



C. DOWNING MEMORIAL, QUEEN'S SQUARE. THE ONLY KNOWN MEMORIAL ERECTED BY CUSTOMERS TO THE HEAD OF A BUSINESS CONCERN BRUNSWICK, GA.

## A Monumental Figure

An impressive monument in downtown Brunswick recalls one of the most prosperous periods in the city's history. Erected in November 1926, the 22-foot-long granite wall with benches serves as a memorial to Columbia Downing, Jr. It was Downing's company that put Brunswick on the map at the turn of the 20th century as one of the largest shipping ports in the world for naval stores. As a testament to his standing in the community, the memorial was funded by his friends and business associates.

Downing was born in Meigs County, Ohio in 1845. During the Civil War, at the age of 17, he enlisted in the 7th Ohio Light Artillery Battery of the Union Army, advancing from bugler to first lieutenant. He spent the last year of the war as aide-de-camp to General J.A. Maltby. After attending college and working in Ohio, Downing moved to Atlanta in 1877 and opened an office for the Chess, Carley Company, an agency of Standard Oil. As the company representative in Atlanta and Savannah, he traveled throughout the state.

In 1881, Downing came to Brunswick to open a naval storehouse for Standard Oil, and within a year, he had purchased the business. Naval stores - turpentine, rosin, tar, and pitch - were originally used in building wooden ships, but by the late 19th century referred to a number of pine resin products. By 1890, his company was handling 125,000 barrels of rosin and 25,000 barrels of turpentine annually at a value of \$600,000. The company also operated a wholesale grocery business and a barrel making factory.

Columbia Downing was involved in other activities in the community. When the First National Bank of Brunswick was organized in 1884, he became its president. He also served on the Brunswick Board of Trade and as a director of the Oglethorpe Hotel Company, which opened the 125-room hotel on Newcastle Street in 1888. He was known as a generous contributor to charitable causes. On Christmas Day, for example, the Downing Company distributed



hams, bacon, flour, crackers, and other goods to Brunswick's needy families.

Downing died in 1924 and is buried in Palmetto Cemetery. The memorial, shown here on a postcard from the Society's archives, includes a bronze portrait of Downing and is located in Queen Square. Also shown is a picture of the Downing Company docks. His home on Halifax Square has been converted into what is known today as the Brunswick Manor.