

## CITY HALL RACES TO FINISH LINE

**RENOVATIONS NOW ARE ON PACE FOR GRAND REOPENING MAY 19**

**MAYOR LITTLEFIELD SAYS THE MOVE FOR CITY EMPLOYEES BEGAN IN MID-APRIL**

Chattanooga, May 19 — Chattanooga officials targeted a May 19 grand reopening for a renovated City Hall, as work continued at a feverish pace on the 99-year-old building.

"We just got some final features to put in on the first floor and basement, and the furniture's ready to go on (floors) three and two," Wendell Singleton, project supervisor, said.

Mayor Ron Littlefield said he and his staff started moving into the renovated City Hall in mid-April from the administration's temporary quarters in Warehouse Row, the City Hall Annex across East 11th Street and the Neighborhood Services building across Lindsay Street.

**DELAYS COSTLY FOR CITY, CONTRACTOR**

City Hall, which will have undergone nearly two years of makeover work that started in summer 2005, had been set to reopen in January, but the project has faced several delays from design changes to holdups on materials pricing. The building, constructed in 1908, had not seen major renovations since the late 1960s.

"We're starting to pack up and scale back here," Mr. Littlefield said from his temporary office in the Neighborhood Services building. "People are coming and scavenging furniture that they want to use, putting their names on chairs and stuff."

Meanwhile, city officials say they still intend to penalize construction firm Raines Brothers Inc. for the late work. The city's \$7 million contract with the company includes fines of \$500 a day for every day the project is late. The work was supposed to be finished in January.

Renting the temporary office space has cost the city about \$19,000 a month, officials have said.

"If we owe them \$100, and they owe us \$50 (for missing deadline), you can bet I'm only going to pay them \$50," said Paul Page, the city's director of general services.

Raines Brothers officials could not be reached for comment.

When finished, the stately City Hall at the corner of Lindsey and East 11th streets will feature revamped office spaces and conference rooms; upgraded heating, cooling and electrical systems; improved lighting; and security cameras. A \$70,000 stained-glass window by Atlanta-based artist Seranda Vespermann will be installed behind the central stairwell.

**HISTORY BARED**

The renovations also uncovered an ornate ceiling on the third floor that had been covered by a drop-down ceiling.

Crews already have installed wood paneling on the walls and decorative tiles on the ceiling.

City Hall includes a new time capsule in the southwest cornerstone of the building to replace a 1908 capsule recovered during the renovations in early February.

Items from the 1908 capsule, which included period newspapers, a Chamber of Commerce roster, business cards, a city directory, various city papers and other artifacts, will be on display in the new building.

E-mail [Herman Wang at hwang@timesfreepress.com](mailto:Herman.Wang@timesfreepress.com)

## FACTS

**THINGS NO ONE EVER TOLD YOU ABOUT CHATTANOOGA CITY HALL**

**WHO KNEW BASEMENT WAS AFTERTHOUGHT?**

Chattanooga, May 19 — Construction began on the Chattanooga City Hall in the early spring of 1907. By April of 1908, the bottom floor (basement) was completely finished and ready for the ceremonial cornerstone insertion. The original artist rendering of the Chattanooga City Hall did not show a basement level. It was added later in the construction, and windows were placed to give the bottom floor more of an open feeling.

**HALL'S U-SHAPE DESIGN HELPED DISPEL HOT AIR**

City Hall was built in a U shape with the inside part of the U remaining hollow. This allowed for greater air movement throughout the building when windows were opened because at the time of its conception, air conditioning was not available. The space later was blocked in with matching stone and a steel frame to give way to more space inside the building as the number of city employees grew. When the area was blocked up, the original windows were left and walls were plastered over them, hiding all traces until the renovation in 2006 and 2007. The glass used in the windows was somewhat wavy due to the way glass was created almost a century ago.

**GERMAN CANNON DISPLAYED ON LAWN**

In 1920, a German-captured World War I field artillery cannon was given to the city of Chattanooga by the local American Legion. The cannon rested on the front lawn of City Hall for more than 50 years.

