

The Birth of City Hall
1903-1906

Savannah City Hall Centennial, 1906-2006

**City of Savannah
Research Library & Municipal Archives**

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Savannah, Georgia**

January 2006



On the cover:

Architect Hyman W. Witcover's original watercolor rendering of City Hall, 1903.
City of Savannah, Clerk of Council's Office, Savannah, Georgia.

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The Birth of City Hall, 1903-1906, Savannah City Hall Centennial, 1906-2006.
Prepared by Luciana M. Spracher, Archivist
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January 2006

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The flag of the City of Savannah was designed by Cornelia Sams Maclean (later Mrs. Willis Wilder) and adopted by City Council on January 18, 1905 as the City's official banner. The design includes a field of white bordered by blue and red, with the City's Coat of Arms in the center surrounded by thirteen stars representing the thirteen original colonies. As used in the flag, white denotes purity, red represents courage, zeal and fervency, and blue signifies loyalty, devotion, justice and truth.

Table of Contents

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	vii
<i>Introduction</i>	1
<i>The Birth of City Hall:</i>	
1903	3
1904	19
1905	67
1906	165
<i>Special Articles:</i>	
<i>Savannah City Exchange</i>	183
<i>Mayor Herman Myers & the Building Committee</i>	187
<i>Architect Hyman Wallace Witcover</i>	195
<i>Sculptor Fernando Miranda y Cassellas</i>	197
<i>Louisiana Purchase Exposition</i>	201
<i>City Hall Architectural Drawings On-line</i>	203
<i>General Sources</i> 207	
<i>Index</i>	209

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Introduction

Constructed between 1903 and 1906, Savannah's City Hall stands as a monument to the progressive spirit of the City of Savannah during the early 1900s when the municipal government strived to achieve "A Greater Savannah." The City desired a larger home to reflect the community's prosperity and to give the growing government adequate facilities with "*a building for a century to come.*" In the century since then, City Hall has served the local government and the community faithfully, and stands as a symbol of the City's progress and history.*

Relying on local newspaper accounts, architectural drawings, contracts and government records, the following series of articles tracing the planning and construction of City Hall, from January 1903 through its opening in January 1906, has been prepared in an effort to document City Hall's history in preparation for its 2006 centennial anniversary, as well as to serve as a future research tool. Each article represents a specific day in the planning and construction of City Hall and relates the issues and work of that point in the project. Additional articles on special subjects related to the construction of City Hall, including a brief biography of the architect and a brief history of the City Exchange building that preceded City Hall, follow the date specific articles.

All information of pertinence found in the research process was included. However, there may be additional events and persons that were not clearly documented and have slipped through the cracks of history. Therefore, this should not be considered "everything" relating to the construction of City Hall.

Each article has been designed to stand alone and includes date, title, narrative, supporting visual materials (if available and/or known), and supporting sources (in a smaller font size). A comprehensive bibliography of this series has not been prepared, since each article is fully cited within the body of the document. A listing of general sources, not specifically cited within the articles, has been supplied. At the end of the volume, a subject and proper name index is available. Instead of citing page numbers, the index directs the reader to a specific article by date or title.

*For more information on the history of Savannah's City Hall see *A Century of History, Savannah City Hall Centennial, 1906-2006* (Savannah, Georgia: City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, 2006).

The Birth of City Hall 1903

A New City Hall February 18, 1903

On February 18, 1903, Savannah's City Council was presented with a report of the special committee appointed to determine the advisability of erecting a new city hall (see page 4 for text of report). The committee confirmed what many already believed, that the government's current home in the old City Exchange building on Bay Street was terribly inadequate and money spent on its repair wasted (for a brief history of the City Exchange see special article "Savannah City Exchange"). That the government needed a new home was not really in question; rather, where that new home would be built was up for debate. The committee proposed erecting a new city hall on the site where the City Exchange stood, reasoning that not only would the Exchange site continue to be the financial, political and commercial heart of Savannah, but the City could save money by using land it already owned. The proposal was met with approval by the Council members and adopted. The special committee was enlarged to five members, including Mayor Herman Myers and Aldermen Daniel R. Thomas, Richard J. Davant, James M. Dixon and W. J. Watson (for brief biographies of the Mayor and Building Committee members see special article "Mayor Herman Myers & the Building Committee"). Five-hundred dollars (\$500) was appropriated for them to use towards securing plans, specifications and estimates for a new modern building to represent the growing City.



City Exchange, Bull and Bay streets, Savannah, Georgia, c.1904.

The Old and the New, Sketch of the Old City Exchange (1799-1904), and the New City Hall, Savannah, Georgia.

Savannah: Savannah City Council, 1905.

City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

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During the same session, Council was presented with a proposition from Thomas H. Gignilliat, of Gignilliat & Smith, architects, to draw plans for a new city hall. The proposal, read and received as information by Council, indicates that there was already much excitement and talk in Savannah regarding the proposed building.

Report of Special Committee on Site for New City Hall:

The special committee appointed to take into consideration the advisability of erecting a new city hall, beg to report after a thorough investigation of the situation and the most careful consideration of the city's finances, that in its opinion a new municipal building is urgently needed and steps should at once be taken looking to the erection of a modern and adequate building as soon as possible. At present the city departments have not the proper room in which to carry on their work, and their operations and usefulness are hampered as a result. It is impossible by the expenditure of any reasonable sum to make the present City Exchange suitable for the purposes of the city government. Money expended upon it is largely wasted. Provisions should be made for a building in which there will be ample quarters for all of the departments, in which the committees of Council will have meeting rooms, in which suitable chambers will be provided for the Mayor, and in which a large room will be had for meetings of Council and for public gatherings.

Your committee after studying the situation closely feels satisfied that the site of the present Exchange is in every way suitable for a new hall. It is easily accessible from all parts of the city and will remain the center of business interests. Being the property of the city its use for this purpose will save the city in the neighborhood of \$100,000, or almost enough to erect a fine building. We would accordingly recommend that Council decide upon the erection of a new city hall on the site of the present Exchange; that an appropriation of \$500 be made and this committee, or another committee especially appointed for the purpose, be authorized to extend all or part of the same in securing plans, specifications and estimates for a building which will provide ample room for the needs of the municipality for many years to come.

*Respectfully submitted,
HERMAN MYERS,
D. R. THOMAS,
R. J. DAVANT,
Committee.*

Upon motion of Alderman Dixon, the report was adopted, an appropriation of \$500 was made, and the committee increased to five, Aldermen Dixon and Watson being added -- the committee now standing as follows: The Mayor, Aldermen Thomas, Davant, Dixon and Watson.

"For a New City Hall." *Savannah Morning News* (19 February 1903) 10:1.

"A New City Hall Soon to Be Built." *Savannah Evening Press* (19 February 1903) 5:6.

Official Proceedings of City Council (18 February 1903) 28. City of Savannah, Clerk of Council's Office, Savannah, Georgia.

Report of Hon. Herman Myers, Mayor...of the City of Savannah, Ga., Year Ending December 31st 1903.... Savannah, Ga.: The Morning News Print, 1904. pp 432-433.

***Citizens Support New City Hall
February 20, 1903***

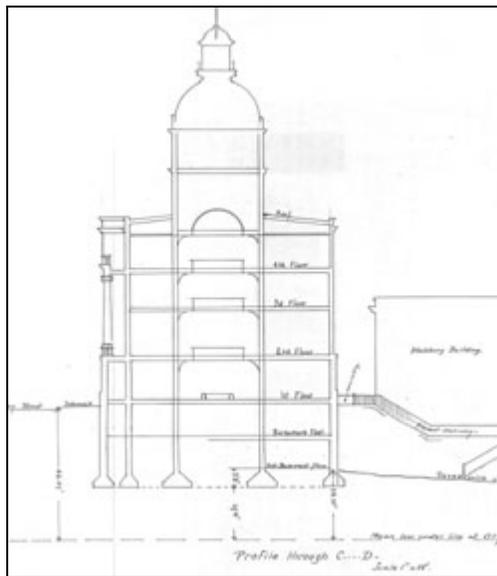
On February 20, 1903, the *Savannah Morning News* ran an article which summed up the feelings of many in the city regarding City Council's decision to build a new municipal building on the site of the City Exchange. The Exchange building, located on Bay Street at the foot of Bull Street, was not only at the

center of Factors' Walk and the commercial district, but literally at the beginning of Savannah's history, near the site where General James Edward Oglethorpe first pitched his tent in 1733. Council's decision to remain on Bay Street "struck a popular chord" with merchants who believed that relocating the seat of City government would amount to a "death blow" to the strip of firms, stores and warehouses. While "on the other hand, a modern building at the foot of the city's most prominent promenade would give back to Bay street some of the life and spirit that it has lost."

"For a City Hall." *Savannah Morning News* (20 February 1903) 12:5.

***Committee Members Discuss New Building
February 24, 1903***

On February 24, 1903, Mayor Herman Myers held a meeting of the special committee in charge of securing plans for a new city hall building in his City Exchange office for the purpose of making preliminary decisions regarding the design of the proposed municipal building. The committee believed the building could be constructed for roughly \$150,000, with payments spread equally over three years and occupancy of the new building projected for July 1, 1904, a little over a year away.*



Sectional elevation through City Hall showing all floors, drawn by Hyman W. Witcover, c.1904.
City of Savannah, Engineering Department, Plans & Designs, City Hall, Drawing 24.66.
City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.
Used with permission.

The committee members decided the new building, erected on the bluff overlooking the Savannah River, would be four stories high on Bay Street (southern façade), making it in reality a six-story building, with two additional stories seen from River Street (northern façade). They wanted the new building to be much larger than the present Exchange and decided to extend as far south as the sidewalk and extend the eastern and western wings over the steps leading below the bluff. By utilizing all the vacant ground around the Exchange they could achieve a much larger city hall. Interior details were not discussed, however it was agreed that Georgia material should be used throughout the construction and the new clock should have illuminated dials. The City Engineer's office was directed to measure the site and prepare dimensions for the committee before they moved any further in the planning phase.

**The municipal building's final cost was \$270,050 and did not open to the public until January 2, 1906.*

"To Build at Once." *Savannah Morning News* (25 February 1903) 10:3.

***Editorial to Move City Hall Building Back on Lot
March 1, 1903***

On March 1, 1903, Thomas H. Gignilliat's editorial on the proposed design of the new city hall building was published in the *Savannah Morning News*. Gignilliat, a local architect, spoke out against the plan to construct the building on the exact site of the Exchange. Gignilliat believed that the erection of a new building provided an opportunity to straighten out the building line along Bay Street creating a clear view of the street; "The present Exchange obstructs the view of Bay street from either end and makes the whole street look only half as impressive as it otherwise would look. Bay street is one of the great features of Savannah, and it will always remain cut in two, if the new building is put on the exact site of the old one." He argued that the setting of the City Exchange not only hurt the street as a whole but lessened the impact of the Exchange building itself, "killed by its close proximity to the Custom House and the Sorrel Building."

Gignilliat compared Bay Street to the face of a pretty, young girl and the buildings as adornments to accent the street. "The pretty buildings of a city should be displayed as a woman displays a jewel or a ribbon and in the amount of this display rests to a large extent the beauty and good taste of the results. The girls we see on Bull street with their new hats have the intelligence enough to shove their hats back somewhat and not pull them down over their faces." The architect closed with a plea to excavate closer to the river so that "we should display our new building on Bay street, but at the same time shove it back from the face of the street -- like the pretty girls do their hats."

His editorial seems to have made no impact on the plans of City Council and the new city hall was built out of line with its Bay Street neighbors, providing the building with a sense of immense size and importance in accordance with its role in Savannah.

"Savannah's New City Hall: A Suggestion that it be Built Farther Back from the Street." *Savannah Morning News* (1 March 1903) 17:3.

***Temporary Headquarters of City Offices
March 3, 1903***

On March 3, 1903, the application of the Savannah City Council to lease a portion of the Chatham Artillery armory as temporary headquarters during the construction of a new city hall was referred to the Confederate Veterans Association. The armory (now demolished), located on Wright Square, was jointly occupied by the Chatham Artillery and the Confederate Veterans Association and therefore a decision had to be made by both parties. The armory was one of several sites considered in the search for temporary quarters, including the County Commissioner's office, the basement of the Georgia Hussars club, and the Board of Trade, before City Council settled on the police barracks.

"Armory as City Hall." *Savannah Morning News* (4 March 1903) 12:3.

"Reward is Offered to Architects Who Submit City Hall Plans." *Savannah Morning News* (7 March 1903) 12:5.

***Call for Architectural Plans & Drawings
March 6, 1903***

On March 6, 1903, the special committee for the building of a new city hall offered a reward to architects to submit plans and estimates for the new municipal building within sixty days. The committee called for estimates on three kinds of buildings and outlined where they expected certain functions to go, giving the submitting architects an idea of what was expected of them and of the new city hall.

The committee outlined three variations of building materials to provide several price ranges to select from. The first option called for the Bay Street level exterior to be clad in Georgia granite with the upper floors in fancy brick with granite trimmings; the second option called for a granite building with marble trimmings; and the third option was a building constructed entirely of marble.

Architects were provided with a basic layout of the proposed six-story building, occupying all the ground owned by the City. The first floor (sub-basement) would house the furnaces and elevator machinery; the second floor a fire-proof safe and large dark room for record keeping (basement); the third floor, Bay Street level (first floor), would be occupied by the City Treasurer, Marshal, Director of Public Works and Board of Tax Assessors; the fourth floor (second floor) would include the Mayor's offices, Clerk of Council office, Council Chamber, committee room and City Attorney's office; the fifth floor (third floor) to house the Water Department, Harbor Master, Plumbing Inspector, Health Officer, and Park and Tree Commission; and finally the top floor (fourth floor) set aside for the City Engineer's force.

Council announced that the architect of the winning design would be named supervising architect, while the architects of the second and third best plans would receive rewards of \$250 and \$150, respectively. The reward system was devised to encourage many architects to submit plans, giving the committee a wide array of designs and estimates to choose from.

"Reward is Offered to Architects Who Submit City Hall Plans." *Savannah Morning News* (7 March 1903) 12:5.

Colonial Dames Fight to Save City Exchange April 16, 1903

On April 16, 1903, the Georgia Society of Colonial Dames of America began a crusade to save the old City Exchange. In February, City Council announced their plans to demolish the building (erected 1799-c.1801) and replace it with a larger, modern structure to house the City government's offices. Council's plans met with little resistance and most citizens were excited about the new building, reflecting little on what it would mean to the old Exchange, described by the Dames as "a silent witness of many notable events in the history of Savannah."



Entrance to the old City Exchange showing directory to City offices, c.1904.
The Old and the New, Sketch of the Old City Exchange (1799-1904), and the New City Hall, Savannah, Georgia.
Savannah: Savannah City Council, 1905.
City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.
Used with permission.

During the Dames' state convention, held in Savannah at the old De Soto Hotel (now demolished), Mrs. Billington presented Mrs. Waring's resolution asking that the present City Exchange building not be removed. The text of the resolution was originally "Resolved, That we, the Colonial Dames, at this our general meeting, protest against the removal of this beautiful old structure." On the motion of Mrs. Charlton, the word "beautiful" was substituted with "historic" considered descriptively more correct. Not all of the Dames were in opposition to the demolition of the Exchange; however they presented a united front to carry their protest as far as they could, all the way to City Council.

Following the Dames' meeting, Mrs. Waring, with the support of the Colonial Dames' Committee on Historical Landmarks, set about to secure the support of many influential organizations in Savannah. She approached the presidents of the Cotton Exchange, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Board of Trade. Numerous articles appeared in both the *Savannah Morning News* and the *Savannah Evening Press* presenting the Dames' case and outlining the history of the old City Exchange.

The Dames, while not forgetful of the fact that the Exchange building is not Colonial, still, as citizens, they wish[ed] to preserve the few old landmarks still remaining here.



“Long Room” of the City Exchange, used by City Council for 89 years (1815-1904).
The Old and the New, Sketch of the Old City Exchange (1799-1904), and the New City Hall, Savannah, Georgia.
 Savannah: Savannah City Council, 1905.
 City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.
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“Destruction of Exchange Official Iconoclasm.” *Savannah Morning News* (26 April 1903) 6:1.

“Monument the Aim.” *Savannah Morning News* (17 April 1903) 10:3.

“To Save the Old City Exchange.” *Savannah Morning News* (20 April 1903) 8:2.

Colonial Dames Petition City Council April 29, 1903

On April 29, 1903, the Georgia Society of the Colonial Dames of America submitted a petition during the City Council meeting protesting against the destruction of the old City Exchange building, “memorializing their effort to save the building, so that they may go on record as opposed to its removal for the purpose of constructing a more modern building.”



Reception for Admiral Schley in the City Exchange.
The Old and the New, Sketch of the Old City Exchange (1799-1904), and the New City Hall, Savannah, Georgia.
 Savannah: Savannah City Council, 1905.
 City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.
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Leading up to the meeting, the *Savannah Morning News* presented the Dames' case and indicated that the Dames would "incorporate in their memorial some interesting historical facts relative to the Exchange, so that future generations may see that those in authority were not unmindful of the historical association which cling to the old structure, but were forcibly reminded of the destruction which they are about to wreak." Those presenting made sure to use excerpts from Thomas Gamble's *A History of the City Government of Savannah*, which was prepared under direction of the City Council and approval of Mayor Myers barely three years earlier. The newspaper mused on the use of the City's own work as "An Official Boomerang" in the face of the Mayor and Aldermen.

The following is an excerpt from the Colonial Dames' petition preserved in the City's archival collections:

This building may not be architecturally beautiful nor adequate to meet the demands upon it of the present time, but it stands in all the dignity of an historic deposit, and for the sake of the record it has made, the work it has done, it should not be destroyed.... As the landmarks of a people disappear the memories of the events that made their distinction fade away also.... And yet how little material evidence remains in our beautiful city of the series of crucial events in Georgia history, which took place in Savannah from its very founding by Oglethorpe.... Little besides the City Exchange, whose corner stone was laid as early as 1799, now remains to mark the progress of events. To-day unlinked with yesterday and to-morrow is meaningless.... Leave it, Honored Sirs, as a tangible evidence of a day that is past.... If larger quarters are necessary for the proper conducting of municipal affairs, put in such modern conveniences as may be necessary to make every space available, and comfortable, and erect such an extension in the rear as the additional room required may suggest and leave the present building as a connecting link between the prosperous Savannah of to-day, which during your administration has reached the high water mark of Georgia's progress, and the Savannah of the eighteenth century.

The Dames' petition, whose signatures included those of Annie J. Waring and Gertrude Billington, was referred without any discussion to the Committee of the Whole for consideration. The Committee of the Whole determined to receive the petition as information and their motion was adopted by Council on May 27, 1903, effectively ending the Colonial Dames' campaign.

"Colonial Dames Suggest Annex for City Exchange." *Savannah Morning News* (30 April 1903) 7:5.

"Destruction of Exchange Official Iconoclasm." *Savannah Morning News* (26 April 1903) 6:1.

Official Proceedings of City Council (29 April 1903) 65. City of Savannah, Clerk of Council's Office, Savannah, Georgia.

"Petition of Georgia Society of Colonial Dames of America," (29 April 1903). City Council Meeting Papers-Proceedings of Council, Box PRO 84, 0115-001-A281, Folder 795. City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

Architects' Submissions Opened May 11, 1903

On May 11, 1903, the Building Committee for the new city hall met in the City Engineer's office at 4 o'clock in the afternoon to open plans submitted by architects for the design competition. Early reports indicated that twenty-one plans would be submitted, however when the deadline came only fourteen had been received.

During a two-hour meeting, the committee reviewed all of the plans. No conclusion was reached and no designs were eliminated during that first meeting, despite the fact that several were recognized as clearly impossible. All preliminary work of the committee was conducted behind closed doors and deliberations kept secret. The Mayor promised to make a full statement following their final decision, when all the plans would be displayed in the Exchange's "Long Room" for the public. The public was waiting eagerly for an announcement; "The question of selecting a new City Hall is of vital importance to the public, and the work of the Building Committee will be watched with a great deal of interest."

Submitting plans in a contest of this nature was an investment for any architect, with estimates of at least \$500, in time and materials, to make a presentation. However, the top prize, selection as supervising architect, was worth the effort with a 5% commission of the building's final cost (at least \$150,000 as planned by Council). The Savannah project attracted prominent architects including Colonel John L. Smithmeyer, architect of the Congressional Library and Georgetown College buildings, all in Washington, D.C., and the Chamberlain's Hotel, in Old Point Comfort, Virginia.

Many of the architects submitted beautifully framed and colored elevations of their proposed designs. One such piece, a four foot wide framed drawing, was damaged in transit. During unpacking, Henry Willis, a porter in the Clerk of Council's office, severely cut his right hand on broken glass, requiring several stitches to close the wound.

"Few to Chose From." *Savannah Morning News* (12 May 1903) 12:5.

"For New City Hall." *Savannah Morning News* (10 May 1903) 20:3.

Citizens Committee Reviews Submissions ***May 13, 1903***

On May 13, 1903, the Mayor invited a Committee of Citizens to join him in the City Engineer's office to examine the architectural plans received on May 11th. After two hours, the committee reviewed all fourteen plans, but only "four plans had the preference of the committee, but none of them were entirely what it was thought was what is required, unless changed in some important details."

The committee came to no conclusions and agreed to meet again in a few days. The ultimate goal of this group of men was to submit recommendations to the Building Committee for their consideration during the selection process.

The Committee of Citizens was composed of influential businessmen from the community, including George W. Tiedeman (Savannah Mayor January 1907-January 1913), Colonel J. H. Estill, P. A. Stovall, George J. Baldwin, and was chaired by J. H. H. Osborne of the Board of Tax Assessors.

"Citizens Examined City Hall Plans." *Savannah Morning News* (14 May 1903) 12:2.

"A List of Mayors and Aldermen of the City of Savannah, Georgia, 1901-1978." City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

All Submissions Rejected ***May 27, 1903***

On May 27, 1903, the Building Committee for the new city hall reported at the City Council meeting that they favored the rejection of all fourteen sets of plans submitted by architects in the design competition. However, the committee recommended that the advertised rewards still be doled out to thank the architects for their hard work and expense. Aldermen Dixon then went on record against paying the monied rewards since no plans were secured.

The most important recommendation of the committee was a change in strategy. No longer did they advise advertising for designs, but suggested hiring an architect that they could work one-on-one with towards a favorable design. Despite Dixon's objections, the report was adopted in full and the committee left to choose an architect who would not only design what they needed but act as supervising architect on the whole construction project.

The following is the Building Committee's report to City Council on May 27th:

Gentlemen: Your special committee charged with the duty of selecting plans for a new City Hall begs to report that, after a careful and thorough consideration of the various plans submitted it has deemed it advisable to reject all of them, not one of those placed before the committee, in its opinion, meeting the requirements of the building desired.

In view of the considerable trouble and expense to which the architects were put in the preparation of plans the majority of your committee favor the payment of premiums to those three whose plans are, in the opinion of the committee, the best of those submitted. While the city is not legally bound to pay such premiums, there is, the majority of your committee believe, somewhat of a moral obligation resting upon it. It is accordingly suggested that Council authorize this committee to confer honorariums to the extent of \$650.

It is also recommended that Council empower this committee to engage an architect under such condition as to compensation as the committee may deem proper, to develop plans until a satisfactory design is obtained both as to interior and exterior features, and also to prepare working plans and specifications, take bonds, etc., all of which are to be submitted to Council before contracts are let.

*Respectfully submitted,
Herman Myers, Chairman*

“All Plans Rejected.” *Savannah Morning News* (28 May 1903) 10:3.

Official Proceedings of City Council (27 May 1903) 83. City of Savannah, Clerk of Council’s Office, Savannah, Georgia.

***Witcover Chosen as Architect
May 29, 1903***



Hyman Wallace Witcover (1871-1936), c.1904.

“Official Souvenir Programme, Laying of Cornerstone, New City Hall, Savannah, Georgia, August 11th, 1904.” *Savannah: Daily Record Print*, 1904.

Vertical Files: Savannah-City Hall/City Exchange.

Bull Street Main Library of the Live Oak Public Libraries, Savannah, Georgia.

Used with permission.

On May 29, 1903, the *Savannah Morning News* announced the selection of Savannah resident Hyman Wallace Witcover as the new architect for city hall (for a brief biography of Witcover see special article “Architect Hyman Wallace Witcover”). Witcover was chosen to work with the Building Committee on a new set of plans after he had presented “attractive plans to the Building Committee” during the design competition. The paper predicted that Witcover’s selection would meet with favor in the public’s eye; “There are many who have contended from the first that the contract should be given to some competent Savannah architect and the selection of Mr. Witcover is certain to give satisfaction.” Witcover started work on the new design immediately.

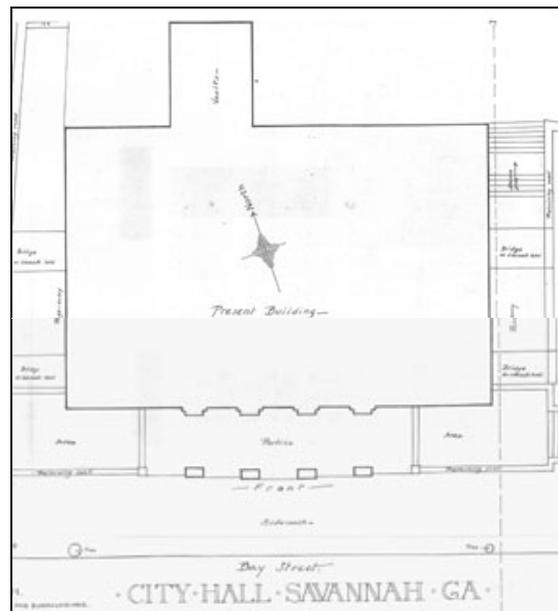
In addition, the Building Committee announced the winners of the competition, despite no selection from those presented. G. L. Normann, of Atlanta, and H. J. Klutho, of Jacksonville, were each awarded two-hundred dollars (\$200) for “excellent plans.” Normann was responsible for many prominent Savannah buildings including the Citizens Bank (1896), the Anderson Street School (1896), and the Henry Street School (1892), for which Witcover designed the 1910 addition.

Morrison, Mary L., ed. *Historic Savannah*. Savannah: Historic Savannah Foundation, 1979.

“Prize Winning Architects.” *Savannah Morning News* (29 May 1903) 10:2.

City Hall Requires Additional Ground July 8, 1903

On July 8, 1903, Mayor Myers addressed letters to the Representatives of Chatham County in the State Legislature asking them to push forward a local bill for “grants of [fifteen feet of] land on all sides of the City Exchange in this city as a portion of the site for the proposed City Hall.” The additional ground space would allow the new city hall to be substantially larger than the old City Exchange.



Footprint of City Exchange site showing building's relationship to sidewalks and stairs, drawn by Hyman W. Witcover, c.1903.

City of Savannah, Engineering Department Retrospective Plans & Designs, City Hall, Drawing 24.50.

City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

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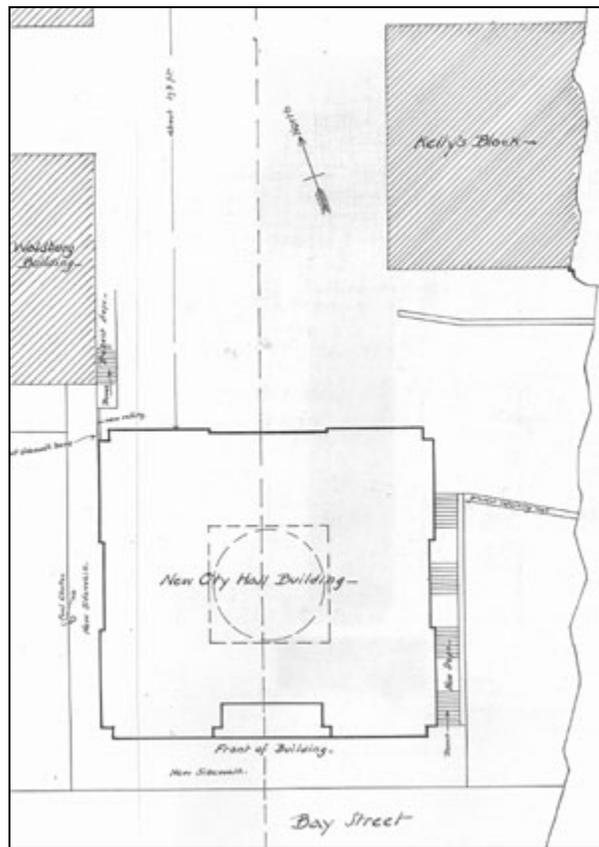
“Mayor Myers Asks Pay for Aldermen.” *Savannah Morning News* (10 July 1903) 6:3.

Official Proceedings of City Council (8 July 1903) 104. City of Savannah, Clerk of Council's Office, Savannah, Georgia.

State Legislature Passes Bill for Additional Ground July 10, 1903

On July 10, 1903, the State Legislature passed the bill presented by Representative Stovall, at the request of the Mayor and Aldermen, granting the City of Savannah the privilege of extending the new city hall an additional fifteen feet east and west of the ground space occupied by the City Exchange. The erection of a larger building on the site would mean the loss of one of the passages on either side of the building permitting access down to the river. In addition, the bill allowed the new building to push further north

towards the river than the current building. “The ground in the rear of the exchange is a public highway and it was for this reason that an act of the legislature was required.”



Proposed City Hall footprint and site plan in relation to Bay Street and surrounding buildings, drawn by Hyman W. Witcover, c.1903.
 City of Savannah, Engineering Department Retrospective Plans & Designs, City Hall, Drawing 24.66.
 City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.
 Used with permission.

“City Hall Bill Passed by House.” *Savannah Evening Press* (11 July 1903) 1:6.

Ga. L. 1903, p. 666

“Plans for City Hall Nearing Completion.” *Savannah Morning News* (13 July 1903) 8:1.

***Witcover's Plans Accepted
 July 14, 1903***

On July 14, 1903, the special committee on city hall met at 3:30 in the afternoon when architect Hyman Witcover presented plans and a watercolor elevation of the proposed building. Following a careful examination and inspection by the committee, the plans were approved and accepted. Prior to the meeting, the newspaper announced that architect and committee had been working for several months on the various details and doubted there would be any additional changes. In fact, “the meeting of the committee was entirely harmonious,” with approval of plans “showing a modern, handsome building, with ample provision for a long time.”

The drawings presented were considered preliminary plans and the committee instructed Witcover to begin work immediately on regular working plans, which would then be used to call for contractor bids. It was thought that the working plans would take about five to six weeks to complete and bids would be advertised for by the first of September.*

The intention of the committee is that the new city building shall not only provide for the officers of the city government under present conditions, but be suitable, commodious and useful for the administrations to come, for many years in the future, anticipating the steady forward movement that has been noted in Savannah for many years.

**Bids were originally advertised for on December 3, 1903.*

"City Hall Plans Accepted by the Special Committee." *Savannah Morning News* (15 July 1903) 12:3.

"City Hall Plans are Approved by Committee." *Savannah Evening Press* (15 July 1903) 5:4.

"Council Committees Will Meet To-Day." *Savannah Morning News* (14 July 1903) 10:2.

Watercolor Elevation of Proposed City Hall July 15, 1903

On July 15, 1903, architect Hyman H. Witcover placed a watercolor elevation of the proposed city hall in the window of the Hymes' picture store, on Bull Street near Oglethorpe Avenue. The framed elevation, measuring five feet by three feet, provided the public with a clear view of what the new building would look like when finished and received only favorable comments as "crowds of people gathered...before the window."



Hyman W. Witcover's watercolor rendering of the proposed City Hall, 1903.
City of Savannah, Clerk of Council's Office, Savannah, Georgia.
Used with permission.

The *Savannah Morning News* and the *Savannah Evening Press* both published detailed descriptions of the proposed building for the public following the unveiling of the watercolor elevation:

The new building is to have extreme dimensions of 90 feet front, 82 feet depth and the height, from the level of Bay street to the top of the dome will be 160 feet.... The style of architecture is of the Italian Renaissance, with perhaps a little more than a suggestion of the French type introduced. The first floor, above the street is to be of either Georgia granite or Georgia marble, and the remaining three floors will be in repressed gray or cream brick, trimmed with terra cotta. The dome, which will rise some seventy feet above the main roof of the building, will be covered with copper. The front will show a portico, with Georgia marble columns thirty feet high, surmounted by a balcony. Entrance will

be through three wide arched ways, in the center, from Bay street, and will be after a rise of five marble steps.

The floors are to be of mosaic pattern and the ceiling of plaster over terra cotta. Hard wood, either quartered oak or mahogany will be used in finishing and the grand stairway, which will be directly at the rear, facing the entrances, will be of marble and brass. The stairs will wind around the elevator shaft, which will run from the lowest floor, in the sub-basement, to the fourth floor, where stairways will lead further, to the top of the dome.

...The dimensions of the Council Chamber, which will occupy the western side of the building are to be 30 by 75 feet.... The seats for the aldermen will be ranged in a semi-circle, with the Mayor's platform and chair at the west center.

...The drawing also shows a considerable amount of ornamentation in the way of statuary. Four groups, representing Roman chariots drawn by three prancing horses, surmount the corners and allegorical figures representing Commerce and Industry, surmount to grand Ionic columns that support the roof of the portico. These ornaments can be used or omitted and will very likely not be considered in the first estimates asked for. They can be added at any time, and while giving artistic tone to the structure, are by no means necessary to the completeness or architectural beauty of the building.

"City Hall Plans Accepted by the Special Committee." *Savannah Morning News* (15 July 1903) 12:3.

"City Hall Plans are Approved by Committee." *Savannah Evening Press* (15 July 1903) 5:4.

"Savannah's New City Hall." *Savannah Morning News* (16 July 1903) 10:3.

W. J. Watson Allowed to Stay on Special Committee July 22, 1903

On July 22, 1903, City Council passed a resolution of Aldermen James M. Dixon allowing W. J. Watson to remain on the new city hall Building Committee despite his resignation as alderman. On June 12, 1903, Watson submitted a letter of resignation to Mayor Myers stating, "I find that on account of business it is impossible for me to give the city as much of my time as I ought. I therefore tender this my resignation as Alderman of the City, and thank you and the members of the Board for courtesies shown me while a member of your Board."

On June 24, 1903, Council appointed a committee consisting of Mayor Myers and Aldermen Davant, Colding and Grayson to ask Watson to withdraw his resignation. Watson declined and his resignation "was adopted by Council with regrets" on July 22, 1903. It was then decided that Watson was "a valuable member [of the Building Committee]...and it is desirable that his services should be retained on the committee."

"On Building Committee Watson Will Remain." *Savannah Morning News* (23 July 1903) 10:4.

"Resolution by Alderman James M. Dixon," (22 July 1903). City Council Meeting Papers, Box 0115-001-A282, Folder 800. City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

"W. J. Watson to Herman Myers, Savannah, Georgia," (12 June 1903). City Council Meeting Papers, Box 0115-001-A282, Folder 800. City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

Protest Against New City Hall July 28, 1903

On July 28, 1903, the first protest against erection of a new city hall was voiced by Mr. S. Krouskoff at a meeting of the Chamber of Commerce. Krouskoff's main argument was that he saw no reason to replace "the present building...commodious, safe, and not unsuitable for the purposes of the city government for many years to come," and that the City "cannot well afford to go into such an undertaking at present." Krouskoff believed the driving force behind the new building was merely a "desire to have something more

ornamental,” and rather than spend \$150,000-200,000 on a new city hall it would be better to reduce taxes for property owners and tax payers.

Krouskoff was previously a member of the City Council and was a proponent of developing the southern section of the city. While “there were evidences of approval by several members,” the Chamber of Commerce took no action on Krouskoff’s comments and within a week it seems it was forgotten in the excitement of a new building.

“Against City Hall.” *Savannah Morning News* (29 July 1903) 6:4.

“Mr. Krouskoff’s Idea About New City Hall.” *Savannah Evening Press* (30 July 1903) 2:4.

Working Plans Almost Ready September 6, 1903

On September 6, 1903, the *Savannah Morning News* predicted that architect Hyman Witcover was almost ready to deliver the city hall working plans.

It is probable that Architect H. W. Witcover will this week finish the working plans for the new City Hall.... In this event the contract for the building will be awarded about the middle of October. Just as soon as the working plans have been completed by Mr. Witcover, arrangements will be made to call for bids. It is expected that contractors from all over the country will put in bids.

...It has not yet been determined how the City Exchange will be disposed of. The contractors may be invited to take the job with the present building standing, or it may be sold outright to the highest bidder, to be removed within thirty days.

*...It is thought that about Nov. 1 the city offices will be moved to police headquarters.... The treasurer, the marshal, and probably the director of public works, will occupy the new red building on Habersham street, and the other officers will occupy parts of the main building on Oglethorpe avenue. The officers will, of course, be cramped, but Mayor Myers says that they will have to put up with some discomfort until their new home is constructed.**

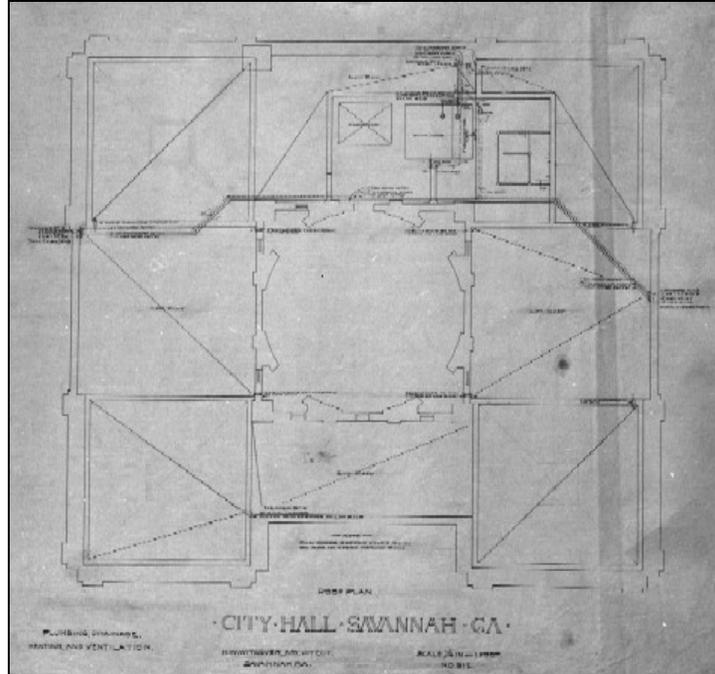
**Witcover’s working plans and the call for contractors’ bids was not approved until December. The municipal government moved headquarters at the end of March 1904 and the demolition of the City Exchange began on March 28, 1904.*

“City Hall Plans.” *Savannah Morning News* (6 September 1903) 17:3.

Working Plans Approved December 2, 1903

On December 2, 1903, the Building Committee met at the City Exchange at 4 o’clock in the afternoon to once again review the plans and specifications with architect Hyman Witcover, Director of Public Works Gadsden and J. H. H. Osborne, chairman of the Board of Tax Assessors. Witcover recently returned from New York where he consulted with “experts” to review the proposed structure. During the lengthy meeting, the committee, composed of Mayor Myers and Aldermen Dixon, Thomas and Davant, approved the final plans which reflected a long revision process between the committee and the architect to get the desired result. Several characteristics of the building were finally decided upon including the use of Georgia marble on the exterior of the first floor and repressed cream brick trimmed in terra cotta for the above floors.

With a satisfactory design finally attained, the Building Committee decided to advertise for contractor bids and began making plans for the actual construction. It was now believed that the proposed building’s construction would amount to about \$200,000 and would be finished by December 1, 1904. The local newspaper announced the decision with pleasure stating, “It is said now that there is nothing to prevent the building of the new City Hall during the life of the present administration.”*



Roof plan, drawn by Hyman W. Witcover, c. 1904.
Historic American Buildings Survey, HABS, GA, 26-SAV, 61-14.
Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.
Used with permission.

**These are not the materials ultimately used, those being, instead, Georgia granite and limestone. The final construction cost of the city hall building was \$258,738.28 (this figure does not include furnishing the building) and it did not open to the public until January 2, 1906.*

"New City Hall Plans are Ready." *Savannah Morning News* (1 December 1903) 12:2.

"Ready in a Year." *Savannah Morning News* (3 December 1903) 12:1.

Contractor Bids Called For December 3, 1903

On December 3, 1903, advertisements appeared in the Savannah newspapers asking for bids from contractors for the erection of the new city hall and the removal of the old City Exchange from the site. Council did not limit their search to Savannah, advertising in newspapers in the cities of Chicago, New York, Baltimore, and Chattanooga. The Building Committee believed that it would take about ten days following the close of bids to award the contract, with relocation of the City's offices to police headquarters occurring around February 1, 1904, followed shortly thereafter by the tearing down of the present building.*

SEALED BIDS will be received until Jan. 14, 1904, for the erection of a City Hall for the city of Savannah, Ga., according to plans and specifications prepared by H. W. Witcover, architect, Savannah, Ga. Bid to be accompanied by certified check for 3 per cent. of amount of bid. Copies of plans and specifications may be obtained upon application to the architect, and a deposit of twenty-five (\$25) dollars, which deposit to be returned to the bidder upon return of the plans and specifications. HERMAN MYERS, Mayor.

**It took three rounds of bids before a contractor was selected and the city government did not vacate the Exchange building until the end of March 1904.*

"Ready in a Year." *Savannah Morning News* (3 December 1903) 12:1.

"Sealed Bids...." *Savannah Morning News* (3 December 1903) 2:2.

***City Hall Appropriation for 1904
December 14, 1903***

On December 14, 1903, the City Council met in the evening to discuss the budget and special appropriations for the upcoming year. Mayor Myers initially asked Council to set aside \$75,000 in the 1904 budget towards the construction of the new city hall. Due to other obligations, Council decided only \$60,000 could be appropriated for the new structure.

“Budget Agreed On.” *Savannah Morning News* (15 December 1903) 12:1.

“Council Will Agree on Appropriations.” *Savannah Morning News* (14 December 1903) 8:2.

***Georgia Building to be Erected at St. Louis Exposition
December 23, 1903***

On December 23, 1903, the Committee of the Whole of the Savannah City Council resolved “That the sum of three hundred (\$300) dollars be and the same is hereby appropriated towards advertising Savannah in the way of erection of a Georgia building at the St. Louis Exposition, to be paid out of the city treasury on the order of the Mayor.” The St. Louis Exposition would be on the minds of City Council for the upcoming year while plans were underway for the new city hall (for more information on the Exposition see special article “Louisiana Purchase Exposition”). While not specifically related, Council’s desire to build a new, modern municipal home and their interest in making a presence at the exposition reflected the current theme of “A Greater Savannah,” a time when Savannah was rapidly growing and spreading its wings both regionally and nationally.

Report of Hon. Herman Myers, Mayor, ...of the City of Savannah, Ga., for the Year Ending December 31st, 1903.... Savannah: The Morning News Print, 1904. p. 431.

The Birth of City Hall 1904



City Hall cornerstone laying ceremony, August 11, 1904.
The Old and the New, Sketch of the Old City Exchange (1799-1904), and the New City Hall, Savannah, Georgia.
Savannah: Savannah City Council, 1905.
City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.
Used with permission.

Contractor Bids Opened January 14, 1904

On January 14, 1904, the first round of bids for the role of contractor of the new city hall building was opened at the City Exchange at exactly 4 o'clock in the afternoon by the Building Committee. Eight bids were received by the deadline and ranged from \$194,963 to \$254,600, considerably more than the \$150,000 originally projected. After considerable discussion, the committee rejected seven of the bids and returned the surety checks accompanying them. Rather than awarding the contract to the lowest bidder, M. T. Lewman & Company of Atlanta, the committee decided to consider Lewman's bid over the next few days.

The contractors represented by bids included:

Savannah Contracting Company, Savannah, Georgia
J. H. McKenzie & Son, Augusta, Georgia
Grant Wilkins, Atlanta, Georgia
M. T. Lewman & Company, Atlanta, Georgia
W. T. Hadlow Company, Jacksonville, Florida
General Supply & Construction Company, New York
Norcross Bros. Company, Worcester, Massachusetts
W.O. & C. G. Burton, St. Louis, Illinois

"Bids-Savannah City Hall," (c.6 February 1904). City Council Meeting Papers-Proceedings of Council, Box 0115-001-A284, PRO 87, Folder 821. City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

"City Hall Bids High." *Savannah Morning News* (15 January 1904) 12:1.

"City Hall Bids to be Opened." *Savannah Morning News* (14 January 1904) 10:6.

"To Reject All City Hall Bids." *Savannah Evening Press* (15 January 1904) 1:7.

Lewman's Limestone Bid Rejected
January 15, 1904

On January 15, 1904, in an afternoon meeting, the Building Committee rejected the bid of M. T. Lewman & Company of Atlanta on the grounds that, while Lewman's bid was much lower than the rest, it did not adhere to the architect's specifications. Lewman's bid proposed extensive use of limestone and as it "was not in the specifications it would hardly be fair, if it is to be used, not to give all bidders another chance."

As a result, the committee altered the original specifications and made a new call for bids giving all of the bidders a second chance. They removed a number of items, desirable but not necessary, to reduce the cost of construction. Contractors were asked to bid on two different specifications reflecting different exterior treatments. The committee was impressed with the reduced cost of limestone and proposed a city hall constructed of Georgia granite on the first floor and Indiana limestone above.

"Bids-Savannah City Hall," (c.6 February 1904). City Council Meeting Papers-Proceedings of Council, Box 0115-001-A284, PRO 87, Folder 821. City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

"New Call for Bids." *Savannah Morning News* (16 January 1904) 12:3.

"To Reject All City Hall Bids." *Savannah Evening Press* (15 January 1904) 1:7.

"A Greater Savannah"
January 16, 1904

On January 16, 1904, Mayor Myers wrote his annual report for the year 1903 (see excerpt below). Myers discussed the government's progress towards a new city hall, summarizing achievements to date and suggestions for funding of the proposed design. In his report, Myers reflected on the importance of the new municipal building in the creation of "the Greater Savannah." The theme of "A Greater Savannah" permeated much of the work of the City government after the turn of the century, pushing public improvements, harbor work, and national exposure for the growing city.

Myers proposed offering inducements to ground rent lot holders to purchase their lots at a 20% discount for six months. "With this addition and such extra amount as may be obtained from our regular source of revenue, over and above the appropriation of \$60,000 provided in the budget, the hall can probably be entirely paid for during the current year." The concept was not new, Mayor Schwarz secured over \$88,000 in 1890 for drainage work and extension of water mains through discounts of 30% and 20%. In 1897, Mayor Meldrim offered a 25% discount which provided \$44,000 for opening streets. In addition, Myers wished to sell off municipally owned property throughout the city. Alderman Thomas, chairman of the Committee on City Lots and Opening Streets, prepared a report for Council which showed over one-hundred acres of unused City land that could be sold for cash.*

*By the end of 1904, the City had procured over \$60,000 from these measures.

Excerpt from the 1903 Annual Report of Herman Myers, Mayor of Savannah, Georgia to the Board of Aldermen of the City of Savannah:

A Twentieth Century City Hall.

The need of a new, modern, properly-equipped and large enough public building to meet the requirements of the municipal government of a growing city has long been acknowledged. Few, if any, cities of the size, wealth and commercial importance of Savannah have as inadequate and commonplace a structure as the building used for city purposes here. Elsewhere, as a rule, citizens feel a personal and pardonable pride in the building devoted to the municipal offices. In Savannah no one carries a visitor to the City Hall [City Exchange] without an apology for its appearance. Its only virtue is its age. Experience has shown that it is impossible to remodel it or enlarge it. Thousands of dollars have been spent upon it in renovations which have failed to permanently better its aspect. It remains deficient in accommodations and conveniences.

*Feeling that the time has at last arrived in the onward march of Savannah, when the spirit of its citizens would approve, and its financial condition permit, of the erection of a hall that would be an ornament to the city and a satisfaction to its people, and which would meet the increasing necessities of the government **for a century to come**, I recommended in my last annual address that Council take steps to this end. The suggestion met with an immediate favorable response from this Board and with general approval from the public. A special committee of five was appointed. Plans were advertised for. A number were received, which, after thorough examination by the committee, were rejected. Architect H. W. Witcover of this city was then engaged to prepare plans under the direction of the committee. As a result of his work, suitable plans were adopted, and bids advertised for, which will be submitted to Council at an early date, with the recommendation of the committee.*

The hall it is proposed to erect will cost about \$150,000. Its general appearance is well known to the public, and it is unnecessary to refer at length to its beautiful exterior or the admirable arrangement of the interior. The building will be one in which all citizens will feel a direct personal pride. It will typify the twentieth century Savannah, the Savannah of indomitable energy, of pushing progressiveness, guided by an invincible determination to place the city on a parity with its sisters of all sections in everything that contributes to the material well-being of its people - that spirit which has developed here so rapidly in the past few years and which, we confidently believe, is destined to insure a future of unparalleled development.

Large Hall Appropriation Available.

In order that the City might be prepared to inaugurate work on the new hall with a liberal appropriation, especial efforts were made during the year to provide a surplus for this purpose. In this the Mayor received the constant support of the Chairman of the Finance Committee, and, indeed, of all members of the Council. As a result, the new year opened with over \$51,000 cash in the treasury. An appropriation of \$60,000 was accordingly easily made in the budget for 1904, without impairing the efficiency of the various City departments or materially lessening other public improvements.

Council is convinced that the site of the present Exchange is the proper place for the new building. This will, in all probability, continue the center of the business interests of Savannah. The trade bodies, the banks, the offices of the commercial houses, will always be within a few blocks of Bull and Bay streets, and the retail district will remain within easy access. A noble structure where the present antiquated Exchange stands, will be a notable landmark to the travel on the river. When it is recalled that over 25,000 persons now pass the Exchange in a year on the steamships plying to Northern ports, representing all parts of the United States, and that this tide of travel increases by thousands each year, this consideration in favor of the present location is of no small moment. In addition to these factors it is not to be overlooked that to secure a suitable site elsewhere would mean the unnecessary outlay of at least \$100,000.

The erection of the new municipal building is one of the steps in the creation of the Greater Savannah, the spirit of which has been making itself manifest in recent years. It is possible, I believe, to pay for the hall entirely during 1904. The means are at hand, and it is merely necessary for Council to avail itself of a source of income that previous Councils have similarly taken advantage of for public improvement purposes.

“Annual Report of Herman Myers,” (16 January 1904). *Report of Hon. Herman Myers, Mayor, ... of the City of Savannah, Ga., for the Year Ending December 31st, 1903*.... Savannah: The Morning News Print, 1904. pp. 19-23

“Pay for City Hall in Quick Time.” *Savannah Evening Press* (16 January 1904) 1:6.

***Building Specifications Revised
January 18, 1904***

On January 18, 1904, the Building Committee for the new city hall met in the Mayor's office to approve the revised specifications prepared by architect Hyman Witcover following the first round of contractor bids. The new advertisement for bids was drafted and ordered printed in the Savannah newspapers. Witcover was assigned to notify all the former bidders of the new developments and request they submit new bids on the revised specifications. The new specifications made no changes to the arrangement of the building exterior but called for three different grades of materials to be bid on. The first proposal called for Georgia marble on the first story and pressed brick and terra cotta above, as in the original specifications. The second proposal called for Winnsboro Blue granite on the first story with limestone above. The third proposal suggested Georgia granite on the first story and limestone above. The deletion of many expensive decorations on the interior was made with Witcover's assurance that they could be omitted without altering "the convenience of the beauty of the interior."

"Call for New City Hall Bids." *Savannah Morning News* (19 January 1904) 12:3.

"New Call for Bids." *Savannah Morning News* (16 January 1904) 12:3.

"Notice to Contractors...." *Savannah Morning News* (19 January 1904) 2:2.

***New Contractor Bids Called For
January 19, 1904***

On January 19, 1904, advertisements for new bids from contractors on the proposed city hall appeared in local newspapers. The new bid was open to all contractors, not just those who had submitted proposals under the previous call. The committee resolved to insist that all bidders keep within the specifications outlined to prevent a repeat of the complication of the first bidding round, when M. T. Lewman & Company substituted limestone for the building's exterior.

NOTICE TO CONTRACTORS. Sealed bids will be received for the erection of City Hall for the city of Savannah, Ga., in accordance with the revised plans and specifications prepared by H. W. Witcover, Architect, Savannah, Ga. Bids will be opened in public at the Mayor's office, Savannah, Ga., at 12 o'clock noon, Saturday, Feb. 6, 1904. Bids to be accompanied with certified check for five thousand (\$5,000) dollars, or guarantee bond, with acceptable surety company as surety in the sum of seven thousand five hundred (\$7,500) dollars, conditions as per specifications. The right is reserved to reject any or all bids. HERMAN MYERS, Mayor.

"Call for New City Hall Bids." *Savannah Morning News* (19 January 1904) 12:3.

"New Call for Bids." *Savannah Morning News* (16 January 1904) 12:3.

"Notice to Contractors...." *Savannah Morning News* (19 January 1904) 2:2.

***Lewman Blames Witcover for Rejection of Bid
February 4, 1904***

On February 4, 1904, every member of City Council received a letter from contractor M. T. Lewman & Company, of Atlanta, announcing that the firm would not submit a second bid because they were unfairly treated by supervising architect Witcover. During the first call for bids, Lewman's bid, while the lowest, was ultimately rejected because it did not comply with the outlined specifications. Lewman specifically blamed Witcover for unjustly depriving them of the contract, stating that "architect Witcover had informed them that he would do all in his power to have the bid thrown out because they had not consulted him before substituting stone for the exterior facing instead of terra cotta and brick, and making other unimportant changes."

Witcover refused to discuss the accusations beyond saying “the statements in Lewman’s letter were so deliberately incorrect that he did not care to discuss the matter.” Likewise, Mayor Myers told the newspaper “the letter was not worthy of consideration and that the bid had been thrown out because it did not comply with the specifications furnished to all the contractors in advance.... Mr. Witcover had no interest in who the contract was awarded to and was only looking after the city’s welfare.”

“Lewman Will Not Bid on City Hall.” *Savannah Morning News* (5 February 1904) 10:3.

“Mayor Myers Talks of the Lewman Letter.” *Savannah Morning News* (6 February 1904) 10:4.

Second Round of Bids Opened February 6, 1904

On February 6, 1904, in the Mayor’s City Exchange office, the second round of bids for the city hall contractor was opened at noon. Six contractors were represented at the meeting during which the Building Committee narrowed the field down to the three lowest bids of Grant Wilkins, of Atlanta, S. S. Leonard, of Savannah, and the General Supply and Construction Company, of New York. Out of the three, Leonard was the only local company and the only contractor who did not answer the first call for bids.

As with the first round, Leonard did not fully meet the conditions specified by the committee, failing to accompany his bid with the required bond. However, the committee seemed swayed by his local connection and promise to give all of his sub-contracts to Savannah firms. The committee gave him until 4 o’clock that afternoon to deposit the amount of the required bond with the committee to satisfy them of his “financial ability to execute it [the contract].” During the afternoon, Leonard filed the necessary \$7,500 certified check.

“City Hall Bids are Down to Three.” *Savannah Evening Press* (6 February 1904) 1:1.

“City Hall Bids Will be Opened.” *Savannah Morning News* (6 February 1904) 10:1.

“Contract was Not Awarded.” *Savannah Morning News* (7 February 1904) 20:5.

“Leonard Will Probably Get City Hall Contract.” *Savannah Morning News* (8 February 1904) 10:6.

Leonard's Bid Chosen February 9, 1904

On February 9, 1904, the Building Committee officially choose S. S. Leonard’s bid for the construction of the new city hall building based on his bid of \$209,795 for proposal B. Leonard was known for the successful execution of many contracts, including Union Station in Jacksonville, Central Railway station in Columbus, and many of the buildings at Fort Screven, in addition to several Savannah residences like the McNeill house on Whitaker and Huntingdon streets. “His work has always been satisfactory, and completed within the time specified in the contract.”

All of Leonard’s estimates were based on local mechanics and laborers, with the exception of the steel structure. He planned to order the Winnsboro granite from South Carolina, the Georgia marble from this state, and the limestone from Alabama. Not wanting to lose any time, Leonard immediately forwarded the order for much of the material and Mayor Myers announced that Council would plan to vacate the City Exchange within the month of February.*

**S. S. Leonard failed to satisfy the terms of the contract with the City, and the Savannah Contracting Company was the contracting firm that eventually successfully bid on the project and built the city hall building.*

“Leonard to Build New City Hall.” *Savannah Morning News* (10 February 1904) 12:3.

**Accepted Bid Exceeds \$200,000
February 10, 1904**

On February 10, 1904, the Mayor called a special meeting of City Council at 4:30 in the afternoon to approve the decision of the Building Committee in the selection of S. S. Leonard's bid for the new city hall's contractor. A report of the Building Committee was read and unanimously adopted by the aldermen. The report summarized the bidding process and final choice of Winnsboro granite and limestone for the exterior. The Building Committee acknowledged that while the final bid exceeded \$200,000, the building, to be used "for a century to come," could not be scaled down any more without the loss of beauty or function.

Report of the Building Committee, New City Hall:

To the Board of Aldermen:

...Our advertisements this time brought seven bids, which were opened on February 6. These new bids ranged from \$209,795 to \$241,900. After careful consideration your committee decided in favor of the bid of S. S. Leonard. The plan adopted by the committee calls for Winnsboro blue granite up to the top of the first floor above Bull Street, and limestone above that.

While the outlay required for the new hall will be considerably in excess of the amount originally contemplated, it appears to be the opinion of our citizens generally that in the erection of a municipal building, expected to serve the purposes of the city government for a century to come, the cost should not be scaled down to a point where either the beauty or usefulness of the building would be impaired. It is our desire and intention to give the city a building that in size, accommodations and attractiveness will conform to the present standard of excellence in architecture, will satisfy the most exacting tax payer and will be a full return for every dollar expended upon it.

"Leonard to Build New City Hall." *Savannah Morning News* (10 February 1904) 12:3.

Official Proceedings of City Council (10 February 1904) 253-254. City of Savannah, Clerk of Council's Office, Savannah, Georgia.

"Plans Accepted by City Council." *Savannah Morning News* (11 February 1904) 12:1.

Report of Hon. Herman Myers, Mayor...of the City of Savannah, Ga., for the Year Ending December 31st, 1904.... Savannah: The Morning News Print, 1905. pp. 529-530

**Leonard's Contract Approved
February 11, 1904**

On February 11, 1904, City Council approved the drafted building contract between S. S. Leonard and the Mayor and Aldermen of the City of Savannah for the construction of the city hall. An unsigned copy of this contract still exists in the collections of the City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives in City Hall and outlines the specifications to be used in the building, and the responsibilities of contractor, supervising architect, and the City. Council decided that the City Hall Building Committee would be responsible for all the duties of the Mayor and Aldermen under the said contract.

The contract would not be signed until a bond of \$52,448.75, one-fourth the amount of the contract, was received from contractor Leonard. The bond would protect the City from potential breaches of contract. Leonard and his attorney, Davis Freeman, approved of the contract and forwarded a certified copy to New York to have his bond executed. "Mr. Leonard convinced City Council of his financial responsibility, and there is no doubt regarding the bond." Leonard was given ten days to furnish the bond to Council.*

**S. S. Leonard failed to provide bond and lost the city hall contract. The Savannah Contracting Company was the contracting firm that eventually successfully bid on the project and built the city hall building.*

"City Exchange to be Vacated Next Sunday." *Savannah Morning News* (13 February 1904) 12:4.

Contract No. 575 (n.d.). City Council Meeting Papers-Contracts, Box 0115-002-22.1, CON 7, Folder 44. City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

Official Proceedings of City Council (11 February 1904) 255. City of Savannah, Clerk of Council's Office, Savannah, Georgia.

"Sub-Contracts for City Hall." *Savannah Evening Press* (13 February 1904) 3:3.

***Winnsboro Granite Contract Signed
February 12, 1904***

On February 12, 1904, the contract for the Winnsboro granite was signed in the afternoon between S. S. Leonard and the Winnsboro Granite Company, of Rockton, South Carolina. The Winnsboro granite would be used on the base of the building up to the top of the first floor on Bay Street. The granite was set to ship at the earliest date possible, so as not to delay the project at all.*

**S. S. Leonard failed to provide bond and lost the city hall contract. The Savannah Contracting Company was the contracting firm that eventually successfully bid on the project and built the city hall building. There is no known documentation that the Winnsboro Granite Company, of Rockton, South Carolina, supplied the granite for the city hall building.*

"City Exchange to be Vacated Next Sunday." *Savannah Morning News* (13 February 1904) 12:4.

"Sub-Contracts for City Hall." *Savannah Evening Press* (13 February 1904) 3:3.

***Contract for Steel Structure Signed
February 13, 1904***

On February 13, 1904, the local newspapers announced the awarding of the two most important sub-contracts by S. S. Leonard in preparation for his work on the new building. In addition to the order for Winnsboro granite the day before, Leonard signed a contract for the steel structure with the Virginia Bridge and Iron Company, of Roanoke, Virginia. The contract included not only furnishing the steel, but installing it in the building.

Leonard expected all of the sub-contracts to be closed by the following week. "All sub-contracts are to be submitted by the contractor to Mr. Witcover before being closed. The object of this provision is to prevent the possibility of a sub-contract being let to an irresponsible party. Of course the material, as it is furnished, will have to be approved by the supervising architect."*

**S. S. Leonard failed to provide bond and lost the city hall contract. The Savannah Contracting Company was the contracting firm that eventually successfully bid on the project and built the city hall building. There is no known documentation that the Virginia Bridge and Iron Company, of Roanoke, Virginia, supplied the steel structure for the city hall building.*

"City Exchange to be Vacated Next Sunday." *Savannah Morning News* (13 February 1904) 12:4.

"Sub-Contracts for City Hall." *Savannah Evening Press* (13 February 1904) 3:3.

***City Exchange Clock Gets New Home
February 14, 1904***

On February 14, 1904, the *Savannah Morning News* first mentioned the final fate of the City Exchange clock which would be replaced by a new clock with illuminated dials in the new city hall building:

So that there will still be a clock on Bay street when the City Exchange is pulled down, the big timepiece in the tower will probably be transferred to the place of John Rourke & Son, on the eastern end of Bay street. A member of Council said that it would probably be decided to let the clock remain in the Rourke tower so long as Mr. Rourke would keep it in good condition, and running.

On October 28, 1903, John Rourke & Sons had made a formal plea for the City Exchange clock to the Mayor and Aldermen: "As the old historic Exchange Building is about to be pulled down...favor us as generously as your predecessors did, by voting us the clock and weather vane in the present tower, to be erected on our new building." When the Exchange's previous clock was replaced in February 1896, City Council gave it to Mr. Rourke to place in the tower of his foundry for the convenience of the residents of the east side. When this structure burned in 1902, the old clock was destroyed. Council referred Rourke's letter asking for the second clock to the Committee of the Whole. On November 11, 1903, a resolution approving Rourke's request was presented but not adopted. Several other locations were considered for the clock, including the fire headquarters on Indian Street and the Little Sisters of the Poor convent on the south side of town. On February 17, 1904, the Committee of the Whole finally adopted the resolution.

Resolved that the clock and weather vane in the Exchange building when said building is removed for the erection of the new City Hall be placed in the care of John Rourke & Son to be by them suitably located within three months at the eastern end of Bay St. and kept in good condition without cost to the city for the convenience of the public. The clock to remain the property of the city and removable by Council if the conditions are not complied with.



Rourke & Sons Ironwork Foundry with City Exchange clock in tower, c.1930.
VM 1360 Cordray-Foltz Photograph Collection, Box 17, Folder 2, Item 6.
Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, Georgia.
Used with permission.

Mr. Rourke promised to install the clock on his new machine and blacksmith shop within ten days of it being turned over. Robert Schneider, who had been employed by the City to maintain the clock, would continue to care for it, his salary now paid by Mr. Rourke.

"City Exchange Clock Loaned to Rourke." *Savannah Morning News* (18 February 1904) 12:2.

"The City's Clock Will Have New Home." *Savannah Morning News* (14 February 1904) 20:4.

"John Rourke & Sons to Mayor and Aldermen," (28 October 1903). City Council Meeting Papers-Proceedings of Council, Box 0115-001-A284, PRO 87, Folder 819. City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

Official Proceedings of City Council, "Resolution of the Committee of the Whole," (17 February 1904) 259. City of Savannah, Clerk of Council's Office, Savannah, Georgia.

Leonard Builds Temporary Office February 15, 1904

On February 15, 1904, the *Savannah Morning News* reported that S. S. Leonard was building a temporary office on Bay Street, near the City Exchange, in preparation to begin work on the property as soon as the City officials relocated. At the time, the paper indicated that Leonard expected to receive his bond from a New York surety company later in the week, and once filed with the Clerk of Council work would begin.

M. Ed. Wilson, photographer, took several photographs of the interior and exterior of the City Exchange anticipating its imminent demolition. Wilson captured images of the Council Chamber, known as the “Long Room,” the Mayor’s office, the Clerk’s office, as well as other offices for publication in Mayor Myers’ annual report. Today, these photographs provide the best look into the City government’s former home.

“Leonard Building Office.” *Savannah Morning News* (15 February 1904) 8:4.

“Photographs Taken of the City Exchange.” *Savannah Morning News* (16 February 1904) 12:3.

***Robert E. Lee Portrait's Temporary Home
February 16, 1904***

On February 16, 1904, the *Savannah Morning News* reported that several parties were interested in temporarily displaying the portrait of General Robert E. Lee when it was removed from the “Long Room” of the City Exchange and for the duration of the new city hall’s construction. The City had planned on storing the painting at the Telfair Art Gallery, “but those who have called the matter to the attention of the city officials say there are so many more visitors to the [public] library it would be better to leave the picture there.”*

**At the time the public library was housed in the Georgia Historical Society’s Hodgson Hall. On December 29, 1905, the Lee portrait was re-hung in the Council Chamber of the recently completed City Hall. The portrait was placed on the east wall of the chamber, just south of the main entrance. In December 2004, this portrait was transferred to the Savannah History Museum under the custodial care of the Coastal Heritage Society in order that a larger public audience could have the opportunity to view it.*

“Mayor Myers’ Picture in Council Chamber Now.” *Savannah Morning News* (2 January 1906) 12:1.

“Move Thursday into City Hall.” *Savannah Morning News* (17 December 1905) 24:3.

“Oglethorpe’s Picture for Council Chamber.” *Savannah Morning News* (30 December 1905) 10:2.

“Want Lee Picture in Public Library.” *Savannah Morning News* (16 February 1904) 12:1.

“Want Picture of Oglethorpe in City Hall.” *Savannah Evening Press* (29 December 1905) 1:7.

***Last Council Session in City Exchange
February 17, 1904***

On February 17, 1904, City Council held what they thought was the last session of Council in the old City Exchange before the building was vacated.* Flashlight pictures were taken at the beginning and conclusion of the session in the decorated “Long Room” for publication in the annual report of 1904. Initially, refreshments were to be served but Council anticipated a very long session and canceled the idea. The session lasted until 11:30 that night.



City Council meeting in the “Long Room” of the City Exchange, February 17, 1904.
The Old and the New, Sketch of the Old City Exchange (1799-1904), and the New City Hall, Savannah, Georgia.
Savannah: Savannah City Council, 1905.
City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.
Used with permission.

Work on preparing the upper floors of the police headquarters for temporary offices for City officials was being rushed, in the hopes of occupancy within only a few days. All of the rooms were in the process of being repainted and papered.

**The municipal government did not vacate the City Exchange until March 23, 1904, making the actual last City Council meeting held in the old City Exchange the meeting of March 19, 1904.*

“Council’s Last Meeting in Exchange Building.” *Savannah Morning News* (18 February 1904) 12:1.

“Last Meeting in Old City Exchange.” *Savannah Morning News* (17 February 1904) 12:1.

“Last Session be Busy One.” *Savannah Evening Press* (17 February 1904) 1:4.

“Rushing Work for City Hall Offices.” *Savannah Morning News* (18 February 1904) 12:1.

