



Manchester Unity Hall, 71 Victoria Street, Hamilton



Manchester Unity Hall has been kept in immaculate condition.

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This is part of a series of architectural articles by the Bermuda National Trust that will highlight some of Bermuda's endangered historic buildings.

The sorry condition of lodge buildings in Bermuda has been highlighted in several past articles. It's time to give credit to the trustees of Manchester Unity Hall who have maintained their now 100-year-old building so well. The Greek Revival triangular gable end facing the street with decorative pilasters is typical of lodge buildings and halls of the period.



The laying of the corner stone of the Manchester Unity of Oddfellows Hall in connection with the Loyal Flower of the Day Lodge No. 6347, I.O.O.F., M.U. Hamilton District was on 15 May 1905 with a huge crowd of spectators in attendance. Mr William Francis Wilson, a lay reader and Permanent Secretary of the Lodge, presented an inscribed silver trowel to the mayor of Hamilton. The two city lots had to be purchased by Clarence O Darrell, a prominent Black businessman in Hamilton and Flatts, who then resold them to the lodge trustees for the same price he paid.

Established in St George's in 1879, the Loyal Flower of the Day Lodge (their emblem being three connecting links with water, flowers and wheat) met for the dedication of their new building on Victoria Street on 11 October 1923. It had taken almost 20 years to complete. The two-storey lodge building was funded by the lodge members and built by Seth Otto Hinson and William Francis Wilson. Members Cecil Davis and Thomas Masters were responsible for the interior. To celebrate the second anniversary of their new lodge, a concert was held at the Colonial Opera House which had been built on the second lot and completed in 1908.



Dwarfed by the Opera House, Manchester Unity Hall is still a work in progress in this undated photograph. Courtesy Wayne & Juliette Jackson.

The ground floor was always intended to be used for commercial purposes and the first business was the Colonial Mineral Water Factory owned and operated by W F Wilson and his family from 1923 to 1934.

Besides Loyal Flower of the Day #6347, Manchester Unity Hall is also used by Loyal Mayflower Lodge #9387, Hamilton District #2 and the Bermuda Friendly Societies Association. These are the last remaining



Orders of Independents in Bermuda. Lodges and Friendly Societies played an important part in Bermuda by providing support for artisans', tradesmen's and workers' families. The trustees of Manchester Unity Hall are to be commended.

Sources: Many thanks to fellow BNT researcher Joy Wilson-Tucker, founding member and president of the Bermuda Heritage Museum. *The Royal Gazette* 20 May 1905 & 13 Oct 1923. For more architectural articles visit the Bermuda National Trust Facebook page or [the Bermuda National Trust website](#).