**AWNINGS KEPT HEAT OFF WORKERS**

During the time when air conditioning was not available, the main windows of City Hall had awnings over them to shade the heat off the inhabitants of offices that had window views.

**LITTLEFIELD SHARES FLOOR SPACE WITH INTERNAL AUDITORS**

Historically, the mayor's office always has been located on the first floor to the right of the entrance. However with the new renovations, the mayor's office now occupies the third floor of City Hall along with the Department of Internal Audit.

**TODDIES, TIDBITS ONCE ON TAP**

The earthen road that existed in front of City Hall before its construction began, was lined by clapboard, makeshift vendor booths that sold alcohol, basic furniture and goods.

**QUARRY ONLY STONE'S THROW AWAY**

Historically, across the street where the City Annex building now stands was once an old quarry and fort named the Stone Fort.

**STONE FACADE COVERS SIX TO SEVEN LAYERS OF BRICK**

The exterior shell of City Hall is completely made of brick about 6 or 7 layers deep and in some areas even more. The bricks are covered by a limestone facade.



City Hall, at the corner of Lindsey and East 11th streets, was built in 1908.

## MAYORS ON CITY HALL

**FORMER, PRESIDENT LEADERS CITE PUBLIC SPIRIT AS DRIVING FORCE**

**"THIS MAGNIFICENT BUILDING IS DUE TO THE CIVIC PRIDE, THE WISDOM AND THE EXECUTIVE ABILITY OF PROGRESSIVE MEN WHO ARE ENTITLED TO ALL THE CREDIT FOR THIS FINE EXPRESSION OF THE 'CHATTANOOGA SPIRIT.'"**



— Former Chattanooga Mayor W.R. Crabtree at Cornerstone Laying Ceremony of Chattanooga City Hall, April 24, 1908

**"THE CITY OF CHATTANOOGA AND ITS RESIDENTS ARE BLESSED TO HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO BRING NEW LIFE TO OUR HISTORIC CITY HALL. THE FINISHED RENOVATION WILL PRESERVE THIS MAGNIFICENT BUILDING'S PAST AND HONOR ITS LEGACY OF SERVICE FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS. CHATTANOOGA CITY HALL IS AND SHALL REMAIN A MONUMENT TO THE CIVIC PRIDE AND PUBLIC SPIRIT OF OUR CITIZENS."**



— Mayor Ron Littlefield at Chattanooga City Hall Grand Reopening, May 19, 2007

TODAY'S  
**'WANTS'**  
NEWS, ENTERTAINMENT AND MORE  
**ONLINE**  
[WWW.TIMESFREEPRESS.COM](http://WWW.TIMESFREEPRESS.COM)

## IN U.S.

**WHERE WE WERE FROM 1900-1910**

**TEDDY'S OUR MAN**

William McKinley was re-elected president but was assassinated in 1901. Theodore Roosevelt became president and was re-elected. During his presidency he made a trip to the Canal Zone in Panama: the first president to make a trip outside the United States. Oklahoma was admitted to the Union.

**BOSTON WINS SERIES**

The baseball World Series began in 1903. The National League and the American League played the best of nine games to determine the World Champion. The NL's Pittsburgh club vs. the AL's Boston club played in the first series. Boston won 5 to 3.

**LADY LIBERTY DEBUTS**

The first 10-story skyscraper was built in Chicago. The Brooklyn Bridge in New York was opened to traffic. The Statue of Liberty was dedicated. The Washington Monument was completed.

**CRAYONS ON THE SCENE**

The first Crayola crayons were introduced in 1903. The box of eight crayons came in a yellow and green box and sold for a nickel. The eight original colors were black, blue, brown, green, orange, red, violet and yellow.

**RABBIT NAMED PETER CHARMS CHILDREN**

Beatrix Potter wrote "Peter Rabbit." The first daily comic strip, "Mr. Mutt," later called "Mutt and Jeff," appeared in the San Francisco Chronicle.

**FASHION IS A DUSTUP**

Clothes were made to shield occupants in car. A duster (coat) and bonnet were in style but were used for protection. Gibson Girls were the symbols of the era.