Witcover Tests Ground Behind Exchange February 19, 1904

On February 19, 1904, supervising architect Hyman Witcover conducted an experiment on the ground at the rear of the City Exchange building to determine how much weight the ground would safely stand. The test “proved conclusively that the ground would stand a much greater weight than would be imposed by the new City Hall. The City Hall foundation will be of concrete and steel and laid directly on the ground. It is estimated that the new building will impose a weight of 5,000 feet to the square foot.” With the results, Witcover was satisfied the ground could handle up to four times the required weight for the new building.

“Ground Tested on City Hall Site.” *Savannah Morning News* (20 February 1904) 12:2.

City Records Preserved February 24, 1904

On February 24, 1904, Mayor Herman Myers and Clerk of Council J. Robert Creamer visited the record room and decided to preserve only those records that proved to be of value. Many of the documents dated back to the City’s incorporation in 1790. The Clerk’s staff began sorting through the records stored on the City Exchange’s third floor to determine which records to save. Several copies of all records would be maintained for the City, while duplicates would be disposed of by Mr. Creamer to any one who made application for them. Fifteen cases of volumes and records had already been transferred to the vaults of the County Courthouse. The records of the last four years would be moved to the temporary offices at police headquarters for reference use by the City officials and staff.

Twenty-one months later, at the end of November 1905, the Clerk of Council began moving the metal filing cases into the recently completed building’s new vaults. At this time, twenty-five cases of records were still stored at the courthouse and plans indicated they would be moved around December 20th, with those ten or fifteen years old stored in the basement vaults.

The records stored at the Court House have been referred to a dozen or more times since they have been there. When they were packed away a record was kept of what was put in each case, so that any given record could be found without difficulty.

“Many Old Records Will be Given Away.” *Savannah Morning News* (25 February 1904) 12:2.

“Moving Filing Cases Into the City Hall.” *Savannah Morning News* (25 November 1905) 12:4.

Leonard Given Extension to Secure Bond February 29, 1904

On February 29, 1904, City Council agreed to give S. S. Leonard ten more days to secure the required bond to finalize his contract. The resolution passed in an open meeting of Council with little dissent, “Council is desirous to give Mr. Leonard full opportunity to comply to the terms and requirements already made in this

regard, he is now allowed until 12 o'clock noon on March 10th 1904 to comply...no further extension of time beyond the foregoing will be allowed."

Leonard returned from Baltimore the day before, failing to receive a bond there. He then made a written proposal to the City offering a smaller cash deposit in lieu of the bond. Leonard stated that the contract contained three items objectionable to the surety company, thereby preventing his securing a bond: claiming the provision that material men could sue on the bond in the name of the City "was unconstitutional"; no allowance was made for bad weather and other events in the time limit; and while Leonard was subject to pay demurrage per day if the building was not finished in time, no rebate was provided if he finished the building ahead of time.

Witcover assured Council "that the contract, as drawn, in every way complies with the requirements of the contractors and builders and the architects national organizations. The specifications as drawn up do not differ from those made for other large buildings." The aldermen did not take Leonard's objections seriously since he approved of the contract and all its provisions only twenty days earlier. "The delay in the matter had caused uneasiness among a number of the city officials. The fact that he went to Baltimore to arrange his bond and returned to make a counter proposition in place of the bond indicated to the aldermen that there was some trouble with the surety company."

While many in Savannah started to question Leonard's ability to fulfill the contract, Leonard was adamant he would complete the job:

*I'm going to build the new city hall and, what's more, the city has to vacate the old exchange this week. There can be no further delay. I want to get to work at once. I have three carloads of material to throw into the foundation for the new building in Savannah right now and I want to use it. It is costing me money to delay any further.**

**S. S. Leonard failed to provide bond and lost the city hall contract. The Savannah Contracting Company was the contracting firm that eventually successfully bid on the project and built the city hall building.*

"Compromise Vote Extended Time." *Savannah Evening Press* (1 March 1904) 2:3.

"Contractor Leonard Back From Baltimore." *Savannah Morning News* (29 February 1904) 10:4.

"Hitch in Plan to Build New City Hall." *Savannah Evening Press* (29 February 1904) 1:6.

"Leonard Failed to Give a Bond." *Savannah Morning News* (1 March 1904) 12:1.

Official Proceedings of City Council (29 February 1904) 263. City of Savannah, Clerk of Council's Office, Savannah, Georgia.

Leonard Allowed to Make Cash Deposit in Lieu of Bond March 9, 1904

On March 9, 1904, in a closed two-hour session, City Council agreed to accept S. S. Leonard's offer of a \$40,000 cash deposit in place of a surety bond. Leonard asked Council to accept the \$40,000 until he could present the \$52,000 bond when he would withdraw the cash deposit. While Council agreed to accept the cash, the withdrawal proposal was declined and Council decided to hold the money until the job was completed regardless of a bond. Additionally, the aldermen would now require a reserve of 20% on every payment made, instead of 15% as the contract originally specified.

After an hour of discussion, Leonard and his attorney, Colonel R. L. Colding, were called into the meeting. Leonard and Colding spoke with Council for over half an hour before leaving the aldermen to debate for another half hour. Following the meeting, the Mayor and Aldermen were very quiet on what had transpired. "There is much speculation as to whether Contractor Leonard will make the deposit by noon...or not. Predictions are freely made both that he will and that he will not."*

**S. S. Leonard failed to provide bond or a cash deposit and lost the city hall contract. The Savannah Contracting Company was the contracting firm that eventually successfully bid on the project and built the city hall building.*

"Council to Allow Cash Deposit." *Savannah Morning News* (10 March 1904) 12:1.

***Leonard Fails to Provide Bond or Deposit
March 10, 1904***

On March 10, 1904, S. S. Leonard failed to meet the extended deadline provided by City Council to put up a \$40,000 cash deposit or \$52,000 surety bond, annulling the award of the contract to him. "Whatever happens, however, in regard to the new building, Contractor Leonard is out of the question." The \$7,500 check put up by Leonard with his initial bid was still held by the City, dependent on the final contract awarded to another contractor; "If the lowest bid is not so low as the bid of Leonard, his check will doubtless be held to make good the deficiency.... In other words, the city is not to lose by his failure to carry out his offer."

The new City Hall is now the all absorbing topic. The entire matter has taken such a peculiar turn that it would take a Philadelphia lawyer to determine just what is what.

After Leonard, the second lowest bid received in the last call was that of the General Supply and Construction Company, of New York. Representatives from this firm as well as those from Grant Wilkins, of Atlanta, traveled to Savannah in the event of Leonard's failure to complete the terms of the contract. The Savannah Contracting Company filed a communication with the Clerk of Council to be read to the aldermen in the event Leonard failed stating, "we are a local contracting company and will use local materials and local labor to the greatest extent possible."

At this time, it seemed certain that another call for bids would occur and the old bids would not be looked at a second time. "There are innumerable companies that are anxious for the contract and are prepared to give any reasonable bond."

"Council to Allow Cash Deposit." *Savannah Morning News* (10 March 1904) 12:1.

"General Supply and Construction Company, New York, to Mayor and Aldermen, Savannah," (8 March 1904). City Council Meeting Papers-Proceedings of Council, Box 0115-001-A285, PRO 88, Folder 824. City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

"Leonard Failed to Put Up Cash." *Savannah Morning News* (11 March 1904) 12:1.

"Savannah Contracting Company to Mayor and Aldermen, Savannah," (10 March 1904). City Council Meeting Papers-Proceedings of Council, Box 0115-001-A285, PRO 88, Folder 824. City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

***Leonard Asks for Money Back
March 11, 1904***

On March 11, 1904, Mayor Myers called a meeting of City Council to discuss several matters including communications from S. S. Leonard and the General Supply and Construction Company, of New York.

Leonard requested the return of his deposit check for \$7,500. No decision was made regarding the check at this meeting. He also made "personal reference to Alderman Oliver in a rather peculiar way." Leonard's letter again complained of the provision allowing material men the right to sue against the bond:

We [Leonard and his attorney] are reliably informed that the original contract...did not contain this stipulation which has been found so objectionable to the Surety Companies, but was inserted at the instances of Aldermen F. M. Oliver, over the objection of the City Attorney, who informed Council that in his opinion he did not believe Mr. Leonard would sign such a contract, and furthermore, did not think he would be able to secure the necessary bond from the Surety Companies, in case this stipulation was inserted.

In their campaign for the contract, the General Supply and Construction Company was worried that public opinion would work against them:

There seems to be an intimation abroad in your city that if the contract for the City Hall be awarded us, it will simply take the business out of this city.... It is the policy of our Company to award all sub-contracts possible to local people.... In the matter of material, your local merchants would always be shown a preference.... In the matter of labor, we would employ more local labor than most of our competitors, as our plans are to buy

Granite, Steel, etc., Savannah deliveries and erect it with Savannah Mechanics. We would use, as much as possible, a local bank to transact our financial matters, and in fact no one could make it a purer local job than we would.... We propose to give you a first class piece of work at a very low margin of profit, and leave practically all the money right here in Savannah.

“There was no doubt that Leonard failed to make good on his bid. The only question was whether to give the contract to the next lowest bidder on the last bids or to advertise for new ones. The majority favored this later course.”

“General Supply and Construction Company to Mayor and Aldermen, Savannah,” (11 March 1904). City Council Meeting Papers- Proceedings of Council, Box 0115-001-A285, PRO 88, Folder 824. City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

“New Bids Again Wanted by City.” *Savannah Morning News* (12 March 1904) 12:3.

Official Proceedings of City Council (11 March 1904) 272. City of Savannah, Clerk of Council’s Office, Savannah, Georgia.

Third Round of Bids Called For March 12, 1904

On March 12, 1904, City Council made its third advertisement for bids for a contractor for the new city hall building. The advertisement in the special notices section included the Resolution of the Committee of the Whole approved in the Council session the day before.

BIDS WANTED...

Resolution by Committee of the Whole:

...sealed bids will be received for the erection of a city hall for the City of Savannah, Ga. in accordance with the revised plans and specifications prepared by H. W. Witcover,...bids will be opened in public at the Mayor’s Office Savannah, Ga. at 12 o’clock noon Saturday Mch 19th 1904.... The right is reserved to reject any or all bids....

“Bids Wanted.” *Savannah Morning News* (12 March 1904) 2:3.

Savannah Contracting Company Awarded Job Despite Bid Confusion March 19, 1904

On March 19, 1904, the third and final round of bids for the job of contractor was opened publicly at noon at the City Exchange. The event proved to be a little controversial and the decision biased in favor of a local firm.

Mr. Grant Wilkins’ bid was the lowest at \$205,500 until the bid of the Savannah Contracting Company was opened. The Savannah concern’s bid was first read by the Mayor as \$205,767, greater than Wilkins’ bid. “In the next breath, however, the mayor, who had been studying the figures, said, ‘I can’t tell whether this figure is a seven or a one.’ A voice from the crowd proclaimed that it was a seven. Immediately the owner of the voice took the statement back, however, and said he had no authority to say what the figure was. Mr. Burgess, representing the Savannah Contracting Company, then announced that the figure was a one. The mayor accepted the statement and read the bid \$205,167.” Mr. Wilkins was upset with the way the confusion was handled and felt the decision should have been made by the Mayor and architect without asking a company representative to interpret the numerals.



Savannah Contracting Company advertisement, 1904.
 "Official Souvenir Programme, Laying of Cornerstone, New City Hall, Savannah, Georgia, August 11th, 1904." Savannah: Daily Record Print, 1904.
 Vertical Files: Savannah-City Hall/City Exchange.
 Bull Street Main Library of the Live Oak Public Libraries, Savannah, Georgia.
Used with permission.

After reading the bids, Council adjourned till 4 o'clock. In a Resolution by the Committee of the Whole, Council awarded the contract to the Savannah Contracting Company for the bid of \$205,167.00 for the Georgia granite proposal, provided the company delivered the required bond to the Mayor by 12 o'clock noon, on Saturday March 26, 1904. The new bid was \$4,628 lower than the Leonard bid previously accepted.

The Savannah Contracting Company:

Is a purely Savannah company. Mr. E. C. Gleason is president and Mr. J. E. Burgess general manager. Mr. Burgess has superintended the construction of many buildings in Savannah. The Savannah Contracting Company has recently been awarded a contract for the construction of the new Sacred Heart church and has just finished a court house for Wilkes county. It is stated by the manager that if the contract is secured Savannah labor will be given the preference in the work and a large amount of the material—in fact, all of it that can be bought in that way—will come through Savannah parties.

"City Hall Bids to be Opened Again." *Savannah Morning News* (18 March 1904) 12:2.

Official Proceedings of City Council (19 March 1904) 285. City of Savannah, Clerk of Council's Office, Savannah, Georgia.

"Savannah Concern May Build the City Hall." *Savannah Evening Press* (19 March 1904) 1:5.

"Savannah Firm to Build Hall." *Savannah Morning News* (20 March 1904) 20:1.

Alderman Dixon Alarms City Exchange March 22, 1904

On March 22, 1904:

Alderman James M. Dixon had every one guessing at the City Exchange.... Wherever Mr. Dixon appeared, what sounded like the ring of an extra large alarm clock could be heard. A gentleman started into the office of the director of public works, while the chairman of Council was there, and as soon as the door was opened, the ringing began.... As the door shut, the ringing ceased. Mr. Dixon then explained. He has a patent burglar alarm, and he was simply giving a few illustrations of how it worked. The alarm is so small that it is not noticed when attached to any door or window. It is easily fixed on any door that needs to be guarded and Mr. Dixon placed it on several doors in various parts of the building without any one noticing it until the door was disturbed.

"Alarming Performance at City Exchange." *Savannah Morning News* (23 March 1904) 12:2.

**Government Moves Out of City Exchange
March 23, 1904**

On March 23, 1904, the City offices began their move from their home of over one-hundred years in the old City Exchange to police headquarters, under the direction of Director of Public Works George M. Gadsden.

The only ceremony, if it can be called such, that marked the surrender of the building by the city authorities was when Mayor Myers, who came to the Exchange for a few minutes at 12 o'clock, prepared to leave. The force of the mayor's office and others from the other offices of the building had gotten wind of what was to happen, headed by Clerk J. Robert Creamer, approached the mayor. Mr. Creamer acted as spokesman. In a speech full of feeling Mr. Creamer told the mayor that it was the wish of all the city employees in bidding him goodbye in the old exchange, that a beneficent Providence would permit them to welcome him again in the new city hall a year hence. The mayor was visibly affected as he responded in a few words, telling them that whether he would come back or not, he was sure that a worthy man will fill the position, and that he hoped they would be back if he was not.



Mayor's office in City Exchange, partitioned off from original "Long Room," 1904.
The Old and the New, Sketch of the Old City Exchange (1799-1904), and the New City Hall, Savannah, Georgia.
 Savannah: Savannah City Council, 1905.
 City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.
 Used with permission.

As the old clock struck noon, the hands were stopped by workmen of John Rourke & Sons who began to dismantle the clock for its move to the Rourke foundry. After the Mayor descended the steps for the last time, the newel post, containing the seal of the State of Georgia, was removed and set aside for the Daughters of the Revolution at their request.

The old building this afternoon is practically dismantled on the interior by the removal of all the furnishing around which so many memories cluster to the old-timers of the city.... Some of those who left today had seen the years of more than a quarter of a century pass away while they labored within and many memories of the years flooded back over them as the moving went on.

The local paper took this opportunity to reflect on some of the "old-timers" who had inhabited the old City Exchange. The longest occupant was Mr. Alvan N. Bell of the City Treasurer's office. Mr. Bell came to the City Exchange in April of 1877, 28 years earlier, as an assistant to Clerk of Council E. A. Silva. City Treasurer Major Hardee had recently celebrated twenty-one years in the building. Mr. J. W. Howard had held the position of Assistant City Engineer eighteen years.

"City Officials Ready to Move." *Savannah Morning News* (22 March 1904) 12:3.

"Bade Mayor Goodby; Hope He Will Return." *Savannah Evening Press* (23 March 1904) 1:1.

***City Treasurer's Safe Moved
March 24, 1904***

On March 24, 1904, the Fidelity and Deposit Company of Maryland issued a surety bond for \$52,000 between the Savannah Contracting Company and the Mayor and Aldermen of the City of Savannah. The contract between the two parties had been drawn up the day before, signed by E. C. Gleason, President of the Savannah Contracting Company, and Herman Myers, Mayor. The agreement was witnessed by J. W. Burgess, secretary of the Savannah Contracting Company, and J. Robert Creamer, Clerk of Council.

Moving of the City's offices was almost complete and Mayor Myers transacted the City's business in his new, temporary office for the first time and "altogether the new quarters are proving very satisfactory." Some aspects of the transition were not as smooth:

The moving of the city treasurer's large safe proved quite a job. It was moved only to the entrance of police headquarters..., after working with it all day. It will be carried the rest of the way [tomorrow].... An effort was first made to pull the safe along the pavement. Two mules were hitched to it, and it was moved for a couple of blocks that way, but the friction on the small wheels under it was so great that the plan had to be abandoned. It was jacked up and placed on rollers. In that way it was carried the rest of the distance, mules furnishing the motive power.

"Bade Mayor Goodby; Hope He Will Return." *Savannah Evening Press* (23 March 1904) 1:1.

Contract and Bond No. 575 (23 March 1904). City Council Meeting Papers-Contracts, Box 0115-002-22.1, CON 7, Folder 44. City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

"New City Offices Not Yet in Order." *Savannah Morning News* (25 March 1904) 12:2.

***City Exchange Building Turned Over to Contractor
March 26, 1904***

On March 26, 1904, the old City Exchange building was turned over to the Savannah Contracting Company at nine o'clock in the morning. The insurance policies on the building were returned and canceled. The City received a rebate, but not as much as at first expected.

Mr. John Rourke took down a small United States flag that he had nailed on the City Exchange a few days earlier. Rourke planned to save the flag and hang it on the new city hall before any other flag was flown from it. "As the last over the old building and the first over the new, the flag will be kept as a relic."*

**It is unknown if Rourke carried out his plan or if this small flag still exists. All attempts by the City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives to locate it failed.*

"Will Demolish Old Exchange This Week." *Savannah Morning News* (28 March 1904) 8:2.

***City Exchange Demolition Begins
March 28, 1904***

On March 28, 1904, the demolition of the old City Exchange began with a force of ten men. Ropes were stretched around the building to keep passers-by out of the way. Work began with the removal of the window blinds, fittings and sashes. The following day, the steeple was removed. The contractor predicted that it would take two to three weeks to tear down the building.

At a meeting of the Building Committee, architect Hyman Witcover received the first installment for his services, \$5,129.17 for preparing the working plans and specifications.

"First Payment Made on New City Hall." *Savannah Morning News* (29 March 1904) 12:3.

"Will Demolish Old Exchange this Week." *Savannah Morning News* (28 March 1904) 8:2.

"Within Fortnight Building Falls." *Savannah Evening Press* (28 March 1904) 1:5.

***City Exchange Only a Shell
April 3, 1904***

On April 3, 1904, the old City Exchange was only “a shell, with windows, doors, steeple and roof all gone.” The razing of the City government’s old home was progressing rapidly and the walls proper began to fall the next day. “The tearing down of the building is no easy task,” and the work crew predicted another ten days before the structure was down to the ground.

“Old City Exchange Not Now Recognizable.” *Savannah Morning News* (3 April 1904) 20:2.

***Merchants Want Bay Street Improved
April 10, 1904***

On April 10, 1904, the *Savannah Morning News* reported that Bay Street merchants were preparing a petition urging City Council to improve the sidewalks fronting their offices and stores between Jefferson and Whitaker streets.

They felt that this time is [was] particularly apropos to bring the matter to the attention of the city, as it would detract from the beauty of the City Hall to have so near it a section of street so badly in need of improvements.

“Bay Street Men Want Street Improved.” *Savannah Morning News* (10 April 1904) 20:2.

***Relic Hunter Offers \$500 for Old Cornerstone
April 11, 1904***

On April 11, 1904, the old City Exchange building had been completely razed down to Bay Street. “The old building, it was found, was not so strong, as had been thought. Much of the timber in the building had decayed and the bricks were not in as good condition as was supposed.” The most modern addition to the building, a vault at the rear of the City Exchange, was proving much harder to demolish, dynamite failing to bring the vault down in the morning.

With attention now focused on the old foundation, speculation began circulating regarding the location and contents of the old cornerstone. “The corner stone was laid more than a hundred years ago. Its contents will probably prove interesting.” At the time, City officials believed the cornerstone would be found in the northeast corner of the building, the traditional location used in Masonic cornerstone laying ceremonies.

The local newspaper announced that an unnamed relic hunter had offered Edward C. Gleason, president of the Savannah Contracting Company, five-hundred dollars (\$500) for the cornerstone of the City Exchange when it was found. According to the contract between the City and the contractor, the Savannah Contracting Company became full owner of the structure when it was vacated by the City. However, Gleason assured the community he would turn over the stone to the City when it was located.

“City Exchange Almost Entirely Torn Down.” *Savannah Morning News* (11 April 1904) 8:1.

“Offered \$500 for the Cornerstone.” *Savannah Evening Press* (11 April 1904) 1:2.

***Witcover Suggests Newspaper Plates
April 12, 1904***

On April 12, 1904, supervising architect Hyman Witcover suggested the placement of newspaper plates in the cornerstone for the new city hall. As anticipation during the search for the old stone mounted, thoughts of the new stone began circulating.

It is customary to place in the corner stone of public buildings a copy of the papers printed on the day that it is laid, but in this case Mr. Witcover desires that instead of putting a copy of the papers in the corner stone, the plate from which the paper is printed, be used, that is that part of the plate on which the article referring to the

*building appears. The reason of this change is that paper becomes discolored and rotten with age, while the plate will never be affected.**

**Despite Witcover's suggestion, paper copies of the newspapers were put in the cornerstone, not the printing plates.*

"Newspaper Plates in Corner Stone." *Savannah Morning News* (12 April 1904) 12:1.

Police Posted to Construction Site to Watch for Cornerstone April 14, 1904

On April 14, 1904, Mayor Myers instructed the Superintendent of Police to post a patrolman at the City Exchange work site during the day to prevent relic hunters from stealing the old cornerstone which had not been found yet.

The efforts in tearing down the old walls were greater than expected, especially the record vaults built by City Engineer Colonel Winn only a few years earlier. The contractor in charge of the demolition work expected to be done in a few days, however the clearing away of the debris and trash would take at least an additional week.

"Old Exchange is Now Almost Down." *Savannah Morning News* (15 April 1904) 12:1.

Recreation Pier Proposed April 15, 1904

On April 15, 1904, Mayor Myers commented on a new proposition circulating with Savannah businessmen. Earlier in the week, a change in location of the new city hall was suggested to allow the now cleared City Exchange site to be maintained as an open space on Bay Street to allow a view of the river.

Since the City Exchange has been demolished, and it is seen what an excellent view of the river can be obtained from the site, these men were of the opinion that it would be a pity to spoil the place by erecting any sort of a building.

The idea of a recreation pier on the spot, extending from the bluff to the edge of the river, was met with the approval of many prominent businessmen, "where not only could the citizens enjoy the view of the water front, but where strangers could get some idea of the fine bluff on which the city is built."

No action was formally taken on the proposal. Myers stated that nothing could come of the suggestion "as the City Hall has been positively decided upon for this site.... The suggestion at this late date rather ill timed."

"Entirely Too Late with Pier Suggestion." *Savannah Morning News* (16 April 1904) 12:2.

"Recreation Pier on City Hall Site." *Savannah Morning News* (15 April 1904) 12:2.

Mayor Against Pier Proposal April 16, 1904

On April 16, 1904, Aldermen Dixon and Garfunkel, and Superintendent of Police Garfunkel suggested to the Mayor that the idea of a new recreation pier could still be pursued, built adjacent to the rear of the new city hall "with a fountain and flowers in the center and a public bath underneath."

The aldermen argued that the city hall building and pier could work together, adding attractiveness and beauty to each other. The pier could be built level with Bay Street, with entrances on either side of the city hall, and run to the new harbor line. "The cost of the pier would not be as great as might at first be supposed, it is argued by the advocates of the plan. It is thought the pier could be constructed for \$50,000. The plan of the two aldermen is to have the city build the pier, if financially able to do so, after the completion of the City Hall."

The new twist on the recreation pier proposition did not meet with the Mayor's favor. "The Mayor thinks the pier would be too expensive, and would not afford any pleasure to any very great number of citizens. He thinks if a pier is to be built it should be put in Emmet Park.... Mr. Myers is not very enthusiastic, however, about a pier." This effectively ended the discussion regarding a recreation pier on or near the site of the new city hall.

"Recreation Pier and Bath, Too." *Savannah Morning News* (17 April 1904) 20:5.

"Throws Cold Water on Recreation Pier." *Savannah Morning News* (19 April 1904) 12:1.

***Search for Cornerstone Still On
April 19, 1904***

On April 19, 1904, the *Savannah Morning News* reported that the search for the old cornerstone was still on despite finding an old English coin among the debris. For awhile "it was supposed that this was an indication that the corner stone had been blown to pieces by dynamite, while the walls were being torn down. The dynamite, however, has not been used where the corner stone was likely to be located, so that theory will have to be abandoned."



Search for City Exchange cornerstone, 1904.
"Does Not Hope to Find Cornerstone," *Savannah Evening Press* (20 April 1904) 3:3.
Used with permission.

With the rear walls of the building leveled to the ground on River Street and still no trace of the stone, officials were puzzled.

There are some who entertain the theory that the stone has already been reached, but has been overlooked by the workmen. The foremen in charge of the work is as much puzzled as anyone else and says the stone may have passed unnoticed.

Mr. Burgess, general manager of the Savannah Contracting Company, believed the cornerstone was still on the site:

Mr. Burgess pooh-poohs the idea that has been advanced that the cornerstone has been stolen during the process of tearing away the old Exchange.... The company has a watchman at the building all the time and a careful watch has been kept for the cornerstone since the building was razed.

During the dismantling of the old foundation the workers and officials discovered that the foundation of the old City Exchange “was built from ballast brought to Savannah in ships from all countries and specimens of rock that are recognized by builders as having come from England, France, Scandinavia and other foreign countries.”

“Corner Stone Not Yet Found in Exchange.” *Savannah Morning News* (19 April 1904) 12:6.

“Does Not Hope to Find Cornerstone.” *Savannah Evening Press* (20 April 1904) 3:3.

“No Cornerstone Can be Found.” *Savannah Morning News* (18 April 1904) 10:5.

Mayor Myers Running for Re-election April 20, 1904

On April 20, 1904, the first campaign button for the upcoming January municipal campaign was seen on the lapel of Harbor Master James McBride. Several thousand buttons were on order to be distributed to supporters of Mayor Myers.

There is no doubt at all that Mayor Myers will be in the race for re-election for another term.... This time he wished to be elected that he may be the first Mayor in the new City Hall. He first suggested the new building and worked hard to make its erection possible.

Contractors on the new building were getting material in preparation to start the actual construction of the new city hall. The Savannah Locomotive Works was in the process of making cast iron braces for the new structure. Several were completed and tested during the afternoon.

“Another Campaign for Mayor Myers.” *Savannah Morning News* (21 April 1904) 12:2.

“Does Not Hope to Find Cornerstone.” *Savannah Evening Press* (20 April 1904) 3:3.

Leonard's Deposit Returned to Backers April 27, 1904

On April 27, 1904, at a regular meeting of City Council, a resolution was passed returning the forfeited money which S. S. Leonard deposited with the City when he was awarded the first contract for the construction of the new city hall. The resolution was introduced by Alderman D. R. Thomas and agreed upon in caucus. Leonard’s certified check of \$7,500 had been deposited in the City treasury when he failed to come up with the necessary surety bond to finalize his contract.

Leonard never received the actual money as it was not his to begin with. In their support of his bid, two prominent Savannah businessmen had put up the money for the deposit. On April 28, 1904, \$5,000 was returned to Alderman J. H. McKenna and \$2,500 returned to Mr. Lawrence McNeill.

“Council Gave Up Leonard Money.” *Savannah Morning News* (28 April 1904) 6:1.

“Leonard to Get Back the Money.” *Savannah Morning News* (18 April 1904) 10:1.

“May Give Leonard Money Back Tonight.” *Savannah Morning News* (27 April 1904) 12:6.

“Others Secured Leonard Money.” *Savannah Morning News* (29 April 1904) 12:1.

“S. S. Leonard to Mayor and Aldermen, Savannah, Georgia,” (n.d., in Council 27 April 1904). City Council Meeting Papers- Proceedings of Council, Box 0115-001-A285, PRO 88, Folder 830. City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

Old Cornerstone Not in Northeast Corner April 29, 1904

On April 29, 1904, the northeast corner of the old City Exchange foundation was dug down to the very bottom in search of the cornerstone laid in 1799. According to all the records, there was definitely a cornerstone in the northeast corner of the building. Mr. John I. Stoddard wrote the City from Washington,

D.C. suggesting that the cornerstone would be found under ground, the very first stone laid during the Exchange's construction, as it had been in the Independent Presbyterian Church.

After three weeks of police supervision, the Superintendent of Police believed:

The search for the corner stone was being drawn out entirely too long, and...requested the Savannah Contracting Company to dig down at the northeast corner...so that the suspense of the police and the officer might at once be removed.

At the end of the day, the cornerstone still eluded Patrolman Scully and the laborers digging. Those who have been watching for weeks now had "about given up hope," though "the search will still be kept up, until the very last of the foundations have been removed."

"No Corner Stone Can be Found." *Savannah Morning News* (30 April 1904) 12:5.

"Will Find Stone Under the Ground." *Savannah Morning News* (22 April 1904) 12:4.

"Will Not Dig for Corner Stone Now." *Savannah Morning News* (23 April 1904) 12:2.

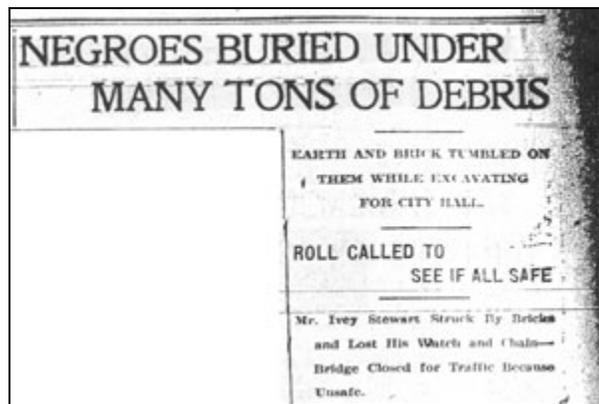
Night Work on City Exchange Demolition May 5, 1904

On May 5, 1904, workmen had just finished their first night of work at the City Exchange site under electric lights. Electric lights were installed to allow crews to work around the clock digging and removing debris. "There is still an immense amount of work to be done before the site will be entirely cleared," and the new city hall structure could be started. While workmen continued to clear away remnants of the old building, the search for the cornerstone continued, so far with no trace.

"Seeking Corner Stone by Electric Lights." *Savannah Morning News* (5 May 1904) 12:3.

Workers Injured in Vault Collapse May 7, 1904

On May 7, 1904, a vault adjoining the city hall work site collapsed, trapping several laborers and endangering the lives of contractors and crew. Three laborers were seriously injured when the shored up dirt walls caved in to the area excavated of the old City Exchange's foundations. Tom Heyward was badly crushed and buried by the mass of stones, dirt and timber; and doctors were initially worried he would not make it. Alexander Spell was unconscious for a long period of time, due to a head injury. Sam Patterson's left arm was broken by a falling brick.



City Hall laborers injured in vault collapse, May 1904.
"Negroes Buried Under Many Tons of Debris," *Savannah Evening Press* (7 May 1904) 1:8.
Used with permission.

Most of the workers escaped with minor cuts and bruises thanks largely in part to the warning of foreman J. T. Sloan who was standing on top of the wall that collapsed and shouted to the workers below. Patrolman Scully, still on the lookout for the old cornerstone, saw the disaster from Factors' Walk and was able to warn several workers. Ivey Stewart, the son of the contractor in charge of the demolition work, was knocked down and lost his watch and chain. "All of the workmen were badly frightened."

Patrolman Scully called policeman Haliford on Bay and Bull streets who then called for an ambulance from police headquarters. The ambulance took the three seriously injured workers home where they were attended to by Dr. George M. Norton. By the following evening, Dr. Norton announced that the recovery of all was likely and none would die from the accident.

After the accident, work for the day was suspended and precautions were taken to prevent more collapses. The walls of the vault next to one that had fallen were secured and the first bridge across Bay Street to Factors' Walk was determined unsafe and closed by Director of Public Works Gadsden. The collapse was a setback for the contractors who were getting prepared to lay the new foundation.

The caving in of the walls and embankment was caused by the removal of the big outside wall. This wall, which was in the path that formerly led down on the side of the Exchange had been removed. It was a very thick wall, and was able to stand the pressure the other walls put upon it. The adjoining wall, the one to the first vault, was not strong enough to stand this pressure. The sand, which the vaults were built upon is ocean sand and likely to shift.... The shifting of the sand is supposed to have caused the wall to collapse.

"Injured Laborers Getting Along Well." *Savannah Morning News* (9 May 1904) 8:5.

"Negroes Buried Under Many Tons of Debris." *Savannah Evening Press* (7 May 1904) 1:8.

"Wall Collapsed on Laborers." *Savannah Morning News* (8 May 1904) 20:3.

Plumbing Contract to Go Out of Town May 9, 1904

On May 9, 1904, the *Savannah Morning News* announced that the plumbing contract for the new city hall building would probably go to the lowest bidder, an out-of-town firm. On May 7, 1904, the Building Committee had met and discussed the sub-contract for the plumbing in great detail.

An out-of-town firm has underbid the Savannah firm on the plumbing for the building, it is understood, and the question of local versus out-of-town labor arises. The committee, of course, favors the local firms, if the work can be done as reasonably by them, but in one instance an Atlanta firm has underbid the Savannah firm \$1,000 in a \$10,000 contract.

No decision was made regarding the contract at this meeting as "it is [was] not thought the Council committee can interfere with the awarding of the contract by the contracting firm that is putting up the building, unless the difference in the price should be made good."

All of the sub-contracts were awarded by the Savannah Contracting Company as per their contract with the City. However, the head contractor had "agreed to award all sub-contracts to Savannah people, if everything was the same. In this case, however, the city officials do not feel like forcing the higher contract on the company."

"Building Committee Postponed Decision." *Savannah Morning News* (8 May 1904) 20:2.

"A Nut to Crack for Committee." *Savannah Morning News* (7 May 1904) 12:1.

"Plumbing Contract to Go Out of Town." *Savannah Morning News* (9 May 1904) 8:2.

***Walking Canes Made from Exchange Banister
May 11, 1904***

On May 11, 1904, at the conclusion of the regular City Council meeting, Alderman Oliver thanked Mayor Myers for the walking canes recently presented to the members of City Council. The canes were made from the spindles of the old stair banister of the demolished City Exchange. On behalf of all of the aldermen, “Alderman Oliver spoke of the close association of the exchange with the history of the city. He said the possession of one of the sticks should make all the aldermen work harder for the welfare of Savannah.”

“Council Thanked Mayor for Walking Canes.” *Savannah Morning News* (12 May 1904) 12:2.

***City Hall Foundations Started
May 18, 1904***

On May 18, 1904, work on the new city hall building officially began with the laying of the beginning of the foundations on the northern and eastern sides of the site. After the noonday rest hour, workmen began on the north side of the building. By the end of the day, eight to ten feet was finished on the north side and six to eight feet was complete on the east side.

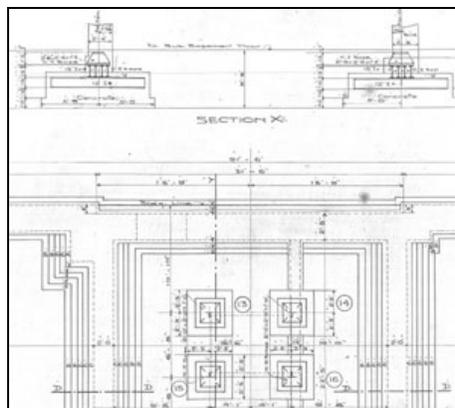
Until the one wall is level with the excavation the work will necessarily be slow, as the sand shifts rapidly. The great trouble in getting the foundations started has been in keeping the sand out of the way. As fast as one portion of it is moved another shifts in its place. Even where the trenches for the foundation have been planked in on either side, the sand slips in and they have to be leveled out just before the cement is dumped in.

Supervising architect Hyman Witcover was on hand to see the new phase of work get started, “Heretofore we have just been preparing to get to work, but from now on the work will be on the City Hall.”

The new foundations were first laid in a mixture of cement, sand and small stones, recycled from the old building and put through a crusher. It would take over a week for this mixture to completely harden. The preparation of the mixture was carefully supervised by Contractor Stewart, sub-contractor for the foundations, so that only quality materials were used. After the first few layers of the concrete mixture, iron reinforcements would also be used. All of the iron, some of the steel, and several carloads of brick for the construction had already arrived on site and were just waiting until they were needed.

“New City Hall Has Been Begun.” *Savannah Morning News* (19 May 1904) 12:1.

***Foundation Work Progresses
May 25, 1904***



Plans and cross-section of City Hall's steel and concrete foundations, drawn by Hyman W. Witcover, c.1904.
City of Savannah, Engineering Department Retrospective Plans & Designs, City Hall, Drawing 24.23.
City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.
Used with permission.

On May 25, 1904, Mayor Myers instructed the contractors to rebuild the old vault that had recently collapsed injuring several laborers. The work on the new foundations was progressing quickly with a portion of the northern, and all of the eastern side already laid level with the excavation surface. "The dirt has to be moved from one side of the lot to the other as the work progresses. It is being piled on the western side now, but will be moved back to the eastern side as soon as the wall has been built sufficiently high to retain it."

"Work on City Hall Progressing Rapidly." *Savannah Morning News* (25 May 1904) 12:2.

***Petition Against Negro Foreman
June 8, 1904***

On June 8, 1904, at an afternoon meeting of the City Council, a petition was received from "sundry citizens protesting against the employment of a negro as head foreman on the new City Hall." The Mayor and Aldermen did not respond to the petition after it was read, referring it to the Committee of the Whole. Apparently no action was ever taken in response to the petition and it was merely received as information since no other mention of it appeared in the Council minutes or the local newspapers.

"Labor Petition Was Sent to Committee." *Savannah Evening Press* (9 June 1904) 8:3.

Official Proceedings of City Council (8 Jun 1904) 348. City of Savannah, Clerk of Council's Office, Savannah, Georgia.

***First Granite Blocks Laid
June 20, 1904***

On June 20, 1904, the first granite was laid for the new city hall building. The work on the foundations proved to be very difficult due to the repeated shifting of the sand. Once that was completed, a great deal of brick work was done in preparation for the granite. By the end of the day, fifteen or twenty feet of the Georgia granite had been laid at the northeast corner of the building. The new construction started at this corner to ensure that it would be progressed far enough for the laying of the new cornerstone.

"First Granite Laid on the City Hall." *Savannah Morning News* (21 June 1904) 12:5.

***Savannah Contracting Company Erects Fence Around Site
June 22, 1904***

On June 22, 1904, the Committee on Streets and Lanes submitted their report to Council regarding a petition of the Savannah Contracting Company to erect a fence around the new city hall building site. The petition was originally presented at the June 8th meeting and referred to the above committee with power to act. R. J. Davant, chairman of the Committee on Streets and Lanes, told Council that permission had been given and the fence was already being installed.

However, at this City Council meeting, Davant recommitted the report for further consideration after there seemed to be some doubt among the other aldermen regarding the suitability of the fence.

Alderman Davant...said the question had been discussed at length in the Committee of the Whole before the application was referred to his committee. He presumed the aldermen all knew that the fence was to be used for advertising purposes, as the matter was talked about in caucus. As the matter was referred to his committee with the power to act, he had granted the permission. He had not specified how high the fence could be.

Work on the fence on the east side has been stopped. Some of the aldermen did not approve of advertising on the fence, while others appeared to be worried about the laying of the corner stone, it being suggested that the fence might interfere with the ceremonies there.

By the July 20th Council meeting, the matter had been straightened out and the fence had been completed around the site.

"City Exchange Fence Up Before Council." *Savannah Morning News* (23 June 1904) 12:2.

Official Proceedings of City Council (8 Jun 1904) 348; (22 Jun 1904) 357; (20 July 1904) 374. City of Savannah, Clerk of Council's Office, Savannah, Georgia.

***First Payment to Contractor
July 2, 1904***

On July 2, 1904, the first payment on the new city hall to the Savannah Contracting Company was made by the City Treasurer for \$5,260. The City planned to stay considerably behind on their payments until the work was completely finished and accepted by the Building Committee.

"First Payment Made on City Hall." *Savannah Morning News* (3 July 1904) 20:4.

***City Exchange Cornerstone Found
July 13, 1904***

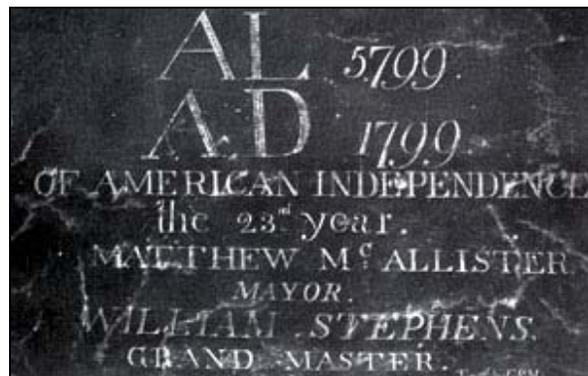
On July 13, 1904, the cornerstone of the old City Exchange building was finally found. Workers and the public had long ago given up any hope of finding the stone, especially as construction had begun on the new city hall building on the same site. In the morning, Bill Davis, "one of the negro laborers on the new building," accidentally found the cornerstone and two 1798 pennies while digging on the western side of the building. His pick struck the copper plate attached with cement to the cornerstone, pulling it away. After calling sub-contractor A. P. Stewart over, the items were put back and dirt thrown over the hole. Architect Witcover and Mayor Myers were contacted and arrangements were made to unearth the stone at 6 o'clock in the evening.

At the hour named, Mayor Myers, Mr. Witcover, Superintendent of Police Garfunkel, Detective Murphy and a uniformed man to keep the crowd back, Mr. Stewart, the contractor, Mr. Burgess, of the Savannah Contracting Company, and a representative of the Morning News, met to excavate the stone.

...It was then thought that there were other objects in the stone, and the cement was broken away with a pick. Nothing was found, however, when the cement had been removed. Some time was spent in examining the pennies and the plate.

A different head was used in those days on money from the one now seen on United States coins, a head that is not as pretty as the one now in use. The pennies are large, as big as a half dollar. On one side of the head the word 'Liberty' is engraved, and beneath it the date, '1798.' On the reverse side, 'One Cent' is marked in rather large letters and '1-100 Dol.' also.

Copper plate from the City Exchange cornerstone, 1904.
*The Old and the New, Sketch of the Old City Exchange (1799-1904),
and the New City Hall, Savannah, Georgia.*
Savannah: Savannah City Council, 1905.
City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives,
Savannah, Georgia.
Used with permission.



The following day, Witcover placed the copper plate and coins on exhibit in Theus' store window at Bull and Broughton streets for the public to view. The plate was 4 ½ by 6 inches with hand engraving. The cornerstone itself was 10 by 10 by 32 inches:

And is the only stone found in the old building which had been carved. At a glance no one would have ever taken it for the corner stone had it not been for the plate. Beneath the plate there was a hole carved out in the stone only 1 ½ inches deep, 4 inches wide and 5 inches long. This had been filled with cement and the plate stuck on the cement, while still wet.

The Building Committee decided the old copper plate would be placed over the door of the Council Chamber in the new building.* Mayor Myers presented contractor Stewart with one of the coins and the other was kept by Myers at the insistence of others.

**This plate is now in the artifact collection of the Georgia Historical Society, located in Hodgson Hall, 501 Whitaker Street, Savannah, Georgia.*

"City Exchange Corner Stone." *Savannah Morning News* (14 July 1904) 12:1.

"Corner Stone Plate for Council Chamber." *Savannah Morning News* (16 July 1904) 10:1.

"To Put Old Plate in the New Cornerstone." *Savannah Evening Press* (14 July 1904) 1:5.

Old Elm Cut Down July 14, 1904

On July 14, 1904, Chairman P. D. Daffin of the Park and Tree Commission ordered the old elm tree cut down from the front of the city hall work site after a water main had broken the night before. A three-inch main, which had led to the old Exchange building, burst around 7 o'clock and flooded part of the building site. Water pressure had to be cut off for part of the night and many houses were without water on the upper floors. Mayor Myers and officials viewed the scene in the morning and decided to ask Daffin to cut down the elm.

With regret [Daffin] consented to the sacrifice of the handsome elm tree that stood for many years in front of the old City Exchange and which it was hoped would remain as an ornament in front of the new city hall.

...The elm tree which is to come down is one of the finest specimens of that species in the city. It is too close to the excavation for safety, however, and must fall before the demand for a finer and more substantial municipal home.

"City Exchange Elm to Fall Under Ax." *Savannah Evening Press* (14 July 1904) 3:3.

Items for New Cornerstone Sought July 29, 1904

On July 29, 1904, the *Savannah Morning News* reported that work on the new cornerstone for the city hall had been started on July 13th. "The stone will be of Georgia granite, a block three and a half by three feet. The block is already on the site and is being carved out. It will be highly polished." The committee charged with the responsibility of laying the new stone decided to mark it simply with the year "1904."* In addition, a marble tablet would be placed inside the building with complete data regarding its construction, including the Building Committee members, architect, when the building was started and when it was completed.

The newspaper announced that anyone wishing to submit an item for the new cornerstone could send it to Secretary Gamble at the Mayor's office. Due to space limitations (a hole of only 10 by 10 by 18 inches would be carved inside the stone), only the most suitable artifacts would be placed inside, and the rest would be returned to their owner.

**The Masonic year was also carved onto the eastern face of the cornerstone at the last minute.*

"City Hall Corner Stone is Now on Hand." *Savannah Morning News* (13 July 1904) 12:1.

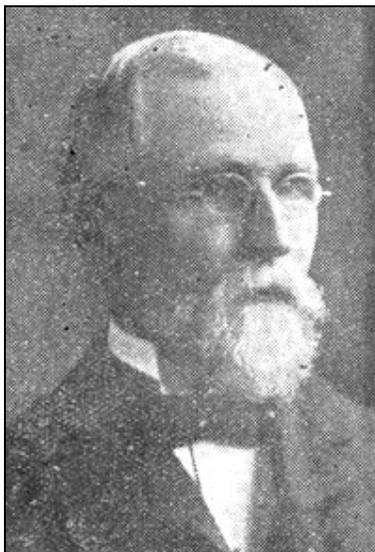
"Only Date Will Mark Corner Stone." *Savannah Morning News* (30 July 1904) 10:2.

***Cornerstone Laying Ceremony (Part I of V): Planning & Preparations
August 11, 1904***

On August 11, 1904, the City of Savannah laid the cornerstone of the new city hall building on Bay Street in an elaborate and exciting program. The cornerstone laying ceremony was held in conjunction with the Georgia League of Municipalities' annual meeting in Savannah, allowing the Mayor and Aldermen to combine the two events into a three-day affair complete with military parade, automobile tour, and a traditional Masonic ceremony. An undertaking such as this required weeks of planning and coordination between the City, the League and the city hall contractors.

On May 25, 1904, Savannah City Council passed a resolution establishing a five-member committee, appointed and chaired by the Mayor, to arrange a suitable program for the cornerstone laying. Three days later, Mayor Myers announced the additional committee members, Aldermen Oliver, Harman, Grayson and Garfunkel. The new committee immediately starting planning out a schedule to coincide with the August League meeting.

During the first week of June, the local newspaper printed a proposed schedule and indicated that Governor J. M. Terrell, Senator A. S. Clay, and General Barry, commander of the Department of the Gulf, would be invited to participate in the affair. On June 9, 1904, invitations were sent to distinguished Georgians in the name of the Mayor and Aldermen. Both Terrell and Clay were asked to make addresses at the ceremony.



Alderman D. R. Thomas, chairman of the Cornerstone Committee, 1904.

"Official Souvenir Programme, Laying of Cornerstone, New City Hall, Savannah, Georgia, August 11th, 1904." Savannah: Daily Record Print, 1904.
Vertical Files: Savannah-City Hall/City Exchange.

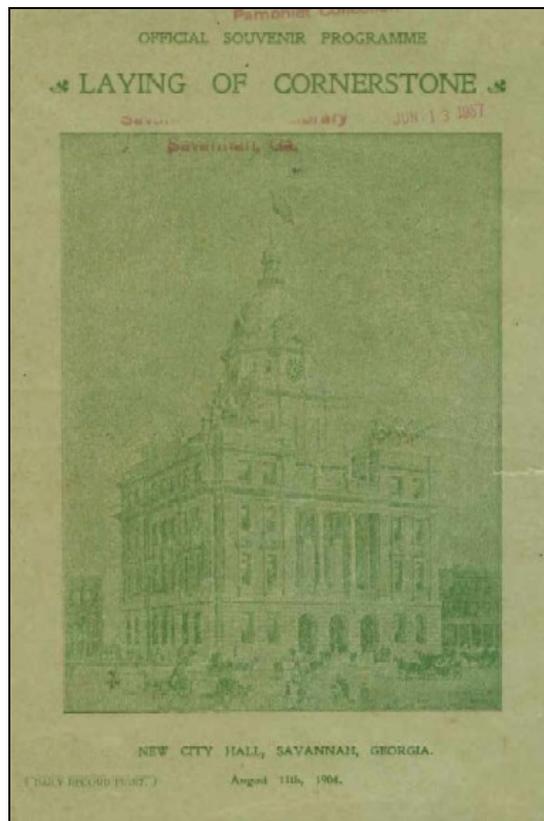
Bull Street Main Library of the Live Oak Public Libraries, Savannah, Georgia
Used with permission.

With so much work to do in a little over two months, sub-committees were appointed in mid-June to help with the preparations, including Reception, Automobile, Casino Supper and Entertainment, Military and Civic Parade, Cornerstone, and Railroad Rates. The cornerstone committee, comprised of Aldermen Thomas, Glatigny and Canty, was charged with the actual cornerstone laying ceremony to take place on the building site. Mayor Myers and Mr. Thomas Gamble were asked to prepare and publish a suitable program commemorating the event for distribution.

On August 8, 1904, following a resolution passed by City Council, Mayor Myers declared a half-holiday for the afternoon of the cornerstone laying ceremony.

In view of the importance to the citizens of Savannah of the erection of the new City Hall, and the general interest felt in the ceremonies connected with the laying of its corner stone on the afternoon of Aug. 11,...the Mayor be and he is hereby directed to order the closing of all municipal offices on that day at 2 p.m. and to issue a proclamation requesting the business houses of Savannah to close their offices, stores, etc., on that afternoon to enable their employees to witness the ceremonies and to permit those who are connected with the military or civic societies to participate in the parade in celebration of the occasion.

It is thought that nearly all of the business houses of the city will comply with the Mayor's request.... The laying of the corner stone will mark an era of progress in Savannah, one that will be referred to for years to come.



Cornerstone laying ceremony program cover, August 1904.
 "Official Souvenir Programme, Laying of Cornerstone, New City Hall, Savannah, Georgia, August 11th, 1904." Savannah: Daily Record Print, 1904.
 Vertical Files: Savannah-City Hall/City Exchange.
 Bull Street Main Library of the Live Oak Public Libraries, Savannah, Georgia
Used with permission.

"Appointed Corner Stone Committee." *Savannah Morning News* (26 May 1904) 12:4.

"Elaborate Plan for Celebration." *Savannah Morning News* (17 June 1904) 12:3.

"Half Holiday Proclaimed." *Savannah Morning News* (9 August 1904) 10:3.

"Half Holiday to be Proclaimed." *Savannah Morning News* (4 August 1904) 4:1.

"Invited Here as City's Guests." *Savannah Morning News* (10 June 1904) 12:5.

“Lay Corner Stone in August.” *Savannah Morning News* (24 May 1904) 12:1.

“Mayor has Announced Corner Stone Committee.” *Savannah Morning News* (29 May 1904) 20:4.

“Mayor Planning for Laying Corner Stone.” *Savannah Morning News* (21 May 1904) 12:3.

“Military and Civic Display.” *Savannah Morning News* (8 June 1904) 12:1.

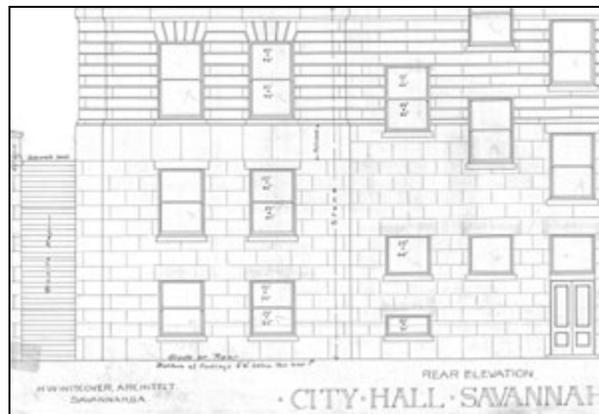
“New Corner Stone Now Being Considered.” *Savannah Morning News* (20 May 1904) 12:2.

Official Proceedings of City Council (25 May 1904) 342; (3 August 1904) 406. City of Savannah, Clerk of Council’s Office, Savannah, Georgia.

“Programme Committee Will Meet Shortly.” *Savannah Morning News* (27 June 1904) 8:2.

***Cornerstone Laying Ceremony (Part II of V): Building Site Preparations
August 11, 1904***

On August 11, 1904, the City of Savannah laid the cornerstone of the new city hall building on the former site of the old City Exchange on Bay Street marking a significant milestone in the construction of the new building. The City Exchange building was razed and its foundations excavated before the new city hall building’s foundations were laid. The sandy soil of the site made this work difficult, but finally laborers were able to start laying the blocks of Georgia granite which became the exterior walls of the ground levels. These walls had to be brought up to the Bay Street level in time to lay the cornerstone at the northeast corner of the Bay Street story.



Rear elevation of City Hall showing location of cornerstone at the top of the second story level with Bay Street, adjacent to the top of the steps, drawn by Hyman W. Witcover, c.1904. City of Savannah, Engineering Department Retrospective Plans & Designs, City Hall, Drawing 24.45. City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia. Used with permission.

On June 16, 1904, City Council agreed to erect a large stand on the building site to accommodate special guests at the ceremony. A month later, they were hoping to lay planks across the walls of the building for seating.

It is hoped that the walls will be high enough by the time the corner stone is laid to be level with Bay street, so that an immense platform, with a seating capacity of 1,200 may be constructed merely by laying planks across the walls. The walls on the eastern side of the building, where the corner stone is to be placed, will be high enough by then, but there is great doubt as to the western walls being ready, as they have not even been started.

By August 5th, this plan was abandoned due to the current state of the building. Instead, two stands were erected, one on the building near the cornerstone for those taking part in the ceremony, the other next to the building for invited guests. The building of the stands, to accommodate at least 500 people, was left up to Alderman Thomas and contractor Stewart. On August 8, 1904, the site was measured off and the material for the stands ordered. The stands took a couple of days to complete while the rest of the labor force continued to work on the western side of the building up until the afternoon of the ceremony.

The large fence surrounding the work site was partially removed from the eastern and southern sides. Several piles of dirt, including a large one on Bay Street, were moved off site for the ceremony. Unfortunately, the earth had to be saved and returned to the building site afterwards to fill in around the building when it was completed.

“Big Platform to be Erected.” *Savannah Morning News* (13 July 1904) 12:5.

“Corner Stone is Finished.” *Savannah Morning News* (5 August 1904) 12:3.

“Eight Hundred will be Seated.” *Savannah Morning News* (8 August 1904) 8:1.

“Will Arrange to Entertain Visitors.” *Savannah Morning News* (7 June 1904) 12:4.

Cornerstone Laying Ceremony (Part III of V): Masonic Ceremony August 11, 1904

On August 11, 1904, thousands* of spectators crowded Bay Street, between Drayton and Whitaker streets, Factors’ Walk, windows and balconies, steps of the Customs House, and nearby rooftops to catch a glimpse of the laying of the cornerstone of the new city hall building.

The buildings on either side of the street, and the bridges and walks along the Bay formed an immense amphitheater, with the platform and the corner stone in the center. The gently waving flags, the white dresses of the ladies, the yellow uniforms of the regulars, the blue and gray of the other companies, the glitter of sunshine on sword and saber and Masonic emblems, all blended to make an animated picture of remarkable beauty and interest.



Laying of the City Hall cornerstone, August 11, 1904.
VM 1361PH Georgia Historical Society Photograph Collection, Box 4, Folder 2, Item 586.
Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, Georgia
Used with permission.

The traditional Masonic laying of the cornerstone began with a processional of Masons including "...a past master with a golden vessel containing corn, principal architect with square, level, and plumb, two past masters with silver vessels, one containing wine and the other oil,...grand chaplain, clergy and orator, grand wardens, deputy grand master, the master of Solomon's lodge carrying the book of constitutions on a velvet cushion,...[and the] grand master."

Grand Master Max Meyerhardt presided over the ceremonies opened by Acting Grand Chaplain C. H. Strong with a prayer and a quartet singing "America." The cornerstone was lowered into position by supervising architect Hyman W. Witcover.

Acting Grand Architect H. W. Witcover examined the stone and reported to the grand master. Acting Grand Treasurer B. F. Finney placed in the box the articles that had been selected to be put in the corner stone and with the invocations of the grand master that ages and ages might pass before those articles would be again seen by man, the box was sealed.



Grand Master Max Meyerhardt, 1904.
"Official Souvenir Programme, Laying of Cornerstone, New City Hall, Savannah, Georgia, August 11th, 1904." Savannah: Daily Record Print, 1904.
Vertical Files: Savannah-City Hall/City Exchange.
Bull Street Main Library of the Live Oak Public Libraries, Savannah, Georgia.
Used with permission.

Meyerhardt then announced, "I have tried this stone by plumb, square and level, and pronounce it to be well formed, true and trusty." The gold and silver vessels were brought forward and the corn, wine and oil were poured over the cornerstone with the Grand Master stating,

May the all-bounteous Author of nature bless the inhabitants of this place with all the necessities, conveniences and comforts of life; assist in the erection and completion of this building; protect the workmen against every accident, and long preserve this structure from decay; and grant to us all, a supply of the corn of nourishment, the wine of refreshment, and the oil of joy.

* *The crowd was estimated between 12,000 and 20,000.*

"Masonic Ceremony at Laying of Cornerstone." *Savannah Evening Press* (11 August 1904) 2:4.

"Thousands Assembled for Corner Stone Laying." *Savannah Morning News* (12 August 1904) 6:1.

***Cornerstone Laying Ceremony (Part IV of V): Parade & Special Speakers
August 11, 1904***

On August 11, 1904, the City of Savannah laid the cornerstone of the new city hall. The traditional Masonic ceremony was preceded by a military and civic parade from Forsyth Park Extension to Bay and Bull streets.



Parade Marshal General William Washington Gordon, n.d.
Juliette Gordon Low Birthplace, Savannah, Georgia.
Used with permission.

The parade, of about 2,000 men, formed in the Forsyth Park Extension and included: the Fort Moultrie band from Sullivan's Island; the Middleton's band; the Savannah Cadets; the Naval Reserves; the Chatham Artillery with mounted guns; the Georgia Hussars; the Knights of Pythias; the Odd Fellows; the Junior Order; the Patriotic Order Sons of America; the German Friendly Aid Society; and the United Confederate Veterans.

Led by General W. W. Gordon, parade marshal, and Colonel Anderson, commander of Fort Screven, the procession left the park at 4:20 in the afternoon and passed the balcony of the De Soto Hotel in review before the visiting mayors in town for the Georgia League of Municipalities convention. Over sixty officials attended the event from over forty-nine Georgia cities. After the parade passed, the visiting mayors fell in line behind the veterans and marched with them to the site of the new city hall for the cornerstone laying ceremony.

Following the Masonic cornerstone ceremony, City Council invited Grand Master Max Meyerhardt, of Rome, and Senator A. S. Clay to address the audience. Meyerhardt outlined the history and achievements of Masonry in Georgia, stressing that it began right here in Savannah in 1735 with the chartering of Solomon's Lodge by Lord Viscount Weymouth, Grand Master of Masons in England. The Masons participation in the ceremony was important since the Grand Lodge of Georgia also laid the cornerstone of the City Exchange on the same spot along the river bluff on June 4, 1799.



Senator A. S. Clay, keynote speaker for City Hall cornerstone laying ceremony, August 11, 1904.
"Official Souvenir Programme, Laying of Cornerstone, New City Hall, Savannah, Georgia, August 11th, 1904." Savannah: Daily Record Print, 1904.
Vertical Files: Savannah-City Hall/City Exchange.
Bull Street Main Library of the Live Oak Public Libraries, Savannah, Georgia.
Used with permission.

Senator Clay choose to reflect on the growth and progress of the City of Savannah. The following excerpts highlight Senator Clay's speech:

This day and this occasion is an important period in the history of Savannah, and it is an occasion that should fill our souls with pride and patriotic emotion....

The people of Savannah who have made her one of the first cities of the South know why this magnificent structure... has become a matter of necessity. When the present City Hall [City Exchange] was erected Savannah had a population of not quite 5,000 souls.... You now have reached a population of, I dare say, 70,000 people....

Your wide-awake and progressive Mayor, and other city officials have done well and deserve credit for planning and constructing this magnificent building for the preservation of your records and for the dwelling place for your city officials for a century to come....

This splendid work, when completed, will be an imperishable monument to the wisdom of your city officials....

Teach your sons that none can make this City Hall their official home except those who understand and seek diligently to advance the public good....

When Savannah speaks, Georgia always listens, because when she speaks she always has something to say. When Savannah leads, Georgia has always been willing to follow, because Savannah is worthy to lead any great cause. God bless the citizens of Savannah in all of their worthy aspirations.

"Eloquent Address Delivered by United States Senator Clay." *Savannah Morning News* (12 August 1904) 6:1.

"Forty-nine Cities are Represented." *Savannah Morning News* (11 August 1904) 6:7.

"Grand Master Here." *Savannah Morning News* (10 August 1904) 6:1.

"Letters of Acceptance Received by Mayor." *Savannah Morning News* (10 July 1904) 20:3.

"Masonry's History and Achievements in Georgia." *Savannah Morning News* (12 August 1904) 6:4.

"Senator Clay to Arrive this Morning." *Savannah Morning News* (10 August 1904) 6:1.

"Splendid Parade Started at Park." *Savannah Morning News* (12 August 1904) 6:7.

"Will Have Five Bands in Parade." *Savannah Morning News* (3 August 1904) 12:2.

***Cornerstone Laying Ceremony (Part V of V): Cornerstone Description and Contents
August 11, 1904***

On August 11, 1904, the cornerstone for the new city hall building was laid by City officials. The cornerstone was carved and polished out of the same Georgia granite used on the Bay Street story. The stone was originally simply carved with "1904," so the date would stand out prominently from a distance. However, at the last minute the Masonic year "5904" and compass were carved onto the lower right corner of the eastern face of the stone.* A box was placed inside the cornerstone with a variety of artifacts and documents commemorating the event and the history of Savannah. An engraved plate was placed on top of the cornerstone providing additional information on the building. On August 12th, the *Savannah Evening Press* published a facsimile of the engraved plate.

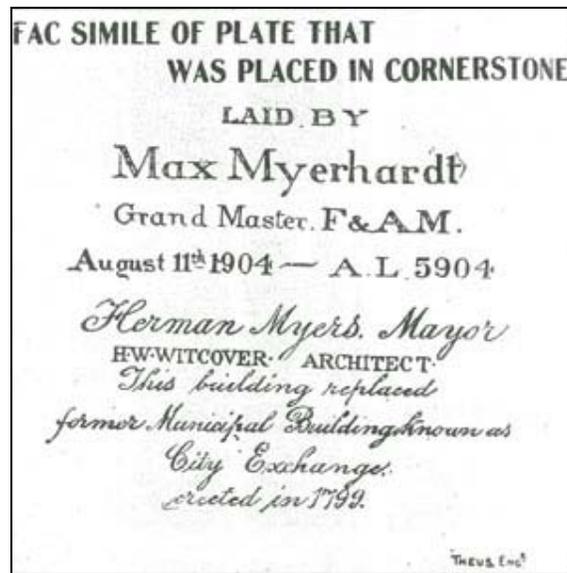


Illustration of engraved plate buried with the City Hall cornerstone, 1904.
"Fac Simile of Plate that was Placed in Cornerstone," *Savannah Evening Press* (12 August 1904) 1:3
Used with permission.

Over thirty articles were placed inside the cornerstone as it became a time capsule of the Savannah of 1904, including:

- 1903 Municipal Report for the City of Savannah
- City Code of Savannah
- A History of the City Government of Savannah*
- Rules of the City Council of Savannah
- Copy of the Declaration of Independence
- Photograph of the City Exchange
- Photograph of City Council meeting in the City Exchange
- Photograph of the British steamship *Saint Andrew*, on which was shipped from Savannah, the world's record cotton cargo
- Photograph of the automobile parade of August 10, 1904
- Copies of the *Savannah Evening Press* of August 6 and August 10, 1904
- Copy of the *Savannah Morning News* of August 11, 1904
- Address of the League of Georgia Municipalities signed by members at the convention on August 11, 1904
- United States stamps in denominations of one to fifteen cents
- Series of United States stamps commemorating the St. Louis Exposition
- All coins of the United States from one cent to one dollar
- Old coins from City Exchange cornerstone
- Official program of the cornerstone laying ceremony

On August 13, 1904, Mayor Myers received an old French coin, dated 1749, from a lady in New Jersey who desired it placed in the cornerstone. Since it arrived too late, the Mayor returned it to its owner.



Daily Record Company's advertisement in the cornerstone program, 1904.
"Official Souvenir Programme, Laying of Cornerstone, New City Hall, Savannah, Georgia, August 11th, 1904." Savannah: Daily Record Print, 1904.
Vertical Files: Savannah-City Hall/City Exchange.
Bull Street Main Library of the Live Oak Public Libraries, Savannah, Georgia.
Used with permission.

**On August 5, 1904, Mayor Myers learned that it was customary to place the Masonic year on the cornerstone in addition to the regular year. The Committee of the Whole met on August 6, 1904 and decided to add 5904 to the stone in honor of the Year of Light, according to the Masonic calendar.*

"Coin Came Too Late for Corner Stone." *Savannah Morning News* (14 August 1904) 20:3.

"Corner Stone is Finished." *Savannah Morning News* (5 August 1904) 12:3.

"Council to Arrange Plans." *Savannah Morning News* (6 August 1904) 12:3.

"Facsimile of Plate that was Placed in Cornerstone." *Savannah Evening Press* (12 August 1904) 1:3.

Gamble, Thomas, Jr. The Old and The New, Sketch of the Old City Exchange (1799-1904) and the New City Hall, Savannah, Georgia. *Report of Hon. Herman Myers, Mayor...of the City of Savannah, Ga., Year Ending December 31st 1905....* Savannah, Ga.: Braid & Hutton, 1905. pp. Appendix, 6, 19-20.

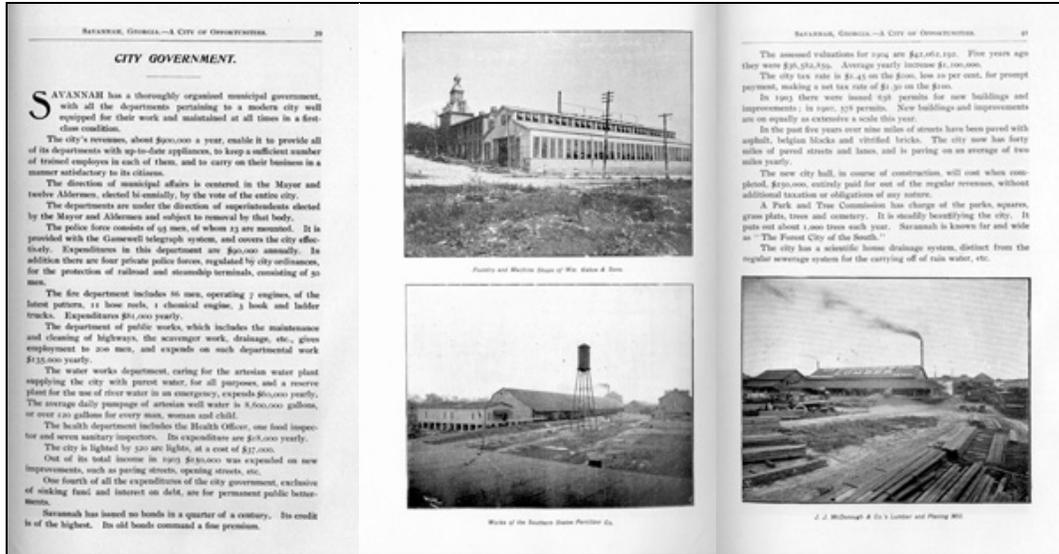
"List of Articles Put in Corner Stone." *Savannah Morning News* (12 August 1904) 6:7.

