

Construction of the present City Hall began in 1852 and in 1853 the building was occupied. Formerly on the site was the wooden dwelling house built by General Reed shortly before the Revolutionary War. When the General left for service in the war the place was sold and was occupied for a time by Dr. Peter Snow who came to Fitchburg in 1782.

General Reed returned to Fitchburg in 1798, bought back the house and lived there until his death in 1807. The last occupant of the house was Dr. