

SAVANNAH FIRE DEPARTMENT, ENGINE HOUSE NO. 7
Gwinnett and Paulsen Streets, Savannah, Georgia
Built 1909, Hyman W. Witcover, Architect



Engine House No. 7, Gwinnett and Paulsen streets, Savannah, Georgia, no date.¹

In his 1907 annual report for the City of Savannah, Mayor George W. Tiedeman announced that provision had been made for the construction of a new fire station on the east side of town. Thomas Ballantyne, superintendent of the City of Savannah's Paid Fire Department, elaborated in the departmental report, "I am glad to say that during the coming year I expect to have a new up-to-date fire station in the south eastern part of the City, which will add better protection to that section." Planning for the new station began in earnest in 1908.²

On June 8, 1908, at a regular meeting of the City of Savannah's City Council, the Committee on Fire offered a resolution appropriating Lots 1 and 2, Kelly Ward, on the southeast corner of Gwinnett and Paulsen streets, for the erection of the new fire engine house. The resolution was approved by Council.³

¹ "Old Station No. 7" (n.d.), available at "Department History," Savannah Fire and Emergency Services, www.savannahga.gov (accessed 19 May 2006).

² *Report of Hon. Geo. W. Tiedeman, Mayor, Together with the Reports of the City Officers of the City of Savannah, Georgia, for the Year Ending December 31, 1907* (Savannah: 1908) 16, 109.

³ Official Proceedings of City Council (8 June 1908) 414, City of Savannah, Clerk of Council's Office, Savannah, Georgia (hereafter COC).

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Three months later, on September 9, 1908, the Committee of the Whole of City Council authorized the Committee on Fire to accept the bid of John R. Eason & Son for the erection of the engine house, now known as Engine House No. 7. The following day, the City signed a \$13,200.00 contract with John R. Eason & Son to construct a two-story, brick engine house. Hyman W. Witcover, architect of Savannah's 1906 City Hall, prepared the architectural drawings and was the supervising architect on the project. The firm of John R. Eason & Son was made up of John R. Eason and Robert P. Eason. The City provided the contractor with a deposit of \$500.00 paid for by certified check in October. On January 30, 1909, the City signed an additional contract with John R. Eason & Son to construct retaining walls on the eastern and southern sides of the lot for \$975.00.⁴

During 1908, while work progressed on Engine House No. 7, the Fire Department completed minor repairs on all their stations, with the exception of Hose Company No. 1, located at 515 West Waldburg, which was slated to be closed when the new engine house was occupied. In his 1908 annual report, Superintendent Ballantyne projected the department would move into the new station around February 1st, 1909 and announced, "I take great pleasure in reporting to you that our new station will be the most modern and up-to-date in the City. It will add a much better protection to the Southeastern section of the City than it has ever had."⁵

Engine House No. 7 was occupied and put into service during the 1909 year. However, on August 21, 1909, the Committee on Fire appropriated an additional \$3,170.23 to the new fire station budget to complete payments on Engine House No. 7. The final cost of the building was \$11,657.78. In the Fire Department's 1909 annual report, the first to reflect use of the new station, Engine Company No. 7 included nine firemen (one foreman, one assistant foreman, one engineer, three drivers, and three hoseman) and housed one engine, one wagon and one truck. The estimated value of the building and equipment was placed at \$26,000.00.⁶

⁴ Official Proceedings of City Council (9 September 1908) 434, COC; Contract #617 (10 September 1908), City Council Meeting Papers-Contracts, Box CON 8, #0115-002-22.2, Folder 47, City of Savannah, Research Library & Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia (hereafter RLMA); Contract #616 (30 January 1909), City Council Meeting Papers-Contracts, Box CON 8, #0115-002-22.2, Folder 47, RLMA.

⁵ *Second Annual Report of Hon. Geo. W. Tiedeman, Mayor, Together with the Reports of the City Officers of the City of Savannah, Georgia, for the Year Ending December 31, 1908* (Savannah: 1909) 87.

⁶ Official Proceedings of City Council (21 August 1909) 43, COC; *Souvenir Year Book* (Savannah: Savannah Council No. 1, Order of American Firemen, 1966), Savannah Area Local Documents, SAV.FIR.1966-001, Box 0121-027-4, RLMA; *Third Annual Report of Hon. Geo. W. Tiedeman, Mayor, Together with the Reports of the City Officers of the City of Savannah, Georgia, for the Year Ending December 31, 1909* (Savannah: 1910) 93-97, 105.