Secretary Gamble Writing Booklet for St. Louis Exposition August 12, 1904

On August 12, 1904, Mr. R. M. Martin, in charge of the Georgia exhibit at the St. Louis Exposition, met with Mayor Myers asking him to distribute literature describing the city at the fair. Martin told the Mayor that Savannah had the best exhibit of all the cities in the state, but many of them were giving away attractive literature to publicize their communities.

Myers asked Secretary Thomas Gamble to begin at once on a booklet for distribution. At the next Council meeting, Myers asked the aldermen to appropriate money for the booklet's publication.

Within a week, Gamble was preparing a pamphlet that would include a rehash of articles containing "nothing new to Savannahians,...but to those not familiar with the area the pamphlet will be a valuable one. It will probably do a great deal of good.... Savannah undoubtedly offers good investments at present."



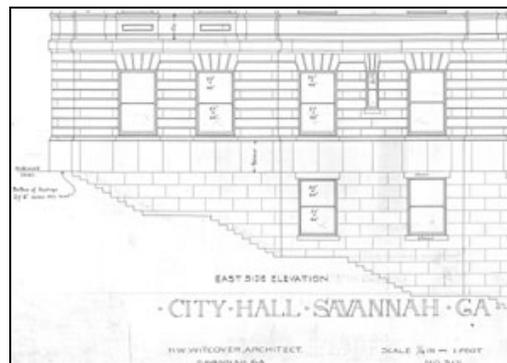
Article written by Secretary Thomas Gamble on Savannah's City government for the new pamphlet, 1904. Thomas Gamble, Jr. "Savannah, A City of Opportunities." Savannah: City Council of Savannah, Georgia, 1904. Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, Georgia. Used with permission.

"Savannah Will Send Literature to Fair." *Savannah Morning News* (13 August 1904) 10:6.

"Work on Pamphlet has been Started." *Savannah Morning News* (19 August 1904) 10:1.

Granite Walls Level with Bay Street August 26, 1904

On August 26, 1904, the *Savannah Morning News* reported that the new city hall would be level with Bay Street by the end of the week. The entire eastern half of the building had been finished to this point before the cornerstone was laid on August 11th and work was now concentrated on the western half. The steel work was being installed simultaneously and no more would be put in until the first story above Bay Street was complete. Most of the Georgia granite for this level had already been cut and would soon be installed.



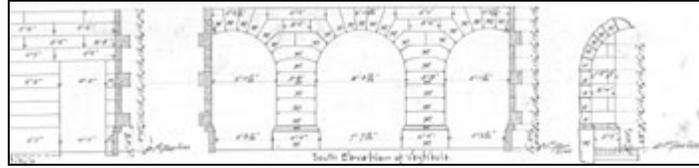
East elevation of City Hall showing granite walls on basement and Bay Street levels, drawn by Hyman W. Witcover, c. 1904. City of Savannah, Engineering Department Retrospective Plans & Designs, City Hall, Drawing 24.47. City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia. Used with permission.

"City Hall Work is Advancing Rapidly." *Savannah Morning News* (20 August 1904) 12:6.

"Entire City Hall Level with Bay St." *Savannah Morning News* (26 August 1904) 10:2.

***Largest Payment Made to Contractor
September 3, 1904***

On September 3, 1904, the *Savannah Morning News* reported that the City had made the largest payment to date on the city hall building with \$9,347.83 paid to the Savannah Contracting Company.



Elevation of vestibule showing measurements for laying stonework, drawn by Hyman W. Witcover, c.1904. City of Savannah, Engineering Department Retrospective Plans & Designs, City Hall, Drawing 24.20. City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia. *Used with permission.*

The stone work on the eastern façade of the new building had surpassed the Bay Street level by quite a bit, while in the rear a story and a half had been completed. The only brick work remaining to be done was a lining for the stone, a layer placed inside the stone work. Large quantities of stone had been pre-cut on the site and it could be laid very fast.

“City Hall Work Advancing Rapidly.” *Savannah Morning News* (3 September 1904) 10:2.

***25,000 Copies of Gamble Booklet Printed
September 8, 1904***

On September 8, 1904, Thomas Gamble’s advertising booklet was sent to the printers. 25,000 copies were ordered, the bulk of which would be sent to St. Louis to be distributed by Mr. Martin at the World’s Fair. A few thousand copies of the book, which included illustrations of many prominent Savannah buildings and photographs of the manufacturing enterprises, would be saved for fairs and events in this region of the country.



Title page of new booklet advertising Savannah, 1904. Thomas Gamble, Jr. "Savannah, A City of Opportunities." Savannah: City Council of Savannah, Georgia, 1904. Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, Georgia. *Used with permission.*

Today, Gamble's book, preserved at local libraries and historical societies, provides a slice of life in 1904 Savannah for local students and historians.

"Advertising Booklet Will Soon be Ready." *Savannah Morning News* (8 September 1904) 10:1.

***Oldest City Employee Dies
September 19, 1904***

On September 19, 1904, Bob Low died at the age of 72 or 73 at his home on West Jones Street. Low was the oldest employee of the City of Savannah in point of service and perhaps in age. The African American had worked for the City continuously since the close of the Civil War. "He was a brick layer and one of the best the city ever had. He was liked and respected by both whites and blacks."

Before the Civil War, Low was free, but he participated in the struggle as a musician in the Savannah Volunteer Guards. He continued to play in the Guards' band for a number of years following the war.

"City's Oldest Employee Has Passed Away." *Savannah Morning News* (20 September 1904) 10:6.

***Impossible to Finish City Hall in Contract Time
September 22, 1904***

On September 22, 1904, sub-contractor A. P. Stewart announced that the new city hall would probably be finished several months behind its contract deadline of March 1, 1905. Stewart, the principal sub-contractor, insisted "there is no possibility in the world of finishing the new City Hall in contract time.... We are working just as fast as we can, are using as many men as we can and the material is now arriving as fast as it is needed." The foundation took longer than expected and unavoidable delays slowed the work down in the beginning. Now in the process of installing the stone, workers had to rely on machinery which could only accommodate so much at a time. "The stone has to all be hoisted and put in place by machinery and the machinery is kept going all the time.... The machine can only lift so much stone and enough men to handle it."



Sub-contractor Stewart announces completion of City Hall will be late, 1904.
"City Hall Will be a Year Late," *Savannah Morning News* (23 September 1904) 10:2.
Used with permission.

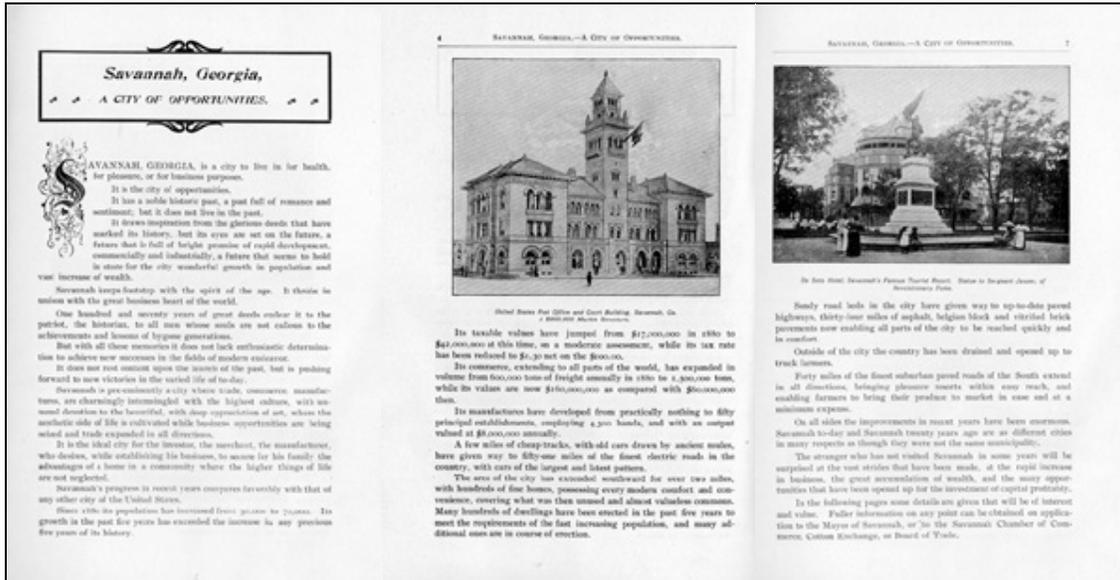
As best estimated at this time, the building proper would be at least six months late and the interior decorating and furnishing would take an additional three months. The City officials had little hope of occupying the new building before the end of the year 1905. Mayor Myers insisted construction was progressing too slowly and met with Mr. Burgess, president of the Savannah Contracting Company, and planned to consult with supervising architect Hyman Witcover when he returned to town.

"City Hall Will be a Year Late." *Savannah Morning News* (23 September 1904) 10:3.

"Will Bring Pressure to Hasten Work." *Savannah Morning News* (24 September 1904) 10:2.

**Gamble Thanked for Excellent Booklet
September 28, 1904**

On September 28, 1904, City Council thanked Thomas Gamble, Jr. for his excellent work on the booklet being distributed at the St. Louis Exposition. Entitled "Savannah, A City of Opportunities," the work was "very instructive, in excellent taste, and of great benefit to the city," and "by far the best that has ever been issued about the city."



Article written by Secretary Thomas Gamble on Savannah's commercial opportunities, 1904.
Thomas Gamble, Jr. "Savannah, A City of Opportunities." Savannah: City Council of Savannah, Georgia, 1904.
Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, Georgia.
Used with permission.

"Council Thanked Gamble for Savannah Booklet." *Savannah Morning News* (29 September 1904) 12:4.

**Witcover Inspects Construction Site
October 3, 1904**



Front elevation on Bay Street showing large granite blocks, drawn by Hyman W. Witcover, c.1904.
City of Savannah, Engineering Department Retrospective Plans & Designs, City Hall, Drawing 24.44.
City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.
Used with permission.

On October 3, 1904, supervising architect Hyman Witcover returned from an out-of-town trip and made an inspection of the construction site. Mayor Myers was concerned that the building was being delayed too much and construction work needed to be hastened. The architect confirmed that the building was going up as fast as possible.

Mr. Witcover says the work has progressed almost as rapidly as he had expected. It will get along a great deal faster, he says, after the first story is finished. The granite for the first floor is cut in large blocks and is hard to handle.

“Mayor Will Confer with Architect Witcover.” *Savannah Morning News* (4 October 1904) 12:6.

Municipal Campaign Begins October 12, 1904

On October 12, 1904, the municipal campaign officially began for the offices of Mayor and Aldermen.

Beginning with to-day the leaders of the Citizens Club will start planning and working for the city election. The Mayor and Aldermen will be chosen on Jan. 10, the second Tuesday of the new year. This is but eleven weeks off, and Savannah politicians seldom let a campaign be of shorter duration than that.

...Savannah is a city where interest in politics may lag, but never entirely dies out. It takes but a slight effort to resuscitate it.... There will doubtless be an abundance of corner gossip to satisfy the most craving appetite for that class of news.

“City Campaign to Begin To-Day.” *Savannah Morning News* (12 October 1904) 12:5.

Savannah Exceeds Building Records October 16, 1904

On October 16, 1904, the *Savannah Morning News* recapped the building events of the year, announcing that the value of all the new buildings currently going up in Savannah, including the new city hall building, exceeded all records. The building trends reflected the general prosperity the city was enjoying during the first decade of the twentieth century.

*Just at this time there are a number of important buildings in course of erection. The new City Hall, the Marine Hospital, the Sacred Heart Church and many less important buildings are going up. The work on the National Bank building will be started just as soon as possible.... The new buildings going up represent an expenditure of nearly \$1,000,000 and these are only a portion of the work that is being done. They are the more conspicuous examples of the city's progress and improvement, but on every hand minor evidences are also found. On West Broad street there have been a number of new stores built, and in every section apartment houses and residences have been erected.... Extensive improvements are also being made at Fort Screven.... It is thought that the value of the buildings being erected will greatly exceed the value of those built in 1903.**

*Hyman Witcover was the architect for the Sacred Heart Church, as well as the new city hall building.

“Building Record Broken This Year.” *Savannah Morning News* (16 October 1904) 20:3.

**Mosaic Coat of Arms
October 19, 1904**

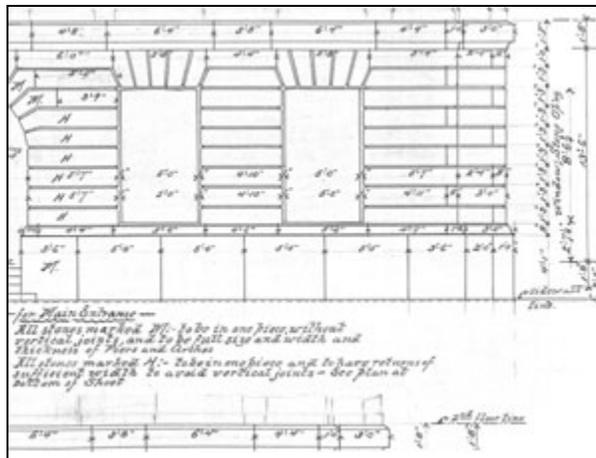


Seal of the City of Savannah.
City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.
Used with permission.

On October 19, 1904, architect Hyman Witcover and Mayor Herman Myers announced that the coat of arms, or seal, of the City of Savannah would be laid in mosaic tile on the floor of the entrance of the new city hall building. The coat of arms, adopted in 1794, includes several symbols: the Sword of Truth; the Scales of Justice; and the Omniscient Eye. The original colors of the coat of arms had long been forgotten and City officials were making efforts to determine the proper colors. “Mr. Myers is very anxious to find out what the colors are, as he would like to have the work conform to the original idea of the court of arms.” In the event that the original colors could not be discovered, those of the state’s coat of arms would be used.

“Court of Arms for City Hall Entrance.” *Savannah Morning News* (19 October 1904) 12:2.

**Last of Georgia Granite Laid
October 21, 1904**



South elevation showing Bay Street level granite work with ornamental strip at top, drawn by Hyman W. Witcover, c.1904.
City of Savannah, Engineering Department Retrospective Plans & Designs, City Hall, Drawing 24.20.
City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.
Used with permission.

On October 21, 1904, the last of the Georgia granite was being laid on the new city hall building with a strip of ornamental granite that would mark the dividing line between the first story, of granite, and the rest of the building, faced in limestone. As soon as the strip was finished around the entire building, the limestone, much easier to cut and handle, was started. A large quantity of limestone had already been cut and placed inside the enclosure about the new building. The contractors predicted that the lower half of the first story of limestone would be slower than those above, since it was highly ornamental, but even this would be faster work than laying the granite.

The steel work for the central rotunda was already in place, and many believed the limestone would go up so fast that the whole building would be under roof by the first of the coming year.

"Last of City Hall Granite Being Laid." *Savannah Morning News* (21 October 1904) 12:2.

City Treasury Greater than State October 23, 1904

On October 23, 1904, the local newspaper announced that comparisons between the State and City treasuries showed Savannah's with a balance of almost \$200,000, while the state had only a little over \$124,000. "It is certainly a most unusual and remarkable state of affairs for a municipality to have on hand a sum so much greater than the state in which the municipality is located.... Nothing better illustrates the excellent condition of the city government." The large treasury of the City was due mostly to the municipal government's frugal planning as it anticipated the construction of the new city hall.

For the building of the new City Hall a special appropriation of \$60,000 was made this year. To be able to meet this extraordinary expense, and other unusual items that were included in the year's budget, the officials decided to dispose of a great deal of real estate that the city had been holding. From the real estate alone, over \$60,000 was this year realized, so that the appropriation for the City Hall was more than balanced. The work on the City Hall has progressed more slowly than was anticipated, so that the amounts spent by the city upon it have not aggregated as much as was expected. In view of these conditions, favoring the city both ways, the officials say the balance now on hand should be even larger than it is.



**CITY HAS MORE MONEY
THAN STATE OF GEORGIA**
**Savannah Has in Treasury About \$75,000 More
Than State Can Show.**

City of Savannah treasury greater than State of Georgia's, October 1904.
"City Has More Money than State of Georgia," *Savannah Morning News* (23 October 1904) 17:2.
Used with permission.

"City Has More Money than State of Georgia." *Savannah Morning News* (23 October 1904) 17:2.

New City Flag Proposed October 26, 1904

On October 26, 1904, a resolution presented by Alderman Dixon was adopted which provided for a committee of three to be appointed to designate colors for the City of Savannah's coat of arms and to submit a design for a new municipal flag. After much investigation, including examining old records and consulting elderly citizens, no one could determine the original colors of the coat of arms.

The coat-of-arms is well known, having appeared on almost every annual report made in the last fifty years. The original resolution of Council, providing for the adoption of the coat-of-arms, says nothing about colors, and the records of the city government are silent as regards the colors to be used in the coat-of-arms. It has been used heretofore in plain black, though it was known, of course, that colors should have been used.

As an afterthought, a new flag was suggested to be flown over the new city hall. “Heretofore the United States flag has been used on the City Exchange, but with the progress and advancement that Savannah has made it is felt that the city should have a flag of its own.” On October 27, 1904, Mayor Myers, chairman of the new committee, appointed Aldermen Dixon and Oliver as the two additional members to the committee provided for in the flag and coat of arms resolution. Together they would select an appropriate design and then report back to Council for its adoption.

Around the same time the flag committee was appointed, the City election was heating up with editorials and articles running frequently in the local newspapers. On October 31, 1904, the *Savannah Morning News* recounted the sermon of Reverend A. M. Williams, of the Trinity Methodist Church, in which he condemned corrupt politicians who stole ballots to win. To stress his point he informed his congregation, “Some one suggested the other day as a suitable design for the new City flag, red ground with a black border, a ballot box in the center and a corpse voting.”



Reverend A. M. Williams proposes a new flag design in sermon, 1904.
 "Design for New Municipal Flag," *Savannah Morning News* (31 October 1904) 8:5.
 Used with permission.

“City Flag Committee Appointed by Mayor.” *Savannah Morning News* (28 October 1904) 12:2.

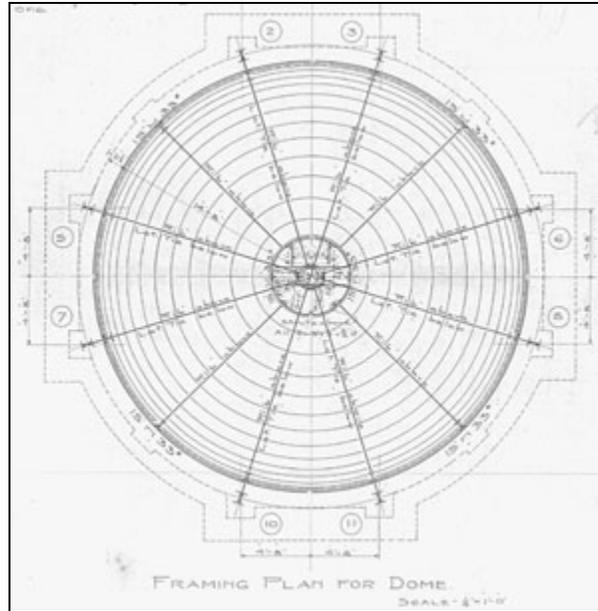
“Colors for City Coat of Arms.” *Savannah Morning News* (23 October 1904) 20:2.

“Design for New Municipal Flag.” *Savannah Morning News* (31 October 1904) 8:5.

“Savannah Will Have Flag of its Own.” *Savannah Morning News* (27 October 1904) 12:1.

***New Office of City Purchasing Agent
 November 17, 1904***

On November 17, 1904, it was announced that a new office of City Purchasing Agent would not be created until the City government moved into its new home in the city hall building. Once the new building was occupied, the position would be staffed and assigned the task of buying all the City supplies. The purchasing agent would have an office and storage room in city hall from where they would issue supplies to various City departments upon application, as needed.



Steel framing plan for dome, drawn by Hyman W. Witcover, c.1904.
 City of Savannah, Engineering Department Retrospective Plans & Designs, City Hall, Drawing 24.42.
 City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.
Used with permission.

The *Savannah Morning News* continued to report on the new building's progress. During the previous two or three weeks, the building progressed at a more rapid rate than at any previous time since it was started. More than half of the second floor above Bay Street went up, and the steel work for the central rotunda is even higher.

The building is now assuming its finished proportions, and it makes a splendid showing... Mayor Myers and the other city officials are congratulating themselves on the selection of the limestone for the upper stories, instead of brick, as was proposed.

"Clerk of Council to Buy City Supplies." *Savannah Morning News* (17 November 1904) 12:2.

"Rapid Progress Made on New City Hall." *Savannah Morning News* (17 November 1904) 12:6.

Steel Night Work ***November 21, 1904***

On November 21, 1904, a new system of lights was tested at the city hall building site in anticipation of a great deal of night work. The system, using illuminating oil, was not new as far as lighting was concerned, but had not yet been used on this particular building. There was a lot of steel work that could be completed by night crews and the contractors planned to use oil lights over the next few weeks, as workers tried to keep the steel work considerably advanced of the masonry work.

"Night Work Now for City Hall." *Savannah Morning News* (21 November 1904) 8:2.

New Book Typewriter for Clerk ***November 28, 1904***

On November 28, 1904, the *Savannah Morning News* announced that supervising architect Hyman Witcover, on the instructions of Mayor Myers, was preparing estimates for the cost of completing and furnishing the new city hall. Myers intended to pay for the completion and furnishing in the upcoming year and armed with the estimates could try and make room for the city hall's completion in the 1905 budget. "In order to do this it will be necessary to practice the strictest economy in all the departments."

Clerk of Council Creamer consulted Mayor Myers regarding a new book typewriter for the Clerk's office. Creamer had been considering it for some time since typed records would be much neater than handwritten records, and twice as much would fit in a volume. Creamer's proposal met with the Mayor's approval and Myers promised to take it to Council.

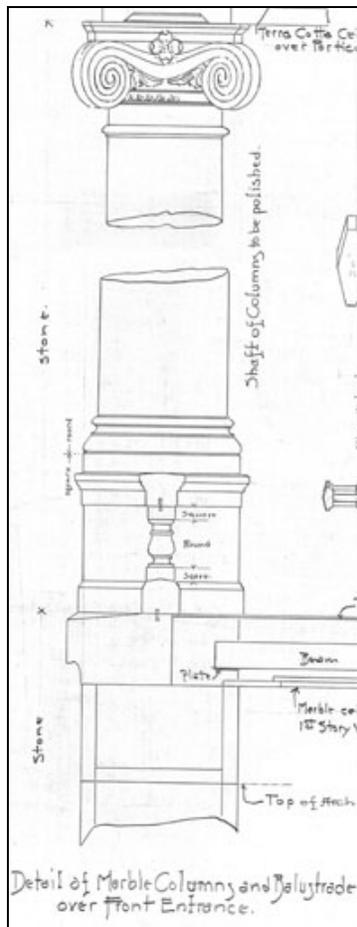
Before getting into the new City Hall, Clerk Creamer says he wants to get all his record books started on the machine. He wants everything neat and in order and thinks the typewriter will greatly aid in the work.

"Book Typewriter for Clerk of Council." *Savannah Morning News* (29 November 1904) 12:2.

"Busy Time Ahead for City Officials." *Savannah Morning News* (28 November 1904) 8:4.

Eleven Ton Columns Arrive November 29, 1904

On November 29, 1904, many people noticed two eleven ton columns sitting on Bay Street for the first time. The immense, solid limestone columns, to be placed above the main entrance of the new city hall, had been quarried in New Bedford, Indiana. Weighing 44,700 pounds combined, they were shipped by railroad in the same car. Worth about six-hundred dollars (\$600) each, the columns measured twenty-one feet long with a diameter of three feet across.



Detail of columns over front entrance, drawn by Hyman W. Witcover, c.1904.
City of Savannah, Engineering Department Retrospective Plans & Designs, City Hall, Drawing 24.24.
City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.
Used with permission.

Once in Savannah, the car carrying the columns was transferred to the foot of Barnard Street and “there began the problem for the contractors. How to get the columns to the front of the building was no easy matter. No truck found in the city was strong enough and they were placed on rollers and moved that way.” Contractors were having a special derrick built that would be strong enough to mount the columns on their six foot high pedestals in front of the city hall.

“Eleven Ton Columns for New City Hall.” *Savannah Morning News* (30 November 1904) 12:4.

***Last 1904 Bill on City Hall Paid
December 2, 1904***

On December 2, 1904, a special meeting of the Building Committee was called at noon and the last bill for the new city hall for the year 1904 was passed. \$12,762 to the Savannah Contracting Company brought the total price paid by the City on the building to \$54,661.26. The total did not include any work completed in December which would be billed in January. The 1904 appropriation of the new city hall was \$60,000. The total amount paid out during the year was within this amount, however if the December work had been included it would have exceeded the appropriation.

Payments for 1904 included:

\$5,129.17 to Hyman W. Witcover, Architect
\$49,018.29 to Savannah Contracting Company
\$262.50 Insurance

“Last City Hall Payment this Year.” *Savannah Morning News* (2 December 1904) 10:1.

Report of Hon. Herman Myers, Mayor, ...of the City of Savannah, Ga., for the Year Ending December 31st, 1904.... Savannah: The Morning News Print, 1905. p. 65

***City's Income Hits Record \$1 Million Mark
December 3, 1904***

On December 3, 1904, Alderman James M. Dixon, chairman of the Finance Committee, estimated the City's total income for the year 1904 to be over \$1,100,000 for the first time in its history.



City of Savannah's income reaches over \$1 million dollars, 1904.
"Over a Million City's Income," *Savannah Morning News* (3 December 1904) 12:1
Used with permission.

It is the first time in the history of the city that the income has reached the \$1,000,000 mark, and the city officials are congratulating themselves on the fact. The total income for 1903, including \$23,146.81, which was carried over from the previous year, was \$949,262.96.

...Two primary causes—the natural growth of the city and the extraordinary efforts made by the officials this year to collect as much money as possible so the City Hall building bills could be paid.

“Big Increase in City Income.” *Savannah Morning News* (11 December 1904) 24:1.

“Over a Million City’s Income.” *Savannah Morning News* (3 December 1904) 12:1.

\$200,000 Appropriation Required to Complete City Hall December 6, 1904

On December 6, 1904, supervising architect Witcover submitted estimates for the completion and furnishing of the new city hall to Mayor Myers. Both gentlemen refused to discuss the estimate in detail, only saying it would take an appropriation of at least \$200,000 to complete the structure. Witcover’s estimate was a great deal higher than this; however, Myers withheld the actual figure while he reviewed the estimate with the intention of cutting it down considerably by omitting unnecessary items.

\$160,000 to \$170,000 would be required to payoff the contract let to the Savannah Contracting Company for the structure itself. Additional money would be needed for decorations and furnishings, and other items not included in that contract, like a new City clock. Witcover’s estimate provided for furnishing the whole building. The City did not intend to use and furnish some of the rooms for several years, reducing the estimate.

“City Hall Total Cost to be High.” *Savannah Morning News* (6 December 1904) 10:3.

“City Will Practice Strictest Economy.” *Savannah Morning News* (7 December 1904) 8:4.

Alderman Proposes Donating Salary for Fountain December 7, 1904

On December 7, 1904, Alderman James M. Dixon proposed the aldermen all give up their salaries of ten dollars (\$10) a meeting for ten months, making a total of \$2,400 with which they could buy a fountain for the city hall rotunda.

But this will not happen for the very excellent reason that the eleven aldermen will not agree to part with their hard-earned cash in the manner suggested by their brother alderman. They would like to see a handsome and costly fountain in the rotunda of the city’s new home, but there are strings tied to the gold pieces of most of the aldermen.

...There is little or no likelihood of the fountain being put in the City Hall by means of the salaries of the members of Council.

“Fountain for City Hall with Money of Aldermen.” *Savannah Morning News* (7 December 1904) 8:4.

***Third Story on Bay Street Almost Finished
December 20, 1904***



Location of two limestone columns over entrance on second floor of southern façade, drawn by Hyman W. Witcover, c.1904.
City of Savannah, Engineering Department Retrospective Plans & Designs, City Hall, Drawing 24.44.
City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.
Used with permission.

On December 20, 1904, work on the new city hall building had almost reached the top of the third story above Bay Street. There still remained a fourth story before the roof could be contemplated. City officials were conscious of the fact that even once the exterior was finished, the interior work would still take a long time to complete.

Expectations were high that the two limestone columns would be raised into place by the special derrick built for the purpose in the following days. “The placing of the columns will be one of the hardest pieces of work in connection with the construction of the building.”

“City Hall is Now Three Stories High.” *Savannah Morning News* (20 December 1904) 12:5.

The Birth of City Hall 1905

Mayor Myers Triumphs in Politics and Business January 2, 1905

On January 2, 1905, Mayor Herman Myers was basking in the glow of an assured re-election as Mayor of Savannah in the upcoming municipal election, in addition to being unanimously elected as a director of both the National Bank of Savannah and the Oglethorpe Savings and Trust Company.

Mayor Myers is today probably the most congratulated man in the city.... The mayor is receiving congratulations for these as a combination probably never before equaled in Savannah and for each of them separately.



Mayor Herman Myers (1847-1909), c.1900.
"Official Souvenir Programme, Laying of Cornerstone, New City Hall, Savannah, Georgia, August 11th, 1904." Savannah: Daily Record Print, 1904.
Vertical Files: Savannah-City Hall/City Exchange.
Bull Street Main Library of the Live Oak Public Libraries, Savannah, Georgia.
Used with permission.

At a meeting of the Citizens Club on January 4, 1905, Mayor Myers and the entire Board of Alderman were enthusiastically nominated as candidates for re-election after less than five minutes with no disagreement among the party. "With these nominations the remotest possibility of opposition to the present administration at the election to be held next Tuesday vanished." Before the midnight deadline, the slate submitted their papers to Clerk of Council J. Robert Creamer announcing their intention to run. Creamer received no other bids, assuring that the Mayor and Alderman would be running unopposed.

"Mayor Myers' Triple Honors One Day." *Savannah Morning News* (2 January 1905) 1:6.

"Named Mayor in Few Minutes." *Savannah Morning News* (5 January 1905) 12:1.

City Property to Raise Funds for City Hall January 4, 1905

On January 4, 1905, at an evening meeting, City Council passed a resolution offering liberal discounts to ground rent lot holders to purchase their lots from the City. Council was following the success of a similar discount offered in 1904. Holders who wished to obtain their titles in fee simple could pay the City treasury the balance of the money due with several discount options: before March 1st a 25% discount would be allowed; after March 1st and through May 11th holders would receive a 20% discount; and those paying after May 1st and through June 1st would receive a 15% discount.

January 4th, 1905

RESOLUTIONS.

By Committee of the Whole.

Resolved, By the Mayor and Aldermen of the city of Savannah in council assembled, That all holders of lots in the city of Savannah, commonly known as ground rent lots, held under fee simple titles conditional, shall be and they are hereby permitted to pay to the city treasurer the balance of purchase money due on said lots respectively, and thereby make their titles fee simple absolute, on the following terms, that is to say:

First-Those who pay into the city treasury said balance of the purchase money at any time on or before March 1, 1905, shall be allowed a discount on the same of 25% per cent.

Second - Those so paying at any time after March 1, 1905, up to and including May 1, 1905 shall be allowed a discount of 20 per cent.

Third- Those so paying at any time after May 1st, 1905 and up to and including June 1, 1905, shall be allowed a discount of 15 per cent.

Adopted.

Resolution approving ground rent lot discounts, January 4, 1905.
 Official Proceedings of City Council (4 January 1905) 480.
 City of Savannah, Clerk of Council's Office, Savannah, Georgia.
Used with permission.

In addition, Council resolved to sell several pieces of unimproved property owned by the City. Alderman D. R. Thomas, chairman of the Committee on City Lots and Opening Streets, had recently completed a study of the City's unimproved property and estimated it could bring in at least \$74,000 in additional income, based on a rate of \$350 per acre. Council wished to use these two sources of revenue again to help offset the financial burden of building the new city hall.

"City Wants to Get in Money." *Savannah Morning News* (5 January 1905) 3:3.

"Total Property City Owns." *Savannah Morning News* (5 January 1905) 12:3.

**Alderman Thomas Recommends Leasing City Property
 January 6, 1905**

On January 6, 1905, the *Savannah Morning News* announced that Alderman D. R. Thomas, chairman of the Committee on City Lots and Opening Streets, would amend his recommendations to Council regarding the disposition of unused City property. Thomas now suggested that the City lease any property that would be considered "undesirable to place on the market at this time." This could include property that would not fetch a good price in the current market or lots the City may be reluctant to part with and would like to use in the future.

LOT	SECTION	WARD	DIMENSIONS	AREA	LOCATION AND REMARKS.
89 and 90..		Battery		5.3 acres	W. side Ogeechee road.
90 and 99..		Garden lots W. of Springfield.....		19 "	W. of Springfield.
1 and 2		Springfield.....		8.8 acres	Louisville road W. Magazine street.
57, 58, 59		"		18 "	N. of Gwinnett st., W. of Brow ditch.
Triangle.....		"	58.9x237.2	0.45 acres	S. E. cor. Stiles ave. and Louisville rd.
Part 3.....		Slave Is. Parcel.....		2.42 acres	Burr ave.
26		East end		361 acres	Savh. river, opp. A. C. L. wharves.
1 and 2 (and lots by call.)		Kelly.....	75.0x123.0	9,225 sq.ft.	S. E. cor. of Gwinnett and Paulsen.
29, 30, 31		Haywood	75.9x113.0	8,308 sq.ft.	Triangle Gwinnett lane & Bilbo canal.
31		Meltrim.....	25.4x32.4	1,310 sq.ft.	35th bet. Montgomery and W. Broad.
32, to 40.....		Owens.....	60.9x133.5 each	57,672 sq.ft.	N. side 37th, W. of Burroughs st.
91		"	48.0x97.0	4,714 sq.ft.	S. E. cor. of Florence and 36th sts.
94		"	30.9x97.0	2,997 sq.ft.	36th bet. Burroughs and Florence sts.
P		"	30.9x97.0	2,997 sq.ft.	" " " " " "
Q		"	30.9x97.0	2,997 sq.ft.	" " " " " "
Part 23.....		Southville.....	19.0x23.0	309 sq.ft.	Triangle S. E. Dryton & Maupis lane.
Old Drayton St.....		"	33.9x90.0	2,975 sq.ft.	N. W. 41st and Drayton sts.
Old Habersham St.....		"	50.4x90.0	4,536 sq.ft.	N. W. 41st and Habersham sts.
93		Owens.....	36.0x97.0	3,550 sq.ft.	36th bet. Burroughs and Florence sts.
7		Old Water Works Tract.....		7.9 acres	Miller avenue.
9		"		6.2 acres	" " " " " "
11		"		6.5 acres	" " " " " "
1		"		11.2 acres	Savannah river.
1		King's Island.....		33.0 acres	Savannah river, opp. Water Works.
				Total.....	148.66 acres

The following improved property owned by the City and not being used for any purpose, may be sold:

MAYOR'S ANNUAL REPORT. 139

Inventory of unused City property, 1905.
 "The following improved property owned by the City and not being used for any purpose, may be sold."
Report of Hon. Herman Myers, Mayor, of the City of Savannah, Georgia, for the Year Ending December 31st, 1905.
 Savannah: Savannah City Council, 1906.
 City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.
Used with permission.

"Favors City Leasing its Idle Property." *Savannah Morning News* (12 August 1904) 6:1.

***Political Fireworks & Parade
January 9, 1905***

On January 9, 1905, the night before the municipal election, the Citizens Marching Club held a parade of their political clubs on the way to a grand rally at the Savannah Theater. Arrangements for the parade had been in the works for weeks with each district club keeping their plans secret from the others.

Not since Cleveland was elected President has Savannah known such a political demonstration as that of last night, when the forces of the Citizens Club from the eastern, western and southern sections of the city paraded to the theater.

The chief features of the parade, apart from its magnitude, were the banners and floats illustrating state politics. Hon. Newton A. Morris was hit harder in these than any one else, though Gov. Terrell and Hamilton McWhorter came in for a large share of the roasts.

A particularly catchy banner, in the line of the Fourth District Club was termed the "Song of the Mercenaries." It read:

*"Oh Willie, dear Willie, leave us alone,
For in the Capitol we have a good home.
If you persist in your red hot attack,
You will send us way back, way back,
And in other fat fields we'll have to roam."*

Another banner of the Fourth proposed to throw Morris in the Bilbo canal, but it remained to the South Side to kill him outright. A real hearse, with a sure enough coffin in it, in which Mr. Morris was supposed to repose, was in the procession.

The parade had several accidents caused by the extensive use of fireworks. The first float, representing a fort and labeled "The Old Fort, the Bulwark of the Citizens Club," caught fire when a roman candle was carelessly tossed in a box of red powder compound representing the fort's magazine. Johnny Connelly, thirteen and son of J. J. Connelly of the fire department, was dressed in khaki uniforms with five other boys riding on the float and was seriously burned.

The fireworks wagon of the South Side, driven by Tom McDonald, caught on fire and all the fireworks went off at once, causing the horses to run away. They started at Bull and Perry streets and ran a block or two before they could be stopped. The horse received the sharp end of a skyrocket and immediately set a pace that was a marvel, even to the dying rocket.

The parade ended at the Savannah Theater where a rally was held and a large crowd of "party men, friends of party men and friends of friends of party men" gathered to hear the speakers, including Mayor Myers, and Aldermen Grayson, Oliver and Thomas. Mayor Myers used the opportunity to thank his party members for their support:

To be Mayor of Savannah for five terms, covering ten years, is, to my mind, the highest honor my fellow citizens could possibly bestow. In that office one is brought directly into contact with the needs and desires of the people. Its service is a daily service for the people. The position is one presenting duties whose execution must have a marked bearing on the prosperity and future of the entire community. It is a position of more than honor; it is a position of great responsibility. Your renomination of me for another term as Mayor signifies that my humble efforts to meet those responsibilities and perform those duties have met with your approval, that while I have made errors and probably fallen far short of the highest excellence, you have believed that I have labored sincerely and zealously for the city's welfare and upbuilding. Under such circumstances I need hardly say that no man could more deeply appreciate the trust you have displayed, or feel

the necessity of measuring up to as high a standard as human weakness will permit in the performance of the duties you have placed on me for the coming two years.

Clerk of Council J. Robert Creamer followed Myers describing him as “the best Mayor Savannah has ever had, and [who] deserves much of the credit for putting the city on a sound financial basis.”

“Blaze of Glory to Mark Parade.” *Savannah Morning News* (9 January 1905) 8:5.

“Named the Mayor in Few Minutes.” *Savannah Morning News* (5 January 1905) 12:1.

“Parade Monday Night Will Be a Wonder.” *Savannah Morning News* (6 January 1905) 12:4.

“Parade Will Be Biggest Known.” *Savannah Morning News* (8 January 1905) 17:1.

“Savannah’s Record Parade.” *Savannah Morning News* (10 January 1905) 12:1.

“Serious Side of Big Parade.” *Savannah Morning News* (11 January 1905) 6:1.

Mayor Myers Re-Elected to Fifth Term January 10, 1905

On January 10, 1905, Mayor Herman Myers and his entire slate of aldermen were re-elected to another term in a quiet election. All of the aldermen received the same number of votes, 2,940. Custom held that the alderman receiving the greatest number of votes would be chairman of Council. Since it was an even tie, the current chairman, Alderman James M. Dixon, would carry on the duty once again, as would his vice-chairman, Alderman R. J. Davant.

With his re-election yesterday, Mr. Myers goes into his fifth term as Mayor of Savannah. He has served eight years and was defeated once. It had been his desire to go into office for the fifth time without opposition and enter the new City Hall with the same Council and city officials he left it [City Exchange] with.

“All Received the Same Vote.” *Savannah Morning News* (11 January 1905) 12:5.

Savannah’s New Flag & Municipal Building Officially Named “City Hall” January 18, 1905

On January 18, 1905, Miss Cornelia Sams Maclean’s design for Savannah’s new municipal flag was officially accepted during the City Council’s evening session. Miss Maclean (later Mrs. Willis Wilder), of Savannah, was awarded ten dollars in gold for her design. Mrs. Hope Chandler McLeod, of Seabrook, South Carolina, received honorable mention from Council for the second best design.

Far more interest has been displayed in the flag contest than any one would have supposed. There were twenty-five or thirty designs submitted, most of them from local competitors, but some from out of town.

The flag submissions were examined by a special committee on the City flag comprised of Mayor Herman Myers, chairman, and Aldermen F. M. Oliver and James M. Dixon. The committee submitted their report to the entire Council recommending that Maclean’s design “be adopted as the official flag of the municipality of Savannah to be displayed on the City Hall, and other local public buildings on public occasions.” Council approved and adopted the committee’s report and Maclean was announced the winner of the contest.



Mrs. Cornelia Sams Maclean Wilder and the City of Savannah's official flag, 1962.
 "Mrs. Wilder with the Flag She Designed,"
Savannah Morning News Magazine (5 August 1962) 6.
 Used with permission.

The new flag was composed of an outer red border, an inner blue border, and a field of white with the City of Savannah's coat of arms in the center surrounded by thirteen blue stars in honor of the thirteen original colonies. Mayor Myers stated, "The flag adopted is distinctive and one of the prettiest I have ever seen."

The colors red, white and blue predominate, the thought having been to adhere to our national colors, though the plan of the flag is quite different. Red is accepted as meaning courage, zeal and fervency, white denotes purity and blue signifies loyalty, devotion, justice and truth.

In an article written by Thomas Gamble, Jr., entitled "Savannah's Official Flag and Its History," he quotes Woodrow Wilson in 1917 on the importance of a flag:

But one may LIVE as well as die for a flag and for the ideals which it symbolizes. Every flag that floats free in the breeze is a living thing. It speaks with the voice of the great past and the mighty present. It is a challenge to us...to whose keeping for better or worse, the flag and all it stands for is committed. The flag has no other character than that which we give it, from generation to generation. The choices are ours.

(On a copy of his article, housed in the Gamble Collection at the public library, Thomas Gamble scribbled a handwritten note, "It was at my suggestion that the City flag was decided on and the contest instituted. T. Gamble.")

In the committee's original report they referred to the new building as the "City Exchange." Alderman Thomas called attention to the use of this name. "Mayor Myers, one of the members of the Flag Committee, said the committee had not intended to use the word. 'I believe it is understood,' he said, 'that the building is to be known as the City Hall. Is it not so, gentlemen?'" The report was changed to reflect this and it was officially decided that the new municipal building would be known as "City Hall."

"Council Will Adopt Flag for the City." *Savannah Morning News* (17 January 1905) 12:1.

"Flag for City Will Soon Be Selected." *Savannah Morning News* (5 January 1905) 3:3.

"Municipal Building Officially Named." *Savannah Morning News* (19 January 1905) 1:3.

Official Proceedings of City Council (18 January 1905) 483. City of Savannah, Clerk of Council's Office, Savannah, Georgia.

"Report Special Committee on City Flag," (18 January 1905). City Council Meeting Papers-Proceedings of Council, Box PRO 92, 0115-001-A289, Folder 855. City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

***Mayor and Aldermen Take Oath of Office; Gamble to Prepare History of City Exchange & City Hall
January 23, 1905***

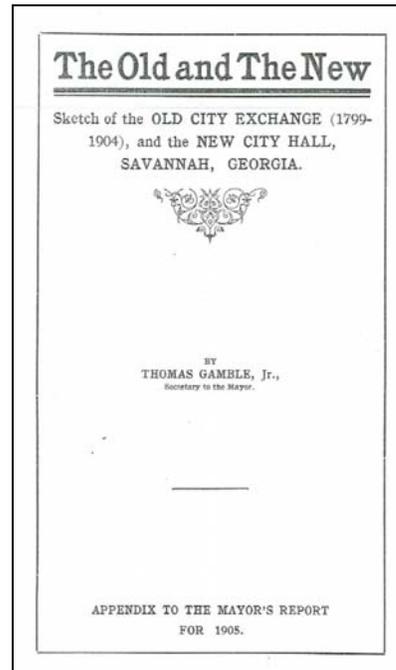
On January 23, 1905, Mayor Myers and his Board of Aldermen were “formally inaugurated for another term of office at the head of Savannah’s municipal affairs.” The inauguration ceremony took place at 12 o’clock noon in the Police Court room. The room, used as the Council Chamber, had been decorated for the occasion with plants and the United States flag.

The scene present to the gaze was almost tropical. On the large Council table had been placed pot plants and one magnificent American Beauty rose tree in full bloom was just in front of the Mayor, who occupied his accustomed place at the head of the table. At all convenient places were palms and an American flag was tastily draped just back of the Mayor, while pictures of former mayors were hung around the room. The arrangement was directed by Messenger of Council Gradot.

The oath of office was administered by the Honorable Judge George T. Cann, judge of the Superior Court, first to the Mayor and then to the Board of Aldermen as one body. The Board of Aldermen included J. F. Canty, James M. Dixon, R. J. Davant, A. J. Garfunkel., William L. Grayson, John F. Glatigny, George F. Harman, James H. McKenna, F. M. Oliver, E. A. M. Schroder, D. R. Thomas, and W. H. Wright.

Mayor Myers then read his annual message for the year 1904, over twenty typed pages, covering all matters interesting the City and generally reflecting on the prosperous condition of the City, describing Savannah as:

A City of Progress: looking backward Savannah has everything to be thankful for and looking forward has every reason to be hopeful.



Title page of “The Old and The New,” 1906.
*Report of Hon. Herman Myers, Mayor...of the City of Savannah, Georgia,
 for the Year Ending December 31st, 1905.*
 Savannah: Savannah City Council, 1906.
 City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.
Used with permission.

Myers chose not to discuss the new city hall in length, but announced that the published 1905 annual report would include an illustrated history of the old City Exchange and the new city hall building which Secretary Gamble was already preparing.

Among the illustrations will be one showing the old Exchange in 1847, before the porticoes were placed in front; another as it stood before its demolition. Other illustrations will be views of the hall downstairs, of the old council chamber, of the old mayor's office, of the last meeting of council in the old building, and of the painting of General Lee, while of the new hall there will be illustrations of the exterior and several of the interior, as well as of Senator Clay and the scene at the cornerstone laying, a detailed account of which will be given. All in all, the sketch of the two halls will make a very valuable historical souvenir that will be appreciated by Savannahians generally.

Thomas Gamble, Jr., who would later serve as Mayor of Savannah (1933-1937, 1939-1945), contributed a valuable source of information on Savannah before and after the turn of the century through his research and writings (many now housed in the Gamble Collection at the Bull Street Main Library of the Live Oak Public Libraries). The 1905 annual report did indeed contain the history Myers promised and provided a detailed account of the old City Exchange, as well as rare images of the brand new city hall building at the time of its completion. In January 1905, the *Savannah Evening Press* announced that:

Mr. Gamble proposes devoting all of his spare time hereafter to local historical work.... Mr. Gamble is very fond of this class of work having begun it in Philadelphia eighteen years ago, when he prepared historical sketches for The Inquirer of that city and continued it in Savannah during his long connection with the newspapers of this city.... His future publications will be awaited with interest by all attached to Savannah and its past.

"City Officials Are Somewhat Muddled." *Savannah Morning News* (15 January 1905) 20:4.

"Historical Bits for Report of 1905." *Savannah Evening Press* (23 January 1905) 10:4.

"New Mayor and Council To-Day." *Savannah Morning News* (23 January 1905) 8:5.

Official Proceedings of City Council (23 January 1905) 486. City of Savannah, Clerk of Council's Office, Savannah, Georgia.

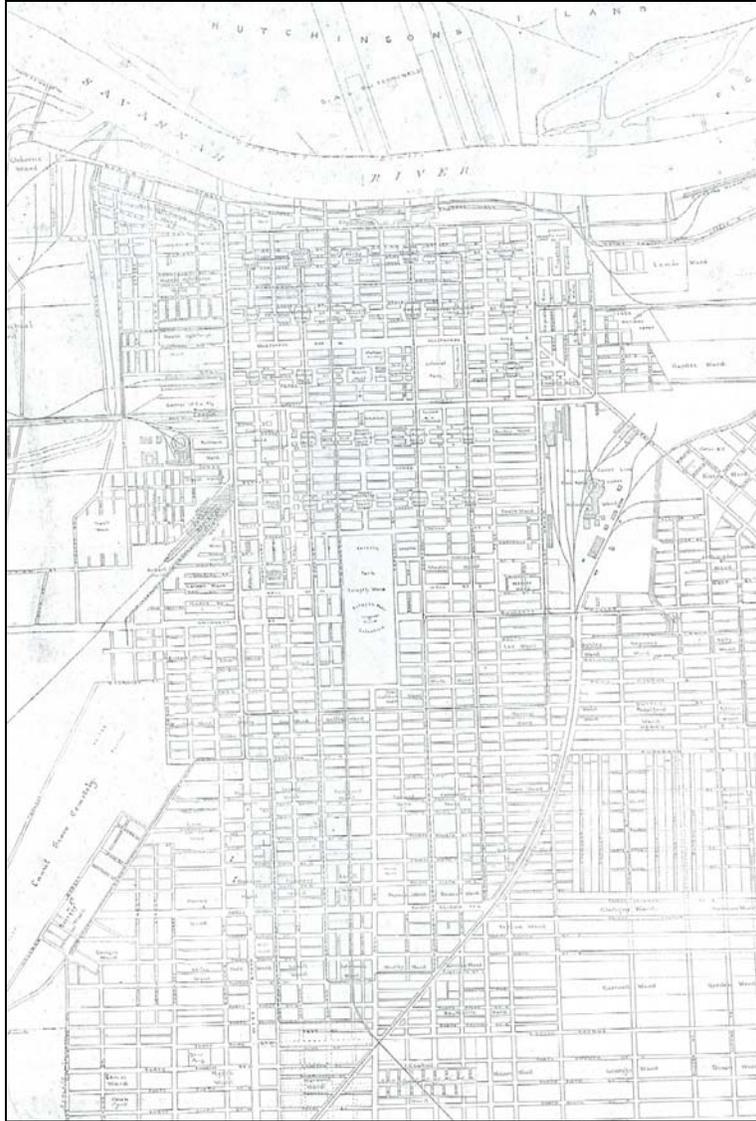
"Simple Ceremony at Inauguration." *Savannah Morning News* (24 January 1905) 8:1.

Savannah, "Hustling, Busy and Progressive" ***January 25, 1905***

On January 25, 1905, the *Savannah Morning News* related comments of native Jacob Buckley who returned to visit Savannah after a twenty-eight year absence. Mr. Buckley reiterated what the local papers and politicians had been saying about Savannah for the previous two years. During the first decade of the 20th century, Savannah was a city of progress and a growing presence in the South. This spirit was embodied in the construction of a new municipal building, a symbol of Savannah's growth, prosperity and promised future.

I was born near Washington Square, and there was really not much of Savannah in my childhood days north of where police headquarters now stand. I have been here two weeks and am astonished at the immense strides the city has taken.... Savannah is a fine city, and a beautiful one, despite her new spirit of commercialism. It is a business city now, too, in a Western sense, hustling, busy and progressive.

I can pay the city of Savannah the high compliment of saying that twenty-eight years passing over her head has found her grown to maturity. I am glad to have found her alive to modern demands and feel confident of her future.

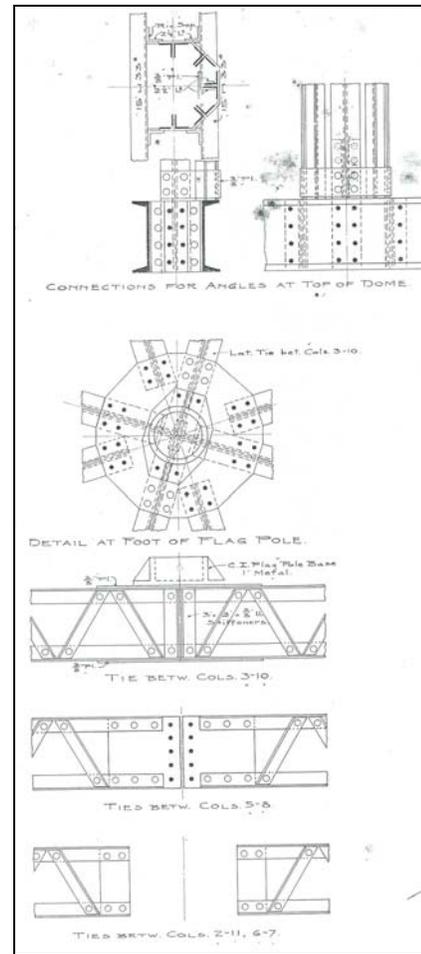


Map of the City of Savannah showing the city expanding south and east from the river bluff, drawn by Percy Sugden, Civil Engineer, Savannah, Georgia, 1906.
 City of Savannah, Engineering Department Retrospective Map Collection, Map #XA-39.
 City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.
Used with permission.

“New Savannah Has Taken Place of Old.” *Savannah Morning News* (25 January 1905) 12:4.

Exterior & Interior Progress on City Hall January 29, 1905

On January 29, 1905, the local newspaper reported on the construction progress of the new city hall building. While the top story was almost complete, the steel frame work for the roof and tower had still not arrived, worrying many that an additional delay would occur. The entire project had already been held up considerably by the difficulty laying the foundations and continual delays in receiving shipments of materials. Unless the steel work arrived soon, a portion of the work on the building would come to a standstill.



Detail of iron ties and construction for the dome, drawn by Hyman W. Witcover, c.1904.
 City of Savannah, Engineering Department Retrospective Plans & Designs, Drawing 24.42.
 City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.
 Used with permission.

Despite this, sub-contractor A. P. Stewart was confident that his end of the work would take only two more months. The interior work was advancing as rapidly as the exterior with fireproof walls and partitions in the process of being installed, soon followed by plastering of the walls, and installation of the wiring and plumbing. “The interior work can now be pushed at all times, regardless of the weather, as protection is afforded the workmen.”

Stewart was struggling with rebuilding the vaults on the east side of the building which had collapsed several months before, once again dealing with shifting sand.

The old vaults that are still standing are not in a very strong condition and the earth where the new vaults are being built cannot be removed for fear of causing the old ones to collapse. The new vaults are therefore being built with the earth in them. As soon as the new walls are connected by an arch with the old ones, so as to support the latter, the earth can be removed.

Despite the delays, Mayor Myers and all the City officials were pleased with the building. “Though it is not shown to advantage now with the trash of the workmen everywhere in evidence, it presents a very handsome appearance just as it is.”



Vaults adjacent to City Hall on the east, seen from Factors' Walk looking east from the rear of City Hall, December 2004.
City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.
Used with permission.

"Finish City Hall in Four Months." *Savannah Morning News* (29 January 1905) 21:1.

100 Pound Weight Falls 40 Feet Injuring Foreman February 6, 1905

On February 6, 1905, foreman R. S. Smith narrowly escaped death at the city hall construction site. At 8 o'clock in the morning, a one-hundred pound weight, used on the derrick to pull the block and tackle down after a load of material was raised up the side of the building, fell about forty feet to the ground striking Smith, standing below, on the side of his body.

One of the hooks which had fastened the weight to the block and tackle caught in his coat and cut it like a knife, swinging the weight against his body and badly bruising him.

Fortunately, Smith broke no bones and a police ambulance carried him to his home at 101 East President Street. Within a few days, the local papers reported that Smith was rapidly recovering from his injury.

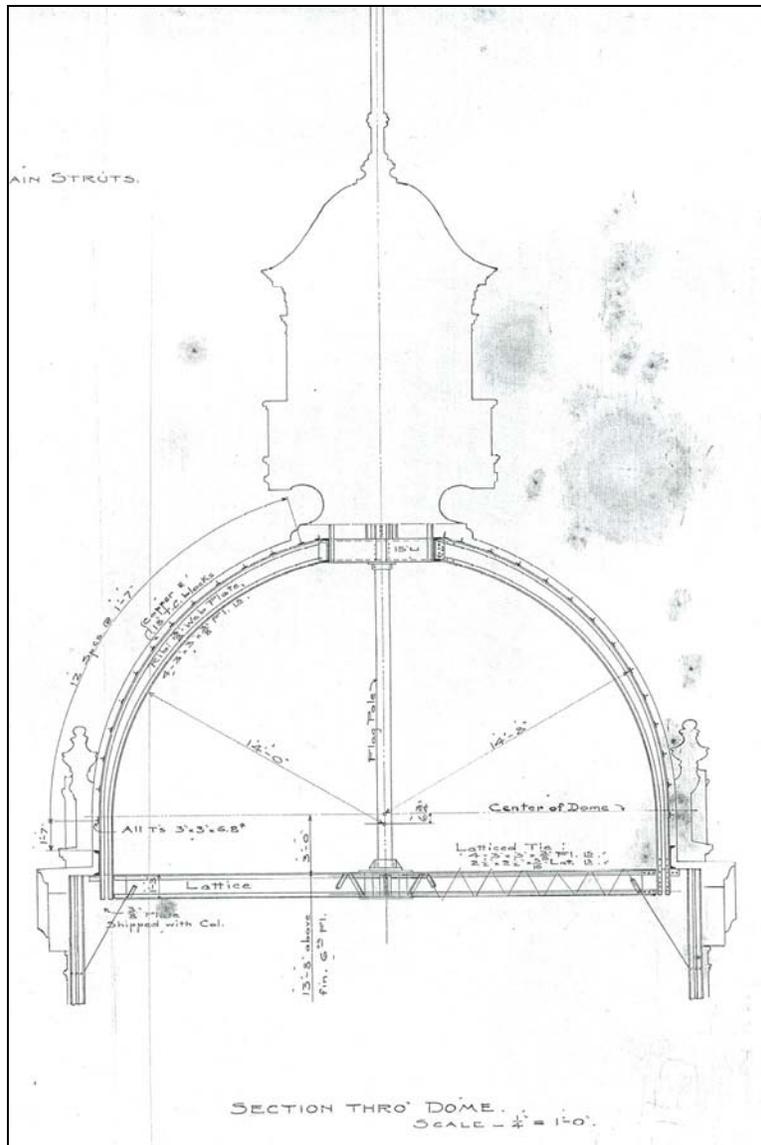
"Foreman's Narrow Escape from Falling Weight." *Savannah Morning News* (7 February 1905) 10:3.

"Man Hurt at City Hall is Rapidly Improving." *Savannah Morning News* (12 February 1905) 24:5.

Tower Frame Work Started February 10, 1905

On February 10, 1905, the first piece of steel frame work for the city hall tower was installed. The steel work shipment had been significantly delayed, holding up work on the exterior of the building. Most of it had finally arrived allowing work to continue.* The tower would eventually rise one-hundred feet above the top of the fourth floor windows and "overshadow everything else in the neighborhood."

The roof will soon be on and already most of the partitions are in. Much of the plastering has been done and the building is beginning to take on a finished appearance.



Section through dome construction, drawn by Hyman W. Witcover, c.1904.
 City of Savannah, Engineering Department Retrospective Plans & Designs, City Hall, Drawing 24.42.
 City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.
 Used with permission.

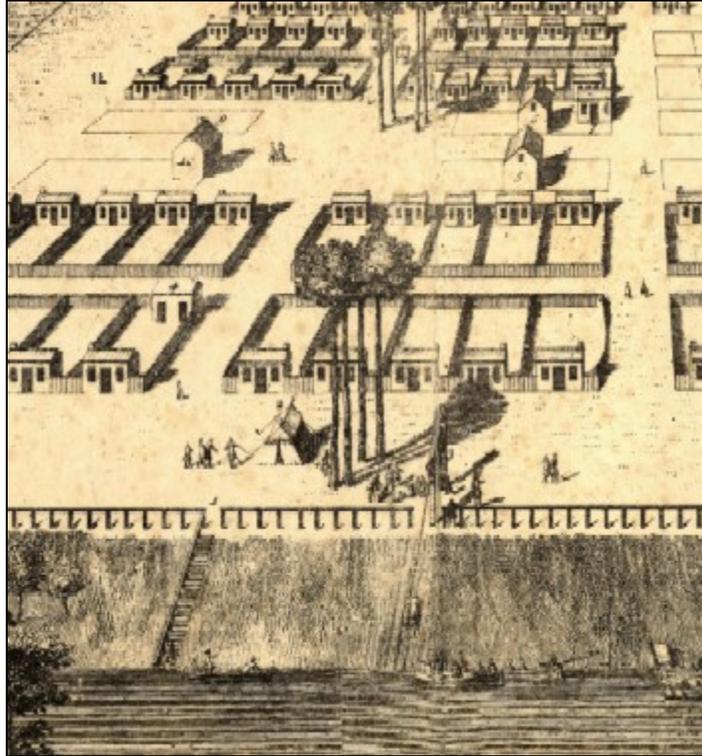
**Delays in the delivery of the steel work would continue to impede progress on the city hall building throughout February.*

“Work Stated on City Hall Tower.” *Savannah Morning News* (11 February 1905) 10:3.

**Savannah’s 172nd Birthday
 February 12, 1905**

On February 12, 1905, Savannah celebrated its 172nd birthday. The event went relatively unnoticed, unlike the two-day sesqui-centennial celebration in 1883. The following day, the *Savannah Morning News* published a view of Savannah as it looked in 1734, one year after the colony was founded under the leadership of General James Edward Oglethorpe. The newspaper described the scene when the colonists first landed in Savannah, selecting a spot along the river bluff to situate themselves and begin work on the settlement.

*The four pine trees under which the colonists pitched their four tents and slept the first night in Georgia were situated nearly on the bluff, between Bull and Whitaker streets. Oglethorpe's tent was nearly under the cluster of trees. The crane and bell, the crane used to haul goods up on the bank, and the bell to call the colonists together for worship, work and other purposes, were just west of the trees, the crane on the edge of the bluff and the bell just in the rear of the crane.**



Detail from "A View of Savannah as it stood the 29th of March 1734" showing Oglethorpe's tent under the pines, drawn by Peter Gordon, 1734.
Call # G3924.S3A3 1734.G6.1876 TIL; Digital ID #g3924s pm001305 <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc/gmd/g3924s.pm001305>.
Library of Congress Geography and Map Division, Washington, D.C.
Used with permission.

This location continued as the center of Savannah's society and government through the 18th and 19th centuries with the City Exchange building located at the foot of Bull Street on the bluff. The bells and clocks of both the City Exchange and its successor, City Hall, continued to lead the community as the first bell did. By February 1905, the new city hall was beginning to take its final shape near the spot where the first tents were pitched in 1733 and where Oglethorpe's house stood in 1734.

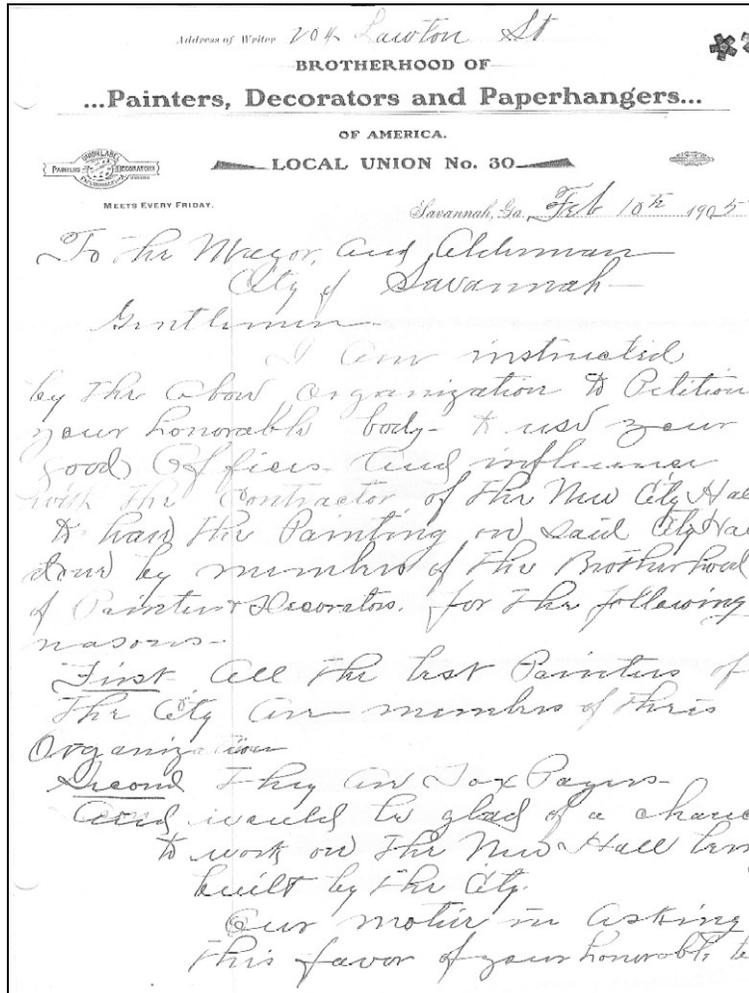
The four lofty pines on the bluff, under which the first encampment was made, were still standing, and there Oglethorpe lived in a house without a chimney. This house was just west of the present new City Hall.

**In May 1905, the Colonial Dames announced plans to erect a memorial on the spot where Oglethorpe pitched his tent after first landing on the bluff. The memorial bench can be seen today just west of City Hall in the Strand along Bay Street.*

"Savannah's One Hundred and Seventy-Second Birthday." *Savannah Morning News* (13 February 1905) 8:3-4.

**Local Union Asks Council to Influence Contractor
February 15, 1905**

On February 15, 1905, at the regular evening meeting of City Council, a petition from the Brotherhood of Painters, Decorators and Paperhangers of America, Local Union No. 30 was presented to the Mayor and Aldermen requesting they use their "influence" to have members of the union paint the new city hall interior.



Union petition to City Council, February 10, 1905.
 "Petition: Brotherhood Painter and Paperhangers Union No. 30," (10 February 1905, in Council 15 February 1905).
 City Council Meeting Papers-Proceedings of Council, Box PRO 93, 0115-001-A290, Folder 865.
 City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.
 Used with permission.

The petition, dated February 10, 1905, was sent by W. F. Frazier, corresponding secretary of the union, and asked the members of Council to:

Use your good offices and influence with the contractor of the New City Hall to have the Painting on said City Hall done by members of the Brotherhood of Painters & Decorators for the following reasons-

First All the best Painters of the City are members of this organization

Second They are Tax Payers and would be glad of a chance to work on the New Hall being built by the City

Our motive in asking this favor of your honorable body is that this company erecting the City Hall has just finished the Sacred Heart Church and they did not employ a single experienced Painter on the building, a man acting as a foreman Painter did the work with Laborers, we don't believe he can do the same on the City Hall. We ask a minimum rate of wages of \$2.25 per day and we believe the contractor can afford to pay so small wages for good Painters.

City Council referred the petition to the City Hall Building Committee, which had been established in 1903 to handle all matters pertaining to the construction of the city hall building.

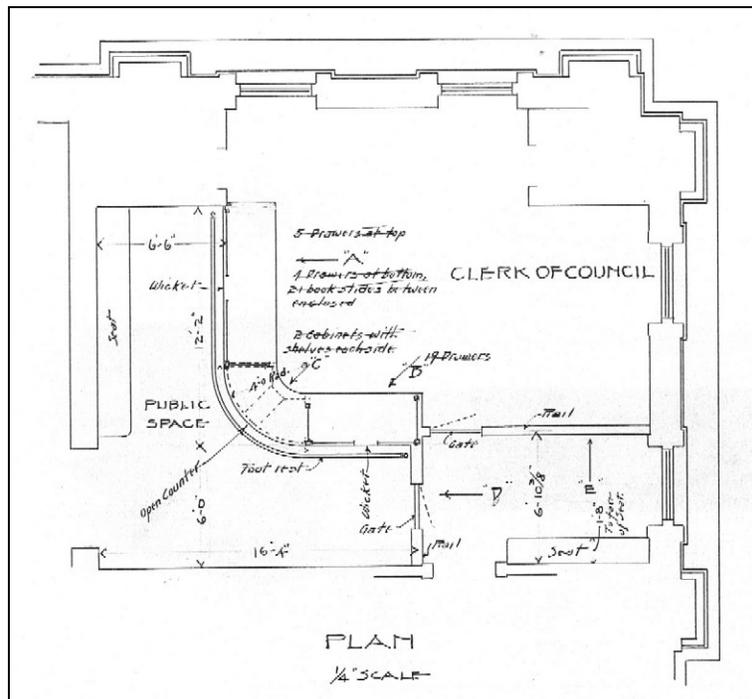
The petition pointed out an interesting side note as well. Not only was Architect Hyman W. Witcover responsible for the designs of Sacred Heart Church and the new city hall, but the Savannah Contracting Company was also responsible for the construction of the two buildings at the same time.

"Many Minor Matters Considered by Council." *Savannah Morning News* (16 February 1905) 12:3.

"Petition: Brotherhood Painter and Paperhangers Union No. 30." (10 February 1905, in Council 15 February 1905). City Council Meeting Papers-Proceedings of Council, Box PRO 93, 0115-001-A290, Folder 865. City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

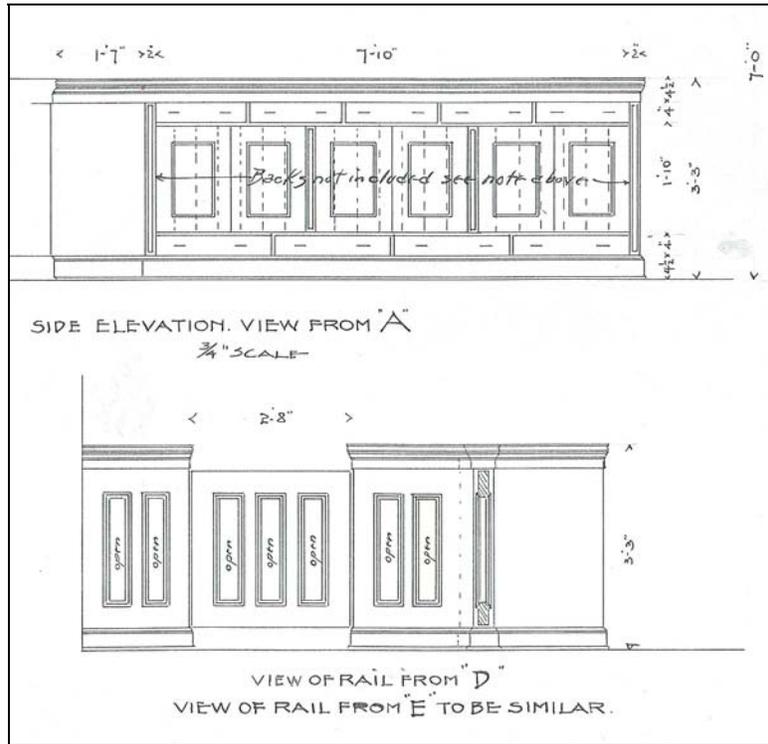
Custom Office Furniture for Departments & Georgia History Murals to Decorate City Hall February 27, 1905

On February 27, 1905, Architect Hyman W. Witcover met with several of the City officials to discuss the plans for their new offices in the city hall building and determine the particular needs of each department before the contract was let for furnishing the building. "A number of cabinets are to be built into the offices and the architect desired to consult with the officials in regard to these."



Plan of Clerk of Council's office reflecting alterations, drawn by Hyman W. Witcover, c.1905. City of Savannah, Engineering Department Retrospective Plans & Designs, City Hall, Drawing 24.6. City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia. Used with permission.

Those present included George M. Gadsden, Director of Public Works, and the Clerk of Council, both of whom requested minor changes in the designs of their office furniture. Clerk J. Robert Creamer asked for an additional cabinet to be built under the counter in his office specially fitted for housing the large books used to record the proceedings of Council. Witcover asked Creamer to prepare a plan of the shelving he would like under the counter. "As far as possible the wishes of the officials will be followed in the furnishings."



Elevation of built-in counters and shelving in Clerk of Council's office, drawn by Hyman W. Witcover, c.1905.
 City of Savannah, Engineering Department Retrospective Plans & Designs, City Hall, Drawing 24.6.
 City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.
 Used with permission.

Plans for the interior walls were also discussed by committee members at this meeting. Earlier in the month, the idea of illustrative murals, depicting the history of the City of Savannah and the State of Georgia, was encouraged.

The plan will involve the expenditure of quite a sum of money, however, and could not well be carried out this year...

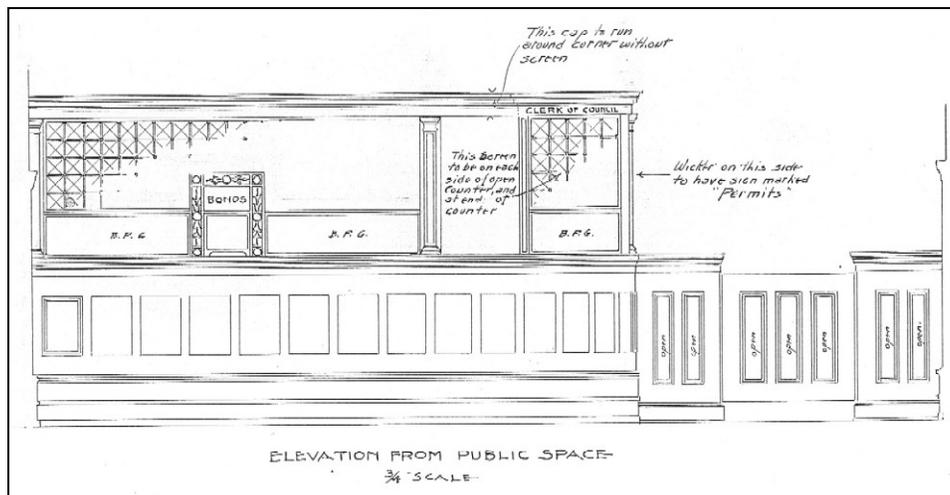
Even if the city had the ready money for the expensive decorations now, it is said that it would be better to wait six or eight months in order to allow the building to thoroughly settle...

The early history of Savannah and of the state are identical and allegorical panels of the principal events in the history of the city would be interesting to all Georgians as well as to the citizens of Savannah. The matter will be discussed by the committee and estimates of the cost of the decorations will be secured. If it is found that the work will not be too expensive it will be ordered done.

The ceiling of the dome and the walls of the rotunda will be made beautiful by these paintings, if the plan that has been suggested is carried out. Through all four stories of the building an open court beneath the dome extends. In the center of the rotunda beneath the dome a fountain will be constantly playing. This with the marble wainscoting and the proposed panels will make the rotunda a very handsome and imposing affair.

During the February 27th meeting, it was decided that “the walls of the building will all be frescoed immediately after the completion of the building. The Council chamber, the Mayor’s office and perhaps one or two others will be finished elaborately as soon as the building is completed, but the others will simply be tinted at first.”

Meanwhile, work on the building continued to be delayed due to “the non-appearance of a car of steel, which was shipped weeks ago. Work on the interior is going ahead as usual, but the other work has been stopped almost entirely.”



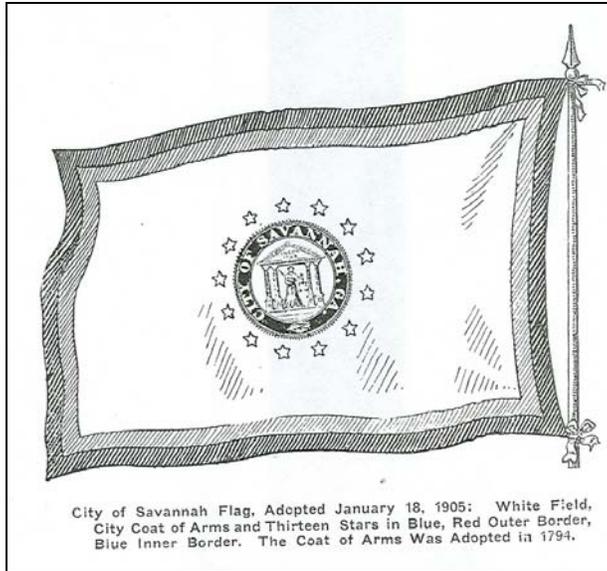
Elevation of Clerk of Council’s office as seen from public space, drawn by Hyman W. Witcover, c.1905.
City of Savannah, Engineering Department Retrospective Plans & Designs, City Hall, Drawing 24.6.
City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.
Used with permission.

“Officials Met About City Hall.” *Savannah Morning News* (28 February 1905) 10:3.

“Painted Panels for City Hall.” *Savannah Morning News* (8 February 1905) 6:1.

Savannah’s New Flag Arrives ***March 3, 1905***

On March 3, 1905, the first two flags of the City of Savannah, according to the design of Miss Cornelia Maclean chosen in January, arrived in Savannah. The flags, one measuring ten by twenty feet and the other twenty by thirty feet, were exhibited in the Mayor’s office for City officials and visitors to admire. The intention was that when the new city hall building was completed, the City’s flag would fly continuously over the government building.



City of Savannah Flag, Adopted January 18, 1905: White Field, City Coat of Arms and Thirteen Stars in Blue, Red Outer Border, Blue Inner Border. The Coat of Arms Was Adopted in 1794.

Official flag of the City of Savannah, 1905.

Report of Hon. Herman Myers, Mayor, ... of the City of Savannah, Georgia, for the Year Ending December 31st, 1905.

Savannah: Savannah City Council, 1906.

City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

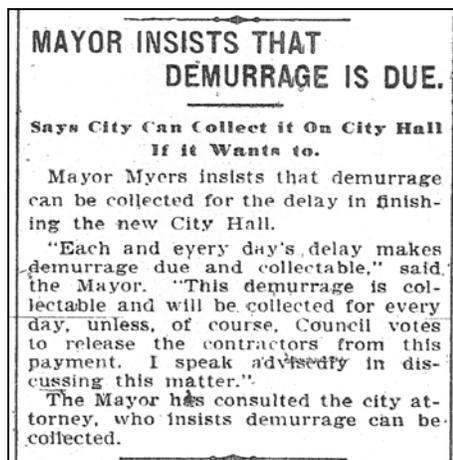
Used with permission.

"City's New Flags are Now On Hand." *Savannah Morning News* (4 March 1905) 12:2.

Demurrage Due on City Hall Project

March 5, 1905

On March 5, 1905, the *Savannah Morning News* began covering the issue of demurrage regarding the construction of city hall, a question that would reappear in the newspapers and City Council throughout the following year. According to the contract signed between the City of Savannah and the Savannah Contracting Company, the city hall building was to be finished by February 1, 1905. Every day past this deadline the City was due a \$50 penalty until the building was finished. Several factors in the delay of the project were considered out of the contractor's control, for instance building material delay. However, during the first week of March 1905, Architect Hyman W. Witcover announced that "taking out the time that was lost for which the contractors were not responsible...the contract time has now expired."



Mayor Myers declared demurrage could be collected, March 1905.

"Mayor Insists that Demurrage is Due," *Savannah Morning News* (11 March 1905) 12:2.

Used with permission.

Mayor Herman Myers consulted the City Attorney who confirmed that demurrage could be collected on the contract. Myers sent written notice to Witcover regarding demurrage, and Witcover passed it on to the Savannah Contracting Company. Mayor Myers was quoted by the newspaper:

Each and every day's delay makes demurrage due and collectable. This demurrage is collectable and will be collected for every day, unless, of course, Council votes to release the contractors from this payment. I speak advisedly in discussing this matter.

The contractors remained silent on the issue, though it was well known that if the contract and demurrage were enforced the company would lose money on the city hall building.

"Mayor Insists that Demurrage is Due." *Savannah Morning News* (11 March 1905) 12:2.

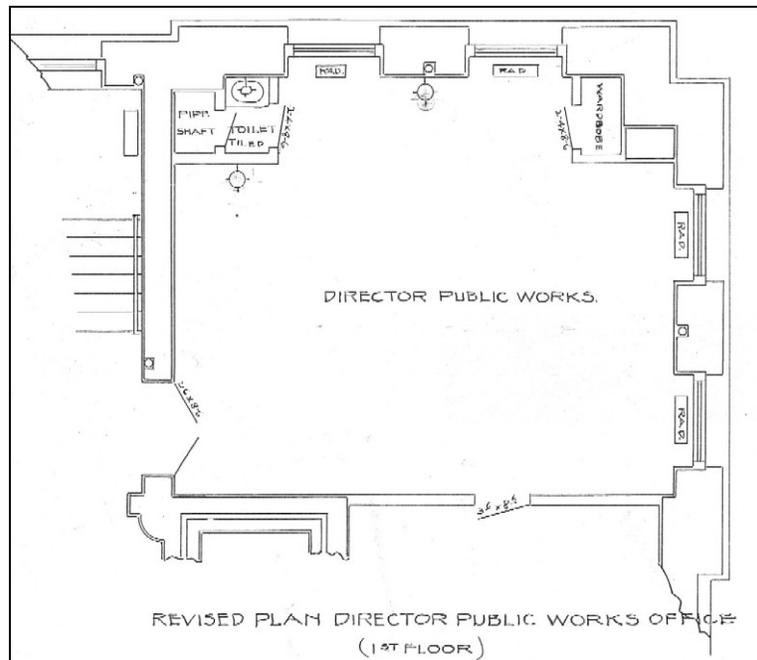
"To Finish Bank Before City Hall." *Savannah Morning News* (5 March 1905) 20:5.

City Hall Floors Tested & Office Plans Changed March 11, 1905

On March 11, 1905, members of City Council, Mayor Herman Myers and Architect Hyman Witcover visited the city hall building site to observe testing of the new floors and to inspect the building. The floor test was carried out in the Tax Assessors' office and "there was not the slightest sag in the flooring."

The floors are guaranteed to stand a weight of 300 pounds to the square foot. To make the test a large box filled with wet sand was placed in the center of the floor of one of the rooms. The sand in the box weighed 9,373 1/3 pounds. The dimensions of the box were 4 feet by 6 inches high and 5 feet by 8 inches in the other dimensions.

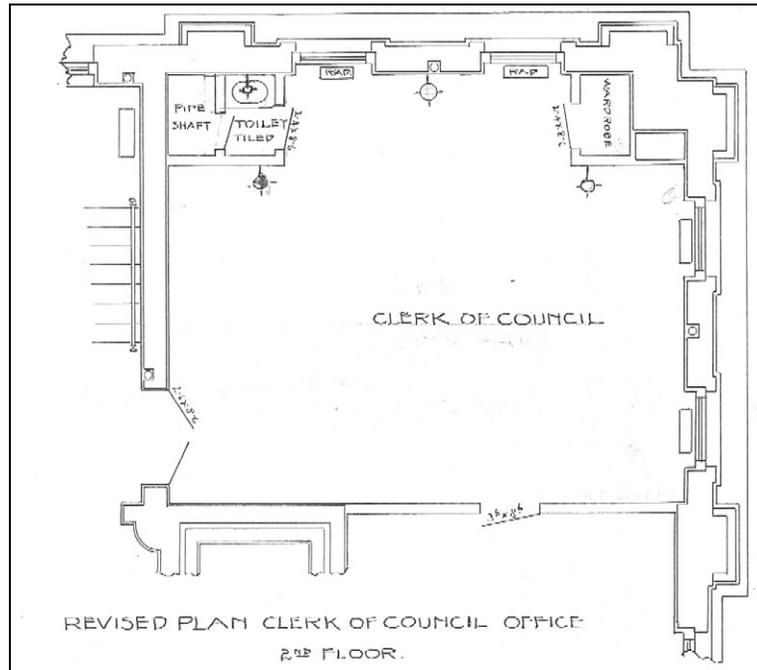
This gives considerable more pressure than guaranteed. After the test[,] portions of the floor were torn up with a crowbar to show how it was constructed. The floor is of fireproof material, laid over twisted wire drawn taut over iron rods.



Revised plan of Director of Public Works' office (1st floor), drawn by Hyman W. Witcover, March 14, 1905.
City of Savannah, Engineering Department Retrospective Plans & Designs, City Hall, Drawing 24.12.
City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

Used with permission.

The City Hall Building Committee then examined the offices of the Director of Public Works and the Clerk of Council, “both of whom were dissatisfied with the offices arranged by the architect.” The arrangement of the closets and cloak rooms was discussed. It was decided that each office did not need a separate closet and cloak room, rather they could share one closet with a washstand on one side and one cloak room on the other. The new arrangement provided that the floor plan was still balanced while opening up a window that was to have been closed.



Revised plan of Clerk of Council's office (2nd floor), drawn by Hyman W. Witcover, March 14, 1905. City of Savannah, Engineering Department Retrospective Plans & Designs, City Hall, Drawing 24.12. City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia. Used with permission.

“Floors Tested at New City Hall.” *Savannah Evening Press* (11 March 1905) 1:3.

“Two Offices Changed in New City Hall.” *Savannah Morning News* (12 March 1905) 20:4.

Municipal Journal and Engineer Highlights New City Hall March 14, 1905

On March 14, 1905, the *Savannah Morning News* ran a full transcript of a new article published in the March 1905 issue of the *Municipal Journal and Engineer*, a New York publication. The journal's article related the story of the old City Exchange and the new city hall building and was supplemented with photographs of both the old and new buildings.

The new City Hall of Savannah is about ready for occupancy, and is, perhaps, unique among municipal buildings, in that its total cost, amounting to \$250,000 will be paid from the current income of the city for 1904-05 without issuing of a single bond, note or other obligation of any kind, and without the levying of any special tax.

The new building stands on a bluff facing the foot of Bull street, the rear overlooking the river.... It occupies the site of the old city building or Exchange, as it was called, which was one of the historic buildings of the South, and the oldest brick building in the state, the corner stone having been laid in 1799. It will, therefore, preserve in a measure the memories of more than a century which cluster around the spot.

In the methods of building the two structures is seen the contrast between the caution of poverty of the early nineteenth century and the bold confidence of wealth of the twentieth century....

It is well that in its site these memories are preserved by the new building, and may its history be saturated with as marvelous achievement.

“Municipal Journal’s Story about Savannah.” *Savannah Morning News* (14 March 1905) 6:4.

“Savannah’s Old and New City Hall.” *Municipal Journal and Engineer* Vol. XVIII, No. 3 (March 1905) 136-137.

***Proposed Bridge to Span Bull Street Behind City Hall
March 15, 1905***

On March 15, 1905, the *Savannah Morning News* announced a new movement in favor of the construction of a foot bridge in the rear of the new city hall building spanning the Bull Street slip running down to the river.

The other streets running to the river are bridged and it is contended that a hardship will be inflicted on pedestrians, if they are required to walk around the City Hall to cross Bull street on the north side of Bay [street].



Bridges spanning Factors’ Walk with City Hall seen in the background, December 2004.
City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.
Used with permission.

Even though pedestrians had no such bridge to bypass the old City Exchange, Mayor Myers and the majority of the City Council were in favor of a new bridge's construction. However, Council insisted there was no way that it could be built during the current year due to the heavy expenditures for the construction of the city hall building. Mayor Myers "is heartily in favor, however, of taking the matter up early in the new year." In the meantime, Architect Hyman W. Witcover began looking into how a new bridge would affect the appearance of the new city hall building and was preparing a report for Mayor Myers.

Almost two weeks later, on March 28, 1905, members of the Savannah Cotton Exchange circulated a petition to the Mayor and Alderman supporting the proposed bridge.

"Bridge Needed in Rear of the New City Hall." *Savannah Morning News* (15 March 1905) 12:2.

"Want Bridge to Rear of New City Hall." *Savannah Morning News* (29 March 1905) 12:2.

New Flag Unfurled to the Breeze March 17, 1905

On March 17, 1905, Savannah citizens watched as the new City flag was "unfurled to the breeze" on the large flag pole in front of police headquarters. The police headquarters were still being used by the City government as their temporary offices while the city hall building was under construction. Two weeks earlier, the City received the first two flags in the new design. The smaller flag, ten by twenty feet, was used since the larger one, twenty by thirty feet, was too big for the police headquarters' flag staff. The larger flag was being saved for occupation of the new city hall building.

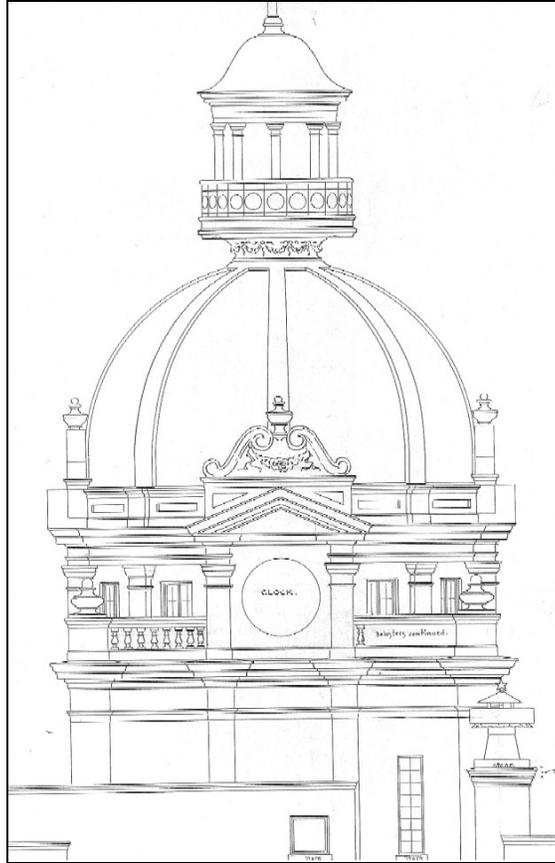


City of Savannah flag flying over City Hall (State flag on left, City flag on right), December 2004.
City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.
Used with permission.

"Savannah's New Flag Unfurled to the Breeze." *Savannah Morning News* (18 March 1905) 12:1.

City Hall Illuminated at Night March 28, 1905

On March 28, 1905, "many were surprised to see the top story of the new building brilliantly illuminated." During the previous weeks, work on the interior of the city hall building was progressing at a very rapid rate and on this evening workers began night work to keep up the momentum. However, construction of the tower above continued to move slowly.



Elevation of City Hall's tower, drawn by Hyman W. Witcover, c.1904.
 City of Savannah, Engineering Department Retrospective Plans & Designs, City Hall, Drawing 24.45.
 City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.
Used with permission.

"City Hall Work Continues at Night." *Savannah Morning News* (29 March 1905) 12:3.

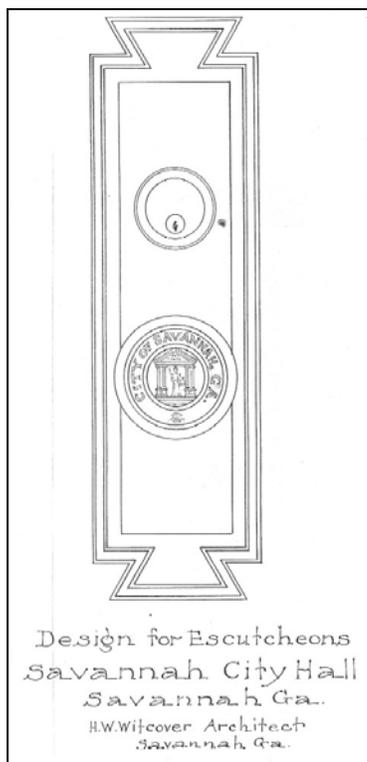
City Hall Stonework Treated with Preservative & Hardware Ordered March 30, 1905

On March 30, 1905, the City Hall Building Committee met in Mayor Myers' office with Architect Hyman Witcover to discuss certain details of the construction of the new city hall building. It was then decided to clean and treat the exterior stonework of the building to preserve its natural beauty and "crystalline whiteness."

The entire exterior of the building will be treated with a preparation to fill the pores of the stone and prevent the elements from staining it. Limestone is naturally an absorbent stone and is readily discolored by the absorption of moisture and dust or dirt combined. Unless treated with some preparation it very soon becomes discolored.

Even now before the completion of the building, the effects of the dust and dirt, incident to the work on the unfinished parts, are very evident. As soon as the building is finished it will be gone over thoroughly with steel brushes to remove all dirt that has collected. The preparation will then be applied. This fills the surface pores of the stone so that it become[s] impervious to moisture and dirt. The coating is imperceptible, yet it protects the stone. The fluid which is to be applied is colorless. The cleansing of the stone work with the steel brushes will restore it to its natural color and the application of this colorless fluid, which fills all the outer pores, will preserve this natural appearance.

In addition, all the door and window hardware for the interior of the building was ordered from the P. & F. Corbin Company, of Hartford. The specially-ordered hardware can be seen throughout City Hall today.



It is to be of a very high grade, of solid bronze and is being especially designed to conform to the style and detail of the interior decoration. The only ornament on the bronze will be the escutcheon [seal] of the city. It has been specially designed to show the coat-of-arms of Savannah to advantage.

Design of City Hall escutcheons (back plate for door knobs), drawn Hyman W. Witcover, c.1904. City of Savannah, Engineering Department Retrospective Plans & Designs, City Hall, Drawing 24.53. City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia. *Used with permission.*



Original custom-made hardware on Council Chamber doors displaying Seal of the City of Savannah, December 2004. City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia. *Used with permission.*

“New City Hall Will Have Bath.” *Savannah Morning News* (31 March 1905) 12:3.

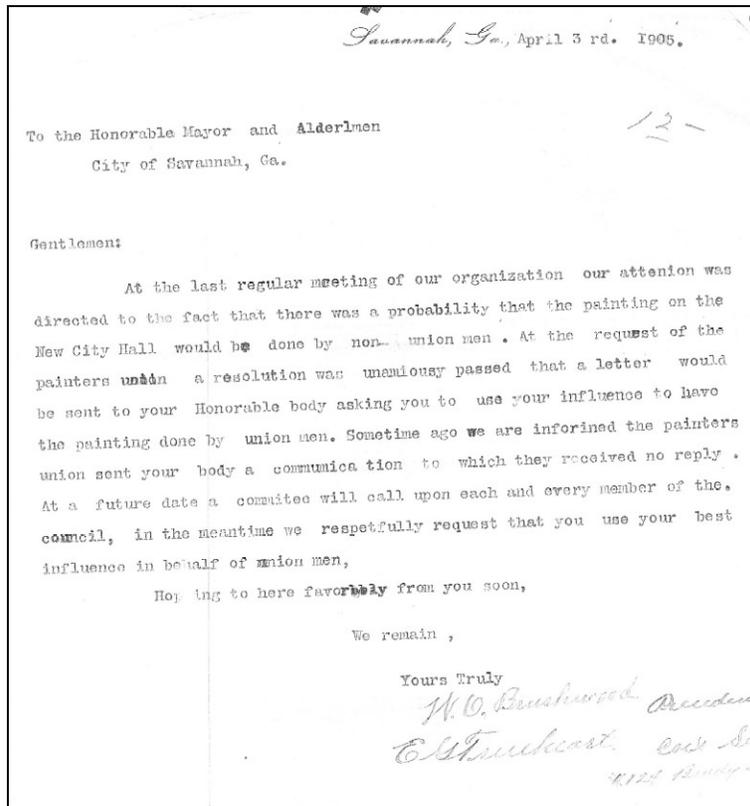
***Labor Issue Comes Back to City Council
April 12, 1905***

On April 12, 1905, City Council read a letter from W. O. Brushwood and E. G. Trueheart on behalf of the Brotherhood of Painters, Decorators and Paperhangers of America, Local No. 30 regarding the use of non-union men on the city hall construction site. Two months earlier, the Union had submitted a petition to Council urging their “influence” with the city hall contractor to have all painting completed by union workers. The petition was referred to the City Hall Building Committee and never acted on by Council.

In the letter, dated April 3, 1905, Brushwood, president of the Union, and Trueheart, corresponding secretary, stated that:

At the request of the painters union a resolution was unamiously [sic] passed that a letter would be sent to your Honorable body asking you to use your influence to have the painting done by union men. Sometime ago we are informed the painters union sent your body a communication to which they received no reply. At a future date a committee [sic] will call upon each and every member of the council, in the meantime we respectfully request that you use your best influence on behalf of union men.

Once again, the Union’s communication was referred to the Building Committee who planned to report back to Council on April 26, 1905.



Painters Union petition to City Council, April 3, 1905.

“Petition: W. O. Brushwood, President Painters Union to City Council,” (3 April 1905, in Council 12 April 1905).

City Council Meeting Papers-Proceedings of Council, Box PRO 93, 0115-001-A290, Folder 865.

City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

Used with permission.

“Petition: Brotherhood Painter and Paperhangers Union No. 30,” (10 February 1905, in Council 15 February 1905). City Council Meeting Papers-Proceedings of Council, Box PRO 93, 0115-001-A290, Folder 865. City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

"Petition: W. O. Brushwood, President Painters Union to City Council," (3 April 1905, in Council 12 April 1905). City Council Meeting Papers-Proceedings of Council, Box PRO 93, 0115-001-A290, Folder 865. City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

City Hall Plasterwork to Begin

April 20, 1905

On April 20, 1905, the *Savannah Morning News* announced that a test portion of the interior plasterwork had been applied in the new city hall building and all the necessary material for the plaster work had finally arrived. There were still a few tasks that needed to be completed, including last minute pipe installation in several of the rooms, and it was projected that it would be seven to ten days before plastering commenced.



Curved plaster wall and ceiling surrounding second floor rotunda, December 2004.
City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.
Used with permission.

"City Hall Plastering to be Started Soon." *Savannah Morning News* (20 April 1905) 12:1.

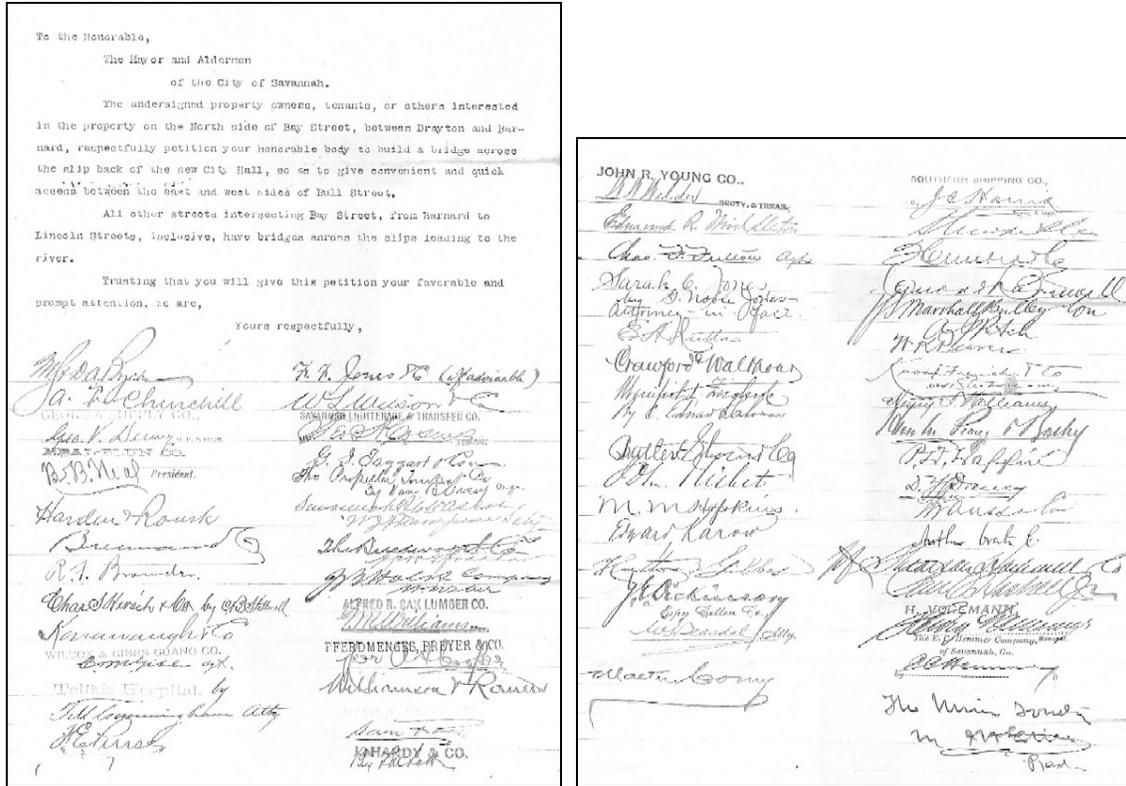
Union Society Petitions for Bridge

April 25, 1905

On April 25, 1905, during a Union Society meeting at Bethesda, J. W. Jackson, on the suggestion of Society president Colonel J. H. Estill, proposed a resolution to City Council endorsing the proposal to construct a bridge on the north side of the new city hall building to connect the east and west sides of Bay Street at the foot of Bull Street. The resolution was unanimously adopted by the Union Society members.

In bringing the matter to the attention of the society, [Colonel Estill] said such an improvement would greatly benefit the property owned by the society, left it by the Clinch estate. Other property in the vicinity would likewise be benefited, as was evidenced by a petition signed by every property owner and tenant in the neighborhood, asking Council to erect such a bridge.

The petition mentioned had been circulated by Colonel Walter E. Coney, Union Society treasurer, and was signed by sixty-one persons and firms in the vicinity of the city hall construction site. The Union Society determined to present the petition and a copy of the resolution adopted on this day to the Mayor and Aldermen.



Petition to City Council for bridge to span Bull Street north of City Hall, May 8, 1905. "Petition: Property Owners, Tenants, et. al. between Drayton and Barnard streets to City Council," (8 May 1905, in Council 10 May 1905 and 24 May 1905). City Council Meeting Papers-Committee of the Whole, Box WHL 1, 0115-001-A64, Folder 1. City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia. Used with permission.

"To Build Bridge Back of City Hall." Savannah Morning News (26 April 1905) 12:2.

City Council Rules No Control Over Labor Force Used April 26, 1905

On April 26, 1905, the Building Committee reported back to City Council regarding the petition and communications of the Brotherhood of Painters, Decorators and Paperhangers, Local No. 30. The Painters' Union, on two occasions, requested City Council to use their "influence" with the Savannah Contracting Company to have all painting work for the new city hall building completed by union workers. After ignoring the first petition in February, the Union wrote a letter to City Council in early April forcing the City Hall Building Committee to address the issue.

In a report dated April 19, 1905, the City Hall Building Committee informed City Council that, after consulting both the City Attorney and Architect Hyman Witcover on the matter, they had no authority to influence the contractor regarding sub-contracts and laborers.

...the communication referred to was given careful consideration by this committee. Under the opinions of both the city attorney and the architect the Committee must report that the contract permits the contractors to employ whatever class of labor they may

desire, provided the work is done in a satisfactory manner and in accordance with the terms of the contract. The City, we find, cannot in anywise stipulate or limit the class of labor to be employed on any of the work. While we would personally prefer to see union hands employed we are not in position to advise or dictate to the contractors whom they shall employ. Under the terms of the contract it would not be prudent, your committee is advised, for this committee or Council to interfere with the contractors in any way....

The report was read to City Council and adopted.

Savannah, Ga., April 19, 1905.

The Special Committee on new City Hall, to which was referred the communication from the Painters Union, requesting that Council use its good offices to have only Union men employed in the painting of the new municipal building, begs to report that the communication referred to was given careful consideration by this committee. Under the opinions of both the city attorney and the architect the Committee must report that the contract permits the contractors to employ whatever class of labor they may desire, provided the work is done in a satisfactory manner and in accordance with the terms of the contract. The City, we find, cannot in anywise stipulate or limit the class of labor to be employed on any of the work. While we would personally prefer to see union hands employed we are not in position to advise or dictate to the contractors whom they shall employ. Under the terms of the contract it would not be prudent, your committee is advised, for this committee or Council to interfere with the contractors in any way so long as the work is done to the satisfaction of the representatives of the City and as provided for in the contract.

Respectfully submitted, *Thomas Hays*

Chairman Special Committee on New City Hall,

Report of Building Committee to City Council regarding Painters Union petition, April 16, 1905.
 "Report of Special Committee on New City Hall re. Painters Union Communication," (19 April 1905, in Council 26 April 1905).
 City Council Meeting Papers-Proceedings of Council, Box PRO 93, 0115-001-A290, Folder 865.
 City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.
Used with permission.

"Council No Authority with City Hall Labor." *Savannah Morning News* (27 April 1905) 12:1.

"Petition: Brotherhood Painter and Paperhangers Union No. 30," (10 February 1905, in Council 15 February 1905). City Council Meeting Papers-Proceedings of Council, Box PRO 93, 0115-001-A290, Folder 865. City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

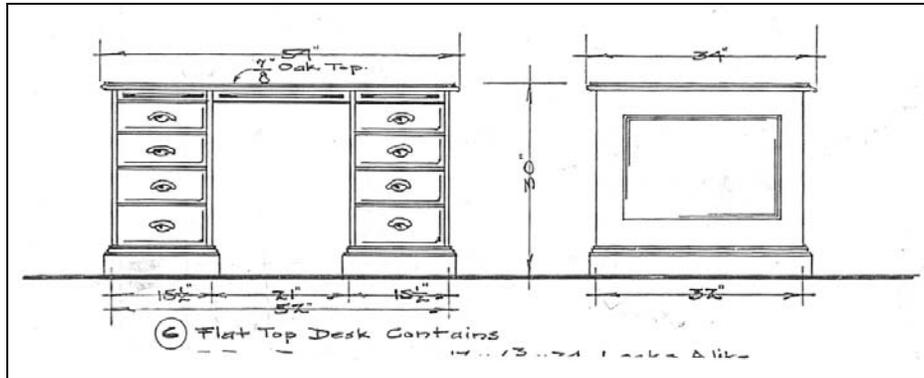
"Petition: W. O. Brushwood, President Painters Union to City Council," (3 April 1905, in Council 12 April 1905). City Council Meeting Papers- Proceedings of Council, Box PRO 93, 0115-001-A290, Folder 865. City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

"Report to Council from Special Committee on New City Hall," (19 April 1905, in Council 26 April 1905). City Council Meeting Papers- Proceedings of Council, Box PRO 93, 0115-001-A290, Folder 865. City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

Furniture and Clock to be Decided Soon

May 4, 1905

On May 4, 1905, the *Savannah Morning News* announced that the City Hall Building Committee would soon meet to discuss the details of decorating and furnishing the city hall building, as well as, plans for purchasing the clock and bell for the tower.



Design for flat top desk for office of City Marshal, drawn by Hyman W. Witcover, 1905.
City of Savannah, Engineering Department Retrospective Plans & Designs, City Hall, Drawing 24.4, Sheet 1.
City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.
Used with permission.

Architect Witcover was almost finished preparing drawings and plans for the furniture, at which time a committee meeting would be called.

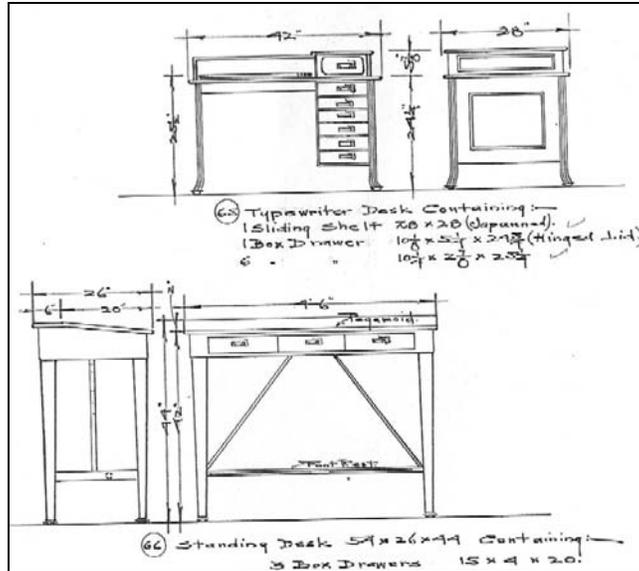
The plans for the furniture for the building have involved an immense amount of work. The requirement of each office has been carefully studied, and special devices designed to suit them. All this in addition to the regular furniture, such as chairs, tables and desks.

As early as March, Witcover had been sending rough drafts of the furniture plans to the various department heads so that they could review the placement of lights, furniture, and built-ins for maximum efficiency in each office, offering them the chance to request improvements.

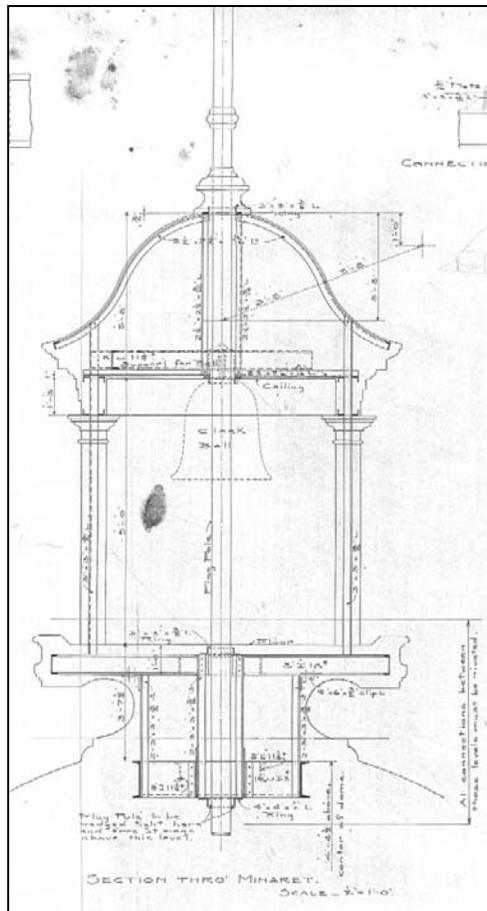
The purchase of the clock and bell was already becoming an important issue. It would be a large investment and their function was very important to the smooth running of the City.

The clock for the City Hall will be an enormous affair. Bids will probably be advertised for furnishing the clock and installing it. The bell for the clock, according to the plans, is to weigh 1,500 pounds. It will be swung in the open tower above the dome, so that it can be heard for a great distance. The dials on the clock are to be seven feet in diameter. They will be illuminated, so that the hands may be seen at a considerable distance.

The original plans called for only one bell, however it was circulating that "two bells with different tones be secured for the clock, one to strike the hours and the other the halves and quarters." This would be a decision the committee would soon make.



Designs for typewriter desk (above) and standing desk (below) for office of Clerk of Council, drawn by Hyman W. Witcover, 1905. City of Savannah, Engineering Department Retrospective Plans & Designs, City Hall, Drawing 24.4, Sheet 8. City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia. Used with permission.



Section through minaret (cupola) showing original location of single bell, drawn by Hyman W. Witcover, c.1904. City of Savannah, Engineering Department Retrospective Plans & Designs, City Hall, Drawing 24.42. City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia. Used with permission.

"Correspondence from H. W. Witcover, architect, to G. M. Gadsden, Director of Public Works," (14 March 1905). City Council Meeting Papers-Mayor's Papers, MAY 1, Box 0115-001-A, Folder 12. City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

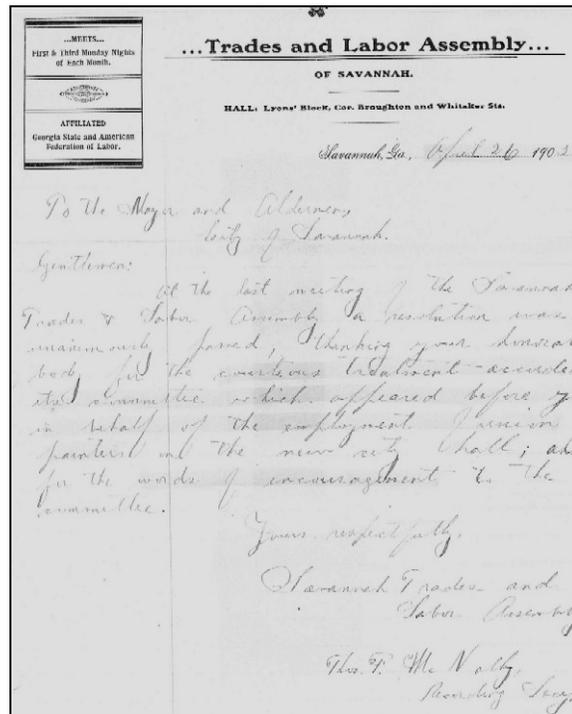
"To Consider Furniture, Decorations and Clock." *Savannah Morning News* (4 May 1905) 10:2.

***Labor Dispute Ends on Positive Note
May 10, 1905***

On May 10, 1905, City Council heard correspondence from the Savannah Trades and Labor Assembly thanking them for their handling of the labor dispute regarding the painting of the new city hall building. In a letter written on April 26, 1905, Thomas F. McNally, recording secretary, informed Council:

At the last meeting of the Savannah Trades & Labor Assembly a resolution was unanimously passed, thanking your honorable body for the courteous treatment accorded its committee which appeared before you in behalf of the employment of union painters on the new city hall; and for words of encouragement to the committee.

This final correspondence to Council ended the labor controversy and indicated that the members of City Council, while not siding with the local union, had treated everyone equally and with respect.



Thank you letter to City Council regarding labor issue, April 26, 1905.

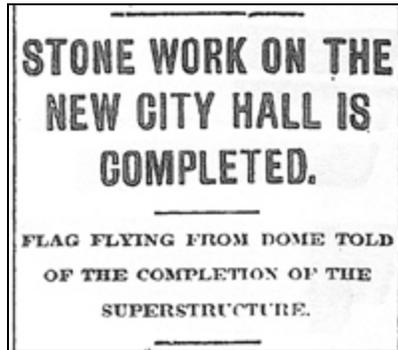
"Correspondence from Savannah Trades and Labor Assembly to City Council," (26 April 1905, in Council 10 May 1905). City Council Meeting Papers-Proceedings of Council, Box PRO 93, 0115-001-A290, Folder 867. City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

Used with permission.

"Correspondence from Savannah Trades and Labor Assembly to City Council," (26 April 1905, in Council 10 May 1905). City Council Meeting Papers-Proceedings of Council, Box PRO 93, 0115-001-A290, Folder 867. City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

***Last Stone Laid & U. S. Flag Flown in Celebration
May 11, 1905***

On May 11, 1905, contractor A. R. Stewart laid the last piece of stonework on the new city hall building when he personally placed the front finial of the tower into position. To celebrate this event, eleven months in the making, the United States flag was raised at noon to the top of the dome and “workmen cheered as the flag was hoisted to the breeze.”



Last of stone work laid on city hall building, May 1905.
"Stone Work on the New City Hall is Completed," *Savannah Evening Press* (12 May 1905) 5:3-4.
Used with permission.

The American flag which floats from the front of the dome of the new city hall indicates that the stone work on the building is completed.... To mark this important event in the construction of the building an American flag was raised on the Bull street side of the tower and it floated there for the rest of the day.



City Hall dome with American flag flying from cupola, December 2004.
City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.
Used with permission.

Mr. Stewart's portion of the work included the demolition and removal of the old City Exchange, laying of the new foundation, and the construction of the new city hall's superstructure.

Mr. Stewart occupied eleven months in tearing down the old exchange and completing the superstructure of the new one.... All that remains for him to do now is to clean off the stone and put it in position for turning his part of the building over to the Savannah Contracting Company.

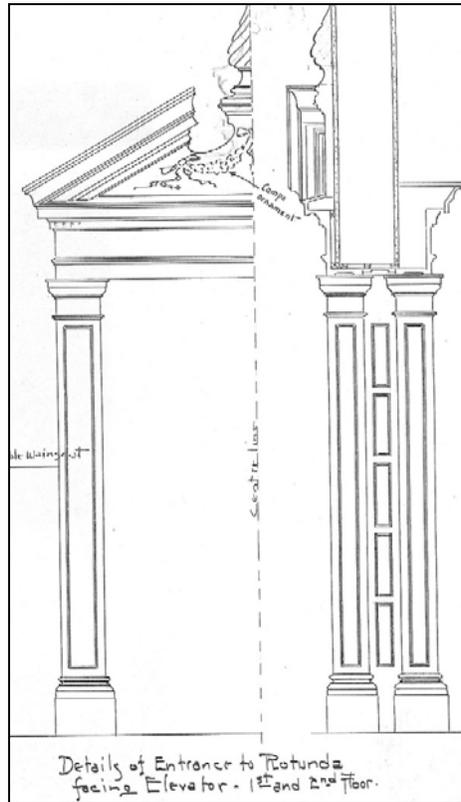
The City Hall Building Committee met in the afternoon at Mayor Myers' office where they "determined to have two bells for the City Hall clock instead of one, as was originally intended. The bells will be so tuned as to produce a chime effect." Several estimates for supplying the clock were already received and bids would soon be called for.

"City Hall Clock to Have Two Bells." *Savannah Morning News* (12 May 1905) 10:2.

"Stone Work Finished; and U. S. Flag Hoisted." *Savannah Morning News* (12 May 1905) 10:2.

"Stone Work on the New City Hall is Completed." *Savannah Evening Press* (12 May 1905) 5:3-4.

***Contractor Stewart to Depart Soon
May 14, 1905***



Woodwork Details: entrance to rotunda facing elevator on first and second floors, drawn by Hyman W. Witcover, c.1904.
City of Savannah, Engineering Department Retrospective Plans & Designs, City Hall, Drawing 24.69.
City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.
Used with permission.

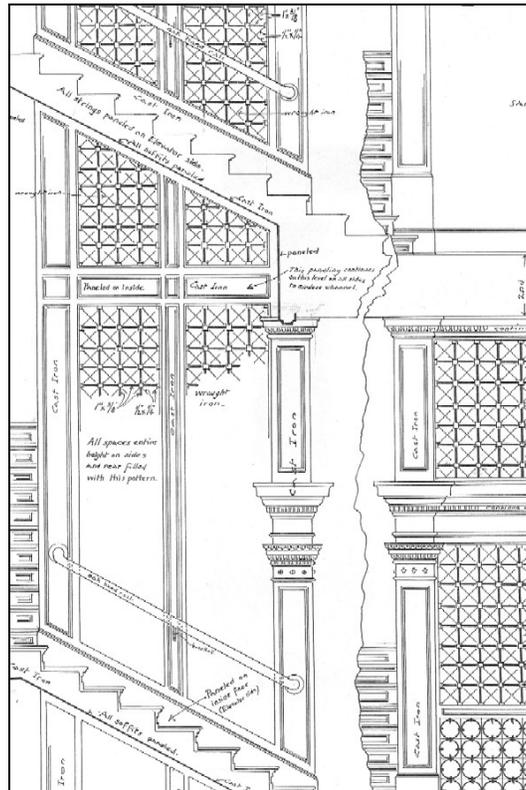
On May 14, 1905, the new city hall building was undergoing a cleaning and coating of the finished exterior stonework.

The entire exterior of the building is to be given a coating of some preparations which will render impervious the porous limestone. After the preparation is applied, the limestone will retain its natural color. The stone is naturally very porous and absorbs moisture rapidly. To prevent this the preparation is to be applied. It does not change the stone at all, it is said, except to fill the pores, and preserve it in its natural state.

Mr. A. R. Stewart, sub-contractor for most of the project, was preparing to ship his plant (supplies and equipment) to Columbia, South Carolina, where he kept his headquarters. Stewart planned to turn over his portion of the work, which included all the brick, granite and limestone work, to the Savannah Contracting Company within about ten days and leave town. The only work left for him was the cleaning of the stone and getting his “outfit together and reading for shipping.”

That Mr. Stewart has done a good job on the building, no one who looks at it can doubt. Except the top of the tower, which is to be of metal, the exterior of the building is now complete, and it only remains to finish out the shell, which has been constructed.

As for the interior, the plastering was almost finished, and most of the doors and windows were ready to be installed. The hardwood work, interior marble work, and ironwork for the stairways and elevators had not been started yet.

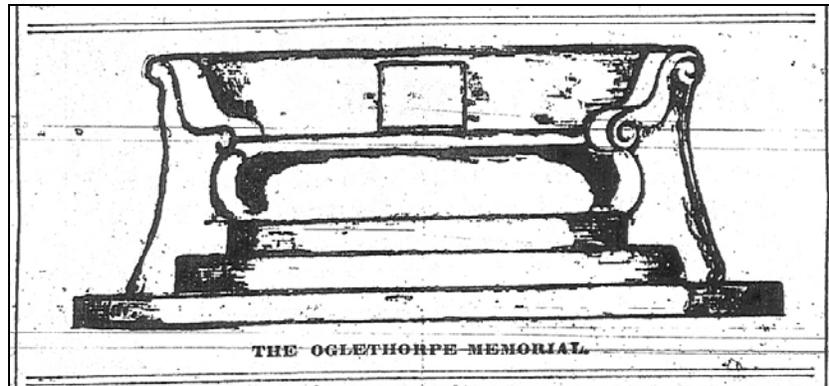


Ironwork Details: screens around elevator shaft, drawn by Hyman W. Witcover, c.1904.
 City of Savannah, Engineering Department Retrospective Plans & Designs, City Hall, Drawing 24.70.
 City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.
 Used with permission.

“Now Cleaning New City Hall.” *Savannah Morning News* (14 May 1905) 16:3.

***Oglethorpe Monument Planned for the Strand
May 29, 1905***

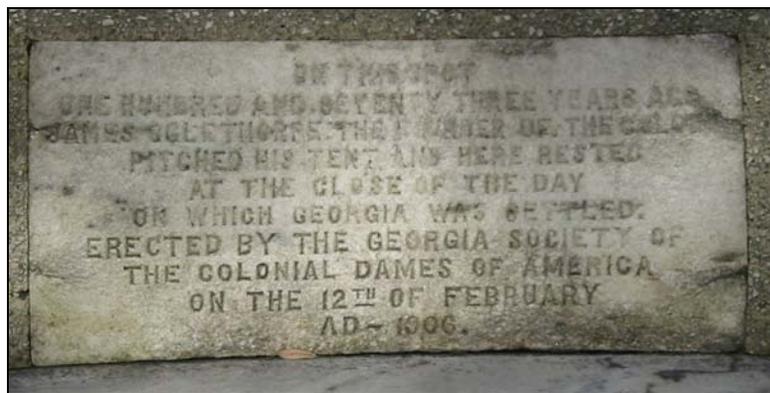
On May 29, 1905, the *Savannah Morning News* announced plans of the Georgia Society of the Colonial Dames of America to erect a memorial bench in honor of General James E. Oglethorpe on the spot he pitched his first tent, just west of the city hall site on the Strand. The Colonial Dames had been planning a memorial for some time and had finally settled on the design for a semi-circular bench made of white stone and marble set upon a platform measuring nine feet by twelve feet. It was projected that the erection of the monument would take only a few months and cost around five-hundred dollars.



Proposed design for Oglethorpe Memorial Bench, designed by Architect J. DeBruyn Kops.
"Bench that Colonial Dames are to Erect," *Savannah Morning News* (17 September 1905) 17:3-4.
Used with permission.

Chairman of Council James M. Dixon, a member of the City Hall Building Committee, was asked how he felt about the monument and the newspaper announced:

He regards the action of the society as timely and thinks the seat will add to the appearance of the ground in the immediate vicinity of the new building.



Oglethorpe Memorial Bench plaque explaining significance of the location, December 2004.
City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.
Used with permission.

Mrs. Edward Karow, who was in charge of making all the necessary arrangements for the monument, wrote the Mayor and Aldermen two days later requesting permission to erect the memorial on the desired spot, which was City property. The Colonial Dames asked that the City dedicate a small piece of land for the bench. The petition was not read in City Council until June 7, 1905 when it was referred to the Committee on Streets and Lanes. On July 5, 1905, Chairman D. R. Thomas reported that the committee was in favor of the location of the memorial and recommended approval with the stipulation that the City "have full

jurisdiction over and ownership” of the memorial after its erection. The committee’s report was adopted by Council on July 5, 1905 and the Colonial Dames were given the final approval they needed.



Oglethorpe Memorial Bench, located in the Strand just west of City Hall on Bay Street, December 2004.
City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.
Used with permission.

“City Will Designate Spot for Memorial.” *Savannah Morning News* (3 June 1905) 12:2.

“Petition: Georgia Society of the Colonial Dames of America to City Council,” (31 May 1905, in Council 7 June 1905, 5 July 1905).
City Council Meeting Papers-Proceedings of Council, Box PRO 95, 0115-001-A292, Folder 879. City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

“Will Mark Spot Where Oglethorpe Landed.” *Savannah Morning News* (29 May 1905) 8:2.

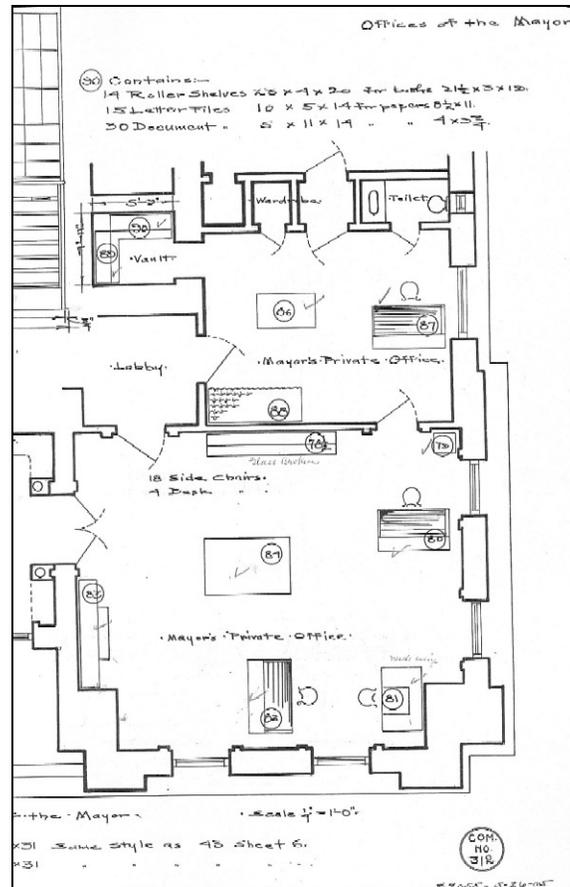
Tower Clock and Furniture Bids to be Called For June 1, 1905

On June 1, 1905, the City Hall Building Committee met in Mayor Myer’s office at noon to discuss the process for securing bids on the furniture necessary for the city hall building.

It had been the intention of the authorities to get estimates for the furniture and let the contract without advertising for bids, but this plan was overruled, as it was desired to give every one a fair chance at the contract.

In addition, the committee decided to advertise for the new clock and bells, including their installation in the tower. As with the furniture, estimates had already been secured and the committee had considered letting the contract without advertising for bids.

Kicks were registered against the method of procedure, however, and yesterday the plan was abandoned and the public advertisement plan adopted both for the clock and the furniture. The advertising plan gives every one, local and out-of-town firms, a chance to compete, whereas by the other method bids from only the larger and better known firms were being secured.



Metal furniture plans for the offices of the Mayor showing layout and type of furniture, drawn by Hyman W. Witcover, May 26, 1905. City of Savannah, Engineering Department Retrospective Plans & Designs, City Hall, Drawing 24.4, Sheet 10. City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia. Used with permission.

Architect Hyman W. Witcover had recently finished extensive plans for the furniture which all bids needed to be based on. There were two separate furniture plans prepared, one for all wood furniture and one for metal furniture. Firms would be allowed to bid on one plan or both.

If the metal is selected, the colors must conform to the general scheme of the interior finish. If wood is used, the Council chamber will be furnished in mahogany and all the rest of the building in quartered oak. This corresponds exactly with the general scheme or treatment and interior finish.

Witcover's plans were very detailed and covered every item to be placed in the new city hall building:

The plans for the furniture are very formidable, embracing twenty-one sheets of drawings. Every piece of furniture is given in detail. There is a drawing of each room, the location of each piece of furniture being denoted with a number. On the same sheet there is a detailed drawing of each piece of furniture separately.... The plans for the furniture include all desks, tables, filing devices, vault furniture, wardrobes, book racks, etc.

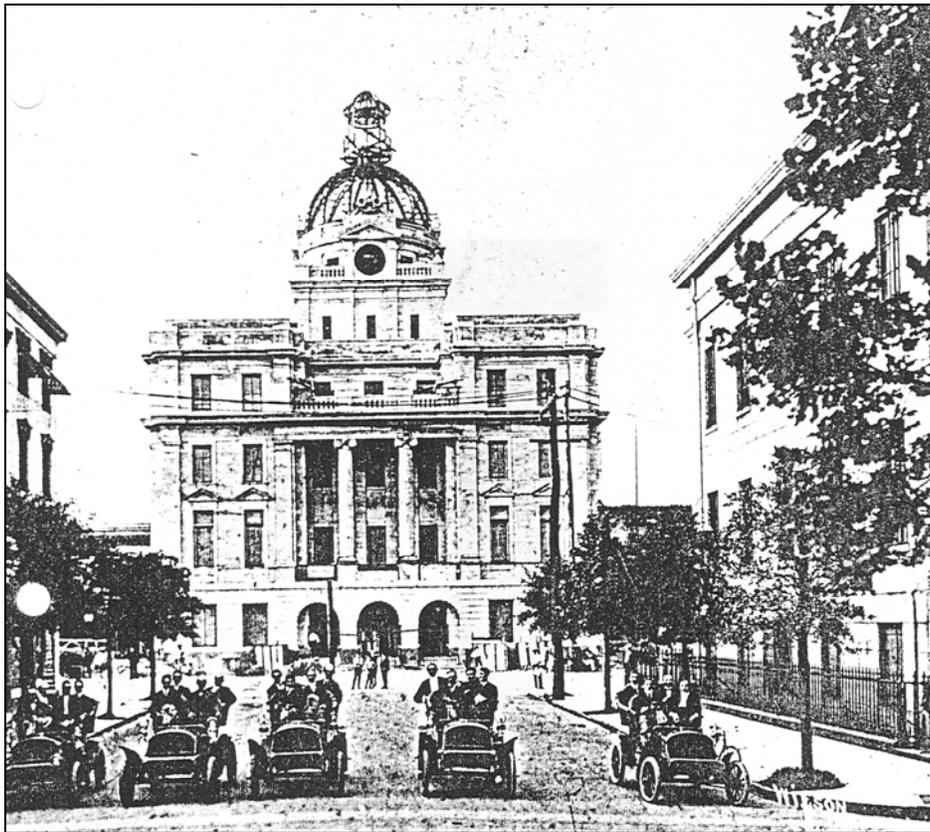
The Building Committee also decided to purchase two ornamental electric lamps to light either side of the main entrance on Bay Street. The wires would be underground and the style of the lamps would "be in keeping with the general appearance of the building."

"Furniture Plan for City Hall." *Savannah Morning News* (2 June 1905) 10:5.

***Automobile Ride for Mayor and Aldermen
June 3, 1905***

On June 3, 1905, Mr. T. A. Bryson, owner of an automobile garage, sent invitations to the members of City Council for an automobile ride to local resorts following the next City Council meeting. The local newspaper reported that “it is promised that there will be eight Franklins loaded with the political stuff of the town.”

Following the June 7th meeting, Mr. Bryson picked up his guests at Police Headquarters, the City government’s temporary seat, and started the trip with a visit to the city hall building site where the “autos and their contents [were] photographed.” They then visited Bethesda, Isle of Hope and Thunderbolt before returning to Savannah.



Mayor and aldermen pose in automobiles in front of unfinished city hall building, photograph by M. Ed. Wilson, June 7, 1905.
Local Reference Files-City Hall (*original source unknown*).
City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.
Used with permission.

As guests of Mr. T. A. Bryson, members of Mayor Myers’ official family covered about twenty-five miles in automobiles late yesterday afternoon, after the meeting of City Council.

The parade of Franklins left police headquarters shortly before 6 o’clock and moved to the new City Hall, where several pictures were taken by Mr. M. Ed. Wilson. Then the county’s splendid roads were tested and mile after mile was clipped off without a mishap.

The autoing party visited Bethesda first, going via Estill [Victory Drive] and Waters avenues. From Bethesda a rapid run was made to Isle of Hope, with a brief stop at the home of Col. J. H. Estill, where Mr. T. Larry Gantt of Smithsonia joined the party.

From Isle of Hope a hot pace was set for the Thunderbolt Casino, where the members were given an opportunity of settling the dust that had accumulated in their throats. The run from the Casino to the city was made in record time, after Mr. Bryson had been cordially thanked for the trip, which was unanimously voted a most pleasant one.

Though eight cars were originally planned, five Franklin automobiles made the trip with Mr. Bryson, Mayor Myers, Chairman of Council James M. Dixon and Honorable W. W. Osborne in the first car; Aldermen W. H. Wright and John Canty, and Director of Public Works George M. Gadsden in the second; Aldermen J. H. McKenna, A. J. Garfunkel and W. L. Grayson in the third; Aldermen John F. Glatigny and E. A. M. Schroeder, Mr. T. Larry Gantt and Mr. Marion Lucas in the fourth; and finally in the fifth car Marshal H. E. Dreeson, Messenger of Council Charles Gradot, and Mr. J. Fred Bernhardt.

"Aldermen in Autos Spun Over Roads." *Savannah Morning News* (8 June 1905) 12:5.

"Mayor and Aldermen in Automobiles." *Savannah Morning News* (4 June 1905) 20:2.

Council at War over Bid Process June 7, 1905



The local newspaper followed the heated furniture debate closely, June 8, 1905. "Council at War over Furniture," *Savannah Morning News* (8 June 1905) 12:1. Used with permission.

On June 7, 1905, the Retail Merchant's Association, represented by a committee of W. J. Lindsay, J. N. Geil and J. C. Manning, presented a petition to City Council protesting the original plan to ask only certain firms to submit bids for the new city hall furniture. The petition, as follows, was referred to the Committee of the Whole who returned to it at the June 21st meeting where it was "received as information":

We, the retail dealers of Savannah offer you this our petition requesting that all of the goods, of what ever nature that may be wanted to furnish the new City Hall, be purchased through the merchants of Savannah.

We feel that this is no more than just, as we are all tax payers, and lots of the revenue that has gone in to the City Hall, has come from the retail dealers, and we should be given the opportunity to submit our bids, on what is needed in the way of furnishings.

The petition was accompanied by the signatures of thirty-two Savannah firms, including Theus & Company, B. H. Levy Brothers & Company, Krouskoff Brothers & Company, and Lindsay & Morgan. The Retail Merchant's Association questioned the City Hall Building Committee's intentions despite their June 1st decision to open the bidding for both the furniture and clock to all dealers.

the Mayor said he thought it would be just as well to restrict the bidding to local dealers altogether.

In trying to smooth out the situation, Alderman Dixon proposed that the resolution only apply to the furniture bids since the clock bids had already been advertised to be opened on June 19th. However, Alderman Garfunkel would not compromise. Then followed a prolonged discussion of what “preference being given to local dealers all things being equal” meant. Garfunkel said that if a local dealer had a lower bid for the same goods then the local dealer should be awarded the contract, and Mayor Myers insisted this was the way all contracts had been awarded in the past.

“We are not here to make capital out of this, gentlemen,” retorted the Mayor. “We have always given the preference to home people, but we have never advertised the fact in advance before.”

In the end, Alderman Oliver proposed striking the words “preference being given to local dealers, all things being equal” from Garfunkel’s resolution. Oliver believed, “there was no doubt that Council would give the preference to a local dealer,” and while he preferred a local dealer he did not prefer paying “a much higher price for the same goods” just for the sake of giving the contract to a local firm. The compromise resolution was adopted and reads in the City Council minutes as follows:

Resolved, That bids be invited for furniture, fixture furnishings and clock for the new City Hall, bids to be advertised at least thirty (30) days and to be directed to and opened by the Mayor and Aldermen. Adopted.

The resolution greatly changed the manner in which contracts were awarded on the city hall project, taking the decision making out of the hands of the City Hall Building Committee which had previously opened the bids, selected the winner and then presented their recommendations to Council for final approval. In addition, the clock bids, which would have been opened on June 19th, would be postponed to meet the thirty day requirement established by Garfunkel’s resolution.