**FIRST FBI CALLED SPECIAL AGENT FORCE**

The Federal Bureau of Investigation is begun under the name Special Agent Force in 1908. It was not officially named FBI until 1935.

**CITY HALL IS SAME VINTAGE AS 'TIN LIZZY'**

Henry Ford founded the Ford Motor Co. A few months later the first Ford, the Model A, dubbed the "Tin Lizzy," was sold in Detroit.

**WRIGHT BROTHERS GET OFF THE GROUND**

Orville and Wilbur Wright successfully flew the first airplane. Orville piloted the first flight, which lasted 12 seconds, on Dec. 17, 1903. Wilbur flew the fourth and final flight of the day, staying in the air 57 seconds.

**COKE WAS A NICKEL**

At the time of the grand opening of City Hall, a bottle of Coca-Cola was 5 cents.

## ARTGLASS FOR NEW BUILDING

**IMAGES OF RIVER, AQUARIUM, MOUNTAINS, BRIDGES WILL BE INCLUDED**

Atlanta, May 19 — Atlanta artist Seranda Vespermann won a \$70,000 commission to create glass art for the renovated City Hall.

Ms. Vespermann, who has produced work for Georgia Tech and pop singer Elton John, created a 146-square-foot stained-glass backdrop behind City Hall's three-story interior staircase.

"In my design, I wanted to capture a lot of the city," Ms. Vespermann said. "I wanted to connect the old with the contemporary."

Her piece incorporates images of the Tennessee River, the Tennessee Aquarium, the Hunter Museum of American Art, bridges and mountains. She said a flowing water motif would be evident throughout the piece.

The glass backdrop to the stairwell will be backlit and visible to all visitors who come into City Hall through the front door.

More than 60 artists nationwide applied for the commission. Virginia Ann Sharber, who helped judge the entrants, said Ms. Vespermann's creative design won over the selection committee.

"We loved the color and the imagery," Ms. Sharber said. "Every time you go by the window, you'll see something you didn't see before."

City Hall, built in 1908, is undergoing a \$12 million renovation.

E-mail [Herman Wang at hwang@timesfreepress.com](mailto:Herman.Wang@timesfreepress.com)

## STYLE ON PARADE FOR REOPENING

**1900S FASHIONS REFLECT TIME WHEN CITY WAS BREAKING NEW GROUND**

**EMPLOYEES DRESS FOR SUCCESS ON CITY HALL'S OPENING DAY**



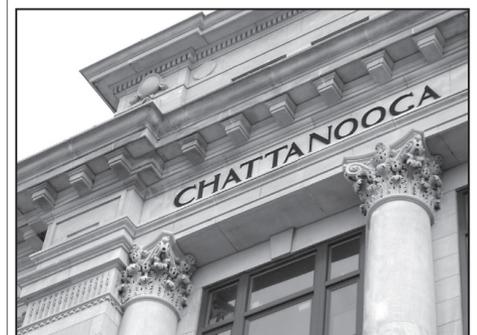
**Ms. Cherita Adams mimics style of blues legend Bessie Smith.**

Chattanooga, May 19 — Century-old fashions are making a comeback, sort of.

In recognition of the reopening of the renovated City Hall in downtown Chattanooga, a group of area citizens will dress as though they were attending the opening of the structure in 1907.

Chattanoogans including Mayor Ron Littlefield's wife, Lanis Littlefield, councilmen Manuel Rico and John Franklin, and City Hall employees Laurie Shipley, Matt Lea and Cherita Adams will dress in vintage clothing courtesy of the Encore Theatre on Brainerd Road.

"The Grand Reopening Celebration will reflect the early-1900s era, a time when Chattanooga was breaking new ground and establishing an identity," according to [www.chattanooga.gov](http://www.chattanooga.gov).



City Hall has undergone a \$12 million renovation.

## 1908 TIME CAPSULE OPENED

**CENTURY-OLD ARTIFACTS COME TO LIGHT**

Chattanooga, May 19 — After an excavation that lasted into the afternoon, city leaders were relieved to find the time capsule, since the only indications of its existence were several newspaper articles from 1908.

