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Fire Dept. got old City Hall

(Editor's note. This is the 12th in a series of "then and now" articles on places of interest in Kansas City, Kan., compiled by area historian Margaret Landis in observance of the 100th birthday of KCK in 1986. Much of the information has appeared in The Kansan.)

(Transcriptions are presented without changes except to improve readability.)

The first city hall for the newly consolidated city of Kansas City, Kan., was located on the site of the present KCK Fire Headquarters building.

It was built in 1884 by the City of Wyandotte as The New Market House on the southeast corner of 6th and Armstrong. It served as the KCK city hall from 1886 to 1911. When a new city hall was built, it then became the KCK Fire Headquarters. Fire Headquarters was in this building from 1911 to 1929. The building was razed in 1929 and a new fire headquarters was built. The new building was occupied on June 25, 1930.

Gov. Martin, in issuing a proclamation for the consolidation of Wyandotte, Kansas City and Armourdale into a city of the first class, ordered an election to be held on April 6, 1886 for city officials. At this election Thomas F. Hannon was elected mayor and C.T. Bohls, W.T. Brown, William Clow, E. Daniels, T. Fleming, Charles Hains, Con Butler and J.C. Martin were elected councilmen from the city at large.

The consolidation did not meet with popular favor. Old Kansas City was peeved. Armourdale was peeved. Wyandotte, the county seat, was peeved because the governor had listened to the bankers' and bond speculators' plea that the bonds would sell better under the name Kansas City than that of Wyandotte and so had robbed her of the name the consolidated city should have carried.

In his book, "Historic Spots in Wyandotte County," Grant Harrington gave this account of the selection of a city hall for the newly consolidated city of Kansas City, Kan., in 1886:



The building in top photo, which was located on the southeast corner of 6th and Armstrong, served as Kansas City, Kan., City Hall from 1886 to 1911. It then became the KCK fire headquarters, from 1911 to 1929. The building was razed in 1929 and the present fire headquarters in bottom photo was built in the same year.

"The newly elected council of the consolidated city (of Kansas City, Kan.) met in the council chambers of the city of Wyandotte, organized and ordered the clerks of the three cities (Wyandotte, old Kansas City, Kan., and Armourdale) to appear with their books.

"At the next meeting the existing local jealousies found expression. The minutes recite that Mr. Fleming moved that when we adjourn, we adjourn to meet at the corner of 5th and James Street, old Kansas City, Kan., but the mayor refused to entertain the motion. Two weeks later Mr. Hains moved that when we adjourn, we adjourn to meet in the new building. Mr. Butler moved to amend to adjourn to 5th and James Street. The amendment was lost by a vote of 5 to 5. The original motion then received a vote of 5 to 5 and the mayor cast the deciding vote in favor of the motion.

"The new building to which the council adjourned was the one on the southeast corner of Armstrong and 6th Street. It had been built with bonds voted for a market house back in 1870 (the new Market House was built in 1884). It now became the seat of government for the consolidated city and did duty as such for a quarter of a century. It housed not only the city offices and the council but was a city jail and fire headquarters."