“Council at War Over Furniture.” *Savannah Morning News* (8 June 1905) 12:1.

Official Proceedings of City Council (7 June 1905) 24, 26; (21 June 1905) 31. City of Savannah, Clerk of Council’s Office, Savannah, Georgia.

“Petition: Retail Merchant’s Association of Savannah, Georgia to City Council,” (7 June 1905, in Council 7 June 1905, 21 June 1905). City Council Meeting Papers-Proceedings of Council, Box PRO 95, 0115-001-A292, Folder 879. City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

“Retail Merchants to Go Before Council.” *Savannah Morning News* (7 June 1905) 12:2, 3.

“Wanted to Favor the Local Bidders.” *Savannah Evening Press* (8 June 1905) 3:5.

Stormy Session of Council over Awarding of Contracts July 8, 1905

On July 8, 1905, City Council met at 1:15 pm to open the bids for furniture and clocks for the new city hall building. The received bids were as follows:

For wood and/or metal furniture:

Art Metal Construction Company, Jamestown, New York, for metal furniture in 90 days
\$16,992.00

General Fire Proofing Company, Youngstown, Ohio, for metal furniture in 200 days
\$22,816.95

Lindsay & Morgan, of Savannah, for M. Ohmer’s Sons Company, Dayton, Ohio, for quartered oak wood furniture (not including furniture for vault) furnished in 84 days
\$12,913.00

Savannah Stationary and Printing Company, by A. L. Girtman, Treasurer, agent for the Library Bureau of Boston, \$17,545.67, City pays freight and places it in the building

For tower and secondary clocks:

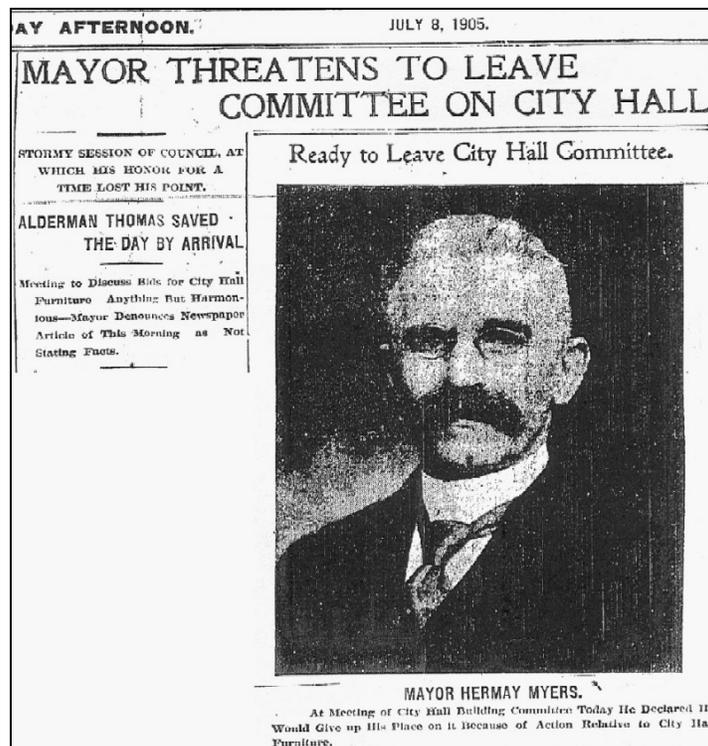
- Robert Schneider, for Howard Clocks \$3,980.00
- E. Howard Clock Company, New York, for Howard Clocks \$3,990.00
- A. Wachstein, for Seth Thomas Clocks \$3,640.00
- Seth Thomas Company, New York, for Seth Thomas Clocks \$3,645.00

The bid of the Self Winding Clock Company, of Brooklyn, New York (representing the Western Union Telegraph Company), was thrown out since it did not include bells, and therefore did not adhere to the specifications provided by the Building Committee. Several firms had requested specifications but then did not submit bids in time, including for furniture Berger Manufacturing Company, of Canton, Ohio, A. H. Andrews Company of Chicago, and M. S. & D. A. Byck, of Savannah, and for clocks Desbouillons Jewelers of Savannah. In the case of the clock bids, both the Thomas and Howard manufacturers submitted a price slightly higher than the local representative's price for the same product, "the factories evidently having decided that it would be better to allow the clocks placed through local dealers."

The newspaper suggested that the furniture contract would likely come down to the two lowest bidders, Lindsay & Morgan and the Art Metal Construction Company:

It is thought, though, that the prices are near enough together to make the decision depend almost entirely upon which of the two kinds of furniture is preferred by a majority of the members of Council. It is thought that it will simply resolve itself into a question of which class of furniture is the more desirable.

Alderman Dixon made a motion for the Building Committee to tabulate the bids and make a recommendation to Council. Alderman Garfunkel argued that Council as a whole should make the awards according to a recent resolution, and asked that the committee tabulate the bids and make no recommendation. Dixon's plan was passed after discussion where "it could easily be seen that the Mayor and some of the aldermen were getting madder and madder." Mayor Myers considered the action discourteous to the Building Committee.



Mayor Herman Myers threatened to abandon the City Hall Committee in the heat of the debate, July 1905. "Mayor Threatens to Leave Committee on City Hall," *Savannah Evening Press* (8 July 1905) 1:4-6. Used with permission.

For a time the objects of the meeting were lost sight of in the feelings engendered. Roasts were handed out and resignations from the committee threatened, while the aldermen stormed. Mayor Myer's forces had been put to rout and he had stated that he would no longer serve on the city hall committee when Alderman Thomas happened in and added his vote to the minority, saving the day...

Like Blucher at Waterloo, Alderman Thomas arrived to stem the tide against the forces of the mayor.

Council appeared to be deadlocked until Alderman Thomas arrived late. After being filled in on the situation, he pointed out that Dixon's original motion stated that the committee make recommendations that then Council could either approve or turn down, and "that it was useless for the committee to work and not to report its conclusions to council." "If the committee was simply to do clerical work, the bids had better go to the clerk." The original motion to have the committee tabulate the bids and make a recommendation to Council was then carried, and Mayor Myers stated the committee would meet the following Monday.

"Bids were Secured from Several Concerns." *Savannah Morning News* (9 July 1905) 17:2.

"Council at War Over the Bids." *Savannah Morning News* (9 July 1905) 20:5.

"Many Will Bid on Furniture." *Savannah Morning News* (2 July 1905) 16:5.

"Mayor Threatens to Leave Committee on City Hall." *Savannah Evening Press* (8 July 1905) 1:4-6.

Official Proceedings of City Council (8 July 1905) 39. City of Savannah, Clerk of Council's Office, Savannah, Georgia.

Building Committee to Support Metal Furniture Bid July 10, 1905

On July 10, 1905, the special Building Committee met in a secret meeting to discuss the clock and furniture bids opened two days earlier. The committee was unanimous in its support of the Art Metal Construction Company's bid for furniture and that of Robert Schneider to supply Howard clocks, but refrained from making any public announcements, holding out for a second meeting on July 11th. After the bitter discussion at the July 8th City Council meeting, everyone was preparing for a long fight over the furniture bids.

The recommendations of the committee are almost certain to be fought in Council and fought bitterly, judging by the feeling displayed at the last meeting.

There is likely to be a hard fight both on the furniture and the clocks. Lindsay & Morgan, the local representatives of the Ohmer people in the bid that is before Council, will be advocated, it is thought, by some of the aldermen.

"Committee for the Art Company." *Savannah Morning News* (11 July 1905) 12:1.

"Will Meet To-Day to Discuss Bids." *Savannah Morning News* (10 July 1905) 8:6.

Committee Work Suspended to Investigate Charges against Architect July 11, 1905

On July 11, 1905, charges of Mr. W. J. Lindsay, of Lindsay & Morgan, against Architect Hyman W. Witcover were made public. Lindsay alleged that the specifications for the furniture were prepared using the catalogs of the Art Metal Construction Company giving that company an unfair advantage over other bidders.

The specifications prepared for the City Hall furniture were undoubtedly prepared for metal furniture and bear all the earmarks of having been prepared for the furniture made by the Art Metal Construction Company. A comparison of the specifications with a catalogue of the Art Metal Company will show this. It shows it so plainly that a blind man up a tree can see it, and I shall be very glad to show it to the Mayor and aldermen if they so desire.

Lindsay, considered a reputable merchant in the city, also stated that Witcover told him some time previous that the furniture had already been contracted for, excluding any opportunity for local firms to bid.

Mr. Lindsay said that Architect Witcover told him before any advertisement for bids appeared that the furniture had all been contracted for. He had been trying to see Mr. Witcover for some time, he said, and when he did catch him he was told that the furniture was to be of metal and that it had been contracted for. He said Mr. Witcover stated it had been planned to harmonize with the building and would be of metal. Mr. Lindsay was very much astonished to learn that the furniture had been contracted for, but told Mr. Witcover he guessed he would have "to grin and bear it."

Mr. Lindsay said he jokingly told some aldermen that they were a "nice lot" to contract for the City Hall furniture without letting local people have a chance to bid and they told him it had not been contracted for. He told them that Mr. Witcover said it had been and they replied that they would look into the matter.

In light of Lindsay's allegations, the Building Committee deferred any decision on the furniture bids and called for an investigation of the charges. Lindsay was invited to present his evidence in front of a meeting of Council at which time Witcover could make a rebuttal. Both Lindsay and Witcover agreed to an investigation.

[Witcover stated,] It is my desire that you make the investigation as exhaustive as possible and that it be public, so that the entire community may become acquainted with the exact facts.

[While Lindsay announced,] he would be on hand with his blue prints and his catalogues.

Meanwhile, discussion regarding the advantages of metal furniture over wood continued. Alderman Thomas stated that the committee members were leaning towards metal because "all the big new buildings North are furnished with it, that it fits together better, is more dustproof and fireproof and that it will make the insurance lower." Secretary Gamble sent notices to all the aldermen "requesting them to call either at the De Soto [Hotel] or the office of the Savannah Stationary and Printing Company and inspect the metal furniture samples on exhibition. The samples at the De Soto are those of the Art Metal Company and those at the stationary company, the library bureau. The notices, Mr. Gamble states, were sent out, so that the aldermen might acquaint themselves with what metal furniture is."

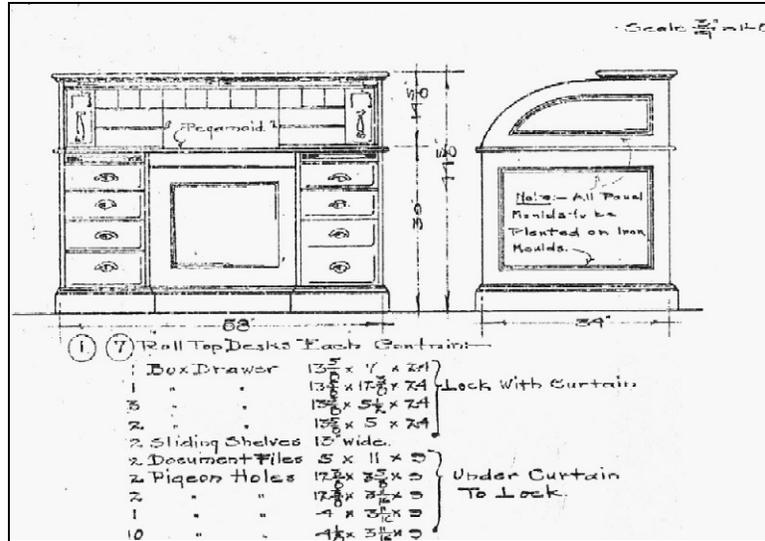
"Committee for the Art Company." *Savannah Morning News* (11 July 1905) 12:1.

"Council Will Probe Charges." *Savannah Morning News* (12 July 1905) 12:1.

"Resolution adopted by Committee on New City Hall" (11 July 1905). City Council Meeting Papers-Proceedings of Council, Box PRO 94 0115-001-A291], Folder 878. City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

Lindsay and Witcover Present Evidence Before Council July 12, 1905

On July 12, 1905, City Council met to investigate the charges of W. J. Lindsay against Architect Hyman Witcover regarding the use of the Art Metal Construction Company's catalog in the preparation of specifications for the city hall furniture. The meeting, in the Recorder's Court room, was attended by quite a crowd with a filled room and a number of people on the rear porch listening through the open window.



Roll top desk with pigeon holes, sliding shelves, box drawers and document files, drawn by Hyman W. Witcover, c.1905. City of Savannah, Engineering Department Retrospective Plans & Designs, City Hall, Drawing 24.4, Sheet 1. City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia. Used with permission.

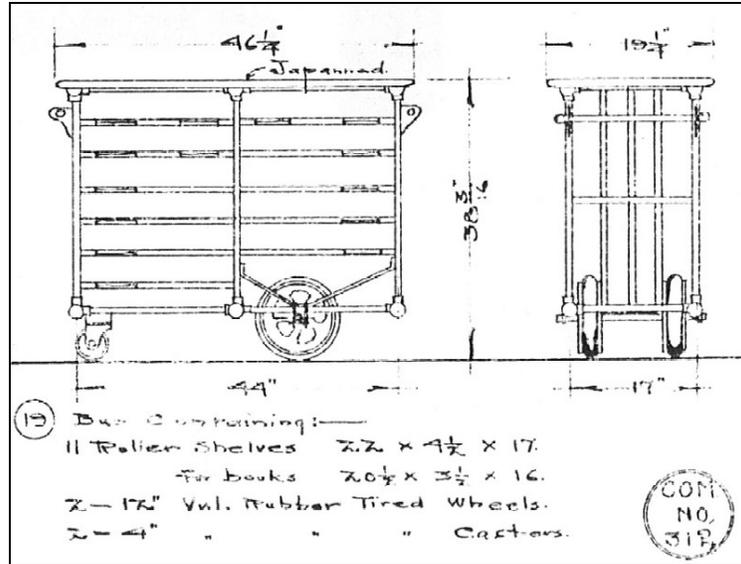
Lindsay, making his arguments first, produced a set of the furniture blue prints and a catalog of the Art Metal Construction Company:

You may take a jackass and cover him with fine raiment, but his ears will stick out and you can see that he is a jackass. The same may be said of these furniture specifications. Before I get through I think I can show you gentlemen very plainly the ears of the Art Metal Construction Company sticking out all over them. And if they did not prepare them themselves, they certainly had a finger in the pie...

He first called attention to a desk on sheet No. 1, pointing out the similarity in the desk on the print and the catalogue. There were two little cases on either side, apparently the same, and there were half circles about the handles the same; also two open spaces on both right and left side. The pigeon holes were counted, eleven on both the catalogue and the blue print. He also called attention to the panels and the base, stating that all were the same. Most of the aldermen were furnished with prints, and Mr. Lindsay showed them the catalogue as he proceeded...

Particular attention was called to a truck shown on sheet No. 3 of the prints, Mr. Lindsay stating that the trucks were identical as shown on print and catalogue.... Even the wheel was of the same construction and the fittings throughout. He thought there were very strong earmarks on the trucks. He had looked through other catalogues, he said, and couldn't find anything like it...

He called attention to the cornices and said the same design ran through the filing cases. On sheet No. 8 he called attention to a typewriter desk for the office of the clerk of Council, which he declared was a strong point. The drawers in the design did not go to the floor, there were the same number of drawers, and the legs had a peculiar twist. There were evidences, he said, that they were the same...



Hand truck with 11 roller shelves and rubber tired wheels, drawn by Hyman W. Witcover, c.1905.
 City of Savannah, Engineering Department Retrospective Plans & Designs, City Hall, Drawing 24.4, Sheet 3.
 City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.
 Used with permission.

Witcover was then given a chance to respond at which time he stated that the Art Metal Construction Company’s forms had served as the model for the furniture plans and Mr. Rappole, a company draftsman, had prepared the drawings at Witcover’s expense, so of course there were similarities. However, Witcover stated that “both of these procedures are entirely in accord with the customary practice of architects.”

Architects have to have some form, and I used this one, changing it to suit conditions.... Your city engineer does it, your director of public works does. It is customary. All architects do it. I chose the Art Metal Company because, in my opinion, it easily stands to the forefront, high above all the rest. They are the pioneers in the business, and are, I think, the best firm.

As for Mr. Rappole’s employ, Witcover announced:

He came here, was in my employ and the work was done at my expense. I carried him around and introduced him as an Art Metal Company man, and there was no secret about it. I have nothing to conceal.

Though Witcover admitted to using the company’s form as a model, he stated that all of the specified furniture was unique to the city hall building.

There are modifications made where they are necessary.... Every piece of goods in those specifications is special.... There is not one piece in any company’s stock.... Everything in the building is special and some of the furniture is to fit spaces which may not be exactly equal to any other in the world.

As to Lindsay’s charge that Witcover told him the contract had already been let before bids had been called for, Witcover flatly denied it. “This last was simply a question between the two.”

Mr. E. G. Rogers told of Mr. Lindsay returning to the store and saying it was all up on the furniture....

Mr. Witcover denied having told Mr. Lindsay that the contract had been let. His supervisor [Mr. Moxn], whose desk is in an adjoining office, stated that he had overheard the conversation between Mr. Witcover and Mr. Lindsay, and that Mr. Witcover had not said that the contract had been let.

Council adjourned until the following day without a formal resolution to the problem. Lindsay still believed his firm was discriminated against and Witcover still denied any wrongdoing.

“Charges were Gone into Fully.” *Savannah Morning News* (13 July 1905) 12:1-2.

“Council Will Probe Charges.” *Savannah Morning News* (12 July 1905) 12:1.

“Mr. Lindsay Presents His Case to Council.” *Savannah Evening Press* (12 July 1905) 1:5-6.

Official Proceedings of City Council (12 July 1905) 40. City of Savannah, Clerk of Council’s Office, Savannah, Georgia.

Architect Witcover Exonerated
July 13, 1905

On July 13, 1905, at 3:30 in the afternoon, City Council met secretly in the Mayor’s office to deliberate the evidence heard the day before from Mr. W. J. Lindsay against Architect Witcover. A resolution was unanimously adopted by Council clearing Witcover of all charges of giving any bidder an unfair advantage over another and expressing their continued confidence in his work. However, there was some discussion of inserting a clause that would state that Witcover had made an error in judgment in hiring an Art Metal Construction Company employee to draft the plans.

Alderman Oliver said it would be a burning shame under the evidence not to fully exonerate Mr. Witcover. None of the aldermen in any way questioned Mr. Witcover’s integrity. The only question was whether he had “erred in judgment.” Alderman Oliver spoke at some length against the “error in judgment” clause. It had been shown, he said, that it was customary for architects to get men from factories to aid in special work and Mr. Witcover had taken a man connected with the firm whose furniture he believed to be the best. Mayor Myers spoke of the great amount of work that Mr. Witcover has had here and the fact that his acts have never before been questioned.



Architect Hyman Wallace Witcover (1871-1936), n.d.
 V. & J. Duncan Antique Maps and Prints, Savannah, Georgia.
Used with permission.

In the end, the resolution was passed without the clause. After coming to an agreement, the door to the office was opened, the resolution hurriedly read and adopted in public and the matter closed. W. J. Lindsay was not satisfied with the outcome, but stated, “what’s the use?” of asking for the case to be reopened. Witcover said, “Of course, he appreciated the expression of confidence by Council.”

Official Proceedings of City Council (13 July 1905) 41. City of Savannah, Clerk of Council’s Office, Savannah, Georgia.

“Resolution by the Committee of the Whole” (13 July 1905). City Council Meeting Papers-Proceedings of Council, Box PRO 94 [0115-001-A291], Folder 878. City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

“Was Exonerated by City Council.” *Savannah Morning News* (14 July 1905) 12:1.

**“Tart Exchanges” as Furniture Contract Awarded
July 15, 1905**

On July 15, 1905, the City Hall Building Committee met in a secret session to formulate a recommendation on the furniture and clock bids for the Committee of the Whole. A special meeting of Council followed, at which time the committee’s report was presented:

The special committee on the new City Hall, to which was referred the bids for furnishing the hall, begs to recommend the adoption of metal furniture for that purpose, to the greatest possible extent, but prefers for Council to decide without recommendation, as to the acceptance of any of the bids now before it.

Alderman Garfunkel then made a motion to throw out all of the bids believing the Art Metal Construction Company had been proven by W. J. Lindsay to have had an unfair advantage in bidding:

Whereas, it appears from admissions that a representative of one of the bidders aided in the preparation of the plans for the new City Hall, and whereas, the catalogue of one of the bidders has been confessedly used as a basis for plans and specifications, this unmistakably giving the Art Metal Company an advantage in the bidding over other bidders, Be it Resolved, That all bids be rejected and that the committee advertise for twenty days for new bids on metal furniture, it being distinctly understood that all bidders may submit offers of the same character of furniture as those indicated in the plans and specifications, but of their own patterns and makes.

JULY 15 1905.

**CITY COUNCIL DIVIDED;
WARS OVER FURNITURE**

ART METAL CONSTRUCTION
COMPANY FINALLY GIVEN
THE CONTRACT.

TART EXCHANGES GIVE
THE MEETING INTEREST

Council Stood Six to Six and the Mayor Cast the Deciding Vote—Alderman Garfunkel Led Flight to Give Other Bidders a Chance—Said the Charges Had Been Proved.

+ + + + +
+ HOW CITY COUNCIL WAS +
+ DIVIDED ON FURNITURE +
+ For the Art Metal Company— +
+ Mayor Myers and Aldermen Dix- +
+ on, Oliver, Wright, Thomas +
+ Schroder and Davant. +
+ Against Art Metal Company— +
+ Aldermen Garfunkel, Grayson, +
+ Cauty, Harmon, Glatigny and +
+ McKenna. +
+ + + + +

City Council at odds even as furniture contract awarded, July 1905.
"City Council Divided; Wars Over Furniture," Savannah Evening Press (15 July 1905) 1:5-7.
Used with permission.

A new fight was then on between the City Hall Committee and the other members of Council, drawing along the same lines of those who had allied themselves with either Lindsay or Witcover in the previous days. "The investigation conducted by Council, though it cleared Mr. Witcover of the charges, widened the breach between the members of the committee and the opposition, and a number of aldermen went into the meeting with blood boiling." Alderman Oliver stated it would be unfair to call for new bids when the Art Metal Construction Company had submitted the lowest bid and he stressed that time was of the essence; "The building has been dragging along like a man with consumption, he said, and he wanted to see it finished and occupied." Jumping into the fight, Mayor Myers read a telegram from the *Municipal Journal*, of New York, which said that "wood should be excluded in favor of metal to the greatest possible extent" in all public buildings.

A vote was taken to award the contract to the Art Metal Construction Company, with six aldermen for and six aldermen against. Mayor Myers cast the deciding vote awarding the contract for \$16,900.

After one of the hardest fights in the history of the present City Council, the contract for the furniture for the new City Hall was awarded...to the Art Metal Construction Company of Jamestown, N. Y., the firm which submitted the lowest bid. As had been predicted, there was a tie vote and it was necessary for Mayor Myers to cast the deciding ballot.

The Mayor said he believed he was doing what was best for the city. The committee, he said, had done what it thought was right, and he believed this would be realized in time. He defied any one to show that the committee had done anything wrong.

Colonel S. B. Thompson, representative for the Art Metal Construction Company, later expressed his happiness over the award, "while regretting exceedingly the unpleasantness which developed in the fight for the furniture.... He says he sold the first metal furniture ever sold in Georgia right here in Savannah to the County Commissioners, sixteen years ago." Thompson planned to remain in Savannah for several days to sign the contract and take additional measurements in the city hall building.

In addition, Council reviewed the bids for the bells and clocks. The Building Committee recommended Robert Schneider's bid for the E. Howard Clock Company for \$3,640. However, the Howard Company had reduced their bid by \$340 to make it equal with that of Mr. Wachstein's. Alderman Grayson believed it would be unfair to accept the reduced bid without first giving the other company a chance to also reduce their bid. The clock bids were then tabled until Mr. Wachstein could be contacted.

"City Council Divided; Wars over Furniture." *Savannah Evening Press* (15 July 1905) 1:5-7.

"Clock Contract to Cause Fight." *Savannah Morning News* (17 July 1905) 8:1.

"Council and Furniture Bids." *Savannah Morning News* (15 July 1905) 12:1.

"May Fight for New Bids on all the Furniture." *Savannah Evening Press* (14 July 1905) 1:7.

"Mayor Cast the Deciding Vote." *Savannah Morning News* (16 July 1905) 20:1.

Official Proceedings of City Council (15 July 1905) 42. City of Savannah, Clerk of Council's Office, Savannah, Georgia.

"Report of the Committee of the Whole" (15 July 1905). City Council Meeting Papers-Proceedings of Council, Box PRO 94 [0115-001-A291], Folder 878. City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

"Report of the Special Committee on City Hall" (15 July 1905). City Council Meeting Papers-Proceedings of Council, Box PRO 94 [0115-001-A291], Folder 876. City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

"Resolution by Alderman A. J. Garfunkel" (15 July 1905). City Council Meeting Papers-Proceedings of Council, Box PRO 94 [0115-001-A291], Folder 877. City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

City Hall Building Committee to Stick Together to the End July 17, 1905

On July 17, 1905, Alderman James M. Dixon withdrew his resignation from the City Hall Building Committee. Frustrated by the fight between the special committee and the Committee of the Whole over the awarding of city hall contracts, specifically for furniture, Dixon had resigned following the heated July

15th meeting. In a letter to the Mayor, delivered via the Messenger of Council, Dixon announced his resignation in order to give others a chance to work on the Building Committee:

...Now that all contracts for the City Hall have been let and there are no further duties for the committee to perform, excepting to see that said contracts are properly executed, it would be well to have some of the aldermen not now on the Building Committee perform that service, and I think a change in the personnel of the committee advisable. With that object in view, I herewith tender you my resignation as a member of the City Hall Committee, to take effect at once.



Alderman James M. Dixon, c.1900.
Report of Hon. Herman Myers, Mayor...of the City of Savannah, Ga., for the Year Ending December 31, 1900.
Savannah: Savannah City Council, 1900.
City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.
Used with permission.

Within a day, Mayor Myers asked Dixon to withdraw his resignation, desiring the committee to remain together until the city hall building was completed and occupied.

The committee has worked unitedly and to the best interests of the city throughout, and I am convinced that the best interests of the public will be served by its continuing its work until the building is completed.

Following Myers plea, Dixon withdrew his resignation and stated that he would remain on the committee “if the Mayor thought best.” The following excerpt from Dixon’s letter to the Mayor reemphasized the continuing disunity among the entire City Council.

...It was not my purpose to desert the committee or to shirk any work put upon me. This committee has worked hard and faithfully for two years or more. Recently certain charges were made against the architect and, after a thorough investigation, he was exonerated by Council unanimously.... After the architect was exonerated, it was then in order to exonerate the committee; hence my actions in voting for the acceptance of the bid of the Art Metal Company.

Some members of Council thought otherwise, and my only purpose in tendering my resignation was to give some member of Council, who was dissatisfied with the actions of the committee, a chance to get on said committee and thereby correct any imaginary wrong that he or they may think existed. As you say, “the committee has worked unitedly to the best interests of the city throughout,” and if you still think that the best interest of

the public will be served by my remaining on the committee, I will adhere to your wishes and continue to serve to the best of my ability.

"Alderman Dixon Will Remain on Committee." *Savannah Morning News* (19 July 1905) 12:4.

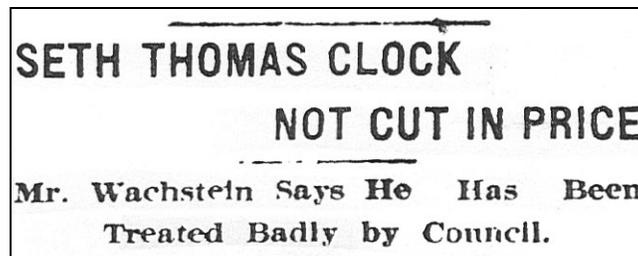
"Mayor Cast the Deciding Vote." *Savannah Morning News* (16 July 1905) 20:1.

"Mayor Myers Praises Work of Committee." *Savannah Morning News* (18 July 1905) 10:2.

***Thomas Clock Company Accuses City of Wrongdoing
July 18, 1905***

On July 18, 1905, Mr. Wachstein announced to the local newspaper that the Seth Thomas Clock Company would not reduce their bid for the city hall clocks and bells, believing they had been treated unfairly by City Council.

The Seth Thomas Clock Company was invited to bid on this clock. The city of Savannah wrote to the company and requested that a bid be sent in. This would indicate that the Thomas clock was considered of the proper quality and would be acceptable. In the face of this after the bids had been opened and canvassed, they gave a competitor the right to reduce his bid. This is not the treatment one would expect to receive from a business concern and I should not think the city of Savannah should extend it to a citizen.



Seth Thomas Clock Company and Mr. Wachstein accuse City Council of unfair treatment, July 1905.
"Seth Thomas Clock Not Cut in Price," *Savannah Evening Press* (18 July 1905) 1:6.
Used with permission.

In a letter to Mr. Wachstein, their representative, the clock company "severely roasting [roasted] the attitude of the City Hall Committee":

We bid direct to the city...naming the lowest figure at which we could afford to do the work, and must let the matter stand there. Had we thought that an opportunity would be given to competitors to reduce their price to make matters look favorable for them, we would have put ours relatively higher and been in a position to undercut them. It is a kind of business that we do not care very much about.

The Seth Thomas Clock Company's refusal to lower the bid ruffled no feathers on the City Hall Building Committee which was unanimously and publicly in favor of a Howard clock regardless of the quoted prices.

"Clock Award Fight Waiting on Price." *Savannah Morning News* (18 July 1905) 10:4.

"Clock Contract to Cause Fight." *Savannah Morning News* (17 July 1905) 8:1.

"Furniture Award Probably Stands." *Savannah Morning News* (20 July 1905) 12:1.

"Seth Thomas Clock Not Cut in Price." *Savannah Evening Press* (18 July 1905) 1:6.

***City Attorney Warns Against Call for New Furniture Bids
July 19, 1905***

On July 19, 1905, in another twist to the furniture debate, members of Council seemed ready to throw out the furniture bids and call for new ones despite awarding the contract to the Art Metal Construction Company, of Jamestown, N. Y., on July 15th. The contract had not yet been signed and aldermen were still debating over the fairness of the first round of bids. Mayor Myers indicated his support for new bids prior to an afternoon Council meeting, believing it would help to restore harmony on the City Council.

The [proposed] resolution will call for new bids on city hall furniture of any make of metal furniture. The bidders will not be limited to any specifications, but any reputable makers of metal furniture will be entitled to make a bid on furniture and fixtures of their design adapted to the uses for which it will have to be put.

However, the new plan soon fell through when City Attorney William Garrard offered his legal opinion that despite an unsigned contract, the contract had been awarded and was now legally binding.

...the signing of the contract was simply a formality. The Art Metal Company having been awarded the contract and having been notified of the award, would have a case for legal action against the city in the event the contract should be taken from it now.

Garrard pointed out that under Rule 14 of the regulations governing City Council, it is necessary to give notice of a motion to reconsider before adjournment of the meeting in which an action is taken. No motion was made on July 15th before the meeting was adjourned. In light of this new information, Council delayed any further action on the furniture contract until the next meeting.

At the same time, Council considered the Building Committee's recommendation on the clocks and bells. With the Seth Thomas Clock Company refusing to lower its bid, the awarding of the contract to the E. Howard Clock Company, with Robert Schneider as local representative, was unanimous. "The placing of the bells in the tower was delaying the completion of that structure... [and Council] thought it would be advisable to make the award..." The decision came after a communication from sundry jewelers of the city was presented endorsing the selection of a Howard clock:

We the undersigned Jewelers [sic] of the city of Savannah regard the Tower Clocks manufactured by the "Howard Clock Co" of Boston as the best made in this Country. The Howard Co has long been regarded by the trade, as making by far, a clock which for time keeping and durability, is far in advance of other makes. So we most respectfully recommend and request that the Howard Clock be selected for the New City Hall Tower, basing our request upon the well known excellence of the above clock.

"Communication from Sundry Jewelers of the City to City Council" (19 July 1905). City Council Meeting Papers-Proceedings of Council, Box PRO 94 [0115-001-A291], Folder 877. City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

"Furniture Award Probably Stands." *Savannah Morning News* (20 July 1905) 12:1.

"Furniture Fight May be Continued." *Savannah Morning News* (19 July 1905) 4:1.

"Get New Bids on City Hall Furniture." *Savannah Evening Press* (19 July 1905) 1:6-7.

Official Proceedings of City Council (19 July 1905) 43, 45. City of Savannah, Clerk of Council's Office, Savannah, Georgia.

***Furniture Case Finally Put to Rest
July 21, 1905***

On July 21, 1905, in a special meeting of City Council, the furniture contract with the Art Metal Construction Company was approved and Mayor Myers authorized to sign it. Before this resolution was passed, Alderman Grayson made a final statement regarding the furniture controversy to be recorded in the City's official minutes:

Without receding from the position taken by the minority of Council as to there being no competition in bids for the City Hall furniture, we still feel that the interests of the city would be best subserved by calling for new bids, but in view of the opinion of the city attorney that the acceptance of the Art Metal Construction Company's was perfected by the adoption of the report, and there being no notice of a reconsideration at that meeting, the contract then being completed, we are inclined to vote for the authorization of the Mayor to sign the contract, with the distinct understanding that this, our position, be recorded in the minutes of Council.

Grayson's request was granted though some questioned who he was representing in his remarks, however, "the matter was allowed to pass without being gone into very closely."

The reiteration, in a way, by Alderman Grayson of the charge that the Art Metal Company had been given an advantage, makes it plain that Council is still divided on the subject. Alderman Grayson realized that his side was beaten, but he "died hard."

Mayor Myers and Colonel S. B. Thompson met in his office following the meeting and signed the contract. The Art Metal Construction Company furnished a bond in the amount \$34,000 with the Fidelity and Deposit Company of Maryland "for the faithful carrying out of the contract." The contract specified that the furniture be delivered within ninety days or a demurrage rate of \$100 a day would be assessed.

When the signing was finished, all parties expressed pleasure that the matter was finally ended. The charges in connection with the plans and specifications, the investigation, the exoneration of the architect, the award of the contract and the plan to reconsider the award and call for new bids have all held the closest attention of the public.

Contract No. 579 (21 July 1905). City Council Meeting Papers-Contracts, Box CON 7 [0115-002-22.1], Folder 45. City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

"Contract Signed for Furniture." *Savannah Morning News* (22 July 1905) 12:1.

Official Proceedings of City Council (21 July 1905) 48. City of Savannah, Clerk of Council's Office, Savannah, Georgia.

"Resolution by Committee of Whole" (21 July 1905). City Council Meeting Papers-Proceedings of Council, Box PRO 94 [0115-001-A291], Folder 877. City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

"Will Likely Sign Contract Soon." *Savannah Morning News* (21 July 1905) 3:3.

Grounds around City Hall to be Improved July 25, 1905



The Strand, east of City Hall, May 2005.
City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives,
Savannah, Georgia.
Used with permission.

On July 25, 1905, the *Savannah Morning News* announced that plans were in the works to improve the grounds adjoining the new city hall building with walks and landscaping. An ordinance had already been passed requiring the removal of poles and wires, with the exception of those required for streetcar operation, from in front of the new building. Council had also already decided to repave Bay Street with vitrified brick from Whitaker Street to Drayton Street. Ideas floating around for the landscaping improvements included artificial stone sidewalks in front of the building and a new lawn or park on the Strand to the west of the building similar to that already on the east side.

Such a grass plat would it is thought, add greatly to the appearance of the City Hall and would make the stores on that side of Bay street more attractive.... It is the intention of the city officials to have these grounds kept in the very best of order, beginning as soon as the building is completed and occupied.

The proposed green space would be complemented by the Oglethorpe Memorial to be erected by the Colonial Dames just west of the city hall building. Everyone seemed confident that the improvements would be made once the building was completed and the temporary structures (related to the construction work) were removed from the spot. On July 27, 1905, the City Hall Building Committee ordered all trash in front and to the west of the building removed, indicating that already the image of the new building was impacted by the landscape around it.

There seems to be little doubt that the plan will go through and that the adjoining grounds to the City Hall will be made one of the most attractive spots in the city.

“Mayor Myers Approves Plan to Beautify.” *Savannah Morning News* (26 July 1905) 12:4.

“Plans for Improving City Hall Grounds.” *Savannah Morning News* (28 July 1905) 10:1.

“Will Beautify the Grounds.” *Savannah Morning News* (25 July 1905) 10:1.

Electric & Gas Lighting Fixtures for City Hall July 27, 1905

On July 27, 1905, the City Hall Building Committee met to discuss the desired color for the contracted furniture, bids for chairs, and electrical and gas lighting fixtures. Though the furniture contract had been signed with the Art Metal Construction Company it did not specify the color of the furniture, whether it would be imitating wood or a solid. With the exception of the Council Chamber, whose furniture was to look like mahogany, the committee decided to leave the color selection up to Architect Hyman Witcover. Witcover indicated that the Mayor’s suite would be finished to look like quartered oak, while the furniture for the other offices would be solid colors corresponding to the hardware finishes.

It was then decided to call for bids for the lighting fixtures under a new plan. The call for the lighting bids, to be opened on August 15, 1905, provided a listing of the types of fixtures desired, however each bidder would be allowed to submit their own designs with supporting samples. This method would bypass the problems encountered in the preparation of the furniture plans using one company’s forms and catalogs as models. A detailed description of the lighting fixtures required for the new city hall building was published in the local newspaper specifying ceiling fixtures, wall sconces, fans, and much more:

A large number of lights will be needed.... The fixtures will be of brushed brass in all rooms and nickle-plated [sic] in the toilets. On the outside of the building the fixtures will be verde antique [Verdi gris].

In the Council chamber...great care has been exercised in the distribution of the lights to get the best effects. The ceiling of the chamber will consist of eighty-four panels, each about five feet square, and in the center of each of these panels will be an ornamental metal husk, with a glass bulb, for a single light. These lights are to be only about half a foot from the ceiling proper, and the fixtures, which are to be extremely handsome, will add to the beauty of the chamber ceiling....

On the four main pilasters in the Council chamber there will be four large bracket lights also, and grouped around the walls will be smaller bracket lights. In the Mayor's general office there will be a ten-light electric chandelier [electrified chandelier]. The rotunda of each floor is to have eight lights suspended around the open space.... There will also be eight large bracket lights.

The lobby on the first floor and the Mayor's reception room on the second are to be lighted by "concealed" lights. In each of these spaces the ceiling is vaulted or rounded and the wainscoting extends up rather high. In the rotunda, the wainscoting is marble and the vaulted ceiling is of marble mosaic. The fixtures are hidden behind the wainscoting just below its top, so that the light is thrown on the mosaic ceiling and reflected over the rotunda. In the reception room the same plan is followed, only the ceiling is of plaster.

On the portico on the second floor, there will be two immense Venetian lanterns of handsome design on the pilasters just back of the big columns. There are to be about 790 lights in the building altogether.... The contract is also to include 26 buzz fans and 29 ceiling center fans.

The tower of the building is wired so that lights may be suspended outside of it, if desired on any gala occasion. This is done in all modern buildings. One light of any number can be suspended for decorative purposes at any time by simply attaching them to the wires put in the building for the purpose.

During the meeting, the committee also decided to advertise for bids on office chairs, with a maximum of \$2,000 to be spent. The inscription for the city hall bells was determined. The larger of the two bells would bear the names of the current Mayor and Aldermen as well as the architect's name. Both bells would also be marked by "1904, Savannah City Hall."

"Colors of Furniture is Left with Architect." *Savannah Morning News* (28 July 1905) 10:3.

"Lighting Plans for New City Hall." *Savannah Morning News* (28 July 1905) 10:1.

"Will Beautify the Grounds." *Savannah Morning News* (25 July 1905) 10:1.

"Will Have Names on City Clock." *Savannah Morning News* (28 July 1905) 10:3.

Sub-Contractor Stewart's Bill Refused July 28, 1905

On July 28, 1905, the *Savannah Morning News* announced that a lawsuit may be brewing between the City, the Savannah Contracting Company, and sub-contractor A. R. Stewart. Stewart, who excavated the site and completed all the stone and brick work on the city hall building, had recently billed the City and the Savannah Contracting Company for \$2,236 for extra work he claimed was above and beyond the signed contract. The bill included replacing the old vault which had collapsed and replacing a large granite stone. The City Hall Building Committee believed all the work was fully covered by the contract and returned the bill to Stewart "with the statement that the city had not made any contract with him and that it could not owe him anything." Mr. J. E. Burgess, general manager of the Savannah Contracting Company which had contracted with the City for the construction of the city hall building and then sub-contracted with Stewart, stated that his company owed nothing additional to Stewart.*

The vault is covered, they claim, by the clause that the contractor must be responsible for all damages. The stone was condemned as not being what it should....

Altogether it is rather mixed up, and it is not thought that it will be settled outside the courts.

**In September 1906, A. R. Stewart filed suit in the United States Circuit Court against the Savannah Contracting Company, the Mayor and Aldermen of the City of Savannah, et. al. claiming money due to him for work, labor and material in connection with the construction of the city hall building. The case carried over into 1909, when the courts dismissed A. R. Stewart vs. Savannah Contracting Company, et. al.*

Report of Hon. Geo. W. Tiedeman, Mayor...of the City of Savannah, Georgia, for the Year Ending December 31, 1907. Savannah: 1908.

Report of Hon. Herman Myers, Mayor...of the City of Savannah, Georgia, for the Year Ending December 31st, 1906. Savannah: Braid & Hutton, 1907.

“Suit Probably Result of Building City Hall.” *Savannah Morning News* (28 July 1905) 10:6.

Third Annual Report of Hon. Geo. W. Tiedeman, Mayor...of the City of Savannah, Georgia, for the Year Ending December 31, 1909. Savannah: M. S. & D. A. Byck Company, Printers and Stationers, 1910.

Clocks and Bells Contract Signed August 1, 1905

On August 1, 1905, Mayor Herman Myers signed a contract with the E. Howard Clock Company for the clocks and bells to be placed in the new city hall building, according to City Council’s awarding of the contract on July 19th. The E. Howard Clock Company, considered one of the best manufacturers of clocks on the East coast, was established by Edward Howard in 1861 as the E. Howard Clock & Watch Company. The company was known for clocks from pocket size (manufacturing the first mass-produced pocket watch in the country) to tower size. Howard clocks were manufactured in Roxbury, Boston until the 1930s when the company was acquired by the Verdin Company.*

For \$3,640 the company promised to “make, erect, build, complete and install ready for use the CLOCK SYSTEM (consisting of tower clock, dials, bells and secondary clocks).” The company offered a surety bond stating that the system, to be installed within four months by Robert Schneider, would “not vary more than fifteen seconds in any thirty consecutive days in the next five years.”



Brass Council Chamber clock, c.1981.
Historic American Buildings Survey, HABS, GA, 26-SAV, 61-38.
Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.
Used with permission.

The contract outlined the specific clocks and bells required for the building’s clock system:

TOWER CLOCK, to be one of THE E. HOWARD CLOCK COMPANY’S large #2 ding-dong quarter striking and hour striking, similar to cut shown on Page 89 of Catalogue, arranged with hands, dial-works, shafting for four (4) dials 7 ft. in diameter, and with three (3) striking hammers and connections necessary; also best quality steel wire ropes; Clock will also be arranged with the following automatic attachments:-

First, a device for controlling the hours of the illumination behind the dials so that the dials will be illuminated at the proper hours, the program of which can be changed to suit the seasons of the year.

Second, minute contact points of iridium-platinum for the purpose of electrically operating Clocks distributed throughout the building, thus assuring the same time throughout the entire building.

The escapement of the above Clock to be Dennison Gravity; pendulum to be of steel and zinc compensation 9 ft. in length with heavy metal pendulum bob. The Clock will be made in the best manner possible; frame and supports of cast iron; the entire train mounted on a heavy metal base; wheels and bearings of hard hammered brass composition; pinions and arbors of best open hearth steel, finely tempered; striking cams

of chilled steel, rendering them impervious to wear; teeth accurately cut; there will be a simple device on the movement for the purpose of setting all hands at one time.

DIALS, to be of the sectional metal and glass type; the metal to be of bronze composition; cast in sections, and when placed in position securely bolted together, lead filling in between the joints so as to make them water-tight, and to allow for contraction and expansion; all joints to be made in back of the figures and minute dots, so that when illuminated there will be no unnecessary marks on the dial. These dials will be glazed with the best American 3/8 inch plate glass, ground and stippled....

BELLS, to be of the Meneely Bell Co., Troy, N. Y. manufacture, 1550 lbs. G and 850 lbs. B flat. These bells to be made of Lake Superior copper and best imported block tin...and to be free from fracture for a period of fifteen (15) years....

SECONDARY CLOCKS, seven (7) in number, to be operated from the contacts of the Tower Clock, and will, therefore show corresponding time; they require no winding, located and described as follows:-

First Floor—

Director of Public Works Room, to have a 14" white Italian marble dial with Roman or Arabic numerals neatly painted thereon; soft pine enameled case about 4" deep, slightly smaller [larger] than the dial.

Tax Assessor's Room, 14" same as above.

Treasurer's Room, 20" white marble dial as described above.

Second Floor—

Council Chamber, dial of white Italian marble with raised bronze metal English-Roman figures and dots, and ornamental hands to match; dial to be surrounded by a cast bronze metal frame about 5" in width and 5" in depth of highest grade bronze work, the dial to be 24" in diameter.

Clerk of Council's Room, 14" white Italian marble dial with painted numerals, etc.

Third Floor—

Corridor, 24" white Italian marble dial, painted numerals, etc.

Fourth Floor—

Corridor, 24" white Italian marble dial, painted numerals, etc....

INSTALLATION, the Contractor is to set up the entire outfit in a thorough and workmanlike manner, paying all expenses incident thereto, (excepting the carpenter work and lumber, and raising the bells to the belfry deck, and the arrangement of the electric lights for illumination of dials and the wiring for same)....

The E. Howard Clock Company sub-contracted with the Meneely Bell Company for the manufacture of the two bronze bells needed for the clock system. The Meneely Bell Company was established in 1870 by Colonel William Hanks Meneely and George H. Kimberly. Meneely came from a foundry background, his father, Andrew Meneely, establishing the Meneely & Company foundry in West Troy, New York in 1826.

In 1876 the Meneely Bell Co. made [a] 13,000 pound replica of the Liberty Bell. The foundry cast 25,000 bronze bells from 1870 to 1950 when it closed.... The bells from this foundry carry a premium value today as musically correct castings.

**Founded in 1842, the Verdin Company was designated by the Smithsonian Institute as the oldest clock tower manufacturer in the United States.*

Contract No. 577 (1 August 1905). City Council Meeting Papers-Contracts, Box CON 7 [0115-002-22.1], Folder 45. City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

“E. Howard Watch & Clock Company.” Taken from <http://www.anticueclockshop.com/appraise/howard.htm> (accessed 2004).

“John Eachus, Verdin Company, to Lewis Hodges, Director Buildings and Grounds, City of Savannah, Georgia” (10 February 1997). Local Reference Files: City Hall. City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

“NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission, August 25, 1981, Designation List 147, LP-1169.” Taken from http://www.clocks.org/new_york_state/new_york_city_landmarks_preserva.html (accessed 2004).

“Will Soon Ship City Hall Clock Bells.” *Savannah Morning News* (4 August 1905) 10:2.

Decorations Contemplated as Interior Progressed August 7, 1905

On August 7, 1905, the City Hall Building Committee met in the Mayor’s office at noon to discuss several details of the new city hall building. Architect Hyman W. Witcover, on hand for the meeting, reassured the committee that the building would be ready for occupation in December. He stated that the interior marble work was progressing and should be completed within a week, at which time the elevator would also be ready for a preliminary test. The counters and grill work were due to arrive on October 1st, followed shortly after by the custom furniture.

The committee again turned its attention to exterior and interior decorations, though no decisions were made at this time. It was believed that two statues, representing either “Commerce” and “Art” or “Commerce” and “Industry,” could be procured for \$2,800 for the front of the building. However, the larger statues, proposed by Witcover as horse drawn chariots for the four corners of the building, would be postponed for an appropriation in the following year’s budget. The committee still planned to decorate the interior of the building with paintings of significant events in the history of Savannah, specifically in the Council Chamber, the corridor, and the Mayor’s office.*

The decorations will be regular paintings on canvas. This work will probably also not be done until next year. The walls were specially planned to properly set off these paintings.

The plan is to have different paintings of the important events in connection with the history of the city, the landing of Oglethorpe, the treaty with Tomochichi, revolutionary scenes and on down to the present thriving and prosperous Savannah.

**Neither the four statues nor the history murals were ever realized.*

“To Occupy City Hall in December.” *Savannah Morning News* (8 August 1905) 10:5.

Details of Plans to Beautify the Strand August 15, 1905

On August 15, 1905, plans for the improvement of the Strand on either side of the new city hall building, prepared by Assistant City Engineer J. W. Howard, were presented to City Council by Chairman of Council James M. Dixon. The plans had been in the works for several weeks already with much discussion following their progress in the local newspapers. On August 1st, Howard had surveyed the grounds adjoining the building and began preparing the plans requested by Dixon.

Alderman Dixon proposes to make the improvements a little more elaborate than was first suggested. There will be the driveway entering at Bull street and running around in front of the business houses on the north side of the Bay to Whitaker street.

There will be a broad artificial stone walk for the two blocks adjoining the City Hall, from Whitaker to Drayton, and smaller walks will also be arranged winding about between the grass plats, which are to be established. The exact plans for the walks have not been determined upon, as it is desired to arrange them in reference to the Oglethorpe Memorial which the Colonial Dames propose to erect.

These grass plats will be surrounded by an attractive stone coping and the walks will be laid with artificial stone.... On the east side of the building, the arrangement of the walks will be changed to conform with the plans for the improvements on the western side. Instead of the old straight walk to the first bridge across to Factors' walk, it will be laid out to run diagonally both to the east and west, joining the artificial stone walk, which is to be laid along Bay street.

This arrangement will divide the present grass plat into several small ones. The plans are very pretty and were attractively gotten up by Mr. Howard. Chairman of Council Dixon is very much pleased with the work, and he hopes to see the plans adopted just as they stand.

The Director of Public Works, under the direction of Alderman Thomas, prepared estimates for the paving of Bay Street from Abercorn to Jefferson streets with vitrified brick at about \$5,000, of which the City would have to pay two-thirds and property owners the remaining third. The artificial stone walks between Drayton and Whitaker streets, at ten feet wide, would cost \$850. No decisions regarding the plans were made at this Council meeting, during which a petition was received for information from sixteen Bay Street firms requesting that the Strand be improved as far west as Barnard Street.

The beginning of the plan was, of course, with the idea of giving a proper setting to the new home for the city officials.... Savannah's City Hall and the adjoining grounds will present as handsome an appearance as any municipality in the South can boast of, when the plans now under way have been carried into effect....

"Estimates are Made for City Hall Plans." *Savannah Morning News* (5 August 1905) 12:5.

"More Elaborate than First Plan." *Savannah Morning News* (6 August 1905) 17:3-4.

"Petition of Sundry Citizens to City Council re. the Strand" (15 August 1905). City Council Meeting Papers-Committee of the Whole Papers, Box WHL 1 [0115-001-A64], Folder 1. City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

"Plans all Ready for Aldermen to Inspect." *Savannah Morning News* (15 August 1905) 10:4.

"Survey Made for City Hall Grounds." *Savannah Morning News* (1 August 1905) 12:4.

Savannah's Electric Supply Company to Furnish Gas & Electric Fixtures August 16, 1905

On August 16, 1905, City Council, based on the recommendation of the Building Committee, awarded the lighting contract for the new city hall building to the Electric Supply Company, of Savannah. Three days later, the contract was signed calling for electric and gas lighting fixtures and fans, manufactured by the Horn & Brannen Manufacturing Company and installed by the Savannah firm, installed and ready for use by November 1st, 1905 for \$6,000. The contract specifically described the styles and quantities, desired finishes, and installation of all the fixtures:

All fixtures, except the two outside bracket lanterns on Portico will be made of brass metal and finished as follows:

In Sub-basement, Basement and all Vaults, "Old Copper"

In First, Second and Fourth stories, "Brush Brass and Black"

In All Toilets and Lavatories, "Nickle [sic] Plated"]

These finishes shall correspond with the P. & F. Corbin Company's finishes [hardware supplier].

The two outside bracket lanterns on Portico will be made of cast iron and finished with two coats of mineral red lead and two coats of Verde Antique Green [Verdi gris]....

The metal work on all fans will be finished to correspond with the fixtures, with center parts of fans which cover motor in Black. 38 Buzz or desk fans and 28 Ceiling fans will be furnished. Ceiling fans will be made with four blades and three speeds and will be the Dayton standard ceiling fan, with plain casing and plain canopy to match the fixtures. Desk or Buzz fans will be with three speeds and will be the Diehl standard fan, with proper amount of cord furnished to make connection in plug. Ceiling fans will be the following height from floor:

In 1st and 2nd Stories 8 ft. from floor to lowest point of fan

In 3rd and 4th Stories 7 ft. 6 in. from floor to lowest point of fan....

All sockets on chandeliers and brackets in public offices will be key sockets, all ceiling fixtures in Rotunda, Entries, Mayor's General Office and Council Chamber fixtures, including brackets in Rotunda and Stairway will be keyless sockets....

Glassware on all fixtures will be French Roughed Inside glass, excepting in Vaults and Toilets and over drafting tables in Engineer's Rooms which will have white porcelain shades. All desk Standards or counter Standards will be furnished with green cone shades. To be Prismatic Reflecting shades concealed in the cornices around Reception Room on second floor; to be Tin Reflecting Gutter concealed in marble cornices on the two long sides of Lobby in first story.

Fixtures will be hung as follows:

Basement, 3rd and 4th Stories, 7' 6" from floor to lowest point of fixtures

1st and 2nd Stories, 8' from floor to lowest point of fixtures....



Electric lights in the Council Chamber, May 2005.
City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.
Used with permission.

“Contract is Signed for Lighting Fixtures.” *Savannah Morning News* (1 September 1905) 10:1.

Contract No. 578 (19 August 1905). City Council Meeting Papers-Contracts, Box CON 7 [0115-002-22.1], Folder 45. City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

Official Proceedings of City Council (16 August 1905) 58. City of Savannah, Clerk of Council's Office, Savannah, Georgia.

“Report Committee on City Hall” (16 August 1905). City Council Meeting Papers-Proceedings of Council, Box PRO 95 [0115-001-A292], Folder 881. City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

***Interior Walls to be Green; Rug & Shade Bids Called For
August 22, 1905***

On August 22, 1905, the City Hall Building Committee met at noon to decide on several proposed plans for the city hall building. Architect Witcover was directed to prepare plans for the two statues, determined to be “Commerce” and “Art,” and advertise for their bids, as well as to prepare plans for the rotunda fountain. Witcover was in the process of securing information on fountains for the committee to review, though it already seemed likely that the fountain would be bronze. The colors for the interior were chosen, light green for the walls, with a paler shade of the same color for the ceilings. The walls of the rotunda, Council Chamber, and the Mayor’s suite would be left plain white in anticipation of the Savannah history paintings to be installed later.*

Bids for the rugs and window shades were called for to be in by noon on September 19th. Only three rugs were advertised for at this time, all for the Mayor’s offices (one for reception room, one for general office, and one for private office), each to be of a different design, but all to be predominantly green and red. The winning bidder must supply the rugs by November 15th for no more than \$225. The window shade bid called for shades for 113 windows in an olive green shade.

**These paintings were never commissioned.*

“Pretty Tints for City Hall Interior.” *Savannah Evening Press* (22 August 1905) 5:5.

“Will Buy Statues for New City Hall.” *Savannah Morning News* (23 August 1905) 12:2.

“Will Inspect New City Hall.” *Savannah Morning News* (25 August 1905) 10:5.

***Two Savannah Firms in Running for Chair Contract
August 25, 1905***

On August 25, 1905, the Building Committee met at 4 o’clock in the afternoon to open the chair bids. Ten companies had requested specifications from the architect, however only four bids were received in time, those of Lindsay & Morgan and Leopold Adler, both of Savannah, W. B. Moses & Sons, of Washington, D. C., and Robert Mitchell Furniture Company, of Cincinnati. Mayor Myers and Alderman Dixon were the only committee members present at the meeting. They ruled out the two out-of-town firms and concentrated on Lindsay & Morgan’s and Leopold Adler’s bids. After Mr. Lindsay exhibited samples, Myers and Dixon desired to see samples of the second bidder and postponed the awarding of the chair contract twelve days until the firm of Leopold Adler had a chance to submit samples of its chairs. Mr. Lindsay, the same who challenged the specifications and awarding of the furniture contract, “expressed himself as not believing the postponement fair.”



Interior doors and woodwork, c.1981.
Historic American Buildings Survey, HABS, GA, 26-SAV, 61-31.
Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.
Used with permission.

Meanwhile, work on the building was progressing. The interior marble work was done, the varnishing of the wood work had begun on the top floor and would continue from the top down, and the tinting of the walls was about to begin. The Savannah Electric Company had turned on the power so that the elevator could be tested within the following days.

“A Striking Feature of the New City Hall.” *Savannah Evening Press* (25 August 1905) 1:6.

“To Let Mr. Adler Get His Samples.” *Savannah Evening Press* (26 August 1905) 12:4.

“Will Inspect New City Hall.” *Savannah Morning News* (25 August 1905) 10:5.

“Will Open Bids for City Hall Chairs.” *Savannah Morning News* (23 August 1905) 10:2.

***Strand Improvements Approved; Aldermen to Keep Chairs as Souvenirs
August 30, 1905***

On August 30, 1905, at a regular meeting, City Council approved the proposal for the improvements to the Strand presented at the August 16th Council meeting. At this time, the resolution approved only improvements between Whitaker and Drayton streets. The work was set to begin as soon as all of the construction rubbish was removed from the site.



Aldermen in their chairs in the “Long Room” of the City Exchange, February 17, 1904.
The Old and the New, Sketch of the Old City Exchange (1799-1904), and the New City Hall, Savannah, Georgia.
Savannah: Savannah City Council, 1905.
City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.
Used with permission.

On this day, the *Savannah Morning News* also announced that the aldermen wished to keep the old chairs used at Council meetings as souvenirs once the government moved into the new city hall building.

It is intended to auction off the old furniture that can not be used, when the officials move into the new building, and the aldermen who desire to keep the chairs they have been occupying figure that they can do so in this way. The chairs are rather handsome ones and will prove an ornament in any home. Some of the aldermen have occupied their same seats for years and they desire to keep the chairs in remembrance of the days gone by. It is thought that the plan will work all right and that each alderman will get “his chair.”

“Aldermen Want the Chairs They Occupy.” *Savannah Morning News* (30 August 1905) 12:1.

Official Proceedings of City Council (30 August 1905) 64. City of Savannah, Clerk of Council’s Office, Savannah, Georgia.

“Plans for Beautifying Grounds Approved.” *Savannah Morning News* (31 August 1905) 12:3.

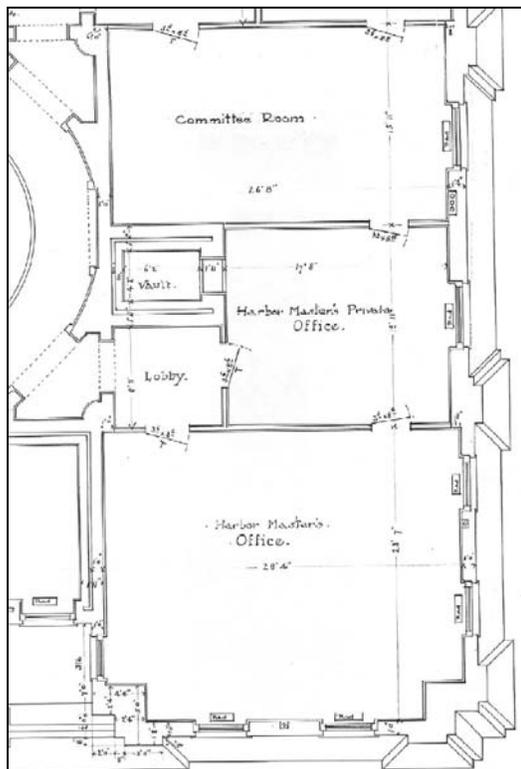
***Harbor Master Moved to 4th Floor During Building Inspection
August 31, 1905***

On August 31, 1905, City officials made their first inspection in several months of the new city hall building, spending over an hour on site. Led by Architect Hyman Witcover, the party, including Mayor Myers, Aldermen Dixon, Harman, Garfunkel, Canty, and Thomas, Clerk of Council J. Robert Creamer, and Deputy Marshal W. T. Hussey, rode the elevator to the top floor and worked their way through the building from the top down, inspecting every room. Several climbed to the roof and the top of the tower:

All had a magnificent view of the city and the harbor. The Tallahassee going out passed while the officials were on the roof and the Mayor and other members of the party exchanged long distance greetings with the passengers.

Witcover described to the group the testing the elevator had recently undergone. It was loaded with different size weights and run up and down the building at various speeds. “The elevator stood the tests well and has been pronounced perfectly trustworthy.” Starting on the top floor, the City Engineer’s offices were found to be:

...by far the best and most complete in the entire building. These offices occupy the entire western side of the building and also the front, where there is a mammoth vault for the storage of maps and records. This vault faces directly on the balcony, and though it contains several windows and is as well lighted as any office in the building, is absolutely fireproof. There is not a piece of wood in it anywhere. The window frames are of metal and the glass is fireproof having wires all through it.



Harbor Master's new office on the fourth floor of City Hall, drawn by Hyman W. Witcover, c.1905. City of Savannah, Engineering Department Retrospective Plans & Designs, City Hall, Drawing 24.72. City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia. Used with permission.

While inspecting the fourth floor, which was still partially unassigned, Mayor Myers announced that the Harbor Master would be given the office at the northeast corner of the building instead of the basement office originally planned for him.

The office which the Mayor assigned to the harbor master is an excellent one. On the top story and at the rear of the building, one with a glass may sit in the window and sight ships as they come up the harbor. This will make it very convenient for the harbor master.

The basement office was then reassigned to the port wardens. Architect Witcover was asked to correct the marble building directory that had already been ordered and listed the Harbor Master's office in the basement. Mayor Myers proposed giving the Harbor Master a choice of using the old furniture or getting new furniture. One of the aldermen suggested that all furniture from the Bay Street level up should be new and match and the two basement levels should make do with the old furniture. No decision either way was made at this time.

Everyone present at the inspection was happy with the progress of the building and the finished appearance of the details.

Many of the aldermen and city officials this afternoon for the first time saw the interior of the building. Those who did were gratified beyond expectation with its beauties...and were unanimous in the opinion that when finished the city hall would be a building well worthy of Savannah.

Though some were expressing concern over the care and maintenance of such a grand building:

Some of the politicians present were as much interested in trying to find out how many new jobs would have to be created by reason of the occupancy of the new building as in inspecting the various offices. There will have to be at least one new position and an elevator man and some think there will have to be an engineer also to look out for the machinery.

"Charmed with View of the New City Hall." *Savannah Evening Press* (31 August 1905) 1:7.

"Harbor Master Gets New Office." *Savannah Morning News* (1 September 1905) 10:6.

"Officials Visit New City Hall." *Savannah Morning News* (1 September 1905) 4:1.

"A Striking Feature of the New City Hall." *Savannah Evening Press* (25 August 1905) 1:6.

"Will Inspect New City Hall Building." *Savannah Morning News* (30 August 1905) 3:2.

Small Bell Cast 3 Times and Large Bell Inscription Incorrect September 4, 1905

On September 4, 1905, the local newspaper announced that the new bells for the city hall clock tower would be delayed, because the smaller of the two had to be recast for a third time. The smaller bell, weighing 850 pounds, was recast after the first bell came out too rough. The inscription on the second cast was wrong and the bell was set to be recast once again. By September 14, 1905, both bells had been finished and shipped to Savannah where Architect Witcover, upon inspection, found the inscription on the larger bell wrong. The clock and bell contract specifically stated the inscription for both bells. The larger of the two was to be inscribed with the names of the Mayor and Aldermen, as well as Witcover's. The Meneely Bell Company, manufacturers of the bells, had inscribed Witcover's name with the initials "W. H." instead of "H. W." Witcover notified the company of the mistake and requested it be corrected or else he would reject the bell. The company immediately sent a telegram to Witcover stating they would fix the mistake, which was clearly their fault. There was some concern that the initials could not be corrected without impairing the tone of the bell. Mayor Myers was of the opinion that the error was not very important and should be left alone.

[However,] it was suggested to his honor that it was probably fortunate for the company that the error had been made on the architect instead of a member of Council. The Mayor did not agree to this, however, and stood by his position even when such combinations as "M. J. Dixon, chairman of Council," and "Myers Herman, Mayor," were suggested.

As Witcover requested, the initials were corrected on the bell by Robert Schneider. The Meneely Bell Company sent Schneider new letters and special solder to adhere the letters to the bell direct from the factory. Schneider chiseled off the incorrect initials and soldered on the new ones. On September 19th, Professor Franz Hubner tested the tone of the bells to make sure the repair had not affected the sound quality.

Prof. Franz Hubner made the test of the bells as to their tone...and their ringing attracted a great deal of attention, making people think that it was the Big Duke.

Prof. Hubner had a tuning instrument on hand and blew on it as the bells were struck. He said they were both exactly right, the large one in G and the smaller in B flat. Mr. Robert Schneider did the striking, which was not an easy job, as the clapper is about the size and weight of a sledge hammer.

Quite a crowd witnessed the test, City Marshal Henry E. Dreeson being very much in evidence. The changing of Mr. Witcover's initials on the larger bell had in no way impaired its tone, every one agreed, those who knew and those who didn't.

With the acceptance of the bells by Architect Witcover, a payment of \$750 was sent to the E. Howard Clock Company. Since the clock company had arranged to have the bells made to order through the Meneely Company, they would be responsible for paying the bell company directly. An additional \$250 was due on the bells, not to be paid until the entire clock and bell system was up and running correctly.

The bells will be hoisted to their position in the tower at once now. The pulleys were arranged yesterday, and the raising of the bells will take place to-day or to-morrow, probably. They are to be installed in the open frame work at the top of the tower. The clock itself is not expected for some time.

"Architect and Mayor Differ as to Importance." *Savannah Morning News* (14 September 1905) 12:6

"Are Casting City Hall Bell for Third Time." *Savannah Morning News* (4 September 1905) 8:1.

"Changing Architect's Initials on Clock Bell." *Savannah Morning News* (19 September 1905) 12:4.

"Changing Initials Didn't Impair the Tone." *Savannah Morning News* (20 September 1905) 12:2.

"First Payment Made on Bells and Clock." *Savannah Morning News* (21 September 1905) 10:1.

Adler to Get Chair Contract September 6, 1905



Original aldermen desks and chairs in the Council Chamber, May 2005.
City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.
Used with permission.

On September 6, 1905, the City Hall Building Committee met in the afternoon to discuss the chair bids opened on August 25th. The awarding of the chair contract had been postponed until Leopold Adler could present samples of his chairs to the committee. Mayor Myers and Chairman of Council Dixon, the only two committee members present at the meeting, decided to recommend Adler's bid to Council. However, there was some confusion and controversy over giving Adler additional time to produce samples when Lindsay & Morgan had presented samples at the very beginning. The local paper announced that the "matter is rather mixed."

The contest for the chairs was entirely upon the samples, the prices being the same, \$2,000. The Art Metal Company cut off of its bid that sum with the understanding that it would not have to furnish the chairs, stools, etc. The additional \$60 is for a sofa, the Art Metal Company allowing that much which to a layman appears liberal.

"City Hall Chairs will be Awarded." *Savannah Morning News* (6 September 1905) 12:4.

"Will Recommend Adler Chair Bid." *Savannah Evening Press* (7 September 1905) 10:1.

Mayor Bets Cigar Demurrage will be Collected September 12, 1905

On September 12, 1905, as completion of the city hall building approached, discussion regarding demurrage due on the construction contract began again:

With the finishing up of the City Hall, the officials are beginning to think of the demurrage clause in the contract. It is a problem that will have to be faced in the next few months. It is rather doubtful just what course the city will pursue, though Mayor Myers has contended all along that the contracting company will be held liable for every day's delay. Despite the Mayor's proposition, however, some doubt has been expressed as to there ever being any demurrage collected, for the simple reason that cities rarely ever do collect it.

