

HISTORY OF THE CHARLOTTE CSI CHAPTER

by Joel E. Stegall, Jr., FCSI (Charlotte Chapter Charter Member)

The Construction Specifications Institute was founded in Washington, DC and incorporated in Maryland in 1948.

I joined CSI in 1953, but was a lone member in Charlotte for 3 or 4 years. Woody Atkins transferred from Virginia to Charlotte as a manufacturer's representative (LCN Closers), and found out that I was a CSI member. He was aware of CSI and its goals, and so he joined and together we got several people interested in becoming members and forming a chapter.

Woody, Walter Hoover (Sanymetal Partitions representative) and I went off to Cleveland, Ohio for CSI's second national convention in early summer of 1958. After a couple of meetings here, getting more people interested, we set to work to organize a local chapter.

There were 25 chapters at that time, and I think we were No. 26. Now, I believe, there are 144. We were chartered by the Institute on July 6, 1958 with 29 Active, 29 Associate, and 1 Junior Members.

Our charter was presented on October 24, 1958 at the Elks Club on South Tryon Street by Willard H. Barrows, Vice President of the Institute. Barrows, incidentally, was the specifications writer for the United Nations Building.

Some of the national committees in the early days were: Specification Methods, Technical (including Bibliography; Specification Nomenclature; and Tests, Codes and Standards), and Reference Workmanship Specifications.

One of our first chapter programs was a "gripe" session. We invited several major, local contractors to come in and tell us what they saw wrong with our specs. Most of those making presentations were estimators and project managers. They let us have it!

That was one of the best programs we could have presented in order to get people interested, and to let other parties of the construction team know that we were serious. I think that all of the architects, engineers, and specification writers attending got some real "eye-openers". After that, we started getting better cooperation from all parties of the construction team.

I'm very glad that this cooperation, generally, has continued and, I feel, is expanding. The construction team has been identified with a 3-legged stool – one of our most stable structures. It takes the owner (one leg); the designer (architects and engineers), the second leg; and the contractor (the builder – including subcontractors, suppliers, tradesmen, and all the rest), the third leg, all working together to make a successful project. Let's keep it that way.

Sandy, I did not mention these two items at the March meeting. They are a part of our history, however, and I thought that current members might be interested:

- ❖ For information, Charlotte developed a standard format for specifications (primarily initiated by the Charlotte Section, AIA, but with several of our CSI members involved) long before our CSI 16-division format came about. We had a total of 35 divisions. Jim Hemphill, FAIA, at that time also a CSI member, was chairman. Members included Hub Sullivan, AGC, CSI; Paul Hardy, AIA, CSI; Joel Stegall; and several others that I don't remember.
- ❖ Another bit of information – several members of the Charlotte Chapter, led primarily by Woody Atkins, were also instrumental in the formation of the Raleigh-Durham, Triad, Columbia, and Greenville Chapters of CSI.
- ❖ A last comment, there has been much discussion and a vote about changing to a single classification for CSI membership. This is not the first time that this issue has come before the membership. I strongly feel that this change would be a serious mistake. We are all equal on this team and we should identify ourselves according to our contributions and be proud of them.