"All we had was just the evidence we found in the newspaper," said Matt Lea, an assistant to Chattanooga Mayor Ron Littlefield who said he found references to the capsule while researching ceremonies for laying the cornerstone. "We're looking at our history."

As Chattanooga's 99-year-old City Hall undergoes a \$12 million renovation, workers last month drilled through several layers of brick inside the

building to find the capsule but stopped for fear of compromising the building's structural integrity.

When the cornerstone was laid nearly a century ago by then-Chattanooga Mayor W.R. Crabtree, a crowd swarmed to watch.

Recently, with the help of construction equipment, the cornerstone was brought down to the eager eyes of about 50 local leaders, residents and reporters.

City Council Chairman Leamon Pierce and Mr. Littlefield cleared off dust and the outline of a dark box emerged, embedded in the cornerstone. With a bit of prying, the box came loose, and the mayor hoisted it up to show the applauding crowd. The capsule, which was welded shut, had minor wear and was covered with gray dust.

Mr. Lea took the box inside City Hall and began peeling back one side of it with a hacksaw.

"Can you believe the last person who touched this would (have been) a Civil War veteran?" Mr. Lea asked.

One by one, the artifacts saw daylight again.

There were business cards and local newspapers from 1908 ("Condition of Ex-Presi-

**CITY EMPLOYEE BRINGS BESSIE BACK**

A fashion show highlighting the styles of yesteryear was featured recently on WDEF-TV's "News 12 This Morning." The live-broadcast fashion show was fun, said Ms. Adams, who dressed as blues empress Bessie Smith.

"It was great. We got an overwhelming response from the general public," Ms. Adams said. "Showing the period dress of that era has inspired folks to rent costumes, make their own or dig through their attics for hidden treasures."

She said dressing like the famous blues singer was especially exciting. She wore a black velvet gown with red sleeves and feather accents. The elaborate headdress was made from an ostrich feather dyed red, she said. "I could not help but feel like a fabulous entertainer. The best part was wearing the headpiece."

**HIGH DAY NECKLINES DIP LOWER AT NIGHT**

Tony Smithey, owner of The Encore Theatre, designed the 1900s-era clothes modeled by Ms. Adams and the others.

"In 1907, women's fashion had changed from a very flowery, pretty, elegant look to more functional clothing," Mr. Smithey said.

"It was the beginning of women's suits, of women in the workplace. Fashions were clean, but still elegant as they were holding onto the last thread of the Victorian era. In the day, the suits were very high neck, but at night, busts were somewhat exposed."

**MEN SPORTED TOPPERS**

Men's fashions have changed little in the last 100 years. "The basic construction of a man's suit is the same," Mr. Smithey said. Men wore several styles of hats, he said, noting that top hats were for evening; derby style for day, and in the summer, the bowler (straw) hat was popular.

E-mail [Karen Nazor Hill at khill@timesfreepress.com](mailto:Karen.Nazor@timesfreepress.com)

dent Cleveland" is stable, one headline said. Also inside was a city directory, hardly stained or yellowed.

The team placed the items piece by piece onto a tablecloth, a faint musty smell emanating from them.

"It's unbelievable," Mr. Lea said.

Mary Helms, from the history department of the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Bicentennial Library, had helped Mr. Lea with the research.

"It's a snapshot of Chattanooga from almost 100 years ago, and we're really excited to see it," she said.

Ms. Helms said the artifacts will be brushed lightly, cleaned and then perhaps encapsulated for preservation.

"Hopefully when City Hall opens, we'll have a beautiful display case for everybody to view them," Mr. Lea said.

He said he had discussed making another time capsule for future generations, perhaps one filled with historic books and a letter from the mayor.

Staff writer [Herman Wang contributed to this story.](mailto:Herman.Wang@timesfreepress.com)

E-mail [Kelly Proctor at kproctor@timesfreepress.com](mailto:Kelly.Proctor@timesfreepress.com)