According to the contract the building should have been finished in February last and the contract provides that \$50 a day demurrage shall be paid. It has been stated, however, that demurrage cannot be collected unless actual damages can be shown.... The only actual damages that the city will be able to show...will be \$20 a month rent, which is paid for the harbor master's office. All the other officials of the city are occupying offices belonging to the city...

The demurrage question is one that will probably have to go to the city attorney before it is decided either one way or the other. If the city claims demurrage, however, there is a great deal of time to be deducted for delays for which the contracting company was in no way responsible. The laying of the corner stone delayed the work some and the change in the plan of ordering the bells for the tower gave the contracting firm over thirty days for which it is not liable. Bids were first invited by the committee from certain houses and after prices had been submitted it was determined to advertise for thirty days.

The demurrage of \$50 a day without deducting the time to which the city admits the contractors are entitled would amount to over \$10,000. With the time for which the contractors are not liable taken out, the sum will be much less....

A week later, the newspaper quoted Mayor Myers as stating "no excuse would be taken from the contractors and the demurrage would have to be paid." At the same event, a man predicted that the City would let the demurrage slide once the building was occupied; "one of those present and not connected with the city administration jocularly offered the suggestion that the contractors would be forgiven in the general good time to celebrate the completion and occupation of the structure." In response, the Mayor bet the man a twenty-five cent cigar that the company would be forced to pay demurrage.

Beneath all this lies the thought that the mayor and several of the aldermen are very much in earnest about the matter. They feel that complete justice is not being done the city by the contractors and do not hesitate to say that the city will get back with a vengeance when the time for settlement comes.

The mayor stated today without equivocation that the contractors are making no effort to hurry the building to completion.

“They are not putting the men to work on the building they should,” said the mayor. “From the way things look now it will be after the first of next year before the building will be ready for the city. I for one shall be in favor of exacting every cent of the demurrage, and I believe the aldermen feel the same way. The contractors are not showing the proper spirit to make the city desire to extend any favors to them.”

John E. Burgess, general manager of the Savannah Contracting Company, “declined to discuss the criticism of Mayor Myers” stating only that the building would be ready when the furniture arrived.

“Building Ready When Furniture Gets Here.” *Savannah Evening Press* (23 September 1905) 12:2.

“City Hall’s Cost When Completed.” *Savannah Evening Press* (7 September 1905) 10:1.

“Mayor’s Cigar Says City to Demand Demurrage.” *Savannah Evening Press* (22 September 1905) 1:7.

C. W. Winstedt to Sculpt Statues September 13, 1905

On September 13, 1905, Architect Witcover chose the designs of sculptor Carl William Winstedt for the figures of “Art” and “Commerce” to adorn the new city hall building. At the following Council caucus meeting, the awarding of the contract to Winstedt was approved. The contest had been between only two sculptors, Winstedt and John Walz, both of Savannah.

The competition was altogether on the models submitted.... Mr. Walz submitted his models in plaster and Mr. Winstedt in clay. The latter made his figures larger, two and a half feet high. The figures to be placed on the building will be ten feet high.

*The models as selected as very handsome.... Both Art and Commerce are represented by draped figures. Art with the Greek head and the finely modeled figure is very handsome. Commerce is coarser and the figure is not so refined, all of which is supposed to be typical. The poise of the head on Commerce, which is modern, is a remarkably fine piece of work. In designing his figures, Mr. Winstedt studied living models. He admits he had to improve on them however.**

The most remarkable feature of the figures to the layman is the way they are draped. Though draped and chaste, no matter which way either of the statues is viewed the outline of the figure is clearly seen. The object of course is that they may be viewed from several points of the compass...

Winstedt was born in Halmstad, Sweden in 1877 where he trained as a stone mason before studying architecture in Belgium. He traveled and worked throughout Europe and met his future wife in Germany. On May 21, 1904, he immigrated to the United States and first settled in New York. After securing some financial success, he sent for his fiancé in Germany and they were married as soon as she arrived in New York. The couple then moved to Atlanta. They did not like Atlanta and traveled to Savannah to catch a steamer back to New York. Once in Savannah, they decided to stay and Winstedt found work on the construction of the National Bank building. By the time the city hall statue contest came around, he had already started a cut stone company and planned to stay permanently in Savannah.**

...Mr. Winstedt’s success in Savannah is rather remarkable. He is a native of Sweden, and came to Savannah last January from Atlanta, intending to take the first steamer for New York. He looked around a little, secured a place on the National Bank building, and hasn’t sailed yet. Architect Witcover says his work on the models submitted [to] the committee ranks with that of the best sculptors in the country.



Detail of Witcover's original watercolor elevation depicting proposed statuary, 1903.
City of Savannah, Clerk of Council's Office.
Used with permission.

**According to stories passed down through the Winstedt family, C. W. Winstedt's human model for the City Hall statues was his wife, Marie Camr Winstedt. Marie, a native of Austria, was only twenty-three years old at the time, but had already mastered several languages and worked as an interpreter in Germany prior to her marriage.*

***Winstedt did not stay in Savannah. He moved on to Brownsville, Texas, where he built and operated a brick works, Seward, Alaska, and finally Honolulu, Hawaii. In Honolulu, he became a successful architect and builder, leaving behind several significant landmarks, including his home "Paki Hale" (now owned by the City of Honolulu and maintained as a recreation center), and Aloha Tower, Honolulu harbor's observation tower.*

"Winstedt, Jon, grandson of Carl William Winstedt, to Luciana Spracher, Library Archivist" (27 April 2006). City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

"Winstedt Won Statue Award." *Savannah Morning News* (14 September 1905) 12:1.

***Rug & Shade Contract Awarded to Adler
September 19, 1905***

On September 19, 1905, the City Hall Building Committee opened bids for the rugs and window shades for the new city hall building. Only Savannah firms were asked to compete, and four bids were expected from Lindsay & Morgan, Herbert & Quarterman, C. P. Miller, and Leopold Adler. Lindsay & Morgan failed to submit a bid, probably due to their experiences with the furniture and chair bids. Apparently learning from his last round of bids, Leopold Adler was the only firm to submit samples. Adler's bid, of either \$125 or \$140 on the window shades, depending on the quality of the shades, and \$225 for rugs for the Mayor's office, was tentatively selected by the committee. No postponements were allowed this time for the other firms to supply samples, as was the case with the chair bids.

A rug in the shape of a half moon for the Council Chamber was not included in the list bid upon, and arrangements are now being made to get this and one or two other rugs, which it has been found will be needed.

There will be two rugs for the Mayor's office, a large and a small one, one for the room for the Committee of the Whole and one for the Council Chamber. The last will be in the shape of a half moon, and will be for the aldermen's desk[s], which are to be arranged in a semi-circle.



Original rugs and window shades in the Mayor's general office, c.1905.
The Old and the New, Sketch of the Old City Exchange (1799-1904), and the New City Hall, Savannah, Georgia.
 Savannah: Savannah City Council, 1905.
 City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.
Used with permission.

On September 29, 1905, the Building Committee met and officially announced the awarding of the rug and shade contract to Leopold Adler.

The rugs for the Council chamber, which had not been advertised for, are included in the contract. The rugs...will cost \$393.75, and the shades, \$140, making a total of \$533.75.

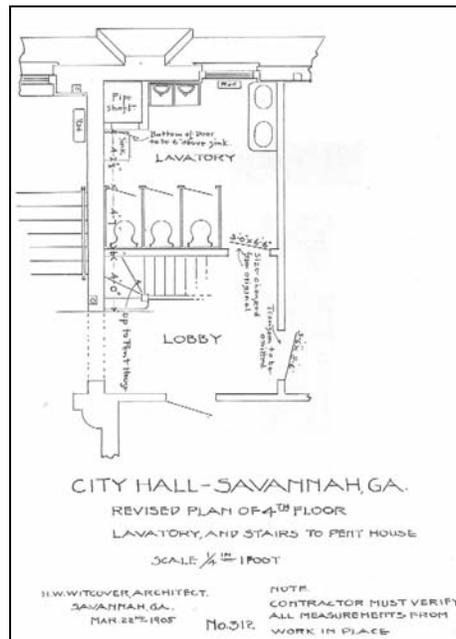
"Four Probable Bidders for City Hall Contract." *Savannah Morning News* (19 September 1905) 12:3.

"Gave Adler Contract as was Expected." *Savannah Morning News* (27 September 1905) 4:2.

"Leopold Adler will get Shade Contract." *Savannah Morning News* (20 September 1905) 12:2.

"Will Open Bids for Rugs and Shades." *Savannah Morning News* (18 September 1905) 8:2.

Harbor Master Gets New Furniture September 21, 1905



Fourth floor lavatory, drawn by Hyman W. Witcover, March 1905.
 City of Savannah, Engineering Department Retrospective Plans & Designs, City Hall, Drawing 24.4, Sheet 1.
 City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.
Used with permission.

On September 21, 1905, Mayor Myers requested that new furniture for the Harbor Master's office on the fourth floor be ordered to match that being made by the Art Metal Construction Company for the rest of the building. "Harbor Master McBride objected to being given old furniture" as had been suggested when he was reassigned to a fourth floor office. It was believed that the additional furniture would be delivered at the same time as the original order.

"New Furniture Ordered for Harbor Master." *Savannah Morning News* (21 September 1905) 10:5.

***Contractor's Bookkeeper Embezzles Company Funds
September 23, 1905***

On September 23, 1905, the *Savannah Morning News* announced that A. Scott Haines, a cashier and bookkeeper for the Savannah Contracting Company, was wanted for embezzling funds from the company. A week earlier, Haines had left to supposedly visit his mother in Atlanta. When he failed to show up for work the following week, John Burgess, general manager of the firm, examined the books and "discovered that some of the company's money had been misappropriated. It is believed Haines has fled, and that a thorough examination of the books will reveal a shortage in the neighborhood of \$500."

Two weeks earlier, Haines had been given notice that he would be let go after October 1, 1905 and replaced with another bookkeeper. He had been unsuccessfully trying to find another job locally since then. "The failure in the effort to secure a position and the knowledge that his books were soon to be audited must have caused Haines to leave."

His transactions seem to have been begun only a few weeks before he left, and appear to have been in small amounts at first. It is believed that most of the shortage will be found to have been misappropriated after Haines was notified that the books would be audited before Oct. 1, when the company purposed getting a new bookkeeper.

We have not yet determined just how all of Haines' crooked transactions were conducted. A. S. Bacon & Son, who are interested with us in part of the City Exchange work, is out \$190 also.

Haines had been a trusted employee of the Savannah Contracting Company. "He had been cashier since he came to Savannah and was in sole charge of the collections and deposits. He stood well in the city, was a member of one of the leading clubs and was well liked by his fellow associates." However, he was also known to gamble and drink when "out with the boys." After the discovery, Burgess and the local police were looking for Haines; it is unknown if they ever caught up with him.

"Nothing Heard from Scott Haines." *Savannah Morning News* (24 September 1905) 24:4.

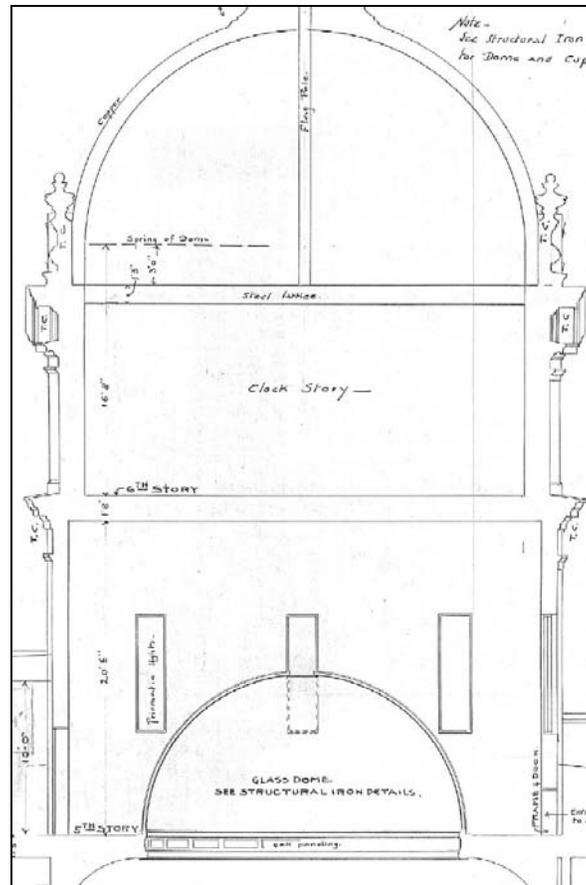
"Young Cashier Short \$500." *Savannah Morning News* (23 September 1905) 10:1.

***Glass & Copper Domes to be a Spectacular Sight
September 25, 1905***

By September 25, 1905, the glass pieces for the interior dome of the new city hall building had arrived and the work of installing them was set to begin any day.

This glass ceiling, or really dome within the outside copper dome, will be one of the many attractive features of the building.

The inside dome will be entirely of glass, joined together by wires, and through this glass the light will be diffused to the space below. There are ten narrow windows in the tower through which the light in the day can go, striking the glass dome and being reflected below. The combined effect of the glass and the light will be very pretty. At night electric lights, which can not be seen from below, will in a similar manner reflect light through the glass dome, illuminating it and giving light below as well.



Sectional showing location of interior glass dome in relation to exterior copper dome, drawn by Hyman W. Witcover, c.1904-1905. City of Savannah, Engineering Department Retrospective Plans & Designs, City Hall, Drawing 24.65. City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.. Used with permission.

Meanwhile, the exterior dome had been completed:

The City Hall dome, now a brownish color, will gradually turn green, or least that's what is expected of it. It has so far been a well-behaved dome, and it is to be presumed that it will not be disappointing in this question of color. Had it not been coated with oil, the green would have already been noticeable...

Despite the oil, the green is expected to begin to show up very soon now. It will first be noticeable at the bottom and will gradually spread over the entire dome. The green will become more and more prominent as time advances, and will finally acquire a verdancy most attractive...

There have been many inquiries and guesses as to whether the dome was to be left as it is or not. A great many don't admire the brown, as it is now. It will be left as it is, but will change itself.

The rotunda under the dome was shaping up to be “the most striking feature of a beautiful building,” and the mosaic ceiling in the first floor lobby was almost complete.

A step through a comparatively low doorway brings one into a magnificent rotunda with a well hole twenty feet across, extending from the pavement to a height of seventy-five feet.

As the eye passes each of the four floors it sees a very beautiful balcony with dark walnut finishing until the top is reached, when a beautiful dome of tinted glass cuts off the view of the inside of the tower....

When completed the rotunda will have a fountain playing in the center, on the first floor. Ornamental pilasters will carry beautiful designs of lights and the whole will be the most showy part of the building.

“City Hall Dome will Gradually Turn Green.” *Savannah Morning News* (24 September 1905) 24:6.

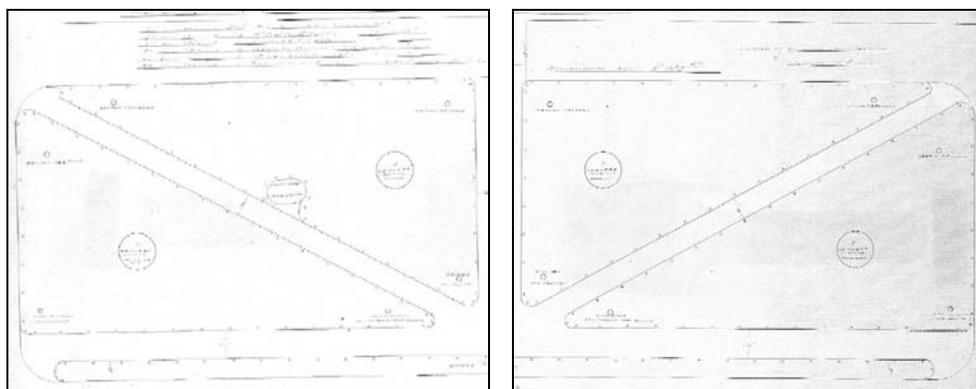
“A Striking Feature of the New City Hall.” *Savannah Evening Press* (25 August 1905) 1:6.

“Will Soon Put in Big Glass Dome.” *Savannah Morning News* (25 September 1905) 8:2.

***Oglethorpe Memorial Spot Selected in the Strand
September 26, 1905***

On September 26, 1905, the City Engineer’s force located the spot for the placement of the Oglethorpe Memorial in the Strand to the west of the city hall building. “The spot was approximately located several months ago, and it was with little difficulty that it was found yesterday.”

The memorial will be seventy-five feet east of Whitaker street and twenty-three feet north of the north curb line of Bay street. Fortunately, the location will conform with the plans, which have been adopted by Council for the improvement of the Strand. One of the walks will run just in front of the memorial bench, and the center walk, running north and south, will be only a few feet away.... An old map in the Mayor’s office shows the spot, which is on the old “tree line” along the Strand.



Landscape plan for the Strand (left: west of City Hall; right: east of City Hall), showing location of Oglethorpe Memorial Bench (left in middle), shrubs and walkways, 1906. City of Savannah, Engineering Department Retrospective Maps and Plans, XJ-46. City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia. *Used with permission.*

“Work has been Started on Oglethorpe Memorial.” *Savannah Morning News* (27 September 1905) 12:4.

***Bells Toll the Noon Hour
October 5, 1905***

On October 5, 1905, the two bells in the city hall tower were tolled for the first time in the same manner they would be when the clock was installed and operating the bells.

The chimes first heralded the ringing of the hour bell, and the music from their brazen throats was loud and true. Then the deep-throated booming of the big bell which will toll off the hours counted out twelve periods of time.

The chimes were pronounced by those who heard them to be unusually clear and sweet, and many stopped in their walk to listen to the unusual sound.

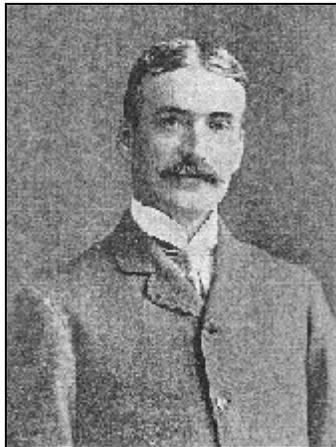


City Hall clock and bell tower, c.1981.
 Historic American Buildings Survey, HABS, GA, 26-SAV, 61-18.
 Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.
Used with permission.

“Chimes at City Hall Announced Noon Hour.” *Savannah Morning News* (6 October 1905) 10:3.

Bay Street Pavement Examined October 11, 1905

On October 11, 1905, a resolution passed by City Council authorized Director of Public Works George M. Gadsden and Assistant City Engineer J. W. Howard to inspect the paving on Bay Street between Abercorn and Barnard streets to determine its condition. “The paving is composed in the main of cobble stones and small portion of brick and is unsanitary aside from being worthless as paving.” The resolution followed an agreement between the Director of Public Works and Alderman D. R. Thomas, Chairman of the Streets and Lanes Committee, made on October 5th to focus on this section of Bay Street.



George M. Gadsden, Director of Public Works, c.1900.
Report of Hon. Herman Myers, Mayor...of the City of Savannah, Ga., for the Year Ending December 31, 1900.
 Savannah: Savannah City Council, 1900.
 City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.
Used with permission.

The work of taking up the old cobblestones, which have been in use on Bay street for the last half century, and the substitution of a high-class brick pavement will mean much for this thoroughfare, which has been avoided to a large extent by traffic since better paving has been provided on other streets, and property owners generally will welcome the news that the paving is to be commenced so soon....

The most difficult part of the work will be that of taking up the cobblestones, which have become firmly embedded, and grading the street. After this is completed it will take but a week or two to lay the brick....

This work will probably not be taken up until spring....

Gadsden and Howard prepared a report for City Council based on their inspection making recommendations for condemnation and replacement of the pavement. The pavement directly in front of the city hall site would be left alone since it had been paved with vitrified brick within the past few years. An ordinance for the new pavement, based on Gadsden and Howard's report, did not appear before City Council until November 8, 1905.

"Artificial Stone Walks Soon to be Laid." *Savannah Morning News* (23 October 1905) 8:2.

"To Condemn Bay Street Pavement." *Savannah Morning News* (22 October 1905) 20:2.

"Will Examine Paving on Bay Street." *Savannah Morning News* (12 October 1905) 12:2.

Winstedt Signs Contract with City for Statues October 12, 1905

On October 12, 1905, the City signed the contract with sculptor C. W. Winstedt authorizing his execution of the two statues "Art" and "Commerce." Unlike the other contracts and agreements related to the construction and finishing of the city hall building, this agreement did not specify a due date or even a time frame.

C. W. Winstedt shall carve and furnish two statues and erect the same upon the pedestals over the portico of the SAVANNAH CITY HALL.

Said statues each to be ten (10) feet high. To be draped female figures, one symbolizing ART, the other symbolizing COMMERCE. To be of the best quality selected "New York stock" Bedford limestone, and executed from models approved by H. W. Witcover, Architect and to be executed to the entire satisfaction of said Architect.

Said C. W. Winstedt is to furnish all material and labor necessary for the complete and satisfactory execution and erection of said statues...

In consideration of the faithful performance of this agreement THE MAYOR AND ALDERMEN of the City of Savannah shall pay said C. W. WINSTEDT the sum of Two Thousand, Eight Hundred Dollars (\$2800.00). Said payment to be made after said statues are completely set in their position at the building....

Contract No. 580. City Council Meeting Papers-Contracts, Box CON 7 [0115-002-22.1], Folder 45. City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

***Furniture & Lighting Fixtures Arrive
October 14, 1905***



Left: brass sconce in Council Chamber; Right: exterior Verdigris lanterns in portico, May 2005.
City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.
Used with permission.

On October 14, 1905, the first car load of furniture for the new city hall building arrived in Savannah from the Art Metal Construction Company, of New York. Representatives of the furniture company soon followed to supervise the unloading and unpacking of the furniture. As the furniture arrived it was placed in the offices and spaces that were already completed in the building. The upper two floors and the vaults received their furniture first, while the furniture for the lower floors was set aside as varnishing work continued. The Council Chamber was almost ready, except for a section of the parquet flooring.

The electric fixtures have arrived. The wiring of the building was long ago finished, and the placing of the fixtures will take only a short time. The work will not be started however, until the other work in the building is nearer completion. The architect has been notified that the fixtures are here and that they will be installed as soon as the building is ready for them.

“City Hall Furniture is Being Unpacked.” *Savannah Morning News* (18 October 1905) 12:2.

“Furniture for City Hall Here.” *Savannah Morning News* (15 October 1905) 20:5.

***Sculptor Fernando Miranda’s Fountain Design Selected
October 16, 1905***

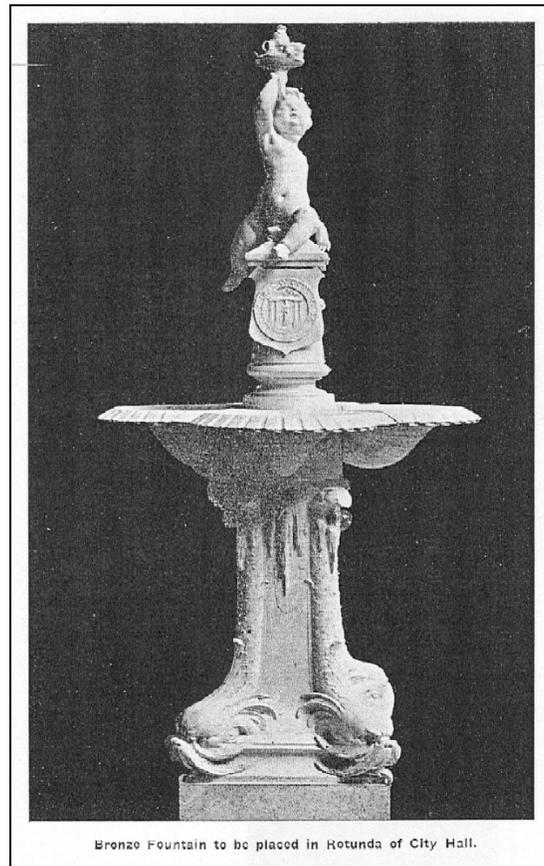
On October 16, 1905, the City Hall Building Committee examined designs for the fountain to be placed in the marble basin already installed in the city hall rotunda. Out of six designs, “especially prepared for the City Hall, models having been made and photographs taken of them,” the committee selected the submission of John Williams, Inc., a bronze foundry in New York City, to recommend to the City Council at its next meeting. “The committee regarded the Williams design as the handsomest and it is also the cheapest.”

The fountain will cost approximately \$2,000. It will be of statuary bronze and will stand five feet high in a marble basin ten feet in diameter.

The central shaft of the fountain consists of four sculptured dolphins. These support a basin consisting of four sea shells. Through the center of these runs a pillar which is surmounted by the figure of a child holding aloft a horn of plenty, typifying the prosperity of the city.

On the pillow below is imposed a shield bearing a sculptured copy of the city's coat of arms, surrounded with garlands. Through the horn of plenty the central jet will spray. The water falling in the basin of shells will overflow from their scalloped edges forming a veil to the basin below. Around the shaft and below the shell basin will be arranged a number of variously colored lights, to be seen through the veil of water. Sprays of water will also issue from the mounting of the dolphins at the base.

The fountain, it is thought, will be even prettier at night, when the lights are burning, than in the day.



Bronze Fountain to be placed in Rotunda of City Hall.

Original clay model of City Hall fountain sculpted by Fernando Miranda, 1905.
The Old and the New, Sketch of the Old City Exchange (1799-1904), and the New City Hall, Savannah, Georgia.
Savannah: Savannah City Council, 1905.
City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.
Used with permission.

On October 24, 1905, Architect Hyman Witcover wrote the foundry that their proposal for manufacturing the fountain had been accepted for \$2,000. Witcover outlined the terms of the agreement, including that the fountain be cast of "United States standard bronze." The company was required to submit samples of the finish, as well as scale drawings of the fountain and full size clay models (or photographs of full size models) for approval.

The Renaissance Revival style fountain was actually the artistic design of Spanish sculptor Fernando Miranda (1842-1925) (for a brief biography see special article "Sculptor Fernando Miranda y Cassellas). Miranda was active in the New York art world during the 1890s and early 20th century. The design is strikingly similar to the Italian Renaissance fountain sculpted by Verrocchio in the courtyard of the Palazzo Vecchio, in Florence, Italy, and a sculpture at the palace of Versailles, in France. Miranda and John Williams, Inc. collaborated on at least one other work, the bronze sculpture *Primitive Marksman* cast in 1907 and now in the collections of the New York Historical Society. John Williams, Inc., established around 1870 and in business at least through 1911, also manufactured the Oglethorpe Monument statue erected in Chippewa Square in 1910.

Conservation Technology Group. *Savannah Monuments Preservation Project*. Newport, RI: Conservation Technology Group, 1996. Savannah Area Local Documents, SAV.PT.1996-001. City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

Contract No. 581. City Council Meeting Papers-Contracts, Box CON 7 [0115-002-22.1], Folder 45. City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

"Fountain Design Chosen for City Hall Rotunda." *Savannah Morning News* (17 October 1905) 12:2.

"Pretty Design for City Hall Fountain." *Savannah Evening Press* (16 October 1905) 1:7.

Stewart, Dorothy. "The Monuments and Fountains of Savannah." Prepared for the Savannah Park and Tree Department through the Department of History, Armstrong State College, June 1993. Savannah Area Local Documents, SAV.PT.1993-001. City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

"Eye-sore" Clean-up Ordered October 17, 1905

On October 17, 1905, Acting Mayor James M. Dixon officially notified the Savannah Contracting Company they had ten days to remove all machinery, buildings, and rubbish from the grounds surrounding the city hall building site. The Building Committee had been requesting the clean up for some time, but all previous attempts had been ignored by the company. However, if the company failed to comply with this request, the City threatened to remove the items at the company's expense.

Acting Mayor Dixon announced...that no further delays in cleaning up about the building would be tolerated. The place has been eye-sore long enough.

Within days, the contracting company began tearing down some of their temporary wooden structures; however most of the undesired materials were left till the last minute.

The work of cleaning up about the new City Hall has been started by the tearing down of one of the several temporary structures that were built adjoining it. There are others of these buildings still standing, one on either side of the City Hall, but they will also be taken down in a short time.... The contractors will comply with the notice, though they are waiting until the last few days allowed to get busy.

On October 27, 1905, ten days after the City's ultimatum, the newspaper noted that the company was working more rapidly to clear the area:

All but one or two pieces of the machinery which was used about the building has also been removed. The place has not been entirely cleaned up yet, but it presents a much better appearance than it has since the new building was started.

"City Hall Furniture is Being Unpacked." *Savannah Morning News* (18 October 1905) 12:2.

"Cleaning Up City Hall Grounds." *Savannah Morning News* (27 October 1905) 10:3.

"Formal Notice to Move Old Buildings." *Savannah Morning News* (18 October 1905) 12:2.

"Fountain Design Chosen for City Hall Rotunda." *Savannah Morning News* (17 October 1905) 12:2.

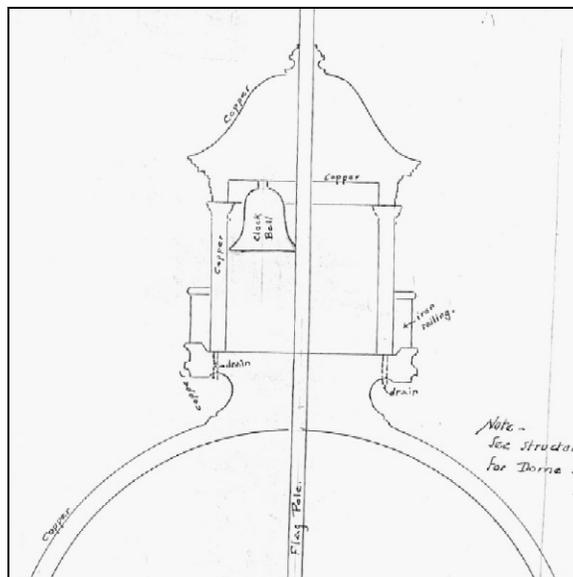
"One Temporary Building Torn Down." *Savannah Morning News* (21 October 1905) 12:5.

Bells Installed Incorrectly
October 20, 1905

On October 20, 1905, Architect Hyman Witcover notified Robert Schneider that the larger of the two city hall bells was installed incorrectly and would have to be moved.

There is a sounding board being put in the tower and the bells are to be located in exact positions in reference to this board. The columns about the tower are now being put in place.

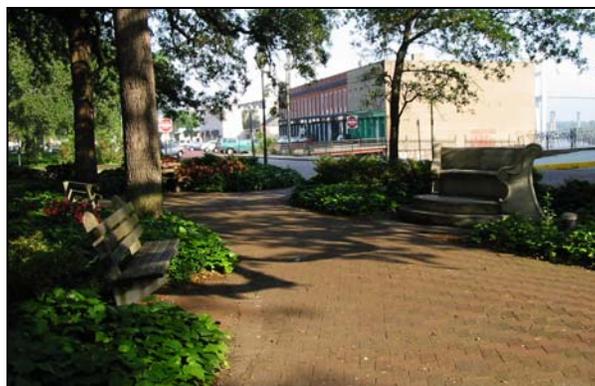
The change will, of course, be made, though it will be rather expensive.



Original location of clock bell in tower from sectional elevation, drawn by Hyman W. Witcover, c.1904-1905. City of Savannah, Engineering Department Retrospective Plans & Designs, City Hall, Drawing 24.65. City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia. Used with permission.

“To Move the Larger of Big Clock Bells.” *Savannah Morning News* (20 October 1905) 12:1.

Oglethorpe Bench Half-way Done
October 21, 1905



Oglethorpe Memorial Bench in the Strand west of City Hall, May 2005. City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia. Used with permission.

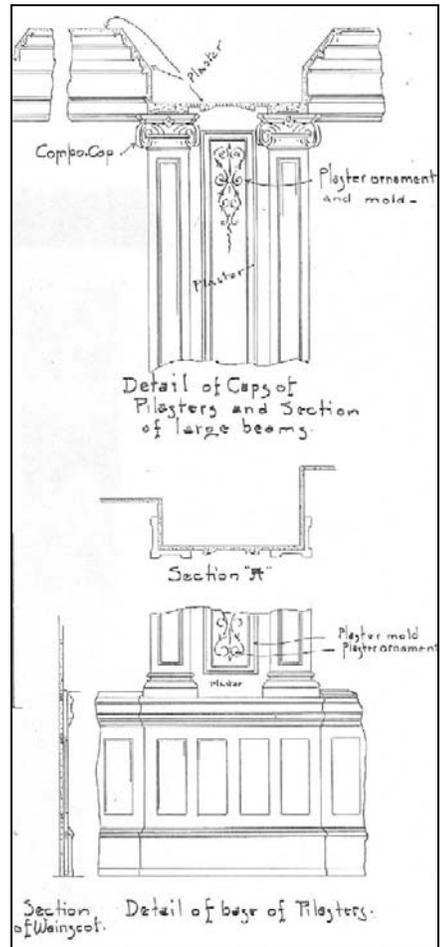
On October 21, 1905, the *Savannah Morning News* announced that almost half of the Oglethorpe Memorial bench had been completed in the Strand west of the city hall building. The foundations and steps to the memorial had been installed and the bench was in the process of being carved.

The bench, which is being carved of marble, is yet to be put in place and the terrazzo flooring is yet to be laid. After the bench is ready, the memorial can be finished in a very short time.

“Oglethorpe Memorial About Half Finished.” *Savannah Morning News* (21 October 1905) 12:2.

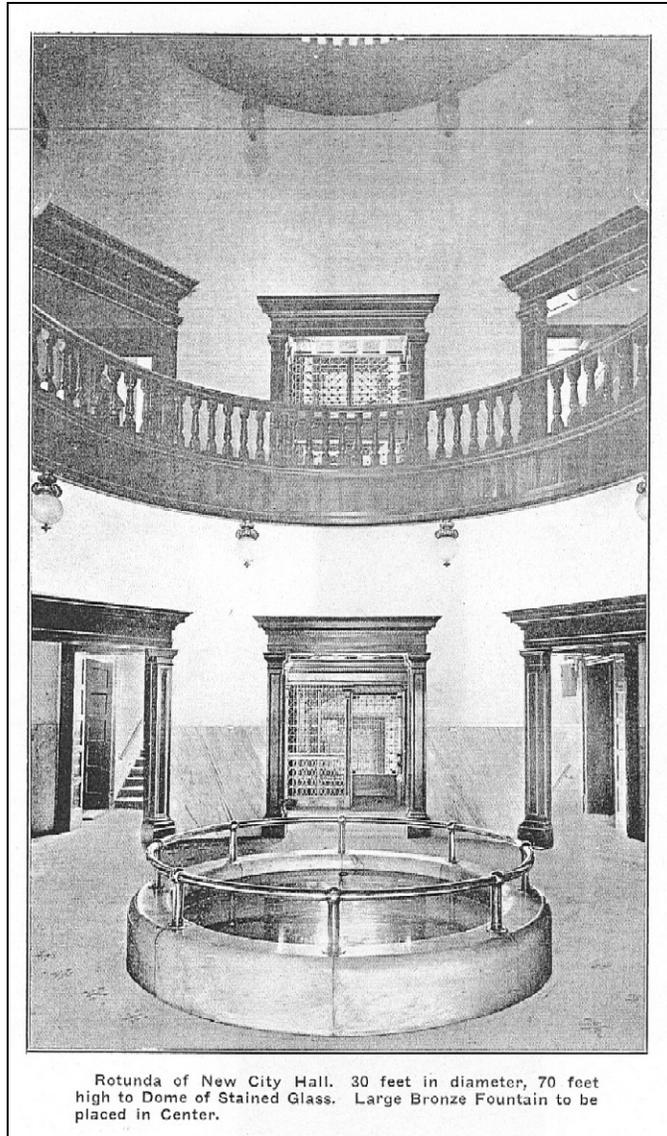
***Painters & Varnishers Busy on First Floor
October 27, 1905***

On October 27, 1905, the front entrance to the city hall building was blocked off while the painters and varnishers finished the walls and trim in the front part of the building.



Details of plaster pilaster and ornamentation in the Council Chamber,
drawn by Hyman W. Witcover, c.1905.
City of Savannah, Engineering Department Retrospective Plans & Designs,
City Hall, Drawing 24.71.
City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.
Used with permission.

The front of the City Hall has been barricaded, so that the building may not be entered by that route. The reason for this is that the painters and varnishers are busy at the front of the building, and it is desired to keep people out until the work is finished and dry.



Rotunda of New City Hall. 30 feet in diameter, 70 feet high to Dome of Stained Glass. Large Bronze Fountain to be placed in Center.

First floor rotunda of City Hall, c.1905.

The Old and the New, Sketch of the Old City Exchange (1799-1904), and the New City Hall, Savannah, Georgia.
Savannah: Savannah City Council, 1905.

City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.
Used with permission.

“Cleaning Up City Hall Grounds.” *Savannah Morning News* (27 October 1905) 10:3.

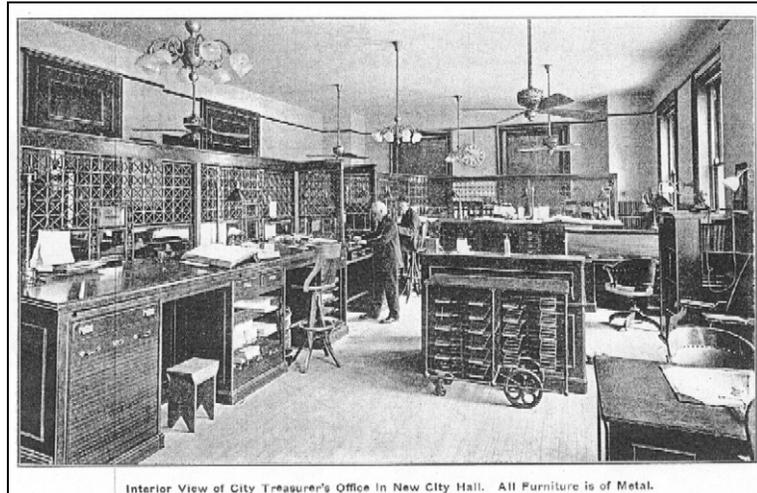
“Builder’s Risk” Insurance Renewed October 31, 1905

On October 31, 1905, City officials decided to renew the insurance policies on the city hall building for an additional sixty days at “builder’s risk” to provide the contractor plenty of time to complete the building under the current policy. The insurance premiums during construction were paid by the City and then deducted from the amount owed to the Savannah Contracting Company, so that the contractor was responsible for the insurance while the building was in his possession. It was decided to increase the insurance from \$110,000 to \$125,000, about half the total cost of the building, when the City accepted the building from the contractor (\$100,000 for the building and \$25,000 for the furniture and fixtures).

“City Hall Insurance Question Settled.” *Savannah Morning News* (1 November 1905) 12:2.

“To Renew Builder’s Risk on City Hall.” *Savannah Morning News* (31 October 1905) 12:4.

Terraced Flower Beds Questioned November 5, 1905



Interior View of City Treasurer's Office in New City Hall. All Furniture is of Metal.

Custom counter tops in the City Treasurer's office, c.1905.

The Old and the New, Sketch of the Old City Exchange (1799-1904), and the New City Hall, Savannah, Georgia.

Savannah: Savannah City Council, 1905.

City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

Used with permission.

On November 5, 1905, the local newspaper announced the arrival of the counters for the city hall building “which have been the cause of much of the delay recently.” Additionally, concerns regarding the approved plan for the walks and flower beds around the building were being voiced. The plan adopted by City Council called for the walks to be at the present elevation, but for the flower beds to be raised or terraced. The Oglethorpe Memorial was already half-way constructed on the present level of the ground and if terraced beds were installed the view of the bench would be partially obstructed.

The plans for the terraced beds in the grounds will probably have to be abandoned to prevent injuring the appearance of the Oglethorpe memorial, or else the plans will have to be so altered as to make some provision for the memorial.

“City Hall Ready by December 10.” *Savannah Morning News* (5 November 1905) 20:3.

“Not Settled Yet About Grounds.” *Savannah Morning News* (5 November 1905) 20:1.

Bay Street Paving Ordinance Introduced November 8, 1905

On November 8, 1905, the ordinance for the improvement of the pavement on Bay Street between Abercorn and Barnard streets was read for the first time to City Council. At the October 25, 1905 City Council meeting, the Director of Public Works and the City Engineer submitted their report of the investigation of the said pavement recommending the replacement of the entire section with vitrified brick.

[The pavement is] unsanitary and worn to such an extent as to be no longer serviceable as good pavement, except that portion of the pavement in front of the City Hall, which is paved with brick, is in fair condition, said report further recommending, for the sake of uniformity, that these bricks be taken up and new brick laid.

The ordinance, based on their recommendations, was read for a second time at the November 22, 1905 City Council meeting and “laid on the table.” On December 20, 1905, the ordinance was read for the third time and amended to include Bay Street only between Drayton and Barnard streets. The amended ordinance was then passed.

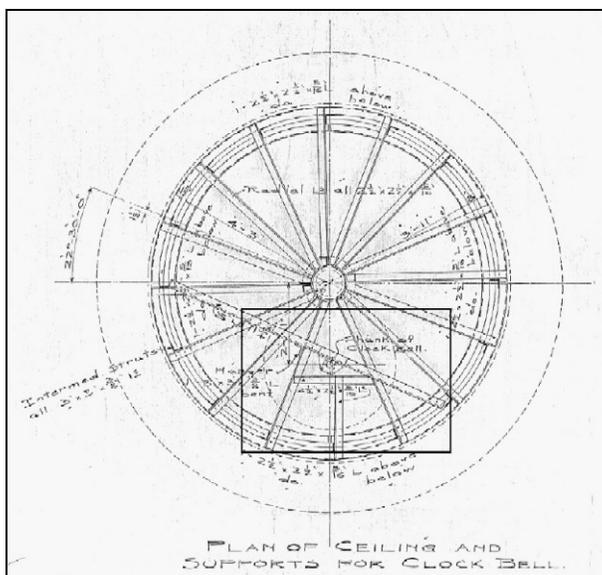
Official Proceedings of City Council (8 November 1905) 78-79; (22 November 1905) 82; (20 December 1905) 95. City of Savannah, Clerk of Council’s Office, Savannah, Georgia.

***Responsibility for Misplacement of Bell Undecided
November 15, 1905***

On November 15, 1905, the City Hall Building Committee decided to let Mayor Myers settle the disagreement between Architect Hyman Witcover and Robert Schneider regarding who was responsible for the misplacement of the bell in the clock tower. Everyone agreed the bell needed to be placed in the proper position, however, which party should bear the burden of the cost of moving the bell was a matter of debate.

Mr. Schneider claims they were hung as shown on the blue prints, and that his company should not have to pay for moving them. On the other hand, it is claimed that even if the blue prints were wrong, it was the business of the clock company to find this out.

Mayor Myers put off making a final decision until a later date.

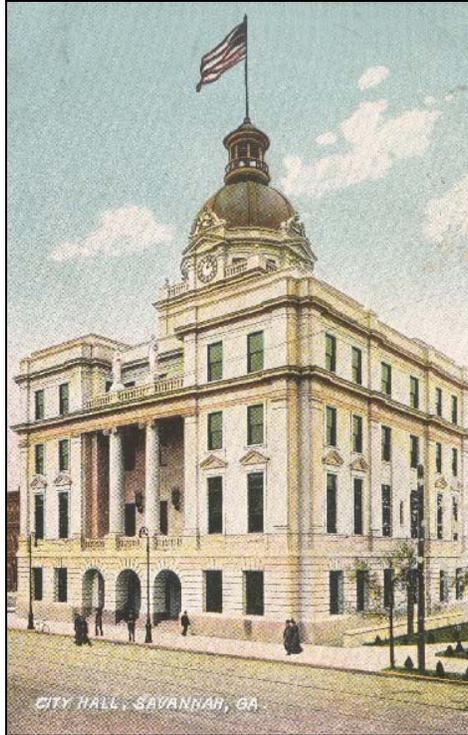


Plan of ceiling and supports for clock bell (box indicates location of bell), drawn by Hyman W. Witcover, c.1905. City of Savannah, Engineering Department Retrospective Plans & Designs, City Hall, Drawing 24.42. City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia. *Used with permission.*

“Who Will Have to Pay for Moving Bells?” *Savannah Morning News* (16 November 1905) 12:6.

***Savannah Electric Company Donates Lamp Posts; Old Furniture to be Auctioned
November 16, 1905***

On November 16, 1905, the *Savannah Morning News* announced that the Savannah Electric Company had presented the City with two ornamental lamp posts for the front of the city hall building. The posts had been ready for sometime, but could not be installed until the curbstone for the new sidewalks was ordered and the height of the new walks was known so the proper grades could be established.



Postcard of City Hall showing original street lamp posts on Bay Street sidewalk, postcard by the Rotograph Company of New York City, n.d.
 Handwritten on the backside, "New City Hall of Savannah."
 V. & J. Duncan Antique Maps and Prints, Savannah, Georgia.
Used with permission.

Also on this day, Mayor Myers sent a note to each department head asking for an inventory of all furniture in their current offices and an itemized list of those items that would be moved into the new city hall building.

The new building has been furnished complete with new furniture, but there are many little things among the old possessions that will still be used.

The City intended to auction off all of the old furniture not to be reused, though some would be taken by the Police Department for use in the police station, the Aldermen would probably buy their chairs, and Assistant Clerk of Council Hernandez had been given the desk he used for the past twenty years by the Mayor as a present.

"Inventory of City Furniture for Sale." *Savannah Morning News* (17 November 1905) 12:2.

"Who Will Have to Pay for Moving Bells?" *Savannah Morning News* (16 November 1905) 12:6.

1906 Appropriation for City Hall November 21, 1905

On November 21, 1905, Mayor Myers sent Architect Witcover a letter requesting him to furnish a statement of the total amount contracted for on the city hall building which had not yet been paid in order to take the remainder into consideration while preparing the 1906 budget. The statement prepared included the remainder of the contract with the Savannah Contracting Company, as well as all secondary contracts for furniture, clocks, statues, rugs, etc. Witcover's statement showed that an appropriation of about \$70,000 would be required to fulfill all contracts in 1906. By the end of November 1905, \$170,231.66 had been paid to the Savannah Contracting Company leaving a balance of roughly \$32,000, plus the costs of those decorative items not included in their contract.

The erection of a \$250,000 structure by a city the size of Savannah without making a loan or raising the tax rate and at the same time carrying on all the regular work of the various city departments is unprecedented in the history of the country, city officials say.

“Wants Estimate for Furnishing City Hall.” *Savannah Morning News* (22 November 1905) 12:2.

“Will Fix Budget in Old Quarters.” *Savannah Morning News* (24 November 1905) 12:5.

***1906 Budget to be Prepared in Temporary Headquarters
November 23, 1905***

On November 23, 1905, Mayor Myers stated that unless the government officials could move into the new building before City Council began working on 1906’s budget and tax ordinance, it would be best to finish all the work in the present, temporary headquarters to avoid any confusion typical of a move during such an important work period.

The work on the building was progressing, but several little things were still undone. The lights were being installed and would probably take another week. The counters were not all in. The furniture was in place, minus the chairs, though they had arrived. The windows and floors were being cleaned. The fountain and statues were not ready; however, this would not interfere with occupancy of the new building. The re-hanging of the bells in the clock tower began on this day, but the clock was not expected for several weeks still.

There are...quite a number of little things to be done, a glass to be put in or a piece of wood to be retouched, or some other trivial thing. These little finishing details are necessarily very slow.

“Will Fix Budget in Old Quarters.” *Savannah Morning News* (24 November 1905) 12:5.

***City Records Storage in New Building
November 24, 1905***

On November 24, 1905, the old metal filing cases from the offices of the Clerk of Council and the Director of Public Works were moved into the city hall building vaults. The gentleman in charge of fitting them into place was in town so they were moved earlier than the rest of the departments’ belongings. “It was desired to have all the filing cases properly fitted in the vaults for which they are intended.” When new furniture was ordered for the building, the filing cases already owned were considered to reduce unnecessary purchases.

The Clerk had around twenty-five cases of records stored at the Chatham County Courthouse which would have to be moved at a later date. The Clerk’s new quarters included a record room in the basement where the City’s old records would be stored, as well as a vault adjoining the Clerk’s office where the records of the last ten to fifteen years would be stored.*

The records stored at the Court House have been referred to a dozen or more times since they have been there. When they were packed away a record was kept of what was put in each case, so that any given record could be found without difficulty.

On this day, the *Savannah Morning News* announced that at least six men were in the running to become custodian of the new city hall building. “There is likely to be a warm race for the place.” Several men were “working for the place” and actively seeking the position, like R. W. Ferguson, J. A. Christian, and S. D. Horton. Friends of Richard McKenna, James Maguire, and Deputy Sheriff Walter Fleming were pushing them. The salary for the position would range somewhere between \$65 and \$75 a month.

**The City’s records are currently maintained in City Hall by the City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives which uses several of the original vaults for this purpose.*

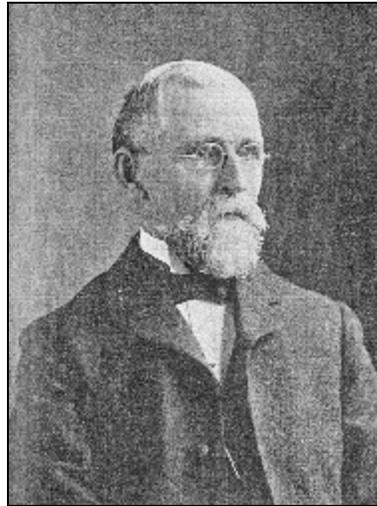
“City Hall Custodian to be Chosen Soon.” *Savannah Morning News* (24 November 1905) 12:2.

“Moving Filing Cases into the City Hall.” *Savannah Morning News* (25 November 1905) 12:4.

***Aldermen Thomas & Garfunkel Resign
November 29, 1905***

On November 29, 1905, the local newspaper announced that Alderman D. R. Thomas had in fact resigned as an alderman on November 15, 1905 in a letter to Mayor Myers and had not been acting as an alderman since the last regular meeting of the City Council on November 22nd. In a statement to the paper, Thomas said:

I am not in accord with the majority of my committee [Streets and Lanes], nor do I accept the construction, given the ordinance, under which the department is operated, by the Mayor and city attorneys.



Alderman D. R. Thomas, c.1900.

Report of Hon. Herman Myers, Mayor...of the City of Savannah, Ga., for the Year Ending December 31, 1900.
Savannah: Savannah City Council, 1900.

City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.
Used with permission.

City Council held a regular meeting on December 6, 1905, at which time Alderman Thomas' resignation was due to be accepted. However, Alderman A. J. Garfunkel submitted his resignation as well, indicating in a letter to Mayor Myers that he was planning on resigning in January due to outside responsibilities, but in light of Thomas' resignation he preferred to discontinue his service with Council effective immediately.*

I wish to assure you I have never antagonized either Mr. Thomas or any other alderman in any measure, except when I felt it my bounded duty to do so in the interest of the tax payers and of a proper administration. Unfortunately on several occasions, I have felt constrained to differ with Mr. Thomas in matters of policy. I would have been untrue to my trust, if I had not taken a firm stand whenever my convictions prompted me to do so....

In response to the second resignation, Alderman Davant suggested that committees be appointed to ask each man to withdraw his resignation as a matter of courtesy, though all doubted a withdrawal would be made in either case. Following a visit by the committees to the aldermen, both resignations were accepted at a special meeting of Council on December 11, 1905. At the same time, Murray M. Stewart was elected to fill Thomas' vacancy. John F. Freeman was elected at the next meeting of Council, on December 15, 1905, to take Garfunkel's place.

**Neither aldermen's resignation was in connection to the construction of the city hall building.*

"Alderman Davant Sidetracks Plan." *Savannah Morning News* (7 December 1905) 12:1.

"May Now Revise All Committees." *Savannah Morning News* (8 December 1905) 12:1.

- "Mayor Announces New Committees." *Savannah Morning News* (16 December 1905) 4:1.
"Mayor has Not Yet Called Upon Mr. Thomas." *Savannah Morning News* (2 December 1905) 10:6.
"Mayor Requests Alderman to Re-Consider." *Savannah Morning News* (3 December 1905) 20:3.
"Murray Stewart Now an Alderman." *Savannah Morning News* (12 December 1905) 12:1.
"Murray Stewart Succeeds Thomas." *Savannah Morning News* (6 December 1905) 16:1.
"Neither Aldermanic Resignation Accepted." *Savannah Morning News* (7 December 1905) 2:5.
"Resignation is Handed to Mayor." *Savannah Morning News* (29 November 1905) 12:3.

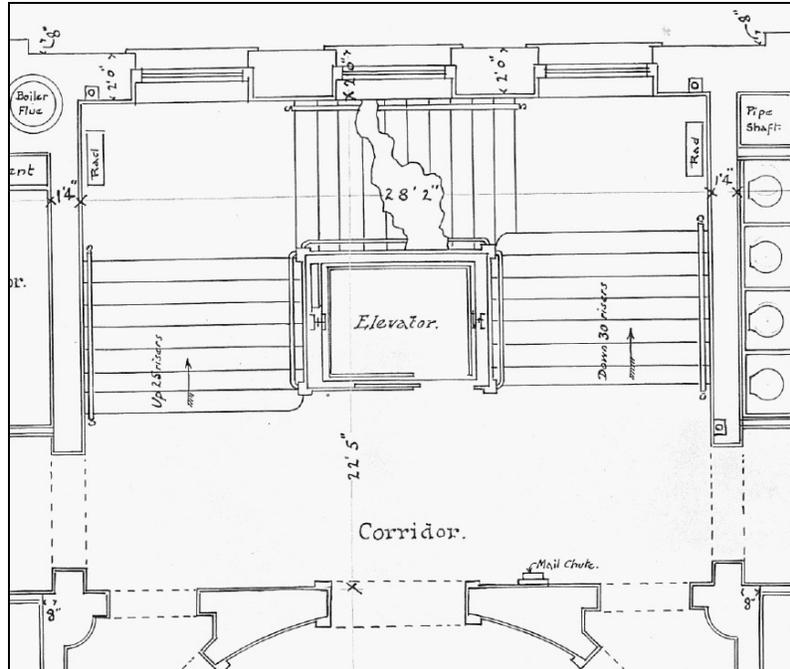
***10% of Marble Stairs Rejected by Architect
November 30, 1905***



Marble staircase in City Hall, May 2005.
City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.
Used with permission.

On November 30, 1905, Architect Hyman W. Witcover sent the Savannah Contracting Company a list of things that would have to be fixed on the city hall building before he would accept it on behalf of the City. The largest item on the list was the removal and replacement of approximately 10% of the marble stairs in the building that were not properly fitted into place.

The architect has finally and flatly rejected marble now down on something like ten per cent of the stairs. Where pieces were too short the crack was filled in with a composition and it was fixed to resemble marble. After wearing it would, of course, show up.



Third floor stairwell and corridor, drawn by Hyman W. Witcover, c.1905.
 City of Savannah, Engineering Department Retrospective Plans & Designs, City Hall, Drawing 24.73.
 City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.
 Used with permission.

The contracting company was scrambling to remedy the defect in accordance with Witcover's demands.

The defect in the stairs is the most important item. The marble to replace those pieces rejected will have to be shipped, and it is not known just how long this will take.

"Part of Stairs in New City Hall Rejected by Architect." *Savannah Morning News* (30 November 1905) 12:1.

Custodian to Care for City Hall December 6, 1905

On December 6, 1905, at the City Council meeting, Alderman Dixon proposed a resolution permitting the Mayor to appoint a custodian to look after the new city hall building. City Council adopted the resolution, and established a salary of \$75 per month for the position. The appointment was postponed until a later date, and Messenger of Council Charles Gradot was placed in the role of custodian temporarily.

Some one is wanted in the new building at once to take charge of the city's property there, valued at about \$40,000, outside of the contract with the Savannah Contracting Company. The company is, of course, responsible for the building and for everything furnished by it, but the city bought the furniture and the electric fixtures under separate contracts.

During the meeting, a communication from Clerk of Council J. Robert Creamer was read. Creamer, who also served as clerk of the Police Court, requested to be relieved of the duty of attending the Police Court effective December 30, 1905.

In view of the fact that we will soon move to the New City Hall, where more time will be required to fulfill the growing demands of my office- I request your Honorable body to relieve me of officiating at the Police Court and to put same under the Police Dept where it justly & rightly belong[s]. I desire to say further that the City of Savh is the only City of its size where the City Clerk attend[s] Police Court. I desire same to take effect Saturday Dec 30-1905.

Creamer's request was referred to the Committee of the Whole, and at the December 20, 1905 City Council meeting was granted. The clerk to the Superintendent of Police was later appointed to assume these duties starting January 1, 1906.

"Communication from J. Robert Creamer" (6 December 1905). City Council Meeting Papers-Proceedings of Council, Box PRO 96 [0115-001-A293], Folder 893. City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

"Murray Stewart Succeeds Thomas." *Savannah Morning News* (6 December 1905) 16:1.

"Resolution by Alderman Dixon" (6 December 1905). City Council Meeting Papers-Proceedings of Council, Box PRO 97 [0115-001-A294], Folder 895. City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

"Routine Work of the Aldermanic Board." *Savannah Morning News* (7 December 1905) 2:6.

Municipal Library Proposed December 8, 1905

On December 8, 1905, the *Savannah Morning News* announced a new proposal to establish a municipal library in the new city hall building.* It is unclear who originated the idea, however it was estimated that an appropriation of only \$75 to \$100 a year would allow the gradual purchase of books that "would be almost invaluable to the city officials." In the past, copies of annual reports of other Southern cities had been collected haphazardly. The proposed library would house not only these types of reports, but works which focused on municipal questions that repeatedly came up and several municipal journals.

Altogether the library, though containing only a small number of volumes, would be made a place from which a vast amount of information could be obtained upon municipal topics. Letters are constantly having to be sent out from the Mayor's office to get information that should be on file there.

Thomas Gamble, Jr., Secretary to the Mayor, stated his approval of the plan and agreed to look after the library if it was established.

**A municipal library was not officially established until the late 1970s under City Manager Arthur A. "Don" Mendonsa. The City of Savannah, Research Library & Municipal Archives, located on the first floor of City Hall, today serves the library information needs of City of Savannah employees and the general public by maintaining collections of professional and technical publications related to City government functions, by performing reference and research services related to City government, and by caring for the historical records of the City of Savannah.*

"Municipal Library will be Installed." *Savannah Morning News* (8 December 1905) 12:4.

Clock & Curbing Delayed December 11, 1905

On December 11, 1905, the local newspaper announced that within a week or two the artificial stone sidewalks would be begun around the city hall building. The work had been delayed by the delivery of the curbing material.

The curbing was ordered some time ago and has all been cut, but owing to the recent cold weather, it has been impossible to dress it. The contract for laying the walks has been let to Mr. Frank Barker, but the walks can not be started until after the curbing is down. There are 330 square yards of the pavement to be put down and the whole job can be finished in two or three days, once it is started.

Meanwhile, the finishing details on the building were nearing completion. The hanging of the window shades began on this day. "Just as soon as they are all up and the carpets down, the Mayor will be notified by the architect that the building may be occupied." The working models for the "Art" and "Commerce" statues had been approved by the architect and one statue was already "chiseled in the rough."

The clock for the City Hall tower has been expected for some time, but it is making a bad beginning by not being on time.

“City Hall Curbing Delayed by Weather.” *Savannah Morning News* (11 December 1905) 6:3.

“City Hall Ready for Officials.” *Savannah Morning News* (10 December 1905) 24:5.

“Special Council Meeting To-Night.” *Savannah Morning News* (11 December 1905) 2:1.

Witcover & Myers Visit Building December 12, 1905

On the afternoon of December 12, 1905, Architect Hyman W. Witcover and Mayor Herman Myers made an unofficial inspection of the city hall building. Witcover sent a letter to the Mayor and Aldermen requesting them to accompany him during his official inspection, which would take several hours, in the upcoming week. During the Mayor and architect’s inspection, the building was heated and the new heating system was found to work fine.

Mayor [Myers] was very much pleased with the appearance of the building, but was surprised to find there are a number of little matters which will have to be fixed.

The window shades had not been installed; the chairs were just being put in place; workmen were in the process of painting in the basement and sub-basement levels; the telephones had not been installed yet; and many light fixtures remained to be put in.

“Another Delay on City Hall.” *Savannah Morning News* (13 December 1905) 12:5.

“Mayor and Architect Going Over City Hall.” *Savannah Evening Press* (12 December 1905) 1:5.

“To Turn on the Lights in City Hall.” *Savannah Evening Press* (12 December 1905) 2:2.

Maintenance Appropriation for City Hall December 15, 1905

On December 15, 1905, the *Savannah Morning News* announced that City Council would need to make an appropriation of between \$5,000 and \$6,000 in the 1906 budget for the care and maintenance of the city hall building.

It has been decided to have a custodian at \$75 a month; an engineer or fireman, some one to look after the furnaces and machinery, at \$60 a month; two men to do general cleaning work at \$40 each, and a couple of boys, one for the elevator and the other for general dusting and window scrubbing, at probably \$25 each. The salaries of these will amount to \$225 a month, or \$2,700 a year. In addition to this fuel, lights, supplies and insurance will have to be provided for and the total will be between \$5,000 and \$6,000 at the least.

“Council to Fix Budget To-Night.” *Savannah Morning News* (13 December 1905) 12:3.

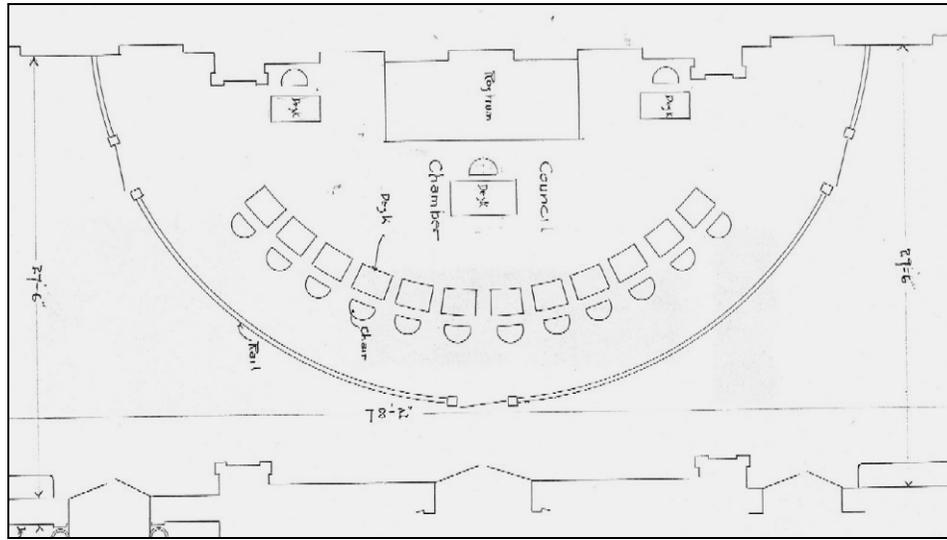
Building Accepted Conditionally by City December 16, 1905

On Saturday, December 16, 1905, Architect Witcover and a group of City officials conducted an official inspection of the completed city hall building “from cellar to dome.” At the conclusion of the inspection, Witcover accepted the building conditionally on behalf of the City. A notice was sent to the Savannah Contracting Company notifying them that the City would take control of the building the following Monday. However, a list of items to be repaired was attached to the notice and final acceptance of the building, and payment of the contract in full, was conditional on its being completed satisfactorily.

Mayor Myers announced that the City officials would move from the temporary offices in Police Headquarters on Thursday, December 21, 1905. The sign of the Savannah Contracting Company, on the front of the building, was ordered to be taken down on Monday; “It’s the company’s building now, but it will be the city’s then.”

Several unoccupied rooms were assigned during the tour. The Director of Public Works was given an additional room in the basement for the use of his men in preparing their afternoon reports. The Superintendent of Waterworks was assigned a room in the basement for the storage of meters. The Health Officer was provided a room in the sub-basement for the storage of disinfectants.

On the fourth floor, the Harbor Master's furniture, ordered after the initial selection of furniture, was still being installed. All of the chairs had been put in place since the architect's last inspection. The locations of all the telephones were pointed out, though they weren't all installed. The phones would be divided between the Georgia and Bell telephone companies.



Layout of desks in the Council Chamber, drawn by Hyman W. Witcover, c.1905.
 City of Savannah, Engineering Department Retrospective Plans & Designs, City Hall, Drawing 24.51.
 City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.
 Used with permission.

The group spent a long time in the Council Chamber where certain desks were quickly claimed by aldermen.

In the Council chamber the Mayor is to occupy a seat on the west side of the room on a raised platform, with a chair on either side of him for distinguished visitors, or possibly for some that are not distinguished. The aldermen are to occupy desks arranged in a semi-circle in front of the Mayor. Chairman of Council James M. Dixon will occupy the first seat on the right hand side from the center as the room is entered. On his right Alderman Murray M. Stewart will be located and on his left Alderman W. H. Wright. No other claims have yet been staked.

With the imminent completion of the building, John E. Burgess, general manager of the Savannah Contracting Company, announced that he would be taking several months off to rest and visit friends and family in the North. During his hiatus, the company would be closed for business and its offices had already been rented out.

"Final Inspection by the Committee To-Day." *Savannah Morning News* (16 December 1905) 10:3.

"Move Thursday into City Hall." *Savannah Morning News* (17 December 1905) 24:3.

**City Takes Possession of Building
 December 18, 1905**

On December 18, 1905, the City of Savannah took possession of the new city hall building at 12 o'clock noon from the Savannah Contracting Company. Charles Gradot, Messenger of Council, assumed his duties as temporary custodian of the building and a fireman was put in charge of the building's boilers. Supplies

were placed in the building in anticipation of City occupancy. Mayor Myers sent letters to all the department heads instructing them to be ready to move on Thursday, December 21st. The City Treasurer's request to move in on Wednesday, December 20th was granted.

The moving will not be a very difficult matter, as there is no furniture to be carried. Only the books and other records are to be taken, all the old furniture being left behind. The large table used in the Council chamber, or, rather, Police Court room, is the one exception to this general rule. This table—a very handsome mahogany one—has been in use by city for years, and the officials do not want to give it up. It will be placed in one of the committee rooms in the new building.

“City Assumes Charge of the City Hall.” *Savannah Morning News* (19 December 1905) 10:4.

“New City Hall in Charge of Gradot.” *Savannah Evening Press* (18 December 1905) 1:6.

Move into City Hall Begins; First Meeting Held in Building December 20, 1905

On December 20, 1905, the departments of the City of Savannah began to move into the new City Hall and transact official government business in their new home. It was originally intended to move in on December 21st, but the Director of Public Works, in charge of the move, decided it would be better to spread the move over two days. The Mayor, the Clerk of Council, the Health Department, the City Engineer, and the Waterworks, located in Police Headquarters, were left for the second day. The Director of Public Works, the Tax Assessors, the City Treasurer, and the City Marshal, operating out of “the little red building on Habersham street belonging to the police department,” all moved into the building in the afternoon, delayed during the day by rain.



Postcard of City Hall, photographed by Adams Studio, Savannah, n.d.
V. & J. Duncan Antique Maps and Prints, Savannah, Georgia.
Used with permission.

The tax assessors got the first things into the new building, but the city marshal claims to have gotten all his things in and gotten to work first. Both were ready for business early in the afternoon....

City Marshal Dreeson sent out a notice from his new office to Mr. Center, who has a store at No. 146 West Broad street, ordering the removal of a sign which interferes with pedestrians along the sidewalk. This was probably the first official notice sent out from the new building.

The first meeting held in the building was one of the Streets and Lanes Committee at 5 o'clock in the afternoon. The meeting was attended by Chairman Murray M. Stewart, and Aldermen John F. Freeman and John F. Glatigny. The committee reviewed several petitions which they reported on at the City Council meeting that evening, held for the last time in the Police Court room.

