment turns out interior finish lumber of a different design.

"No lumber goes to waste. We assort it in sizes and sell it, just as do the lumber yards, but it brings only about half the price of new lumber. If it isn't good for anything else it goes for kindling. "Gas fixtures are junk," he admitted. "We have to sell them for what brass and iron they have in them. They're shipped back to the steel mills, remelted and made into modern electrical fixtures. Plumbing fixtures only bring about half what they brought when new." Mr. Jensen told of wrecking a fourth of the buildings erected here for the Trans-Mississippi exposition. It was his company that wrecked the old state fair grounds and a score of other buildings to which old settlers still refer frequently. "Brick is cleaned and re-used if it is whole. If broken up, the brick is ground and used for concrete in building foundations and retaining walls. "Stones, if they are large, can be recut and used as well as new stones. Although it is not profitable, stone may be ground up and used for concrete, and some is used for foundation, footings under brick walls. Plaster may be used in concrete. "We pack old laths in bundles of 1,000, just as they're packed at the mills. The old white pine laths

are really superior to the new and sell for 60 cents on the dollar." Mr. Jensen paused sadly as he reached the fixture stage. "That's just one of a dozen buildings I've constructed from old material," said Mr. Jensen. "I've built apartment buildings, store buildings and bungalows from salvaged material and they're good buildings, too. I know of one of the finest residences in a most exclusive section of the city that was constructed largely from old lumber and brick. "Behold, a former sidewalk," he

announced, with some pride. "There isn't a bit of new material in it. Even the gratings over the sidewalk in front of it had been used before." Mr. Jensen explained that the lumber had been shipped here from Blue Hill, where his firm, the Omaha Wrecking company, had wrecked an old school building. The lumber had been planed and looked new and substantial. The walls of the building, in which bricks from a sidewalk had been used, had as smooth and handsome surface as that of any new building. "That's just one of a dozen buildings I've constructed from old material," said Mr. Jensen. "I've built apartment buildings, store buildings and bungalows from salvaged material and they're good buildings, too. I know of one of the finest residences in a most exclusive section of the city that was constructed largely from old lumber and brick. Boy Realizes Dreams. Over in sunny Italy, not so many years ago, a boy of 12 worked eagerly with expert engineers of that country constructing great stone buildings which are characteristic of many parts of the Mediterranean peninsula. His young eyes glowed with interest as he saw masses of stone turned into

impressive structures by skillful engineers and stone masons. This youth is now one of Omaha's builders. He is V. P. Chiodo, 832 South Twenty-fourth street, owner of several apartment houses and other property in the vicinity of Twenty-fourth and Leavenworth streets. It is the "Chiodo," a 30-apartment building at the corner of Twenty-fifth avenue and Marcy streets, that reflects Mr. Chiodo's inherent love for stone. The "Chiodo" also is one of the most handsome examples of how salvaged stone may be utilized. The lower half is constructed from stone salvaged from the old Douglas county court house. The stone walls of the "Chiodo" are almost three feet thick. Mr. Chiodo estimates he could have built walls less thick from pressed brick and saved two-thirds of the money he spent. All the stone used had to be recut. He paid stone masons fabulous wages to have the work done and constantly supervised the job himself. But in the end he produced an example of real conservation of materials. There always has been, in the minds of many, the idea that there is something incongruous in a member of the clergy doing physical labor. This idea was dissi-

pated somewhat by the record of chaplains during the war. But imagine the comment drawn forth back in 1909 when Rev. J. F. Schwartz announced that he wanted a new church and, if necessary, he would build it himself. Pastor Fulfills Promise. There was more surprise when Rev. Mr. Schwartz made good his promise and actually did construct what is now the Bethany Presbyterian church. Of course he had help. Those who were in touch with the church at that time say there was a Russian stone cutter, and surely there were members of the congregation who assisted. The real problem was to get material. There was no money to buy it. Rev. Mr. Schwartz turned his attention to collecting salvaged material. The good looking church at 2400 North Twentieth street is the result of his efforts. To be sure, there are at least two varieties of stone in its massive walls, but that only lends a picturesque, mosaic effect. One member of the congregation said he believed the stained glass windows had been purchased new. All the other material had been salvaged from other structures. Much of it was donated by large service corporations of the city.

There was much sentimental interest in the old Boyd theater building. This was evinced especially when the theater was being torn down to make way for a more modern structure. Boards on which feet of the country's most noted actors trod, have been used in new buildings; scenery which furnished the "atmosphere" for the great Thespians now is doing the same thing for embryonic actors at South and Central High schools. The great asbestos curtain has found renewed life in the auditorium of South High school. Chambers-O'Neill company, the wrecking firm which tore the venerable theater to the ground, disposed of a portion of the seals to a church in the city and the remainder are being used in the auditorium at Norfolk, Neb. A 16-ton steel girder which was taken from above the stage is continuing its "theatrical career" in a motion picture theater. The bricks of the old theater have found new usefulness in the walls of the modern Burgess-Nash store building, which replaced the theater. Officials of Omaha wrecking companies say the words "salvage, conservation and progress," are synonymous.