It was originally thought that City Marshal Henry E. Dreeson would hoist the City's new flag over the City Hall for the first time on this day. However, the Mayor directed that the flag not be flown until all the departments were moved into City Hall, and then only when weather permitted:

...the weather man had not been taken into consideration in the moving plans, and he had to keep up the steady showers, in an effort to break the precipitation record for December, 1905.... It was never intended that the new city flag should fly until all the officers completed the move, and tomorrow, not today, was the time set for the unfurling of the city's ensign. Not even tomorrow will the flag fly, if the rain keeps up, for fear the elements would damage the hand-painted piece of bunting, for which the city paid \$150. This is the flag code set down by the mayor for the next few days, and upon which the city marshal has received instructions. If the move into the new city hall is made tomorrow, and if the day is fair, then let the flag with its hand-painted seal fly to the breeze. If no move is made no flag is to fly. If the move is made and the rain is falling, no flag is to fly. If the day is a dark and dreary one, then "Old Glory," made of stout bunting, is to be run up to the peak, in celebration.

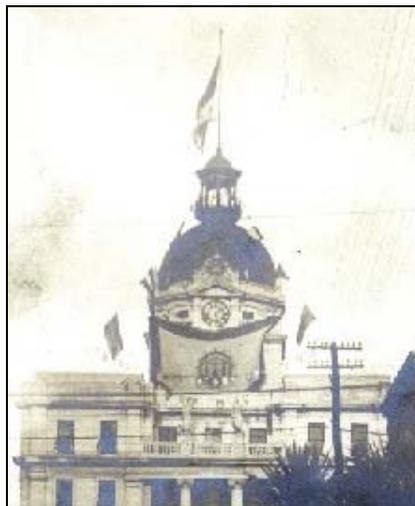
"City Flag Cannot Fly When the Rain Falls." *Savannah Evening Press* (20 December 1905) 1:6.

"City Officials in New Building." *Savannah Morning News* (21 December 1905) 10:5.

"Flag to Float over City Hall." *Savannah Morning News* (20 December 1905) 10:3.

"Last Council Meeting in Police Court Room." *Savannah Morning News* (20 December 1905) 10:1.

The Mayor Moves In & the City Flag Flies Over the Dome December 21, 1905

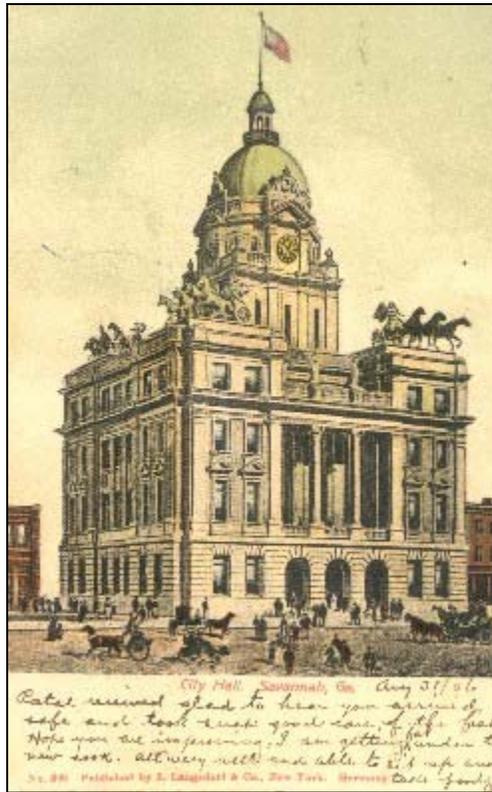


Flag of the City of Savannah flying from the dome, November 1908.
VM 1361PH Georgia Historical Society Photograph Collection,
Box 4, Folder 2, Item 0597.
Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, Georgia.
Used with permission.

On December 21, 1905, the remaining City officers, except the Harbor Master, moved into City Hall in the morning and the City's flag was hoisted over the copper dome at 10:40 a.m. Robert Schneider, Keeper of the City Clocks, rang the bells to announce the event.

City Marshal Henry E. Dreeson hoisted the city flag over the new building shortly after 10 o'clock in the morning and Robert Schneider, the irrepressible keeper of city clocks, beat on the famous bells in the tower to let people know something was happening. The bells are adjuncts of a clock yet to arrive, but in the absence of the clock, Mr. Schneider did the human "knocker" act, greatly to the edification of the wondering populace.

The Mayor occupied his office around noon and found several mementos awaiting him, including a gilded horseshoe wrapped in a miniature American flag, postcards of City Hall, and a picture of "The Return of the Pilgrims" mounted on an American flag. The Finance Committee met and approved payment of \$6,000 on a bill from the Savannah Contracting Company. The City Treasurer's office was reported to be in "apple pie order" and operating regular business.



Early postcard of City Hall with Architect Witcover's original watercolor rendering, postcard by S. Langsdorf & Company, New York, c.1906. V. & J. Duncan Antique Maps and Prints, Savannah, Georgia. Used with permission.

The city engineer's office also was gotten in order early. A feature of this office will be the record room, where the city maps, numbering between 5,000 and 6,000 will be arranged and indexed so as to be easily accessible. It is intended that lawyers and others shall have entry to this room, so that they can readily find any information they desire. The suite of the city engineer is probably the best arranged and the most commodious in the building.

Most of the phones were installed on this day and the City's private exchanges were found to be working properly. The Bell Telephone Company supplied the City with new phones for their lines, while the Georgia Telephone Company reused the old phones from the temporary offices at Police Headquarters. "The contrast between the appearance of the 'phones is striking." Perhaps swayed by comments like this, the Georgia Telephone Company ordered new phones within the week.

The move created some confusion and tension among the officials and departments. Several offices complained that their new leather chairs had been stolen and several extra ones were found in the Clerk of Council's office in the afternoon. "The matter was not straightened out, however, and it will probably be necessary for the list of things ordered for each office to be produced and for some one in authority to restore chairs to the right offices." At the last minute, a wooden walkway was placed in front of the building, at the Mayor's request, after the moving and "tramping of many people into the building soiled it."

The annoyance of moving and the appeals that were made to him about first one thing and then another did not serve to put his honor [the Mayor] in the best of humor. The days that follow will probably be pleasanter than the first.

The evening ended on a lighter note when nobody could figure out how to turn on the lights:

...And as the shades of darkness began to fall the troubles of the officials increased. Nobody knew how to turn on the lights and it took about a half or three-quarters of an hour to solve the mystery, if it was ever solved. On every floor there is a switch board, to say nothing of innumerable little push buttons here and there. The various switches, controllers, buttons, etc., are lettered or otherwise marked, but without a diagram they present something of a Chinese puzzle. There is a diagram somewhere, but no one knew just where. By continuous experimenting, the lights were finally gotten on, here and there.

One would press a little button expecting to light up the Mayor's office and a circle of lights would appear at the top of the tower. This manifestly being all wrong, another button would be tried and some unassigned office on the fourth story would immediately become brilliantly illuminated. Still another button and everything would go out except a single circle of lights about the dome....

All sorts of funny jumps were made by the lights. Finally numbers of lights in the building were lit with one of the big green lights in front of the building and it was decided to let well enough alone. The architect has a diagram showing just what each switch and button is intended for. This will probably be obtained and some one assigned to study out the combinations. If necessary a night school may be opened.

"All Officials in New Building." *Savannah Morning News* (22 December 1905) 10:3.

"Many Happy Mementoes City Hall Occupancy." *Savannah Evening Press* (21 December 1905) 1:6-7.

"New Bell Telephones for the City Hall." *Savannah Morning News* (22 December 1905) 10:6.

R. W. Ferguson Appointed City Hall Custodian December 22, 1905

On December 22, 1905, Mr. Robert W. Ferguson was appointed at noon to be custodian of City Hall and immediately assumed his duties. Charles W. Gradot, who had been filling the role temporarily, was restored to his former position as Messenger of Council. Ferguson's old job, in charge of the ambulance service at the barracks, was given to Lovick P. Morgan. "Considerable interest had been manifested over the disposition of these jobs and the permanent appointments formed the chief topic of interest at the new city hall today."

The appointment straightens out City Hall affairs for a while at least. The moving into the new building soiled it considerably, and Mr. Ferguson will have his hands full for the next few days getting the building in good shape. It is desired to get it thoroughly cleaned and keep it that way.

Mrs. Max Krauss sent a gold stand for papers to the Mayor, who displayed it in his private office. Mayor Myers was also presented with a writing set, consisting of an inkstand and accessories matching his office furniture, by the work force of the Mayor's office and the Clerk of Council's office. Clerk of Council J. Robert Creamer made the presentation:

It is fitting at this time of the year to remember those who are near and dear to us. You are near to us as the head of our city government, and dear to us as our friend and for the many kindnesses that you have shown each and every one of us. I also wish to congratulate you on your assumption of the reins of office in this magnificent building, standing as a monument to you for all times to come and showing to the world at large that you managed the city affairs with the same sagacity and ability as you devoted to your own private affairs. And while this slight token of our affection is intended for your personal use, we hope you will live many years to use it officially.

Visitors continued to flow into City Hall, including Captain Henry Blun and George C. Freeman, both former aldermen. Finding the Mayor out, they left the following message:

The undersigned desire to express their approval of the council in giving our community a city hall commensurate with the growth and importance of our city, and their admiration of the appointments of the different offices and the architecture and general appearance of the building. The architect deserves credit.

The Mayor replied that City Council “has earnestly sought to give our citizens a building that would meet all their requirements for another century and one in which they feel a pardonable pride as representative of the new Savannah.”

“Ferguson Made City Hall Custodian.” *Savannah Morning News* (23 December 1905) 12:1.

“Gift Giving Keeps up at New City Hall.” *Savannah Evening Press* (22 December 1905) 1:6-7.

“Mayor Received Handsome Gifts.” *Savannah Morning News* (23 December 1905) 4:7.

“Two Chairs Recovered from Clerk’s Office.” *Savannah Morning News* (23 December 1905) 12:1.

No Expectorating on City Hall Floors! December 23, 1905

On December 23, 1905, City officials finished settling into their new quarters, but little work was done due to the impending holiday.

Christmas began rather early with the city officials this year. Many of them shut up shop...at 2 o'clock, and even in the offices where the men were on hand there was little work done during the afternoon.... The exchanging of presents among the officials and employes [sic] took place.... Practically every one was remembered with some little gift and there was a very jolly time about the new building during the early afternoon. The Mayor and the chairman of Council were at the City Hall only a short time, as both attended the Christmas tree at the Cotton Exchange.

Mayor Myers did take time to order the Clerk of Council to post signs prohibiting spitting on the new floors of City Hall:

Woe be unto the man who dares expectorate on the floor of the City Hall!

Mayor Myers has ordered the clerk of Council to have the building placarded, warning the public not to be guilty of such an offense and instructions have been issued to immediately docket cases against those caught.

Some slight evidence that there was cause for such a regulation were brought to the attention of the Mayor yesterday and he at once took the matter up with Mr. Creamer. The cards will be put out to-day or tomorrow and all persons caught expectorating on the floor will be prosecuted before the Recorder.



W. J. Winn, City Engineer, c.1900.
Report of Hon. Herman Myers, Mayor...of the City of Savannah, Ga., for the Year Ending December 31, 1900.
Savannah: Savannah City Council, 1900.
City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.
Used with permission.

The City Engineer's force was busy indexing and filing the City's maps. "The task is an enormous one, but when once completed, every map in the office will be easily accessible." Several of the maps were being framed to decorate the offices of the City Engineer and the committee rooms.

"The City Officials and Christmas Day." *Savannah Evening Press* (23 December 1905) 15:4.

"City Officials Will Spend Quiet Christmas." *Savannah Morning News* (24 December 1905) 16:4.

"Must Not Expectorate on City Hall Floor." *Savannah Morning News* (23 December 1905) 12:1.

Custodian Ferguson Given Powers of Arrest in City Hall December 28, 1905

On December 28, 1905, plans to make Custodian R. W. Ferguson a special police officer with powers to arrest within the City Hall were announced. On January 4, 1906, he was sworn in and given a badge. His powers did not extend beyond the limits of the City Hall property.

The object in having Mr. Ferguson sworn in was that he might preserve order at all times in the City Hall and prevent any abuse of the city property. The plan to have the custodian wear a uniform has been abandoned. Mr. Ferguson objected to it and the officials therefore dropped the matter.

"City Hall Custodian to be Special Officer." *Savannah Morning News* (28 December 1905) 10:6.

"Custodian Ferguson is Now a Special Officer." *Savannah Morning News* (5 January 1905) 12:4.

Mayors' Portraits Hung in Council Chamber December 29, 1905

On December 29, 1905, the portraits of Savannah's mayors for the past twenty years were hung in the Council Chamber. Brass plates containing the names and dates of office for each mayor were proposed to be placed on the frames. Only one portrait from the line of mayors was missing, that of Colonel Peter Wiltberger Meldrim, who was asked to supply one. Mayor Myers announced that he would present a new portrait of himself, painted by Scotch artist Ambrose DeBarra MacNeil, to the City to be hung in the Council Chamber. "The painting is a life-sized bust of Mr. Myers, and is said to be an excellent picture by those who have seen it." It was also reported that the City would try to acquire a portrait of General James Edward Oglethorpe.*



Mayors' Portrait Gallery, second floor rotunda and hallway, May 2005.
City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.
Used with permission.

**The City did not acquire a portrait of General Oglethorpe. The mayors' portraits are now hung in the second floor rotunda and hallway and are labeled with brass plates.*

"Oglethorpe's Picture for Council Chamber." *Savannah Morning News* (30 December 1905) 10:2.

"Want Picture of Oglethorpe in City Hall." *Savannah Evening Press* (29 December 1905) 1:7.

**Harbor Master Moves into City Hall
December 30, 1905**

On December 30, 1905, the Harbor Master finished moving into his fourth floor office in City Hall and all the City departments and officials were finally settled in the new building.

Some few of the books of his office and other little things were moved into the new building yesterday, but the office will not really be occupied until to-day. Until his telephone connections were made, the harbor master could not go into the building, as it is necessary for him to be in communication not only with many offices in the city, but with Tybee also, that he may be notified of the arrival of ships.

"Harbor Master Moves into City Hall To-day." *Savannah Morning News* (30 December 1905) 4:1.

**"1905 A Year of Prosperity Everywhere"
December 31, 1905**



1905, a banner year for Savannah, Georgia, December 1905.
"1905 a Year of Prosperity Everywhere." *Savannah Morning News* (31 December 1905) 17:1-7.
Used with permission.

On December 31, 1905, the *Savannah Morning News* ran a full page spread outlining the activities and achievements of the community within the past year. Mayor Myer's recapped the accomplishments of the City, led by the construction and completion of the new municipal building.

Our largest single expenditure on this line was, of course, on the City Hall, but the amount paid on the City Hall is only about half of what has gone for public improvements.

The record of the last year's work will compare favorably with that of any year in the city's history, so far as I am familiar with the affairs of the municipality. In looking back over the year I cannot but express my gratification at what has been accomplished. The year has been a good one and we must now go to work to make 1906 an even better one....

During the present year the city has spent \$145,000 on the City Hall. This building, now finished and occupied, will serve the needs of the municipality for another century.... The city of Savannah will begin the New Year with \$43,875.77 in its pocket.... The city was under extraordinary expense this year in connection with the erection of the City Hall, and the officials feel decidedly elated that the balance is as large as it is.

The City government's elation over the successful completion of City Hall was echoed in the general prosperity of the economy and city. The newspaper's headlines included:

SAVANNAH'S YEAR OF PROSPERITY GREATEST IN ITS HISTORY

BANK CLEARINGS ARE \$30,725,268 AHEAD OF LAST YEAR.

All Branches of Trade Active—Savannah Now Not Only the Greatest Naval Stores Port, But the Price-Making Market of the World—As a Financial Center, Its Pre-eminence is Maintained—The Shipping Interests, Following Cotton and Lumber, Show a Great Increase. More Direct Trade With Europe Than Ever in the History of the Port.

POLICE REPORT EXPECTED TO BE GRATIFYING.

Homicides Decreased and Department is Running Smoothly.

FIRE LOSSES FOR 1905 WILL SHOW A DECREASE.

Number of Smaller Fires Considerably Less Than in 1904.

VERY SUCCESSFUL YEAR WITH HARBOR MASTER.

Receipts of the Office Will Show An Increase.

PROSPERITY ALL OVER GEORGIA

EVERYBODY HAS MONEY.

GOOD CROPS, NEW BANKS, NEW INDUSTRIAL INCREASED VALUES.

Georgia Has Never Known a More Prosperous Year, Says Gov. Terrell—The Only Danger Ahead the Overplanting of Cotton—If That Is Avoided the Governor Sees a Record Year for Prosperity in 1906. The State Tax Returns Show An Increase of \$47,000,000 Over Last Year.

1905 A YEAR OF RICH REWARDS

IS A RECORD BREAKER.

ENORMOUS BANK CLEARINGS AND FEW FAILURES.

Industry Has Been Unprecedentedly Active While Labor Conservatively Managed, Has Been Busily Employed—Strikes Have Been Few and the Number of Idle is the Smallest in Three Years—The situation in the South is Buoyant.

"Forty Thousand Balance in the City Treasury." *Savannah Morning News* (31 December 1905) 17:6.

"1905 a Year of Prosperity Everywhere." *Savannah Morning News* (31 December 1905) 17.

"The Year with the City Reviewed by Mayor." *Savannah Morning News* (31 December 1905) 17:1.

The Birth of City Hall 1906

City Hall Opens for Business (Part I of V) 10,000 Citizens Visit City Hall for Opening Reception

THE PEOPLE INVITED TO OPENING

Newspaper announces public reception, December 1905.

"The People Invited to Opening," *Savannah Evening Press* (30 December 1905) 11:3-5.

Used with permission.

On January 2, 1906, City Hall was thrown open to the citizens of Savannah, the rightful owners of the building, for inspection. Two receptions were held, one in the afternoon from 3:30 until 5 o'clock, to give ladies and children an opportunity to view the building, and one in the evening from 8 o'clock until 10:30.

Literally thousands of persons—men, women and children—thronged the building during the hours it was open for inspection, and the unanimous opinion was of admiration and praise. That the people feel genuine pride in the city government's new home was very evident from the comments that were to be heard on all sides as the throngs came and went.

In early November 1905, as the building neared completion, the City Hall Building Committee decided to skip an elaborate affair for the grand opening of the building, like that of the cornerstone laying ceremony, and simply have a public reception with no public speaking of any kind. On December 18, 1905, City Council chose Tuesday, January 2, 1906 as the date for the reception. The Building Committee handled most of the details, meeting on December 26th in the Mayor's office to finalize the plans. Chairman of Council James M. Dixon was responsible for arranging music for the reception and Mayor Myers requested all department heads and their clerks to be on duty during the reception to answer questions and show guests around the new offices.

In each office there will be somebody to show the visitors around and explain what the different conveniences and ornaments are and how the work for the city is done. Everybody in the building has about settled down to the routine work interrupted by the moving, and the visitors Tuesday will be in a position to judge just how everything looks when the machinery of the municipal government is moving in the city hall. The building and everything in it will belong to the visitors and they will be expected to ask questions if there is anything they do not understand....

Everyone was requested to appear in formal attire, if possible, for the evening reception. Formal invitations were not sent out, the Mayor merely made an announcement and the local newspapers publicized the event.

Custodian R. W. Ferguson had his hands full keeping the building clean between the time the departments moved in and the reception, a steady stream of visitors tracking in dirt. The day before the reception was New Year's Day and the building was closed for the holiday, giving Ferguson a good opportunity to clean up the building. Palms, potted plants, and flowers of various kinds, borrowed from the Park and Tree Commission, were placed in the rotunda and corridors to make the building "a bower of green."



City Hall rotunda looking down from the third floor gallery, c. 1981.
 Historic American Buildings Survey, HABS, GA, 26-SAV, 61-30.
 Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.
Used with permission.

In anticipation of the event, workers rushed to finish several small details in the building. The new portrait of Mayor Myers and the bronze wall clock were hung in the Council Chamber. Two marble tablets were installed in the first floor rotunda, one containing a directory of the City departments and the location of their offices by floor, the other listing pertinent information to the construction of the City Hall, including the names of the Mayor and Aldermen during the building's construction, the Building Committee, the architect, the building contractor, and the date of completion. The fountain basin, devoid of the bronze fountain not yet finished, was filled with water and gold fish Custodian Ferguson had secured from the Park and Tree Commission.

The afternoon reception was attended by approximately 4,000 people, a large majority of them women and children.

*A feature of the afternoon reception was the Mayor's conversation with the many little children, who thronged his office. One of the first youngsters to enter confided to his honor that when he grew up to be a man he was going to be Mayor and have his office in the City Hall. He liked it. After that Mayor Myers told each of the boys that he could be Mayor when he grew up. He told the little girls much nicer things.**

Mayor Herman Myers secured souvenirs for visitors to take away at a cost of \$400. Thomas Halligan and Roy Bailey distributed them in the Mayor's reception room as visitors passed by in a line. Some guests were disappointed they could not have more than one, while some accused others of getting in line more than once to receive a second souvenir.

They are little trays with a reproduction of the City Hall on them, making exceptionally pretty ornaments. They may be used as either pin or ash trays and are suitable souvenirs for both women and men.

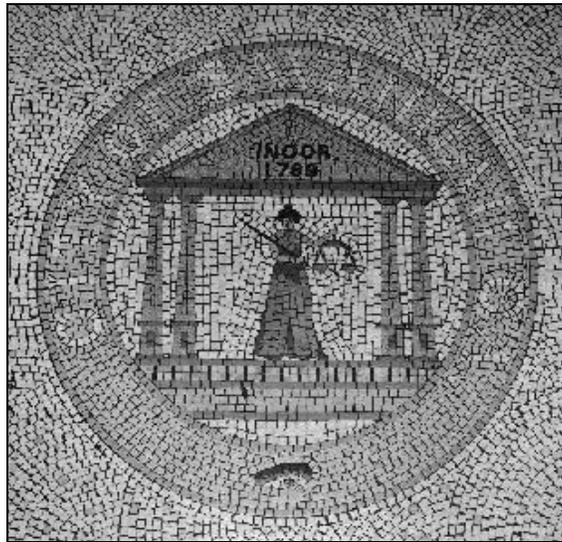
Wiegand's Orchestra, led by Director John Wiegand, Jr., provided music from the second floor rotunda during both receptions. During the afternoon affair, the play list included "National Airs," "Tannhauser" (Wagner), "Golden Sunset" (Hall), "Courtesy" (Wiegand), "Carmen" (Bizet), "Love's Sorrow" (Shelley), and "Call of the Wild" (Losey).

The visitors went at will through the building inspecting it from tower to basement. In each office they were received by one of the heads of departments, or their assistants, and made to feel at home. On the second floor, where the office of the Mayor, the Council Chamber and the clerk of Council are located, it was necessary to form lines to prevent a congestion in the crowd. The police on duty saw to this, and the crowds, even when they were largest, managed to get through and see everything with little confusion.

The afternoon reception was marred by one incident. Harold McDonald, a teenager of 16 or 17 years of age, fainted while in the City Hall tower. After recovering, he still wanted to go out on the roof, but those afraid for his health convinced him otherwise. "McDonald is unfortunately afflicted. His illness created some excitement in the City Hall."

The evening reception was also well attended, with an estimated 6,000 visitors, mostly men and women, touring the City Hall. "Expressions of surprise at the beauty of the structure were heard on every side."

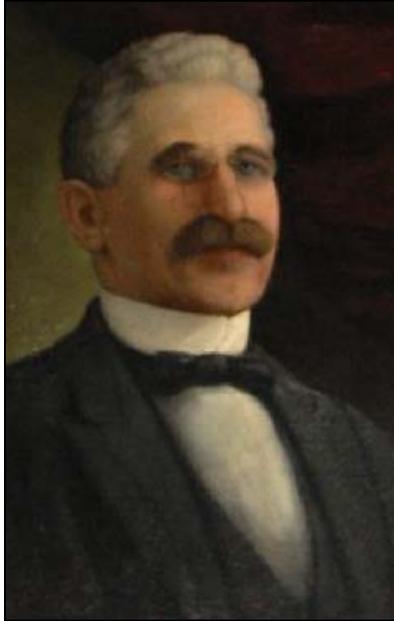
The reception really developed into surprise parties for the citizens, for no one who had not previously visited the building had any conception of the beauty and artistic arrangement of the interior. Mayor Myers, who received the visitors in his private office, and all the city officials were warmly and repeatedly congratulated upon the appearance of the building. Architect Witcover, who was present at the receptions, was kept almost as busy as the Mayor, shaking hands and responding to congratulations.



Mosaic Seal of the City in the foyer floor, c.1981.
Historic American Buildings Survey, HABS, GA, 26-SAV, 61-26.
Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.
Used with permission.

The appearance of the building at night, lit by the electric fixtures, presented a dramatic appearance. The fountain basin was lit with colored, miniature bulbs which created a beautiful effect on the palms. The Council Chamber ceiling was brilliantly illuminated by the electric lights in the coffered ceiling panels. "The Council Chamber is by far the handsomest part of the building and it was there that the visitors lingered longest.... Numerous electric lights in the ceiling add to the beauty of the room and make it a chamber of brilliance when they are turned on." Features that appealed particularly to visitors included the metal furniture, which was still fairly uncommon at this time, and the Mayor's oil portrait.

The portrait of Mayor Myers, only recently finished by Mr. Ambrose MacNeil, the Scotch artist, attracted a good deal of attention in the Council Chamber. The Mayor was somewhat embarrassed by having several ladies tell him that it did not do him justice, that he was much handsomer than the picture showed him to be.



Mayor Herman Myers' portrait, painted by Ambrose DeBarra MacNeil in 1905, photographed in 2005.
City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.
Used with permission.

The orchestra's evening concert included "Patriotic Airs of Two Continents" (Rollinson), excerpts from "Babes in Toyland" (Herbert), a cornet solo of "O Dry Those Tears" (Reigo), the waltz "On the Beautiful Danube" (Strauss), "What the Brass Band Played" (Morse), selections from "Faust" (Gounod), "Moonlight" (Meret), "Light Calvary" (Suppe), Wiegand's march entitled "De Soto," and in closing the "Star Spangled Banner."

All the colored porters were on duty in the respective offices in which they are employed, but Willis, in the clerk of Council's office, made the hit of the evening among this contingent of the city's employees. His immaculate white jacket gave promise of refreshments that did not materialize. A brilliant carnation spoke eloquently and aggressively of the joyousness of the occasion, while his white knit gloves seemed to deny the spirit of the remainder of his attire, suggesting a funeral or some other solemn event. Willis was certainly one of the hits, and there were many.

All visitors seemed extremely pleased with the building, "modern in the fullest sense." One visitor stated, "I like every office I enter better than the one I have just left, no matter which way I go." Another nicknamed City Hall "the Coconut Building," as being better on the inside than on the outside. Unfortunately, Chairman of Council Dixon was unable to attend the receptions due to illness. Mayor Myers was exhausted at the end of the evening from shaking hands the entire time, but everyone agreed the building and the reception were successes.

During the first full month the City Hall was open, visitors continued to stop by. On January 31, 1906, Charles Edgeworth Jones, of Augusta, paid a visit. His father was Charles C. Jones, Mayor of Savannah at the outbreak of the Civil War. "The visitor inspected the Council Chamber and gazed upon the picture of his father, which occupies a place with all the Mayors of the city." The following day, Mr. L. S. Richardson, of the *Municipal Journal*, of New York, included City Hall in his tour of Savannah.

Mr. Richardson was very much impressed with the City Hall. He says he has, of course, seen many costlier structures, but he has never seen a city building better adapted to the uses for which it is intended. He says it compares favorably with the Richmond City Hall, which cost over a million dollars.... Very few City Halls are ever what they should be, he says, as neither city officials or architects usually understand what is needed.

**Savannah's first female mayor was Susan S. Weiner, who was inaugurated on January 2, 1992 and served through December 31, 1995.*

“Have Souvenirs for City Hall Opening.” *Savannah Morning News* (19 December 1905) 10:2.

“Mayor Had 10,000 Callers.” *Savannah Morning News* (3 January 1906) 12:1.

“Mayor Myers’ Picture in Council Chamber Now.” *Savannah Morning News* (2 January 1906) 12:1.

“The New City Hall.” *Savannah Morning News* (3 January 1906) 5:3.

“On Tuesday Citizens Invited to Inspect Handsome City Hall.” *Savannah Evening Press* (30 December 1905) 11:1-7.

“Only Reception to Mark Opening.” *Savannah Morning News* (2 November 1905) 12:1.

“Plans are Made for Reception.” *Savannah Morning News* (27 December 1905) 12:1.

“Plans Complete for Reception.” *Savannah Morning News* (31 December 1905) 14:1.

“Reception To-Day at the City Hall.” *Savannah Morning News* (2 January 1906) 12:1.

Report of Hon. Herman Myers, Mayor...for the Year Ending December 31st, 1905...and Sketch of the Old City Exchange and the New City Hall. Savannah: Braid & Hutton, 1906.

“Son of Former Mayor Visited City Hall.” *Savannah Morning News* (1 February 1906) 12:4.

“To Occupy City Hall in December.” *Savannah Morning News* (8 August 1905) 10:5.

“To Write up City in Municipal Journal.” *Savannah Morning News* (2 February 1906) 10:3.

“Will Fix Budget in Old Quarters.” *Savannah Morning News* (24 November 1905) 12:5.

City Hall Opens for Business (Part II of V)
First City Council Meeting in City Hall



Council Chamber, c.1981.

Historic American Buildings Survey, HABS, GA, 26-SAV, 61-37.
Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.
Used with permission.

On January 3, 1906, City Council met at 8 o'clock in the evening for their first regular meeting of 1906 and their first meeting in the new Council Chamber of City Hall. All members of Council were present except for Chairman of Council Dixon, who was still ill, and Alderman Davant, who was out of town. Prior to the meeting, Council had met in caucus and drawn lots for their new seats in the chamber. Alderman Dixon's seat, opposite of the Mayor, had been determined in December when the building was inspected. Alderman Glatigny drew first choice and there was some confusion as the men selected their seats. The Mayor sat on a raised platform facing the aldermen who sat in a semi-circle as follows:

Aldermen Glatigny, Freeman, Canty, Schroder, Harman and Grayson on the Mayor's right. Alderman Dixon will be seated in the first seat on the Mayor's left, Alderman Stewart next, then Aldermen Davant, McKenna, Wright and Oliver.

Once the aldermen found their seats, Mayor Myers called the meeting to order and opened with a brief speech on the completion of City Hall:

Before proceeding to business I desire to congratulate you all. Your co-operation has made it possible to give the people of Savannah a City Hall commensurate with its growth, enterprise and prosperity. I also take pleasure in expressing my commendations to the architect, contractors and builders and every one connected with the erection of this edifice. In my judgement [sic] this work has been well done, and now it only remains for us as long as we occupy this building as the servants of the people to continue doing our duty, subserving the best interests of all our citizens. I hope and believe we will receive the co-operation in this endeavor not only from the heads of all departments, but also from all their subordinate employes [sic]. This magnificent building which we now occupy for the first time as a Council will all be paid for within the next few months. Other improvements now can and should be taken up. I very deeply regret that the pleasure of this first meeting in the new building is marred by the absence of our Chairman of Council, whom you all know is ill. Alderman Davant, I understand, is absent from the City.

At the conclusion of the Mayor's remarks, a round of cheers was heard and then the Council's regular business was attended to. After all business was finished, a communication from Mayor Myers officially presenting the oil portrait painted by Ambrose MacNeil to the City was read.

I beg that you will accept, as a slight evidence of my love for Savannah and its people, and my sincere appreciation of the many honors that have been conferred upon me, the oil painting now hanging on the wall of the Council Chamber.

Alderman Grayson, on behalf of Council, accepted the picture for the City. "He paid a glowing tribute to the business and executive ability of the Mayor, and said the city was indeed fortunate in having such a man at the head of the municipality and his earnest hope was that he would continue as." In addition, a resolution of the Committee of the Whole was adopted to thank Mr. M. Ed. Wilson for the framed photograph of the "Old City Hall," or City Exchange, that he had recently presented to the City.*

During the afternoon, three committees were called together to meet before the Council meeting. "In each case the calls were made out for 'At City Hall,' a rather indefinite term." Committee members arrived at the appointed hours and then wandered the new, large building in search of their meeting. It was determined that "hereafter each meeting will be called for some special office or committee room."

**Wilson's photograph was reproduced in the 1905 annual report and the framed photograph mentioned here can be seen hanging on the wall in a photograph of the Mayor's office published in the same report.*

"Herman Myers to the Board of Aldermen" (3 January 1906). City Council Meeting Papers-Proceedings of Council, Box PRO 97 [0115-001-A294], Folder 900. City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

"Mayor Speaks to the Aldermen." *Savannah Morning News* (4 January 1906) 4:1.

Official Proceedings of City Council (3 January 1906) 97, 100. City of Savannah, Clerk of Council's Office, Savannah, Georgia.

"Resolution by Committee of the Whole" (3 January 1906). City Council Meeting Papers-Proceedings of Council, Box PRO 97 [0115-001-A294], Folder 900. City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

"Three Committees Lost in the City Hall." *Savannah Morning News* (4 January 1906) 12:4.

*City Hall Opens for Business (Part III of V)
Annual Report for 1905 Summarizes City Hall Construction*



Postcard of City Hall, Bamforth & Company, Publishers, New York, c.1907.
Handwritten on backside, "This Is Our New City Hall."
V. & J. Duncan Antique Maps and Prints, Savannah, Georgia
Used with permission.

On Wednesday, January 17, 1906, at a regular evening meeting of City Council, Mayor Myers submitted his annual report for the year 1905.

The report was an excellent one, full and comprehensive in its character, dwelling upon the prosperity and progressiveness of the city, containing condensed statements of finances, street paving etc, reviewing health conditions and other important features of municipal life.

Following the reading of the report, Alderman Grayson proposed a resolution that the recommendations made by the Mayor in the address be referred to the Committee of the Whole for consideration. The resolution was adopted.

Myer's report, his ninth as Mayor, was considerably shorter than previous years and reflected on the City's financial condition and the expenses of the past year. He included a detailed statement of the expenditures for the construction of City Hall and stated that the City Hall appropriation for 1906 was \$71,000 to pay off any balances on various contracts.

Within sixty days the new home of the municipal government will be entirely paid for. Savannah will then own a beautiful, modern, thoroughly equipped structure, the expense of building and furnishing which was met from its regular revenues. Many thousands of our people have already inspected the building and have evidence their appreciation of its imposing aspect and exquisite interior finish. The total cost of the Hall as it now stands is \$258,738.28 [as of January 1906]. I present herewith an itemized statement, showing how closely the committee adhered to its original estimate of its construction and equipment, which was placed at \$240,000, not including the architect's fees.

The statement reflected unexpected expenses and problems encountered during construction, changes in the original plans, and the final cost of several items agonized over during the process, including:

*Strengthening 4th story walls \$660.00
Bracing belfry on account of additional wall \$500.50
Hoisting additional bell \$33.33
Preservative for exterior stone \$490.00
Special design of hardware \$495.00
Various office changes \$918.90
Tinting interior walls \$549.50
Counters and grilles \$4,777.93
Rugs and window shades \$539.75
Architect's Fees \$12,320.87*

Myers stressed that the interests of the tax payers were always at the forefront of the project, "from the initial steps toward providing Savannah with a hall in keeping with its position as a city," and Savannah firms were utilized whenever possible. His address reflected the "Greater Savannah" movement that had characterized his administration during the first part of the 20th century.

Harmonious relations existed with the contractors and it adds to the public's pleasure of ownership to know that the Hall was designed by a Savannahian and erected by a Savannah firm. It stands as a monument to the progressive spirit that marks the Savannah of today.

The Mayor's report, along with those of the other City departments, was published shortly thereafter by Braid & Hutton with a special appendix describing the City Hall building and its construction, along with a history of the old City Exchange building it replaced. Thomas Gamble, Jr., Secretary to the Mayor, prepared the appendix, "The Old and The New, Sketch of the Old City Exchange (1799-1904), and the New City Hall, Savannah, Georgia." The special supplement included photographs of the City Exchange and the City Hall, including interior and exterior views.

This brief history of the building and the plan whereby it was erected without the city's borrowing a penny or going into debt will probably be eagerly sought by the officials of sister cities, which are without municipal buildings.

The annual report for the following year, 1906, filled in the rest of City Hall's construction story. The Mayor's 1906 report was his tenth and last as Mayor of the City of Savannah. Several contracts were not finished until mid-1906 and the balances remained to be paid with the last special appropriation. The final payments made on City Hall amounted to \$63,484, under the \$71,000 appropriated for the purpose, and brought the grand total for the building and all its furnishings to \$270,050.

The first year in City Hall also proved more expensive in terms of maintenance than originally anticipated. At the end of 1905, City Council appropriated \$5,000 for City Hall maintenance and insurance. However, during the 1906 year, \$7,407.24 was spent for the Custodian and maintenance staff's salaries, insurance, and fuel and electricity for the building. When preparing the new budget for 1907, Council reserved \$8,500 for this purpose.

THE OLD AND THE NEW.

After one hundred and five years of continued public service, the old Savannah "City Exchange" was razed to the ground in 1904. For ninety-two years of that time it had served as the seat of the municipal government. During all of its long life it had been used for public purposes. With its destruction passed away one of Georgia's oldest and most historic structures. The tide of progress removed the ancient landmark, built sixty-six years after the landing of Oglethorpe, not far from the spot where he first set foot on Georgia soil, and upon the site now stands the beautiful new City Hall, the emblem of Savannah's twentieth century position of expanding business prosperity and high civic pride.

For some years after its erection the old flature in Reynolds Square, that reminiscence of the blasted hopes of Georgia as a land of silk culture, divided with the Exchange the honors as the gathering place of the public. Of the flature no description or illustration remains. It was doubtless a structure of moderate dimensions and unassuming architecture, just such a frame building as one would expect in a weak and struggling community, yet combatting with savages and with nature for a foothold. It had served its varied purposes well for many years. Built in early Colonial days, held in some veneration as Georgia's oldest public edifice, its inadequate accommodations had long been apparent. It was doubtless more because of this than on account of the decrepitude of age or through dissatisfaction with its location, just beyond the business district, that the suggestion of Mayor Stephens in 1795, calling for an Exchange for business and public purposes, was received with approval. The municipal government had then been in

First page from Secretary Thomas Gamble's sketch of the City Exchange, 1905.

The Old and the New, Sketch of the Old City Exchange (1799-1904), and the New City Hall, Savannah, Georgia.
Savannah: Savannah City Council, 1905.

City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.
Used with permission.

Mayor Myers closed the chapter on the construction of the building with only a few remarks in his 1906 annual message and the building took its place as a regular fixture of the municipal government.

Of the new City Hall it is not necessary to make more than a passing reference. We can justly regard it as one of the monuments of this administration. Visitors from all parts of the country have, during the past twelve months, praised it. Not only has it given the municipal government a home worthy of a city of Savannah's importance, but the building of the hall out of the city's regular funds has been an excellent advertisement for the city's financial condition and has indicated to the world Savannah's spirit of determination to advance at least in keeping with the progress of its sister cities, if not to excel them in many ways.

"Architect is Given Thousand for Change." *Savannah Morning News* (2 August 1906) 12:6.

"City Hall Committee on Architect's Fees." *Savannah Morning News* (19 July 1906) 12:6.

"City Hall Committee Will Have Meeting." *Savannah Morning News* (1 August 1906) 12:2.

"Mayor's Message Will Be Late this Year." *Savannah Morning News* (20 December 1905) 3:1.

"Mayor's Message Will Be Read." *Savannah Morning News* (17 January 1906) 12:5.

Official Proceedings of City Council (17 January 1906) 105. City of Savannah, Clerk of Council's Office, Savannah, Georgia.

"Pistures [sic] Will Illustrate Mayor's Report." *Savannah Morning News* (10 May 1906) 12:2.

Report of Hon. Herman Myers, Mayor...for the Year Ending December 31st, 1905...and Sketch of the Old City Exchange and the New City Hall. Savannah: Braid & Hutton, 1906.

Report of Hon. Herman Myers, Mayor...for the Year Ending December 31st, 1906.... Savannah: Braid & Hutton, 1907.

"To Finish up Reports to Mayor." *Savannah Morning News* (7 January 1906) 17:1.

"Will Soon Begin Annual Message." *Savannah Morning News* (14 December 1905) 12:6.

City Hall Opens for Business (Part IV of V) ***Savannah Contracting Company Relieved of Demurrage***

On March 14, 1906, City Council voted to relieve the Savannah Contracting Company of any demurrage in regard to the City Hall building contract. Only Aldermen Davant and Oliver were opposed to forgiving all damages and delays. The final decision came after months of discussion and speculation on the matter. Since the City took possession of the building in December 1905, public opinion supported forgiving the company approximately \$10,000 in late fees in light of the magnificent structure.

Starting in February, the City Hall Building Committee met several times with Architect Hyman Witcover, City Attorney William Garrard, and Hal H. Bacon, representative of the Savannah Contracting Company, to determine the facts of the case following a communication from the contractor requesting payment on the full balance.

Mr. Bacon contended that no demurrage should be collected on the building. The city not only had not been put to any extra expense by reason of the delay, he argued, but had secured a better building by reason of the delay. Not only that, but practically all of the sub-contractors had lost money on the work, it was stated. The contracting company itself made little or nothing out of the contract.

After much discussion, the Building Committee voted in favor of relieving the company of the burden. A report was formulated for Council and signed by committee members Mayor Myers and Aldermen Dixon and Schroder. Alderman Davant, also of the committee, refused to sign the report, because he did not agree with it. The report, presented to Council as a report of the Committee of the Whole, read as follows:

The Committee of the Whole from a careful consideration of all the facts, find that the delay in the completion of the City Hall on the part of the Savannah Contracting Company, was caused by the delays on the part of the sub-contractors and the material men, the latter failing to deliver the necessary supplies on time. All these delays not only interfered with the completion of the building but resulted in inconsiderable financial loss to the main contractors. The Committee accordingly begs to present for the consideration of Council the following summary of the facts as brought to its attention:

First. The City of Savannah lost nothing in a financial way by the delay in the completion of the City Hall.

Second. The delay was really beneficial to the structure. The committee is informed by the architect and believes that the delays in the construction of the building resulted in better settling and that in the final result the building is in better condition than it would have been if the construction thereof had been rushed.

Third. The Committee is convinced that the contractors made no margin of profit on the building; that the city of Savannah received complete value for all of its expenditures; that there was a painstaking and praiseworthy effort on the part of the contractors to give the city a fine structure and the enforcement of the demurrage would be a direct loss and hardship to the contractors and not required by the equity of the case.

Fourth. There would be on account of the long delay in the completion a further amount to be paid to the architect because of the additional expense thrown upon him as a result. This additional compensation would necessarily be chargeable to the contractors. The architect however, has voluntarily waived all such claims.

While in the opinion of the city's legal advisor, the city could rigidly stand upon the provisions of the contract as to demurrage, even if the damages were difficult of computation, your committee believes that under the facts and in a spirit of equity, the city should not stand on technicalities and accordingly recommends to Council that the demurrage be not insisted upon.

After it was read, Alderman Davant rose to make a statement, desiring his objection to be on the official record.

He was prepared to admit that the city had sustained no financial loss, but that he knew hardships had been inflicted upon citizens on account of the delays in finishing the building. He said he knew also that some citizens thought the city should not remit the demurrage. One instance in which the public was inconvenienced by the delay to which he pointed, was during the yellow fever epidemic in Louisiana last summer, when people had to go to police quarters to get health certificates. The stipulation in the contract covers just such inconveniences.

In response, Mayor Myers stated that "he believed the contractors had done everything possible to finish the building as soon as they could.... The delay in the foundations was largely responsible for the other delays...and in the foundations the conditions were encountered which had not been foreseen." Council then voted on the report and it was adopted. The balance on the Savannah Contracting Company's contract of \$31,021.35 was then paid by the City.

"Aldermen Who Opposed Plan." *Savannah Morning News* (10 March 1906) 12:5.

"Committee Will Take Up Demurrage." *Savannah Morning News* (17 February 1906) 12:4.

"Demurrage is at Last Settled." *Savannah Morning News* (15 March 1906) 12:3.

"Demurrage is Question Now." *Savannah Morning News* (15 February 1906) 12:3.

"Demurrage on the City Hall." *Savannah Morning News* (18 February 1906) 20:5.

"Demurrage Problem to be Settled at Last." *Savannah Morning News* (13 March 1906) 12:4.

Official Proceedings of City Council (14 January 1906) 117-118. City of Savannah, Clerk of Council's Office, Savannah, Georgia.

"Recommend that No Demurrage Should be Collected." *Savannah Morning News* (22 February 1906) 12:3.

"Report by Committee on City Hall" (14 March 1906). City Council Meeting Papers-Proceedings of Council, Box PRO 98 [0115-001-A295], Folder 906. City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

City Hall Opens for Business (Part V of V) Loose Ends Tied Up for City Hall in 1906

On the night of January 3, 1905, the gutters on City Hall became stopped up causing water to back up on the roof and leak down into the City Engineer's office on the fourth floor and the Waterworks office on the third floor. One of the offices in the City Engineer's suite suffered damage to the plaster walls requiring much of it to be replaced. With the building still under conditional acceptance, the Mayor notified the contractor to repair the roof and the damaged plaster. In August, the roof was still leaking during heavy rains and Architect Witcover was asked to look after the matter. Mayor Myers assured everyone, "that all new buildings leaked...and the City Hall is no exception."

On the morning of January 6th, one of the large glass globes of the chandelier in the Mayor's office crashed down startling Secretary Gamble and Messenger Gradot. Mayor Myers requested Architect Witcover to make another inspection, which he completed that same afternoon finding several "insignificant things" still needing attention.



Mayor's reception room showing original chandelier, c.1981.
 Historic American Buildings Survey, HABS, GA, 26-SAV, 61-35.
 Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.
Used with permission.

Final acceptance and payment of the building was not complete until March 14, 1906, when City Council relieved the Savannah Contracting Company of any demurrage penalties. However, the contracting company wasn't off the hook yet. On April 30, 1906, Custodian R. W. Ferguson discovered one of the panels of the stained glass dome had sprung out of place and was in danger of crashing down four stories to the first floor rotunda. The 3 by 7 foot panel was pulled back through the frame, but at close inspection it was found that several panels were warping due to expansion from the heat and in danger of popping out. Architect Witcover's office inspected the dome and the Savannah Contracting Company was notified that all the glass would have to be taken out and reset. There is no available documentation that this actually occurred and it is possible that repairs and adjustments were made to the dome in place that rectified the problem.

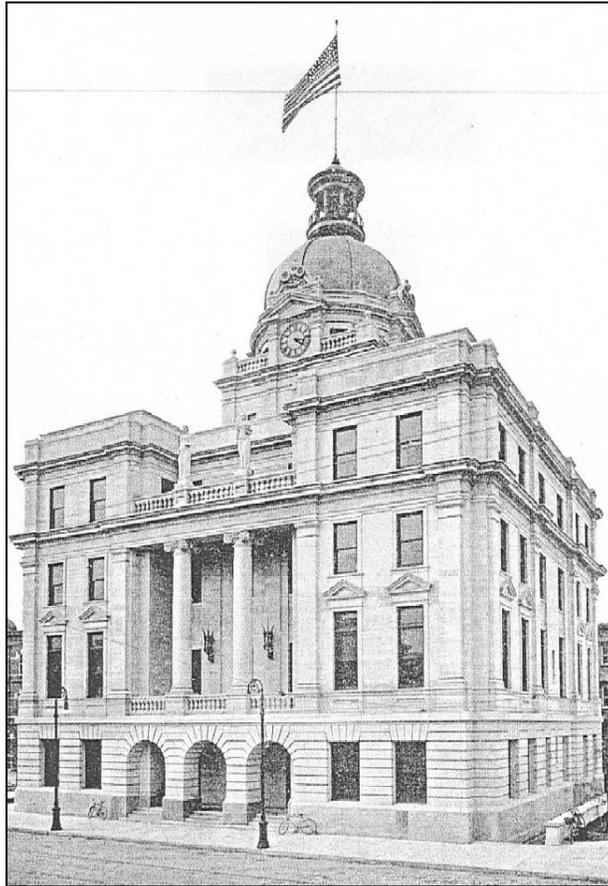


Interior stained glass dome, c.1981.
 Historic American Buildings Survey, HABS, GA, 26-SAV, 61-29.
 Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.
Used with permission.

The electrical lighting and fan fixtures, purchased from the Electric Supply Company, were accepted and paid for on January 11, 1906. On February 13th, the City received its first electricity bill for City Hall, a whopping \$181.00.

Almost every one in the City Hall has seen the bill except the Mayor. No one has had the nerve to present it to him yet. Just what is going to happen when the Mayor sees the bill is not known, but it has been predicted that he will faint.

The large bill was initially blamed on the burning of the lights during the evening reception on January 2nd. However, the next few bills disproved this theory. Several days later, Mayor Myers met with L. R. Nash, manager of the Savannah Electric Company, to determine an electric rate for the future to avoid such surprises. It took several months of the City withholding payment on their electricity bills, before an agreement was reached with the electric company resulting in a reduced rate for City Hall.



Savannah's new City Hall, 1906.

The Old and the New, Sketch of the Old City Exchange (1799-1904), and the New City Hall, Savannah, Georgia.

Savannah: Savannah City Council, 1906.

City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

Used with permission.

During the first half of 1906, several items under contract with various companies were still being completed including the clock, the statues, and the bronze fountain. The clock for the City Hall tower did not arrive in Savannah via steamship until Friday, January 5, 1906. Installation of the clock by Robert Schneider began the following Monday and took several weeks. A special derrick was constructed to hoist the clock works up to the tower. During the installation, Schneider discovered that a hole had not been left in the tower for the weights to hang through. He did not want to be responsible for drilling the hole through three feet of masonry, believing it was the Savannah Contracting Company's fault. Architect Witcover believed the drilling fell under Schneider's contract. It is unclear who performed the work, but

Schneider estimated it would cost about \$50, “to say nothing of the danger which will be run of dropping some of the masonry on top of the glass dome and doing hundreds or perhaps thousands of dollars worth of damage.” By February 10th, the clock was in operation and the *Savannah Morning News* published the pattern that the clock struck the hours:

Two blows at the first quarter (one blow on each of the two bells).

Four blows at the half hour (two blows on each of the two bells).

Six blows at the third quarter (three blows on each of the two bells).

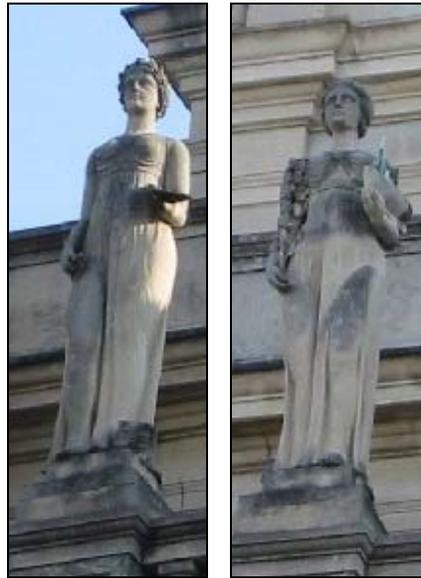
*The hour is struck without the ding-dong, simply being sounded on the larger of the bells.**

On February 21st, the clock faces were illuminated by electric light for the first time after dark. However, the automatic switch had not yet arrived and Custodian Ferguson had to manually turn the lights off at 10:30 p.m. “The present limited illumination is simply a kind of test the clock is being put through.” Once the switch arrived, the clocks would be lit nightly, but would have to be turned off at a specified time for fear that the thirty-two lights required to light up the four faces would drive up the electricity bill again. On March 26, 1906, the E. Howard Clock Company requested settlement of their bill, however the expense of the additional work of repositioning the bells was debated.

The expense of this work has been very great. We took the contract several hundred dollars lower than our original estimate, and the City of Savannah has been the gainer. We, therefore, Gentlemen, ask that you pay us in full.

The matter was referred to the Building Committee and payment was not approved by City Council until April 11, 1906, when they determined the City would absorb the additional costs. A check was cut to the clock company on April 16th for the balance of \$2,890.

By January 9th, sculptor C. W. Winstedt had completed the first statue for City Hall of “Commerce.” For fear that it might be damaged while he finished the second figure, he requested permission to install it first by itself. Permission was granted and he constructed a special derrick to hoist it. “Art” was installed soon after and on February 7, 1906, Winstedt and Architect Witcover signed an affidavit that the work had been completed and the artist paid in full.



Winstedt's statues of "Art" and "Commerce," 2005.
City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.
Used with permission.

The bronze fountain for the basin in the City Hall rotunda, the last detail of City Hall to be finished, was finally installed and put into use in early August 1906. While waiting for the fountain, the basin was kept filled with water and gold fish. Assistant Clerk of Council C. V. Hernandez was especially fond of the fish, as reported by the local newspaper when he bought food for them on January 16th:

Mr. Hernandez declares it is the first square meal the fish have enjoyed since their arrival at the City Hall. He says the fish are beginning to know him already, and that they jump out of the water and wag their tails whenever he passes the fountain.

The following day, an anonymous person placed two small alligators in the fountain basin. Custodian Ferguson retrieved the alligators for fear they would eat the fish and gave them to Fire Chief Maguire to dispose of.



Fernando Miranda's sculpture atop the City Hall fountain, 2005.
City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.
Used with permission.

On January 23, 1906, City Marshal Henry E. Dreeson held an auction of the remaining old furniture and fixtures at Police Headquarters. The sale started at 10:00 a.m., lasted two hours, and brought the City \$681.75. A large crowd attended, including junk dealers and second-hand furniture dealers, and "the bidding was quite lively."

Several city officials were also bidding. The marshal began by offering the big Council table for sale. The highest offer on this was \$15 and it was withdrawn, as the table is a very valuable one and it had been suggested that it be kept for the largest of the committee rooms in the City Hall. It will probably be so disposed of the Mayor said after the auction was over.

The auction was not as large as at first planned. Much of the old furniture had been used to furnish the basement levels of City Hall, some had gone to the City Lot, and the Superintendent of Police was given the Mayor's old desk and chair. Chairman of Council Dixon purchased the thirteen Council Chamber chairs for \$40 and intended to let each alderman claim his old chair. Former aldermen A. J. Garfunkel bought the twelve chairs from the Mayor's old office for \$25.

Altogether the city is regarded as rather lucky in the sale, though some of the individual bidders were disappointed.



Mayor's office in the old City Exchange showing old furniture, 1904.
The Old and the New, Sketch of the Old City Exchange (1799-1904), and the New City Hall, Savannah, Georgia.
 Savannah: Savannah City Council, 1906.
 City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.
Used with permission.

The Streets and Lanes Committee handled the repaving of Bay Street with 9,381 square yards of vitrified brick, plus an additional 227 square yards of brick for the rear of City Hall, for about \$9,000. The 1906 annual report described the landscaping improvements to the Strand on either side of City Hall completed by the Park and Tree Commission during the year:

The east plot of ground has been beautified by the placing of artificial stone walks alongside and through it, and by the planting of the Golden Arbor Vitae along the borders of the walks. We also planted an Amoor River Privit hedge alongside the iron railing overlooking the bluff, and in the coming year this railing will be entirely hidden by the hedge, which will add much to the beauty of this plot. We also planted many ornamental plants.

The west plot has also been beautified by the laying of artificial stone walks through it, and the planting of ornamental shrubs. Both of these plots have been planted in Italian Rye for the winter and present a most beautiful and artistic appearance, grass with its beautiful shade of green in contrast to the other shrubbery.

The walls along the slip adjacent to the City Hall have been planted with English Ivy and Ampelopsis and will soon cover the unsightly condition of these walls....

Council has seen fit to make an appropriation [for 1907] for the improvement of the Strand from Whitaker Street to Jefferson Street, and from Drayton Street to East Broad Street, and we are quite sure that no money could be more judiciously spent than in the beautifying of this natural park.



Oglethorpe Memorial and the newly landscaped Strand, west of City Hall, c.1900s.
VM 1361PC Georgia Historical Society Postcard Collection, Box 7, Monuments-Miscellaneous Monuments.
Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, Georgia.
Used with permission.

The Oglethorpe Memorial was dedicated in the Strand just west of City Hall on April 20, 1906 in a simple ceremony led by Mrs. J. J. Wilder, president of the Georgia Society of the Colonial Dames of America. Walter G. Charlton delivered the dedicatory address.

**This is not the same pattern currently used to ring the bells [as of 2005].*

“Affidavit from C. W. Winstedt” (7 February 1906). City Council Meeting Papers-Contracts, Box CON 8 [0115-002-22.2], Folder 47, Contract No. 609. City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

“Alligators Appear in City Hall Fountain.” *Savannah Morning News* (18 February 1906) 20:2.

“Another Inspection at the City Hall.” *Savannah Morning News* (7 January 1906) 20:2.

“Architect is Given Thousand for Change.” *Savannah Morning News* (2 August 1906) 12:2.

“Attractive Setting for the City Hall.” *Savannah Morning News* (23 February 1906) 10:2.

“Bay Street Now Almost Finished.” *Savannah Morning News* (29 July 1906) 20:2.

“City at Last to Pay Lighting Bills.” *Savannah Morning News* (7 August 1906) 12:2.

“City Hall Committee will have Meeting.” *Savannah Morning News* (1 August 1906) 12:2.

“City Hall Dome Will Have to be Reconstructed.” *Savannah Evening Press* (30 April 1906) 1:6.

“City Hall Fountain Put in Place.” *Savannah Morning News* (3 August 1906) 12:4.

“City Hall Glass Dome is Doomed.” *Savannah Morning News* (1 May 1906) 12:6.

“City Hall Light Bill is Held Up.” *Savannah Morning News* (5 May 1906) 12:3.

“City has Paid for City Hall Clock.” *Savannah Morning News* (17 April 1906) 12:2.

“City is to Buy Vitrified Brick.” *Savannah Morning News* (24 January 1906) 12:5.

“City’s Furniture Sale.” *Savannah Morning News* (22 December 1905) 10:2.

“Colonial Dames and the Oglethorpe Memorial.” *Savannah Morning News* (20 April 1906) 7:4-5.

“‘Commerce’ Now Ready for the City Hall.” *Savannah Morning News* (9 January 1906) 12:4.

“Differences Arise About the City Clock.” *Savannah Morning News* (15 January 1906) 8:2.

“Fountain is Here for the City Hall.” *Savannah Morning News* (24 July 1906) 12:2.

“How City Hall Clock Strikes the Hours.” *Savannah Morning News* (10 February 1906) 12:4.

“How Late Must Clock be Lighted?” *Savannah Morning News* (22 February 1906) 12:4.

- "Howard Clock Company Wants its Bill Paid." *Savannah Morning News* (29 March 1906) 12:5.
- "January Light Bill for the City Hall." *Savannah Morning News* (13 February 1906) 12:1.
- "Leak in the Roof Damaged City Hall." *Savannah Morning News* (5 January 1906) 12:4.
- "Mayor and Manager Confer about Lights." *Savannah Morning News* (17 January 1906) 12:1.
- Official Proceedings of City Council (17 January 1906) 105. City of Savannah, Clerk of Council's Office, Savannah, Georgia.
- "Old Furniture Sale Realized Large Sum." *Savannah Morning News* (24 January 1906) 12:2.
- "One Statue at Time on the City Hall." *Savannah Morning News* (12 January 1906) 10:6.
- "Patent Breakfast Food for City Hall Fish." *Savannah Morning News* (17 January 1906) 12:2.
- "Petition of E. Howard Clock Company" (26 March 1906). City Council Meeting Papers-Proceedings of Council, Box PRO 98 [0115-001-A295], Folder 910. City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.
- "Reduced Rate for the City Lighting." *Savannah Morning News* (1 June 1906) 12:2.
- Report of Hon. Herman Myers, Mayor...for the Year Ending December 31st, 1906...* Savannah: Braid & Hutton, 1907.
- "Resolution by the Committee of the Whole" (14 February 1906). City Council Meeting Papers-Proceedings of Council, Box PRO 98 [0115-001-A295], Folder 905. City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.
- "To Begin Installation of City Clock To-Morrow." *Savannah Morning News* (7 January 1906) 20:2.
- "To Begin this Week on City Hall Walks." *Savannah Morning News* (8 January 1906) 8:2.
- "To Consider Cost of City Hall Walks." *Savannah Morning News* (24 February 1906) 12:2.
- "To Improve the Space West of City Hall." *Savannah Morning News* (10 August 1906) 12:3.
- "Work on City Hall Walks is Under Way." *Savannah Morning News* (12 January 1906) 10:6.

Savannah City Exchange (1799-1904)

Around no building in Georgia clustered so many interesting and historic memories as made memorable [in] this venerable edifice.

-Thomas Gamble, Jr., 1904



City Exchange, Bull and Bay streets, Savannah Georgia, c.1904.
*The Old and the New, Sketch of the Old City Exchange (1799-1904),
and the New City Hall, Savannah, Georgia.*
Savannah: Savannah City Council, 1905.
City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.
Used with permission.

Before there was City Hall, there was the City Exchange, which for over one-hundred years was the political, commercial and social center of the city of Savannah. No history of City Hall would be complete without mention of its important and historic predecessor.

[On] August 18, 1795, Mayor Stephens gave notice that he would “propose a scheme for building an exchange in the city without expense to the citizens, and for public and private purposes, which will be not only useful, but ornamental.” It was four years later before the Exchange was built.

Money for the construction of a new exchange building, on the same site as an early wooden exchange destroyed by fire in 1796, was raised by subscription with the City and private citizens buying shares. On June 5, 1799, the cornerstone was laid in an elaborate ceremony performed by the Grand Lodge of Free Masons at the foot of Bull Street on Bay. The cornerstone’s inscription plate (now housed in the artifact collection of the Georgia Historical Society) reads:

A.L. 5799.

A.D. 1799.

*Of the Independence of America, the
23rd Year.*

Matthew McAllister, Mayor.

Williams Stephens, Grand Master.



City Exchange cornerstone plate, engraved c.1799.

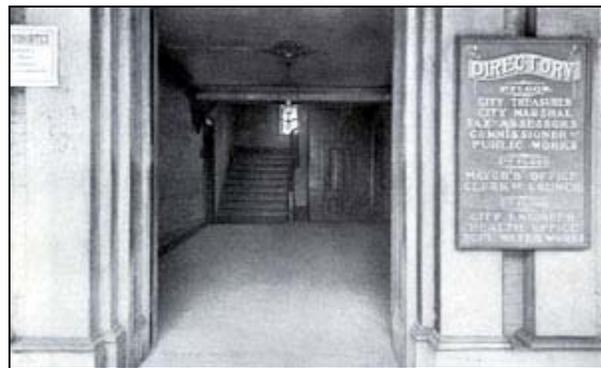
The Old and the New, Sketch of the Old City Exchange (1799-1904), and the New City Hall, Savannah, Georgia.
Savannah: Savannah City Council, 1905.

City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia
Used with permission.

The structure was completed in 1801 at a cost of \$20,000 and was much larger than needed at the time; it “was erected with a thought for the future.” It wasn’t until 1812 that the City was able to purchase the last of the shares from the stockholders, and even then they continued to rent out rooms to local businesses and militia companies.

The Savannah Volunteer Guards, the Republican Blues, the Georgia Hussars, Irish Jasper Greens, Oglethorpe Light Infantry and “Phoenix Rifles” occupied quarters in the building prior to the occupancy of their own quarters. For a long while the Custom House and Post Office were within its walls.

This use of the Exchange by the military continued to some extent until late in the 70’s, but as one company after another withdrew to its armory, Council declined to admit others to the privilege, owing to the disturbance of public business by the noise.



City Exchange entrance and directory, 1904.

The Old and the New, Sketch of the Old City Exchange (1799-1904), and the New City Hall, Savannah, Georgia.
Savannah: Savannah City Council, 1905.

City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia
Used with permission.

As the government grew and tenants moved out, the City gradually took over the entire building. It wasn’t until the 1890s that building was solely occupied by the City’s departments. Ellis, Young & Co., naval stores factors, were the last firm to occupy any part of the City Exchange. Their offices were in the eastern half of the first floor.

Over the years, the City Exchange was altered and remodeled several times:

On September 4, 1815, the Committee on the Exchange was instructed to extend the area now constructing on the southern front of the building.... In 1817 the building was thoroughly overhauled and a railing was put around it at a cost of \$328.32. In front was paved with 'free stone and round,' at a cost of \$1,164.50, and the Council room was put in good order for the sole use of the board.... On Dec. 6, 1819, two windows were ordered cut in the west side of the building, and in 1822 two or more additional windows were ordered cut in the lower tenements.

In the great storm of September 1854, the building was considerably damaged. Builders who were called to examine it reported that the wood work throughout the building was decayed.... In 1855 \$18,046.46 was expended, the building being put in practically its present shape and renovated throughout, among the improvements being the erection of the portico in front.

The old City Exchange Bell, believed to be the oldest bell in Georgia, dates back to 1802 when it was cast in Amsterdam. It was imported to Savannah and in 1804 hung in the City Exchange's cupola (the cupola was added to the building in 1802). The bell served numerous functions: it signaled the closing time for shops; was rung by a watchman when fire broke out; and announced celebrations, visitors, victories and deaths.

Its rich tones were heard in celebration of American victories during the War of 1812. It pealed a welcome to such distinguished visitors to Savannah as Monroe, LaFayette, Polk, Fillmore, Clay and Webster and it tolled tributes for America's illustrious dead.

A replica of the City Exchange's cupola was erected in 1957 through combined efforts of the Savannah Chamber of Commerce, the Pilot Club of Savannah and the Savannah-Chatham Historic Site and Monument Commission, and sits on Bay Street housing the historic bell.

No special accommodations were provided for the Mayor until 1853. On March 10 of that year Council directed that the eastern part of the long room, which until then had extended the entire Bay Street front of the second floor of the building, should be partitioned off for the Mayor's office. For a half century this room was so used.



The "Long Room," City Exchange, 1904.
The Old and the New, Sketch of the Old City Exchange (1799-1904), and the New City Hall, Savannah, Georgia.
Savannah: Savannah City Council, 1905.
City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia
Used with permission.

As early as 1811, documentation shows that the building was used for social purposes, including balls, cotillions and circuses:

The "long room" has been utilized on many occasions for public meetings, for the reception of distinguished visitors and as a suitable place when the honored dead might lie in state.

Aaron Burr, Presidents Monroe, Polk and Filmore, Gen. Lafayette, Henry Clay, Daniel Webster, and other great men of the early history of the Republic there met and received the homage of the Savannahians of the ante bellum period. No building in the State of Georgia had more historic memories clusted [clustered] about it than had this venerable edifice. In the infancy of the city, the belles and beaux of the little city danced therein, and at several times rooms were granted temporarily for school purposes to worthy pedagogues of limited means. For many years it was the center of the social life of the community. Itinerant actors and passing showmen with strange animals to exhibit, found it a convenient place for the purpose, and the City Council leniently consented to its use for such popular amusements.

By the late 1890s, the City had outgrown the old building and it was deemed too expensive to attempt repairs or additions. In 1903, City Council began making plans for the removal of the old City Exchange and the erection of a new city hall.

It had only been within the past ten or fifteen years that the city's growth has been so noticeable, so remarkable.... Until the Savannah of to-day finds itself cramped for room. The old Exchange has served its time and must fall before this progressive twentieth century.

The building was razed in March and April of 1904 and City Hall has now served the City for over one-hundred years on the same site.



One of the last City Council meetings in the City Exchange's "Long Room," February 1904.
The Old and the New, Sketch of the Old City Exchange (1799-1904), and the New City Hall, Savannah, Georgia.
 Savannah: Savannah City Council, 1905.
 City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia
Used with permission.

"The City Has Grown." *Savannah Morning News* (2 March 1903) 10:5.

"Destruction of Exchange Official Iconoclasm." *Savannah Morning News* (26 April 1903) 6:1.

Gamble, Thomas, Jr. "The Old and the New: Sketch of the OLD CITY EXCHANGE (1799-1904), and the NEW CITY HALL, SAVANNAH, GEORGIA. Appendix to the Mayor's Report for 1905." Savannah: Savannah City Council, 1905. City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

"Official Souvenir Programme, Laying of Cornerstone, New City Hall, Savannah, Georgia, August 11th, 1904." Savannah: Daily Record Print, 1904.

"Old City Exchange Bell." Georgia Historical Commission Marker (1957), Bay Street, Savannah, Georgia.

"The Old City Exchange Which Stood for 105 Years on the Site of the New Building." *Savannah Morning News* (11 August 1904) 6:6.

Mayor Herman Myers & the Building Committee



City Exchange with Mayor Herman Myers tipping his hat to the camera (walking along sidewalk on the right), April 20, 1896.
VM 1361PH GHS Photograph Collection, Box 4, Folder 2, Item 592.
Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, Georgia.
Used with permission.

On February 18, 1903, Savannah's City Council was presented with a report of the special committee appointed to determine the advisability of erecting a new city hall. The committee proposed erecting a new city hall on the site where the City Exchange stood. The proposal was met with approval by the Council members and adopted. The original special committee was enlarged to five members, including Mayor Herman Myers and Aldermen Daniel R. Thomas, Richard J. Davant, James M. Dixon and W. J. Watson, and was charged with the responsibility of making the proposed city hall a reality.

Over the next three years, the City Hall Building Committee oversaw every aspect of the planning and construction of the building working closely with the architect, Hyman Witcover, the contractors, and the rest of City Council. The Building Committee remained fairly constant during the construction of City Hall. When Watson resigned as alderman, a special resolution was passed by City Council allowing him to remain on the special committee and see the project to completion. Alderman Dixon resigned from City Council on July 15, 1905 and was replaced by E. A. "Martin" Schroder (alderman 1901-1907, 1913-1919), however, by this time the majority of the decisions had already been made and the final touches were being completed on the new building.

*Committee Members (in alphabetical order)****Richard James Davant (III) (1866-1915)***

Richard J. Davant was born near Sylvania, in Screven County, on March 20, 1866 to Richard J. Davant and Anna Caroline Maner. In 1866, the family moved to Guyton where Davant attended public schools before attending the Georgia Military Academy in Milledgeville. He then came to Savannah and was a clerk for the wholesale grain and produce firm of Thomas P. Bond. After a few years, he went into the insurance business with his father. At the time of his death, Davant was partnered with Charles F. Powers in the insurance firm of Davant & Company.

In 1903, he was elected alderman under Mayor Herman Myers and became vice-chairman of Council. Davant served as chairman of the Streets and Lanes Committee and as one of the Massie School commissioners. After serving under Mayor Tiedeman for one term, he took a two year break from Council. In 1912, he opposed George P. Walker in the mayoral race and was elected Mayor for the term beginning in January 1913. Davant was re-elected for a second term, beginning in January 1915, without opposition.

He was a member of Solomon's Lodge No. 1, F. & A.M., president of the Georgia Field Trial Association, and captain of the Chatham Artillery from 1906 until 1913, when he was promoted to major. He was married almost twenty-six years to Jennie Footman of Savannah.

Davant died unexpectedly while still Mayor, at the age of only forty-nine, while on a weekend visit to Millen where he had a farm. City Council chairman W. J. Pierpont filled his vacancy as Mayor before an election was held for his replacement. Davant was buried in Bonaventure Cemetery.

Gamble, Thomas, Jr. "Mayor Left City Hall With a Smile." *Savannah Morning News* (10 October 1915) 24:2.

Gordon B. Smith Notebooks: "Richard James Davant (III)." Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, Georgia.

"Mayor Davant Dies Suddenly in Hotel in Millen." *Savannah Morning News* (10 October 1915) 24:1.

"Pierpont Becomes Mayor Temporarily." *Savannah Morning News* (10 October 1915) 22:3.

James M. Dixon (1864-1920)

James M. Dixon was born on April 10, 1864 in Valdosta, Georgia while his mother, Mary Jane Dent, was a refugee there from the family's home in Savannah. At the time, his father, William Dixon, was in the Confederate blockade running service.

As James M. Dixon & Company, with partner John E. Foy, Dixon pursued the wholesale grocery and lumber businesses. He was secretary and treasurer of the Gadsden Contracting Company and director of the Exchange Bank.

In 1896, he was appointed by Mayor Herman Myers as chairman of the Water Commission, a post he held for three years. Between 1899 and 1907 he served on City Council, and at various times held the posts of vice-chairman and chairman of Council. Dixon resigned as an alderman on July 15, 1905 and was replaced on the special Building Committee for City Hall by E. A. "Martin" Schroder (alderman 1901-1907, 1913-1919). In 1907, Dixon joined the Board of County Commissioners for two years.

Dixon was a life member of the Savannah Volunteer Guards, commodore of the Savannah Yacht Club, member of the Ancient Landmark Lodge No. 231, F. & A.M., and a 32nd Degree member of the Scottish Rite. On November 12, 1889, he married Miss Jessie Dale, of Savannah, with whom he had two daughters and two sons.

During World War I, Dixon served simultaneously as Chatham County fuel administrator and Mayor of Tybee. On September 26, 1920, he died after a year long illness at his East Hall Street home.



Alderman James M. Dixon, c.1900.

Report of Hon. Herman Myers, Mayor...of the City of Savannah, Ga., for the Year Ending December 31, 1900.

Savannah: Savannah City Council, 1900.

City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

Used with permission.

"End Comes for James M. Dixon." *Savannah Morning News* (27 September 1920), 8:1.

Gordon B. Smith Notebooks: "James M. Dixon." Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, Georgia.

Mayor Herman Myers (1847-1909)
Mayor of Savannah (1895-1897, 1899-1907)

...though Herman Myers did not live to see the glory of the 'Greater Savannah,' his work, his efforts and ideals,...point the way following which we and future generations shall attain it.

—Rabbi George Solomon (March 26, 1909)



Herman Myers (1847-1909), c.1900.
 "Official Souvenir Programme, Laying of Cornerstone, New City Hall, Savannah, Georgia, August 11th, 1904." Savannah: Daily Record Print, 1904.
 Vertical Files: Savannah-City Hall/City Exchange.
 Bull Street Main Library of the Live Oak Public Libraries, Savannah, Georgia.
Used with permission.

Herman Myers was born on January 18, 1847 in Bavaria, Germany to Sigmund and Fannie Myers. As a child, he immigrated with his parents to Bath County, Virginia. He apprenticed under his father and learned the tanner's trade. After his father's death in 1861, the family moved to Lynchburg, Virginia and then to Savannah, Georgia in 1867. In Savannah, Herman and his brothers, Sigo and Fred, began a cigar and tobacco business and owned the firm of H. Myers and Brothers, dealers in wool. Myers became president of his El Modelo Cigar Manufacturing Company of Tampa, which later merged into the Cuban-American Cigar Manufacturing Company of Tampa and Havana. He was one of the organizers and president of the Savannah Grocery Company, a wholesale firm. By 1909, the three brothers' combined assets were worth over one million dollars.

Myers was involved with several banking establishments including: as one of the organizers of the National Bank of Savannah in 1885; as president of the National Bank from incorporation until his death in 1909; and as vice-president of the Oglethorpe Savings and Trust Company starting in 1886 and president in 1909. He was a promoter and organizer of the South Bound Railroad Company, and an officer in the Savannah and Tybee Railroad and the Tybee Hotel Company.

Herman Myers entered Savannah politics in 1885 as an alderman. He served continuously on City Council for ten years, sitting on the Finance, Police, Water, Market, Harbor and Wharves, and Special Railroad committees. In 1895, he ran for Mayor against Dr. William Duncan and won. After one term, he lost re-election to Peter W. Meldrim. In 1899, he returned to the office, defeating John J. McDonough. In the 1901, 1903, and 1905 mayoral elections, Myers was re-elected without opposition. After ten years as Mayor, poor health forced him to withdraw from participation in municipal affairs.

Myers' crowning achievement was the erection of City Hall under his administration. Myers was the last Mayor to serve in the City Exchange before it was torn down, and the first to serve in City Hall when it was occupied in December 1905.

His administration has been marked by the greatest public improvements in the history of Savannah,...in the eyes of many his chief movement, a magnificent new City Hall was erected which is the finest south of Richmond, Virginia, its cost with furnishings, approaching \$300,000 and built out of the regular revenues of the city, without issuing a single obligation and without the slightest increase in taxes.

In September 1906, Myers married Virginia Gluckenheim, of Danville, Virginia. In 1908, he went to Europe and visited his birthplace in Germany in an effort to restore his health. On the evening of March 24, 1909, at the age of 62, Myers died in his De Soto Hotel apartment. The following day, an escort of eight mounted policemen escorted his body from the De Soto Hotel to City Hall where his body laid in state for twenty-four hours. His casket was placed at the southern end of the Council Chamber beneath his life-sized portrait. Police guarded the site throughout the night as the public paid their respects.



Myers' funeral cortege in front of City Hall, March 25, 1909.
JVM 005 Congregation Mickve Israel Visual Materials Collection, Oversize Box 5, Album 1.
Savannah Jewish Archives, at the Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, Georgia.
Used with permission.

Thousands of persons from every walk in life and all ages went to the City Hall to get a last look at the man who in life did so much for Savannah.

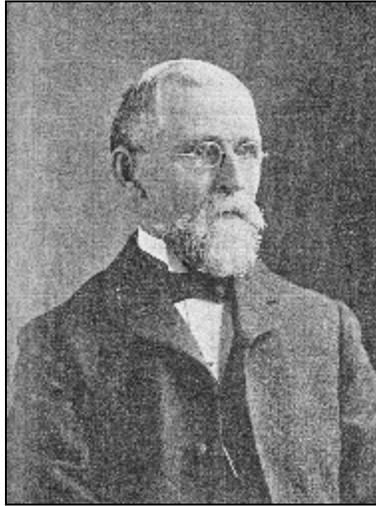
Current Mayor Tiedeman issued a proclamation requesting retail merchants to close between three and four o'clock in the afternoon during the funeral on March 26th. Flags were flown at half mast, and both City Hall and the National Bank building were draped in mourning. During the afternoon of March 26th, Myers remains were transported to Congregation Mickve Israel's synagogue on Monterey Square where Rabbi George Solomon presided over his funeral. From there, a funeral cortege left the synagogue and took Myers to Bonaventure Cemetery in "one of the largest processions of the type ever seen in Savannah with a military escort by the detachment of the Savannah Guards and the entire command of the German volunteers." Myers was laid to rest, in a burial service conducted by the Ancient Landmark Mason Lodge No. 231, below a granite monument.

Bonaventure Historical Society, Vol. 6, No. 6. (September/October 2000). Biography File: Herman Myers. Savannah Jewish Archives, at the Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, Georgia.

"In Memoriam: Herman Myers." *Savannah Morning News* (18 April 1909) 2:1.

Daniel R. Thomas (1843-1915)

Daniel R. Thomas was born in Savannah on August 27, 1843 to John T. Thomas and Jane Remshart. In 1862, Thomas enlisted in Company G (Tattnall Guards), First Volunteer Regiment of Georgia. Due to ill health, he was assigned to district headquarters and the war tax office. Following the Civil War, he moved to Macon and worked as an insurance agent. In March 1866, Thomas returned to Savannah and went into the commission, fertilizer and coal business with Captain D. G. Purse.



Alderman D. R. Thomas, c.1900.

Report of Hon. Herman Myers, Mayor...of the City of Savannah, Ga., for the Year Ending December 31, 1900.
Savannah: Savannah City Council, 1900.

City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.
Used with permission.

In December 1878, Thomas was elected as an original member of the Sinking Fund Commission, an important new department of the City government directed towards the retirement of general bond issues. Thomas served as the Commission's secretary until January 1883 when he resigned to become an alderman (January 22, 1883-January 21, 1889). After six years on City Council, he returned to his position as secretary of the Sinking Fund Commission. In 1889, he made an unsuccessful bid for Mayor of Savannah. Thomas would again serve on City Council (June 29, 1898-December 11, 1905), during which time he would serve on the City Hall Building Committee.

Mr. Thomas served the city with great usefulness as an alderman under the administrations of Mayors Lester, Meldrim and Myers, for a period of thirteen and a half years. He was a member of the Sanitary Commission, making a thorough study of the city's system of sewerage and house drainage. He had long been known as one of the best posted authorities on these matters. He was at various times chairman of the Accounts, Finance, Streets and Lanes, City Lots and Opening of Streets committees of Council.

In 1867, Thomas married Jennie Manget of Marietta, with whom he had two children, Mrs. John A. Robeson and John Murchison Thomas. Daniel R. Thomas died on April 7, 1915 at his home at 210 East Gaston Street. He was buried in Laurel Grove Cemetery.

"Daniel R. Thomas Claimed By Death." *Savannah Morning News* (8 April 1915), 12:2.

Gordon B. Smith Notebooks: "Daniel R. Thomas." Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, Georgia.

Wales J. Watson

Little is known about Wales J. Watson who served as alderman under Mayor Herman Myers from January 28, 1895 through February 1, 1897, and again from January 21, 1901 until July 22, 1903 when he resigned for personal reasons. Watson served on the Water Committee as well as the City Hall Building Committee. When he resigned in 1903, during the planning of City Hall, Council passed a special resolution allowing him to remain on the Building Committee.

In 1888, Watson and his partner, Richard W. Powers, were running Pulaski House, having come from managing the Charleston House in Charleston, South Carolina. By 1891, Watson & Powers were lessees of the De Soto Hotel on Bull and Liberty streets. Watson and Powers leased and managed the hotel together for about fifteen years until the stockholders of the Savannah Hotel Company decided to run the hotel themselves after the lease's expiration in July of 1905. Following the termination of the lease, Watson told the local newspapers that he was entertaining several offers from various tourist hotels. By 1906, Watson and his wife, Frances, had left Savannah and his former partner, Powers, was managing the De Soto Hotel for the stockholders.

While running the Pulaski House in the late 1880s, Watson's young daughter, Gracie, died and was buried at Bonaventure Cemetery. Today, her gravesite, adorned with a lifesize statue, is a popular tourist attraction.

Bonaventure Cemetery, visit to Gracie Watson's gravesite (17 October 2004).

"Company Will Manage the De Soto Hotel." *Savannah Morning News* (19 May 1905) 12:4.

"De Soto Under New Management." *Savannah Morning News* (1 July 1905) 12:1.

Savannah City Directories, 1888-1908. Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, Georgia.

"Watson and Powers Have No Definite Plans." *Savannah Morning News* (2 July 1905) 20:4.

"Watson and Powers Have No Plans Yet." *Savannah Morning News* (11 June 1905) 20:5.

Architect Hyman Wallace Witcover (1871-1936)



Hyman Wallace Witcover was only 32 years old when he was chosen as City Hall's architect, photograph c.1904.
"Official Souvenir Programme, Laying of Cornerstone, New City Hall, Savannah, Georgia, August 11th, 1904."
Savannah: Daily Record Print, 1904.

Vertical Files: Savannah-City Hall/City Exchange.
Bull Street Main Library of the Live Oak Public Libraries, Savannah, Georgia
Used with permission.

Hyman Wallace Witcover, architect of Savannah's City Hall, was born on July 16, 1871 in Darlington, South Carolina to a German father and North Carolinian mother.

After moving to Savannah, he became a draftsman for architect Alfred S. Eichberg in 1888. Eichberg was the busiest architect in Savannah at the time. In 1900, Witcover started his own firm. One of his first major commissions was the Sacred Heart Church on Bull and 33rd streets. During 1903, the year he was chosen as the City Hall architect by City Council, he was responsible for the majority of prominent residences going up around the city, including the Kehoe House. Witcover served as supervising architect of the Germania Bank. After its completion, he kept offices in the building until 1906 when he moved his firm into the new National Bank, on the corner of Bull and Broughton streets, also his design.

Witcover is responsible for the designs of the Chatham Armory at the corner of Bull Street and Park Avenue, the Knights of Pythias Castle Hall on Telfair Square (demolished), Hick's Hotel on Johnson Square (demolished), the Jewish Educational Alliance on Barnard Street, the Scottish Rite Temple at the corner of Bull and Charlton streets, Congregation B'nai B'rith Jacob's synagogue on Montgomery Street, and the Lewis-Kayton House on Drayton Street.

He was the first president of the Savannah Society of Architects. Between 1919 and 1922, he served by appointment of the Governor on the State Board of Examiners for Architects.

In 1914, the Savannah Library Commission chose Witcover to design the new Public Library on Bull Street. Witcover had a long association with the public library system in Savannah. In 1904, while he was working on City Hall, Mayor Herman Myers appointed him to the Savannah Public Library Board. He remained on the board for over twenty years and became chairman in 1922.

Witcover was an active Mason, an association that complemented his profession. He participated in the Masonic cornerstone laying ceremony for City Hall on August 11, 1904. At the biennial session of the Supreme Council of Scottish Rite Masons in Washington, D.C. in 1911, Witcover was elected Sovereign Grand Inspector General for Georgia, the executive head of the Scottish Rite Masons in the state. At only forty years old, he was the youngest man ever elected to that office. In October 1923, he was elevated to Secretary General of the Supreme Council. By the 1920s, Witcover was focusing his time on designing and consulting on the designs of Masonic temples throughout the United States. He was responsible for temples in Jackson, Mississippi, Montgomery, Alabama, and Jacksonville, Florida.

Witcover came from an Orthodox Jewish background and was a member of the Young Men's Hebrew Association in Savannah during the 1890s. In 1904, he joined Congregation Mickve Israel, and in the 1920s served on its Board of Adjunta.

On September 17, 1913, Witcover married Agnes Dillon, of Savannah, in a Darlington ceremony. They had three children, Dorothy, Hyman W., Jr., and David Carl. Agnes died around 1932. In 1934, Witcover retired and returned to Darlington where his two sons were living. He died there on October 2, 1936 at the age of 65 after a long illness. Witcover was buried in Washington, D.C.

"Mayor Herman Myers to Mayor and Aldermen of the City of Savannah," (23 December 1904). City Council Meeting Papers-Proceedings of Council, Box PRO 92, 0115-001-A289, Folder 859. City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

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Sculptor Fernando Miranda y Cassellas (1842-1925)



City Hall fountain, 2005.
City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.
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Fernando Miranda y Casellas, commonly known as Fernando Miranda, was born in 1842 in Valencia, Spain. Miranda, referred to as a “celebrated Spanish sculptor” in 1893, studied with sculptor J. Piquer, of the court of Queen Isabella II, in Madrid, and later with Carpeaux in Paris. He came to the United States during the Centennial Exposition of 1876 and settled in New York City.* Around the late 1880s, King Alfonso XII made him Comendador of the Royal Order of Isabella and he was knighted. Miranda exhibited works at the National Academy of Design in New York City in 1878, 1879, and 1898, and with the National Sculpture Society in New York c.1908. Miranda died in 1925 in New York at the age of eighty-three.

Miranda assisted Francisco Piquer with the modeling of a statue of Christopher Columbus erected in the Plaza de Recreo in Cardenas, Cuba in 1862. In 1892, he prepared a design for the Circulo Colon Cervantes, a Spanish-American heritage group, of a fountain honoring Christopher Columbus for submission to the Quadro Centennial Committee to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the discovery of America. Miranda’s design was one of three memorials to be erected around Central Park in New York City by various groups. However, the Circulo Colon Cervantes pulled funding for their project after a disagreement with the Central Park Board regarding placement of the fountain. The group desired to erect the fountain at the entrance to Central Park at 59th Street and 5th Avenue. The Park Board suggested two alternate sites at the Battery and at Mount Morris, neither as centrally located or desirable to the group. Had it been built, Miranda’s fountain would have had a basin 100 feet in diameter with a statue of Christopher Columbus standing on a pedestal representing the globe.

Miranda's body of work includes several important commissions primarily around the turn of the twentieth century in the United States. Four large figures of angels sculpted by Miranda were placed in the American Tract Society Building, designed by Robert Henderson Robertson and built in 1894-1895 in Manhattan. In 1903, he was one of numerous artists awarded commissions for the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition, commemorating the centennial anniversary of the Louisiana Purchase (for more information on this fair see special article "Louisiana Purchase Exposition"). Miranda's work appeared in relief panels for the Palace of Machinery at the exposition in St. Louis. Supervised by Thomas Edison, the Palace of Machinery, a building "very rich in plastic detail and sculptural decoration," covered an area of ten acres and contained the power plant for the exposition. The hall's highlights were "sheet metal, link belts and the gasoline engine."

In February 1897, Miranda was at the forefront of a group of sculptors protesting the contracting of work on the new Appellate Division Court House in New York City at 25th Street and East Madison Square without advertising for bids. The sculptors wanted a competition to be held and bids accepted before the art works were commissioned.

In 1905, Miranda's design of a fountain for Savannah's City Hall was accepted through the proposal of bronze foundry John Williams, Inc., of New York City. Miranda's design, cast by John Williams, Inc. and installed in 1906, includes a "putto" or male angel, supported by a base of four dolphins, holding aloft a cornucopia representing the prosperity of the City at the beginning of a new century. The last confirmed work of Miranda's is the sculpture entitled *Primitive Marksman*, also cast by John Williams, Inc. The bronze figure depicts a Native American lying on his back and shooting an arrow. This piece is now part of the New York Historical Society's collections and is housed in the Henry Luce III Center for the Study of American Culture.

**The Centennial Exposition (the International Exhibition of Arts, Manufactures and Products of the Soil and Mine) opened in Fairmount Park, Philadelphia on May 10, 1876 to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence and the nation's advances in science and industry. Nearly ten million people visited exhibits of 38 states and 50 nations during the five months the exposition was open.*

"American Tract Society Building." New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, Designated June 15, 1999; LP-2038. Taken from <http://www.ci.nyc.ny.us/html/lpc/html/designation/summaries/americantract.html> (accessed 31 March 2005).

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“World’s Fair Centennial Celebration: The 1904 Fair.” International Folklore Federation, 2004. Taken from <http://www.worldsfairstlouis.org/> (accessed 31 March 2005).

Louisiana Purchase Exposition
(St. Louis Exposition & World's Fair)
St. Louis, Missouri
April 30-December 1, 1904



Panoramic view of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition taken from the top of Festival Hall, 1904.
Published in *Collier's Weekly* (24 April 1904) 14-15. LC-USZ62-52828 through 52830 DLC.
Prints and Photographs Division, Panoramic Photographs, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.
Used with permission.

In 1904, the centennial of the 1803 Louisiana Purchase was celebrated with an international exposition highlighting technology, science, and culture. The Louisiana Purchase Exposition, also known as the St. Louis Exposition or the St. Louis World's Fair, opened in St. Louis, Missouri on April 30, 1904.

The World's Fair of 1904 celebrates the Centennial of the Louisiana Purchase, an event in American history having an importance secondary only to the Declaration of Independence. The territory acquired from France by this purchase embraced all the land lying between the Mississippi river and the crest of the Rocky Mountains, and its ownership by the United States made possible the extension of the nation's boundaries to the Pacific Ocean.

The exposition encompassed some two square miles, included over two hundred buildings, and cost over \$19 million. The fair was complemented by the 1904 Olympic Games, also held in St. Louis. Representatives from every state in the United States and twenty-five foreign nations presented exhibits and pavilions. For twenty-five to fifty cents, visitors could take in eleven palaces displaying science, agriculture, transportation, machinery, industry and art exhibits.

Among the scientific displays was the first successful demonstration of wireless telegraphy between the ground and the air in the United States. At heights varying from 1400 feet to 2 miles, messages were received from the ground station. Another first was the meteorological balloon experiments which sent small balloons up to altitudes of 51,000 feet to record temperatures.

The World's Fair was also famous for the accidental invention of the ice cream cone, and the "Observation Wheel" which carried 60 passengers in each car...[and] later took the name of its engineer, Ferris.

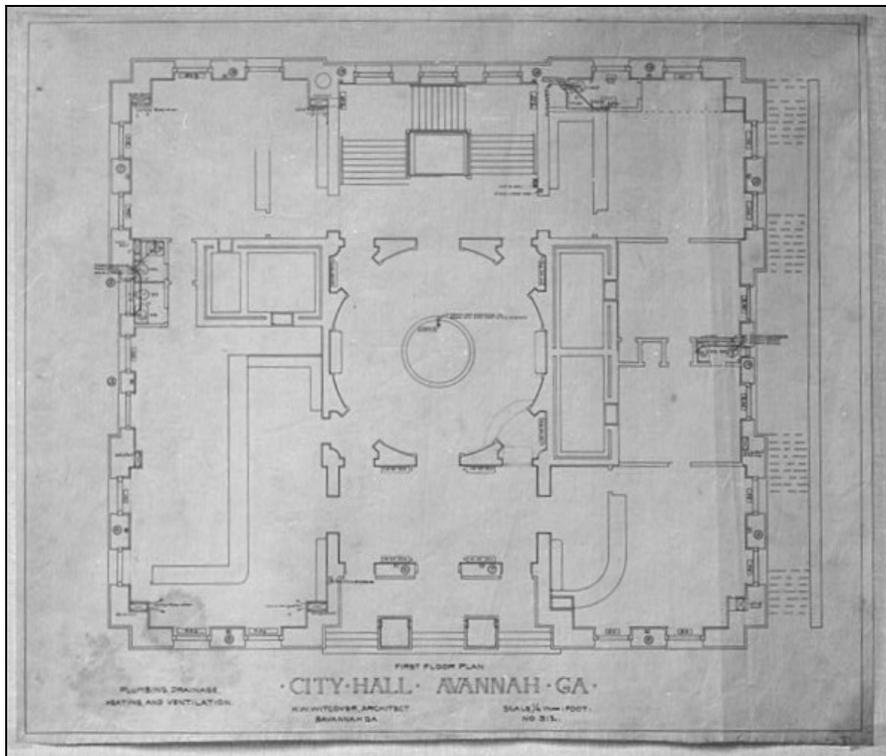
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City Hall Architectural Drawings On-line

The Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS)* collection, cared for by the Library of Congress, includes documentation of the City Hall of Savannah, Georgia. Collected around 1981, the City Hall HABS project (HABS, GA, 26-SAV, 61) includes forty-two black and white photographs, twelve data pages, and one photo caption page. The photographs include contemporary views of the building, as well as photographs of the plans and elevations drawn by Hyman W. Witcover, architect, c.1903-1905, during the planning and construction of City Hall (the original drawings are housed in the City of Savannah, Research Library and Municipal Archives, City Hall, Savannah, Georgia). The data pages include a brief history of the building and a thorough description of its materials, architectural style and details.



Plan of the first floor of Savannah City Hall, drawn by Hyman W. Witcover, c.1904.
Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Historic American Buildings Survey, HABS, GA, 26-SAV, 61-10.
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The Savannah City Hall HABS project is available on-line through the Library of Congress' Built in America Collection (go to http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/habs_haer/, in the search field type "Savannah City Hall," click "Go," and the main page for the City Hall's HABS project will come up, click on the icons for photos, data pages, or photo captions to access the information). You can print or download the material from this website or order reproductions through the Library of Congress' Photoduplication Service (telephone (202) 707-5640; email: photoduplication@loc.gov).



City Hall Council Chamber, c.1981
 Historic American Buildings Survey, HABS, GA, 26-SAV, 61-37.
 Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.
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At a minimum, please use the following citation when using the Savannah City Hall HABS materials:

Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Historic American Buildings Survey, HABS, GA, 26-SAV, 61-(Item #).

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***History of the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS)**

In 1933 the National Park Service, Department of the Interior established the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) following a proposal by Charles E. Peterson, a Park Service landscape architect. It was founded as a make-work program for architects, draftsmen and photographers left jobless by the Great Depression. Guided by field instructions from Washington, D.C., the first recorders were tasked with documenting a representative sampling of America's architectural heritage. By creating an archive of historic architecture, HABS provided a data base of primary source material for the then fledgling historic preservation movement.

The Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) and the Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) are collections of documentary measured drawings, photographs, and written historical and architectural information for about 37,000 structures and sites in the United States and its territories. The U.S. Department of the Interior is responsible for the administration of these surveys and creates the records which are transferred to the Library of Congress for service and preservation. Architectural and engineering structures and sites of almost every type, including residential, commercial, public, monumental, religious, military, and industrial categories, have been recorded and are part of these collections. Various building technologies and materials, as well as periods and styles from the 17th to the 20th century are represented.

“...the survey shall cover structures of all types from the smallest utilitarian structures to the largest and most monumental. Buildings of every description are to be included so that a complete picture of the culture of the times as reflected in the buildings of the period may be put on record.”

-excerpt from original HABS mission statement

The Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER) is an integral component of the federal government's commitment to historic preservation. The program documents important architectural, engineering and industrial sites throughout the United States and its territories. A complete set of HABS/HAER documentation, consisting of measured drawings, large-format photographs, and written history, plays a key role in accomplishing the mission of creating an archive of American architecture and engineering and in better understanding what historic resources tell us about America's diverse ethnic and cultural heritage. To insure that such evidence is not lost to future generations, the HABS/HAER Collections are archived at the Library of Congress, where they are made available to the public.

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Index

*Note: All entries pertain to the planning, construction, and use of City Hall, unless otherwise specified.
All entries regarding the old City Exchange building are found under "City Exchange."
Entries cite article dates within the year chapters or special articles found at the end of the volume.*

- Accidents: 5/11/1903; 5/7/1904; 7/14/1904; 2/6/1905
Adler, Leopold (furniture dealer): 8/25/1905; 9/6/1905;
9/19/1905
Advertising: 6/22/1904
A. H. Andrews Company (Chicago, IL): 7/8/1905
Alarms: 3/22/1904
Alligators: City Hall Opens for Business: Part V
Annual reports:
1905: City Hall Opens for Business: Part III
1906: City Hall Opens for Business: Parts III and V
A. R. Stewart vs. Savannah Contracting Company, et. al.:
7/28/1905
Architects: 2/18/1903; 3/1/1903; 3/6/1903; 5/11/1903;
5/27/1903; 5/29/1903; *also see* Witcover, Hyman Wallace
Architectural drawings:
Specifications: 1/15/1904; 1/18/1904; 2/4/1904; 2/6/1904;
2/10/1904; 3/28/1904
Watercolor elevation: 7/10/1903; 7/15/1903
Working plans: 9/6/1903; 12/2/1903; 12/3/1903;
3/28/1904; "City Hall Architectural Drawings
Available On-line" (special article)
Archival records *see* Records
"Art" statue *see* Statuary
Art Metal Construction Company (Jamestown, NY):
7/8/1905; 7/10/1905; 7/11/1905; 7/12/1905; 7/13/1905;
7/15/1905; 7/19/1905; 7/21/1905; 7/27/1905; 9/6/1905;
9/21/1905; 10/14/1905
A. S. Bacon & Sons: 9/23/1905
Attorney (City): 4/29/1905; 7/19/1905; City Hall Opens for
Business: Part IV
Automobiles: 8/11/1904 Parts I and V; 6/3/1905

Bacon, Hal H. (representative of Savannah Contracting
Company): City Hall Opens for Business: Part IV
Bailey, Roy: City Hall Opens for Business: Part I
Ballast stone: 4/19/1904
Barker, Frank (sidewalk contractor): 12/11/1905
Basement: 8/31/1905
Bathrooms: 3/11/1905
Bay Street:
Improvements: 2/20/1903; 3/1/1903; 4/10/1904;
4/15/1904; 4/16/1904; 7/14/1904; 4/25/1905;
7/25/1905; 8/15/1905; 10/11/1905; 11/8/1905; City
Hall Opens for Business: Part V
Bell, Alvan N. (employee of Treasurer's Office): 3/23/1904
Bell Telephone Company: 12/16/1905; 12/21/1905
Bells and clocks: 12/6/1904; 2/12/1905; 10/5/1905;
12/21/1905
Bids: 5/4/1905; 5/11/1905; 6/1/1905; 6/7/1905; 7/8/1905;
7/10/1905; 7/15/1905; 7/18/1905; 7/19/1905
Contract: 8/1/1905
Council Chamber clock: 8/1/1905; City Hall Opens for
Business: Part I
Delivery and installation: 10/20/1905; 11/15/1905;
11/23/1905; 12/11/1905; City Hall Opens for Business:
Parts II and V
Inscription: 7/27/1905; 9/4/1905
Manufacturing and casting: 9/4/1905
Tower clock: 8/1/1905; 9/4/1905
also see City Exchange
Berger Manufacturing Company (Canton, OH): 7/8/1905

Bids:
Architectural plans: 3/6/1903; 5/11/1903; 5/13/1903;
5/27/1903; 5/29/1903; *also see* Witcover, Hyman
Wallace
Bells and clocks: 5/4/1905; 5/11/1905; 6/1/1905;
6/7/1905; 7/8/1905; 7/10/1905; 7/15/1905; 7/18/1905;
7/19/1905
Chairs: 7/27/1905; 8/25/1905; 9/6/1905
Contractors: 9/6/1903; 12/2/1903; 12/3/1903; 1/14/1904;
1/15/1904; 1/18/1904; 1/19/1904; 2/4/1904; 2/6/1904;
2/9/1904; 2/10/1904; 3/10/1904; 3/12/1904; 3/19/1904
also see Contracts; Leonard, S. S.; Savannah
Contracting Company
Furniture: 6/1/1905; 6/7/1905; 7/8/1905; 7/10/1905;
7/11/1905; 7/12/1905; 7/13/1905; 7/15/1905;
7/15/1905; 7/19/1905; 7/21/1905
Plumbing: 5/9/1904
Procedure: 6/1/1905; 6/7/1905; 7/27/1905; 9/12/1905
Rugs: 8/22/1905; 9/19/1905
Statuary: 8/22/1905
Window shades: 8/22/1905; 9/19/1905
Bills (State) *see* State Legislature of Georgia
Blun, Henry, Captain (former alderman): 12/22/1905
Bonds *see* Surety bonds
Brick: 5/18/1904; 6/20/1904; 9/3/1904; 11/17/1904
Bridge (foot): 5/7/1904; 3/15/1905; 4/25/1905
Bronze:
Fountain: 10/16/1905
Hardware: 3/30/1905
Brushwood, W. O. (painters' union): 4/12/1905
Bryson, T. A. (automobile garage): 6/3/1905
Building Committee: "City Hall Building Committee"
(special article); 6/7/1905; 7/10/1905; 7/15/1905;
7/17/1905; 7/18/1905; 7/27/1905; 7/28/1905; 8/7/1905;
8/22/1905; 8/25/1905
Appointments: 2/18/1903; 7/22/1903
Investigations: 7/11/1905; 7/12/1905; 7/13/1905;
7/15/1905; 7/17/1905; 7/21/1905; 11/15/1905; City
Hall Opens for Business: Parts IV and V
Reports: 2/18/1903; 5/27/1903; 7/14/1903; 2/10/1904;
4/26/1905; 7/15/1905; 8/16/1905; 9/6/1905
Responsibilities: 2/18/1903; 2/11/1904; 7/8/1905;
7/27/1905; City Hall Opens for Business: Part I
Burgess, John E. (contractor): 3/19/1904; 3/24/1904;
4/19/1904; 7/28/1905; 9/12/1905; 9/23/1905; 12/16/1905

Campaigns *see* Elections
Canes (walking): 5/11/1904
Canty, John F. (alderman): 8/31/1905; City Hall Opens for
Business: Part II
Carpet *see* Rugs
Chairs: 12/21/1905
Bids: 7/27/1905; 8/25/1905; 9/6/1905
Delivery and installation: 11/23/1905; 12/12/1905;
12/16/1905
Charlton, Walter G.: City Hall Opens for Business: Part V
Children: City Hall Opens for Business: Part I
Christian, J. A.: 11/24/1905
Citizen involvement: 5/13/1903
City Council (meetings): City Hall Opens for Business:
Part II

- City Exchange (Old): "Savannah's Old City Exchange" (special article)
 Alarms: 3/22/1904
 Bells and clock: 2/14/1904; 3/23/1904; 2/12/1905
 Chairs (aldermen): 8/30/1905; City Hall Opens for Business: Part V
 Cornerstone: 4/11/1904; 4/12/1904; 4/14/1904; 4/19/1904; 4/29/1904; 5/5/1904; 5/7/1904; 7/13/1904; 8/11/1904 Part IV
 Council Chamber ("Long Room"): 2/15/1904; 2/16/1904; 2/17/1904; 1/23/1905
 Council meeting (last): 2/17/1904; 8/11/1904 Part V; 1/23/1905
 Demolition: 9/6/1903; 12/3/1903; 2/14/1904; 2/17/1904; 3/23/1904; 3/26/1904; 3/28/1904; 4/3/1904; 4/11/1904; 4/14/1904; 4/19/1904; 4/29/1904; 5/5/1904; 5/7/1904; 5/18/1904; 8/11/1904 Part II; 5/11/1905; 9/23/1905
 Flag: 3/26/1904; 10/26/1904
 Furniture: 8/30/1905; 11/16/1905; 12/18/1905; City Hall Opens for Business: Part V
 History: 4/16/1903; 4/29/1903; 5/11/1904; 7/14/1904; 1/23/1905; 3/14/1905; City Hall Opens for Business: Part III
 Insurance: 3/26/1904; 12/2/1904
 Photographs: 2/15/1904; 2/17/1904; 8/11/1904 Part V; 1/23/1905
 Site: 2/18/1903; 2/20/1903; 2/24/1903; 3/1/1903; 7/8/1903; 7/10/1903; 1/16/1904; 4/15/1904; 4/16/1904; 2/12/1905
 Staircase: 3/23/1904; 5/11/1904
 Steeple: 3/28/1904; 4/3/1904
 Table (Council): City Hall Opens for Business: Part V
 Vacating: 3/23/1904; 3/24/1904; 3/26/1904
 Weathervane: 2/14/1904
 City Hall (New): 1/23/1905
 Appropriations: 2/18/1903; 12/14/1903; 1/16/1904; 10/23/1904; 12/2/1904; 12/6/1904; 11/21/1905
 Approval: 2/18/1903; 12/16/1905
 Articles (published): 3/14/1905
 Cost/payments: 2/24/1903; 5/11/1903; 7/28/1903; 12/2/1903; 1/14/1904; 1/16/1904; 2/9/1904; 2/10/1904; 7/2/1904; 9/3/1904; 12/2/1904; 11/21/1905; 12/21/1905; 12/30/1905; City Hall Opens for Business: Parts III-V
 Design requirements: 2/24/1903; 3/6/1903; 1/15/1904
 Financing: 1/16/1904; 1/4/1905; 1/6/1905; 11/21/1905; City Hall Opens for Business: Part III
 History: City Hall Opens for Business: Part III
 Move into: 12/18/1905; 12/20/1905; 12/21/1905; 12/30/1905
 Naming: 1/18/1905
 Opposition to: 4/16/1903; 4/29/1903; 7/28/1903
 Original design: 7/15/1903
 Possession: 12/18/1905
 Site: 2/12/1905
 Support for: 2/20/1903
 Time frame: 2/24/1903; 12/2/1903; 9/22/1904
also see entries for specific building parts, contracts, events, materials, etc.
 City Marshal: 12/20/1905; City Hall Opens for Business: Part V
 City records *see* Records
 Clay, A. S. (Senator): 8/11/1904 Part IV; 1/23/1905
 Cleaning *also see* Maintenance:
 Stonework: 5/11/1905; 5/14/1905; City Hall Opens for Business: Part III
 Clerk of Council (equipment and office): 11/28/1904; 2/27/1905; 3/11/1905; 12/21/1905
 Clocks *see* Bells and clocks
 Closets/cloakrooms: 3/11/1905
 Coat of Arms (City): 10/19/1904; 10/26/1904; 1/18/1905; 3/30/1905
 Cobblestones (paving material): 10/11/1905
 "The Coconut Building": City Hall Opens for Business: Part I
 Coins: 4/19/1904; 7/13/1904; 8/11/1904 Part V
 Colonial Dames (Georgia Society of Colonial Dames of America): 4/16/1903; 4/29/1903; 2/12/1905; 5/29/1905; 7/25/1905; City Hall Opens for Business: Part V
 Colors (City): 10/19/1904; 10/26/1904; 1/18/1905
 Columns: 7/15/1903; 11/29/1904; 12/20/1904
 "Commerce" statue *see* Statuary
 Committee *see* Building Committee
 Committee Room (Caucus Room): 9/19/1905
 Coney, Walter E., Colonel (Union Society): 4/25/1905
 Contracts: 7/17/1905
 Contractors: 2/11/1904; 2/29/1904; 3/11/1904; 3/19/1904; 3/24/1904; 4/27/1904; 5/9/1904; 4/26/1905; 5/11/1905; 5/14/1905; 7/28/1905; 9/12/1905; City Hall Opens for Business: Parts III-IV
 Materials:
 Bells and clocks: 8/1/1905; 9/4/1905
 Electric fixtures: 8/16/1905
 Fountain: 10/16/1905
 Furniture: 7/15/1905; 7/19/1905; 7/21/1905; 7/27/1905; 8/25/1905; 9/6/1905
 Granite: 2/12/1904
 Hardware: 3/30/1905
 Iron: 4/20/1904
 Plumbing: 5/9/1904
 Rugs: 9/19/1905
 Shades: 9/19/1905
 Sidewalks: 12/11/1905
 Statues: 9/13/1905; 10/12/1905
 Steel: 2/13/1904
 Copper: 8/7/1905
 Cornerstone: 4/12/1904; 6/20/1904; 7/29/1904; 8/11/1904 Parts I-V; 1/23/1905; *also see* City Exchange
 Council Chamber: 7/15/1903; 7/13/1904; 2/27/1905; 9/19/1905; 12/16/1905; 12/29/1905; City Hall Opens for Business: Parts I-II; *also see* City Exchange
 Counters: 8/7/1905; 11/5/1905; 11/23/1905
 C. P. Miller (Savannah, GA): 9/19/1905
 Creamer, J. Robert (Clerk of Council): 2/27/1905; 8/31/1905; 12/6/1905; 12/22/1905; 12/23/1905
 Custodian (of City Hall): 11/24/1905; 12/15/1905; 12/22/1905; 12/28/1905; City Hall Opens for Business: Part III
 Daughters of the American Revolution: 3/23/1904
 Davant, Richard James, III (building committee member): City Hall Opens for Business: Part s II and IV; "City Hall Building Committee" (special article)
 Davis, Bill (laborer): 7/13/1904
 Decorations: 12/6/1904; 8/7/1905; 12/29/1905
 Demurrage: 2/29/1904; 3/5/1905; 9/12/1905; City Hall Opens for Business: Parts IV-V
 Derrick: 11/29/1904; 12/20/1904; 2/6/1905; City Hall Opens for Business: Part V
 Desbouillons Jewellers (Savannah, GA): 7/8/1905
 Directory (building): 8/31/1905; City Hall Opens for Business: Part I
 Dixon, James M. (building committee member): "City Hall Building Committee" (special article); 5/29/1905; 7/8/1905; 7/17/1905; 8/15/1905; 8/31/1905; 10/17/1905; 12/16/1905; City Hall Opens for Business: Parts I, II, IV and V
 Dome: 7/15/1903; 1/29/1905; 2/10/1905; 2/27/1905; 3/28/1905; 6/3/1905; 8/31/1905; 9/25/1905; City Hall Opens for Business: Part V

- Doors: 5/14/1905
 Hardware: 3/30/1905
 Dreeseon, Henry E. (City Marshal): 9/4/1905; 12/20/1905; 12/21/1905; City Hall Opens for Business: Part V
- E. Howard Clock Company (New York, NY and Boston, MA): 7/8/1905; 7/10/1905; 7/15/1905; 7/18/1905; 7/19/1905; 8/1/1905; 9/4/1905; City Hall Opens for Business: Part V
 Elections: 4/20/1904; 10/12/1904; 10/26/1904; 1/2/1905; 1/9/1905; 1/10/1905; 1/23/1905
 Electric Supply Company (Savannah, GA): 8/16/1905; City Hall Opens for Business: Part V
 Electricity: 5/5/1904, 1/29/1905; 8/16/1905; 8/25/1905; 9/25/1905; City Hall Opens for Business: Parts III and V
 Wiring: 10/14/1905; 12/21/1905
 Elevator: 5/14/1905; 8/7/1905; 8/25/1905; 8/31/1905; 12/15/1905
 Elm tree: 7/14/1904
 Employees (City): 3/23/1904; 9/19/1904
 Engineer (City): 12/21/1905; 12/23/1905; City Hall Opens for Business: Part V
 Engineer (of City Hall): 12/15/1905
 Estill, J. H., Colonel (Union Society): 4/25/1905
 Excavation *see* Foundation
 Exterior (treatments): 3/30/1905; 5/11/1905; 5/14/1905
- Fans (ceiling and buzz): 7/27/1905; 8/16/1905
 Fence (work site): 6/22/1904; 8/11/1904 Part II
 Ferguson, Robert W. (City Hall Custodian): 11/24/1905; 12/22/1905; 12/28/1905; City Hall Opens for Business: Parts I and V
 Finance Committee: 12/21/1905
 Fireman (of City Hall): 12/15/1905; 12/18/1905
 Fireproofing: 3/11/1905; 7/11/1905; 8/31/1905
 Flag:
 City of Savannah, GA: 10/26/1904; 1/18/1905; 3/3/1905; 3/17/1905; 12/20/1905; 12/21/1905
 United States of America: 3/26/1904; 5/11/1905
 Fleming, Walter (Deputy Sheriff): 11/24/1905
 Floors: 3/11/1905; 10/14/1905; 11/23/1905; 12/21/1905; 12/23/1905
 Foreman (African American): 6/8/1904
 Foundation: 2/19/1904; 4/19/1904; 5/18/1904; 5/25/1904; 6/20/1904; 8/11/1904 Part II; 9/22/1904; 1/29/1905; 5/11/1905; City Hall Opens for Business: Part IV
 Fountain: 12/7/1904; 2/27/1905; 8/22/1905; 9/25/1905; 10/16/1905; 11/23/1905; City Hall Opens for Business: Parts I and V
 Franklins (automobiles): 6/3/1905
 Freeman, George C. [John F.] (alderman): 12/22/1905; City Hall Opens for Business: Part II
 Fuel: City Hall Opens for Business: Part III
 Furniture: City Hall Opens for Business: Part I
 Bids: 6/1/1905; 6/7/1905; 7/8/1905; 7/10/1905; 7/11/1905; 7/12/1905; 7/13/1905; 7/15/1905; 7/19/1905
 Color: 7/27/1905
 Contract: 7/15/1905; 7/19/1905; 7/21/1905; 7/27/1905; 9/21/1905
 Delivery and installation: 8/7/1905; 10/14/1905; 11/23/1905; 12/16/1905
 Estimates/plans: 11/28/1904; 12/6/1904; 5/4/1905; 6/1/1905; 7/11/1905; 7/12/1905; 7/13/1905
 Reuse of old: 11/16/1905; 12/18/1905; City Hall Opens for Business: Part V
- Gadsden, George M. (Director of Public Works): 2/27/1905; 10/11/1905; 11/8/1905
- Gamble, Thomas, Jr. (Secretary to the Mayor): 8/12/1904; 9/8/1904; 9/28/1904; 12/8/1905; City Hall Opens for Business: Parts III and V
 Garfunkel, A. J. (alderman): 8/31/1905; 11/29/1905; City Hall Opens for Business: Part V
 Garrard, William (City Attorney): City Hall Opens for Business: Part IV
 General Fire Proofing Company (Youngstown, OH): 7/8/1905
 Georgia League of Municipalities: 8/11/1904 Parts I and V
 Georgia Telephone Company: 12/16/1905; 12/21/1905
 Girtman, A. L. (merchant): 7/8/1905
 Glatigny, John F. (alderman): City Hall Opens for Business: Part II
 Gleason, Edward C. (contractor): 3/19/1904; 3/24/1904; 4/11/1904
 Goldfish: City Hall Opens for Business: Parts I and V
 Gradot, Charles (Messenger of Council, temporary City Hall Custodian): 12/6/1905; 12/18/1905; 12/22/1905; City Hall Opens for Business: Part V
 Grandstand: 8/11/1904 Part II
 Granite: 1/15/1904; 1/18/1904/ 2/9/1904; 2/10/1904; 2/12/1904; 6/20/1904; 8/11/1904 Parts II and V; 8/26/1904; 9/3/1904; 9/22/1904; 10/3/1904; 10/21/1904; 3/30/1905
 Grayson, William L. (alderman): City Hall Opens for Business: Parts II-III
 "A Greater Savannah," (theme/movement): 12/23/1903
 Grill work: 8/7/1905
 Ground rent lots: 1/16/1904; 1/4/1905
- Haines, A. Scott (bookkeeper): 9/23/1905
 Halligan, Thomas: City Hall Opens for Business: Part I
 Harbor Master: 8/31/1905; 9/21/1905; 12/16/1905; 12/30/1905
 Hardee, Major (City Treasurer): 3/23/1904
 Hardware (door): 3/30/1905; 8/16/1905; City Hall Opens for Business: Part III
 Harman, George L. (alderman): 8/31/1905; City Hall Opens for Business: Part II
 Health Officer (office): 12/16/1905
 Heating system: 12/12/1905; 12/15/1905; 12/18/1905
 Herbert & Quarterman (Savannah, GA): 9/19/1905
 Hernandez, C. V. (Assistant Clerk of Council): 11/16/1905; City Hall Opens for Business: Part V
 Heyward, Tom (laborer): 5/7/1904
 Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS): "City Hall Architectural Drawings Available On-line" (special article)
A History of the City Government of Savannah (prepared by Thomas Gamble, Jr. for City Council of Savannah, Georgia, 1900): 4/29/1903; 8/11/1904 Part 5
 Holidays (City): 8/11/1904 Part I
 Horn & Brannen Manufacturing Company (electric fixtures): 8/16/1905
 Horton, S. D.: 11/24/1905
 Howard clocks *see* E. Howard Clock Company
 Howard, Edward (clock manufacturer): 8/1/1905
 Howard, J. W. (Assistant City Engineer): 3/23/1904; 8/15/1905; 10/11/1905
 Hubner, Franz (music professor): 9/4/1905
 Hussey, W. T. (Deputy Marshal): 8/31/1905
- Inauguration: 1/23/1905
 Injuries *see* Accidents
 Inspections (of construction): 10/3/1904; 3/11/1905; 8/31/1905; 12/12/1905; 12/16/1905; City Hall Opens for Business: Part I; *also see* Tests

- Insurance:
 Builder's risk: 10/31/1905
 Building: 12/15/1905; City Hall Opens for Business: Part III
 Fire: 7/11/1905
see City Exchange
 Interior walls: 1/29/1905; 2/15/1905; 2/27/1905; 3/28/1905; 4/20/1905; 5/14/1905; 8/7/1905; 8/22/1905; 8/25/1905; 10/27/1905; 12/12/1905; City Hall Opens for Business: Parts III and V
 Ironwork: 4/20/1904; 5/18/1904; 5/14/1905; 8/7/1905; City Hall Opens for Business: Part III; *also see* Steel
- Jackson, J. W. (Union Society): 4/25/1905
 John Williams, Inc. (foundry, New York City): 10/16/1905
 Jones, Charles Edgeworth (son of former mayor Charles C. Jones): City Hall Opens for Business: Part I
- Karow, Edward, Mrs. (Colonial Dame): 5/29/1905
 Kimberly, George H. (bell manufacturer): 8/1/1905
 Krauss, Max, Mrs.: 12/22/1905
- Labor:
 Local (use of): 3/11/1904; 3/19/1904; 2/15/1905; 4/12/1905; 4/26/1905; 5/10/1905
 Petitions re.: 6/8/1904; 4/12/1905; 4/26/1905; 5/10/1905
 Unions: 4/12/1905; 4/26/1905; 5/10/1905
 Landscaping: 7/25/1905; 8/15/1905; 8/30/1905; 9/26/1905; 11/5/1905; City Hall Opens for Business: Part V
 Laws (State) *see* State Legislature of Georgia
 Lawsuits: 7/28/1905
 Lee, Robert E., General (portrait): 2/16/1904; 1/23/1905
 Leonard, S. S. (contractor): 2/6/1904; 2/9/1904; 2/10/1904; 2/11/1904; 2/15/1904; 2/29/1904; 3/9/1904; 3/10/1904; 3/11/1904; 4/20/1904
 Lewman, M. T. & Company (contractor): 1/14/1904; 1/15/1904; 2/4/1904
 Library (municipal): 12/8/1905
 Library Bureau of Boston: 7/8/1905; 7/11/1905
 Lighting:
 Bids: 7/27/1905; 8/16/1905
 Delivery and installation: 10/14/1905; 11/23/1905; 12/12/1905
 Fixtures: 6/1/1905; 7/27/1905; 8/16/1905; 11/16/1905; City Hall Opens for Business: Part V
 Operation: 12/21/1905
also see Electricity
 Limestone: 1/15/1904; 1/18/1904; 2/9/1904; 2/10/1904; 10/21/1904; 11/17/1904; 11/21/1904; 11/29/1904; 12/20/1904; 1/29/1905; 3/30/1905; 5/11/1905; 5/14/1905; 10/12/1905
 Lindsay, W. J. (merchant/furniture dealer): 6/7/1905; 7/11/1905; 7/12/1905; 7/13/1905; 7/15/1905
 Lindsay & Morgan (Savannah, GA): 7/8/1905; 7/10/1905; 7/11/1905; 7/12/1905; 7/13/1905; 7/15/1905; 8/25/1905; 9/6/1905; 9/19/1905
 Lobby: 9/25/1905
 Low, Bob (oldest City employee): 9/19/1904
- M. Ohmer's Sons Company (Dayton, OH): 7/8/1905; 7/10/1905
 M. S. and D. A. Byck (Savannah, GA): 7/8/1905
 Maclean, Cornelia Sams (Mrs. Willis Wilder; flag designer): 1/18/1905; 3/3/1905
 MacNeil, Ambrose (painter): 12/29/1905; City Hall Opens for Business: Parts I-II
 Maguire (Chief): City Hall Opens for Business: Part V
 Maguire, James: 11/24/1905
 Maintenance (ongoing): 8/31/1905; 12/15/1905; 12/22/1905; City Hall Opens for Business: Parts I and III
- Marble: 2/9/1904; 2/27/1905; 5/14/1905; 8/7/1905; 8/25/1905; 8/31/1905; 10/16/1905; 11/30/1905; City Hall Opens for Business: Part I
 Masonic ceremonies: 4/11/1904; 7/13/1904; 7/29/1904; 8/11/1904 Parts I-V; "Savannah's Old City Exchange" (special article)
 Mayor's Office: 2/27/1905; 9/19/1905; City Hall Opens for Business: Parts I and V
 McBride (Harbor Master): 8/31/1905; 9/21/1905
 McDonald, Harold: City Hall Opens for Business: Part I
 McKenna, James H. (alderman): City Hall Opens for Business: Part II
 McKenna, Richard: 11/24/1905
 Meneely, Andrew (bell manufacturer): 8/1/1905
 Meneely Bell Company (Troy, NY): 8/1/1905; 9/4/1905
 Meneely, William Hanks (bell manufacturer): 8/1/1905
 Merchants (local): 6/7/1905
 Meyerhardt, Max (Grand Master): 8/11/1904 Parts III and IV
 Miranda y Cassellas, Fernando (sculptor): 10/16/1905; "Sculptor Fernando Miranda y Cassellas"
 Mosaics: 10/19/1904; 9/25/1905
 Moxn, Mr. (architect's co-worker): 7/12/1905
Municipal Journal and Engineer: 3/14/1905; City Hall Opens for Business: Part I
 Murals: 2/27/1905; 8/7/1905
 Music: City Hall Opens for Business: Part I
 Myers, Herman (Mayor): 4/20/1904; 7/13/1904; 1/2/1905; 1/9/1905; 1/10/1905; 1/23/1905; 6/7/1905; 7/8/1905; 7/15/1905; 7/17/1905; 8/31/1905; 9/12/1905; 12/12/1905; 12/21/1905; 12/22/1905; City Hall Opens for Business: Parts I-V; "City Hall Building Committee" (special article)
 Portrait: 12/29/1905; City Hall Opens for Business: Parts I-II
- Nash, L. R. (manager Savannah Electric Company): City Hall Opens for Business: Part V
 Newell post *see* City Exchange-Staircase
 Night work: 5/5/1904; 11/21/1904; 3/28/1905
- Offices (layout): 3/6/1903; 11/17/1904; 2/27/1905; 3/11/1905; 5/4/1905; 6/1/1905; 8/31/1905; 12/16/1905; City Hall Opens for Business: Parts I and III
 Oglethorpe Memorial: 5/29/1905; 7/25/1905; 9/26/1905; 10/21/1905; 11/5/1905; City Hall Opens for Business: Part V
 "The Old and the New...." (prepared by Thomas Gamble, Jr. for City Council of Savannah, Georgia, 1906): 1/23/1905; City Hall Opens for Business: Part III
 Oliver, Frank M. (alderman): City Hall Opens for Business: Parts II and IV
 Opening *see* Reception
- P. & F. Corbin Company (Hartford, CT): 3/30/1905; 8/16/1905
 Painting (interior): 2/15/1905; 2/27/1905; 4/12/1905; 4/26/1905; 8/7/1905; 8/22/1905; 10/27/1905; 12/12/1905
 Parades: 8/11/1904 Parts I and IV; 1/9/1905
 Park and Tree Commission: City Hall Opens for Business: Part V
 Parks *see* Landscaping; the Strand
 Parquetry: 10/14/1905
 Patterson, Sam (laborer): 5/7/1904
 Paving: 10/11/1905; 11/8/1905; City Hall Opens for Business: Part V
 Photographs: 2/15/1904; 2/17/1904; 8/11/1904 Part V; 1/23/1905; 6/3/1905
 Plans *see* Architectural drawings
 Plants: City Hall Opens for Business: Part I
also see Landscaping

- Plaques:
 Building tablet: 7/29/1904
 Plaster: 1/29/1905; 2/10/1905; 4/20/1905; 5/14/1905; City Hall Opens for Business: Part V
 Plumbing: 5/9/1904; 1/29/1905; 4/20/1905
 Police patrol: 4/14/1904; 4/29/1904; 5/7/1904
 Police Superintendent: City Hall Opens for Business: Part V
 Porters (City Hall): City Hall Opens for Business: Part I
 Portraits: 2/16/1904; 12/29/1905; City Hall Opens for Business: Part I
 Postcards (of City Hall): 12/21/1905
 Preservation (of exterior): 3/30/1905
 Proposals: 4/15/1904; 4/16/1904
 Public *see* Reception
 Public Works (office): 2/27/1905; 3/11/1905; 12/16/1905; 12/20/1905
 Purchasing Agent (new City office): 11/17/1904
- Ramps (to River Street): 3/15/1905
 Rappole, Mr. (Art Metal Construction Co. draftsman): 7/12/1905; 7/13/1905
 Records (City): 2/24/1904; 8/31/1905; 11/24/1905; 12/21/1905; 12/23/1905
 Reception: City Hall Opens for Business: Part I
 Recreation pier: 4/15/1904; 4/16/1904
 Retail Merchant's Association: 6/7/1905
 Richardson, L. S. (with *Municipal Journal*): City Hall Opens for Business: Part I
 Robert Mitchell Furniture Company (Cincinnati, OH): 8/25/1905
 Rogers, E. G., Mr. (Lindsay & Morgan clerk): 7/12/1905
 Roof: 12/20/1904; 1/29/1905; 2/10/1905; 8/31/1905
 Leaks: City Hall Opens for Business: Part V
 Rotunda: 10/21/1904; 11/17/1904; 12/7/1904; 2/27/1905; 9/25/1905
 Rourke, John & Sons: 2/13/1904; 3/23/1904; 3/26/1904
 Rugs: 8/22/1905; 9/19/1905; 12/11/1905; City Hall Opens for Business: Part III
- Safe (Treasurer's): 3/24/1904
 St. Louis Exposition: 12/23/1903; 8/11/1904 Part V; 8/12/1904; 9/8/1904; 9/28/1904
 "Savannah, a City of Opportunities," (prepared by Thomas Gamble, Jr. for City Council of Savannah, Georgia, 1904): 8/12/1904; 9/8/1904; 9/28/1904
 Savannah Contracting Company: 1/14/1904; 3/10/1904; 3/19/1904; 3/24/1904; 4/11/1904; 4/19/1904; 4/29/1904; 5/9/1904; 6/22/1904; 7/2/1904; 9/3/1904; 12/2/1904; 12/6/1904; 2/15/1905; 3/5/1905; 4/26/1905; 7/28/1905; 9/12/1905; 9/23/1905; 10/17/1905; 10/21/1905; 11/21/1905; 11/30/1905; 12/6/1905; 12/16/1905; 12/18/1905; 12/21/1905; City Hall Opens for Business: Parts III-V
 Savannah Cotton Exchange: 3/15/1905
 Savannah Electric Company: 11/16/1905; City Hall Opens for Business: Part V
 Savannah, Georgia (history): 2/12/1905; 2/27/1905
 Savannah Locomotive Works: 4/20/1904
 Savannah River: 4/15/1905; 4/16/1904
 Savannah Stationary and Printing Company: 7/8/1905; 7/11/1905
 Schneider, Robert (clock caretaker, clock dealer): 2/13/1904; 7/8/1905; 7/10/1905; 7/15/1905; 7/19/1905; 8/1/1905; 9/4/1905; 10/20/1905; 11/15/1905; 12/21/1905; City Hall Opens for Business: Part V
 Schroder, E. A. "Martin" (building committee member): City Hall Opens for Business: Parts II and IV; "City Hall Building Committee" (special article)
 Seal of the City of Savannah *see* Coat of Arms
 Seal of the State of Georgia: 3/23/1904
- Self Winding Clock Company (Brooklyn, NY): 7/8/1905
 Seth Thomas Clock Company (New York, NY): 7/8/1905; 7/18/1905; 7/19/1905
 Sidewalks: 7/25/1905; 8/15/1905; 9/26/1905; 11/16/1905; 12/11/1905
 Slips *see* Ramps
 Sloan, J. T. (foreman): 5/7/1904
 Smith, R. S. (foreman): 2/6/1905
 Souvenirs: City Hall Opens for Business: Part I
 Special committee *see* Building Committee
 Spell, Alexander (laborer): 5/7/1904
 Stained glass: 9/25/1905; City Hall Opens for Business: Part V
 Stairway: 5/14/1905; 11/30/1905
 State Legislature of Georgia: 7/8/1903; 7/10/1903
 Statuary: 7/15/1903; 8/7/1905; 8/22/1905; 9/13/1905; 10/12/1905; 11/23/1905; 12/11/1905; City Hall Opens for Business: Part V; *also see* Fountain
 Steel: 2/13/1904; 2/19/1904; 5/18/1904; 8/26/1904; 10/21/1904; 11/21/1904; 1/29/1905; 2/10/1905; 2/27/1905 *also see* Iron
 Stewart, A. R. (contractor): 5/18/1904; 7/13/1904; 9/22/1904; 1/29/1905; 5/11/1905; 5/14/1905; 7/28/1905
 Stewart, Ivey (contractor): 5/7/1904
 Stewart, Murray M. (alderman): City Hall Opens for Business: Part II
 Storage: 8/31/1905
 The Strand: 2/12/1905; 5/29/1905; 7/25/1905; 8/15/1905; 8/30/1905; 9/26/1905; 10/21/1905; 11/5/1905; City Hall Opens for Business: Part V
 Streets and Lanes Committee: 12/20/1905; City Hall Opens for Business: Part V
 Surety bonds: 2/6/1904; 2/11/1904; 2/15/1904; 2/29/1904; 3/9/1904; 3/10/1904; 3/11/1904; 3/24/1904; 4/20/1904
- Tablets (marble): City Hall Opens for Business: Part I
 Tax Assessor's Office: 3/11/1905; 12/20/1905
 Telephones: 12/12/1905; 12/16/1905; 12/21/1905; 12/30/1905
 Temporary headquarters: 3/3/1903; 9/6/1903; 2/17/1904; 2/24/1904; 3/23/1904; 3/24/1904; 1/23/1905; 3/17/1905; 6/3/1905; 11/23/1905; 12/16/1905; 12/21/1905; City Hall Opens for Business: Parts IV-V
 Tests:
 Floors: 3/11/1905
 Ground: 2/19/1904
 Iron braces: 4/20/1904
also see Inspections
 Thomas, Daniel R. (building committee member, Chairman Streets and Lanes Committee): "City Hall Building Committee" (special article); 5/29/1905; 7/8/1905; 8/15/1905; 8/31/1905; 10/11/1905; 11/29/1905
 Thompson, S. B., Col. (representative of Art Metal Construction Co.): 7/15/1905; 7/21/1905
 Tower *see* Dome
 Tower clock *see* Bells and clocks
 Trash removal: 7/25/1905; 8/30/1905; 10/17/1905
 Treasury (City): 10/23/1904; 12/3/1904; 12/18/1905; 12/20/1905; 12/21/1905
 Trueheart, E. G. (painters' union): 4/12/1905
 Typewriter (book): 11/28/1904
- Union Society: 4/25/1905
 Unions *see* Labor
- Vaults: 2/24/1904; 4/11/1904; 4/14/1904; 5/7/1904; 5/25/1904; 1/29/1905; 7/28/1905; 8/31/1905; 11/24/1905
 Verdin Company (clock manufacturer): 8/1/1905
 Virginia Bridge & Iron Company (Roanoke, VA): 2/13/1904

- Vitrified brick (paving material): 10/11/1905; City Hall
 Opens for Business: Part V
- Wachstein, A. (clock dealer): 7/8/1905; 7/15/1905; 7/18/1905
- Wainscoting: 2/27/1905
- Walking sticks *see* Canes
- Walls *see* Interior walls
- Walz, John (sculptor): 9/13/1905
- Washrooms *see* Bathrooms
- Water main (broken): 7/14/1904
- Waterworks (office): 12/16/1905; City Hall Opens for
 Business: Part V
- Watson, Wales J. (building committee member): "City Hall
 Building Committee" (special article)
- W. B. Moses & Sons (Washington, D.C.): 8/25/1905
- Weathervane *see* City Exchange
- Western Union Telegraph Company: 7/8/1905
- Wiegand, John, Jr.: City Hall Opens for Business: Part I
- Wiegand's Orchestra: City Hall Opens for Business: Part I
- Wilder, J. J., Mrs. (president of Georgia Society of the
 Colonial Dames of America): City Hall Opens for
 Business: Part V
- Wilder, Willis, Mrs. *see* Maclean, Cornelia Sams
- Williams, John *see* John Williams, Inc.
- Willis (City Hall porter): City Hall Opens for Business: Part I
- Wilson, M. Ed. (photographer): 2/15/1904; 6/3/1905; City
 Hall Opens for Business: Part II
- Windows: 5/14/1905; 9/25/1905; 11/23/1905
 Hardware: 3/30/1905
 Maintenance: 12/15/1905
 Shades: 8/22/1905; 9/19/1905; 12/11/1905; 12/12/1905;
 City Hall Opens for Business: Part III
- Winnsboro granite *see* Granite
- Winnsboro Granite Company (Rockton, SC): 2/12/1904
- Winstedt, C. W. (sculptor): 9/13/1905; 10/12/1905; City Hall
 Opens for Business: Part V
- Witcover, Hyman Wallace (architect): 5/29/1903; 7/14/1903;
 2/4/1904; 4/12/1904; 10/16/1904; 2/15/1905; 9/4/1905;
 City Hall Opens for Business: Parts I and III; "Hyman
 Wallace Witcover" (special article)
- Fees: City Hall Opens for Business: Part III
- Misconduct investigation: 7/11/1905; 7/12/1905;
 7/13/1905; 7/15/1905; 7/17/1905; 7/21/1905
- Supervising duties: 2/13/1904; 3/28/1904; 5/18/1904;
 8/11/1904 Part III; 10/3/1904; 11/28/1904; 12/2/1904;
 12/6/1904; 2/27/1905; 3/5/1905; 3/11/1905; 3/15/1905;
 4/26/1905; 6/1/1905; 8/1/1905; 8/22/1905; 8/31/1905;
 9/4/1905; 9/13/1905; 10/12/1905; 10/20/1905;
 11/15/1905; 11/30/1905; 12/12/1905; 12/16/1905; City
 Hall Opens for Business: Parts IV-V
- Woodwork (interior): 5/14/1905; 6/1/1905; 8/25/1905;
 9/25/1905; 10/14/1905; 10/27/1905
- Wright, William H. (alderman): City Hall Opens for
 Business: Part II
- Yellow fever (Louisiana epidemic of 1905): City Hall Opens
 for Business: Part IV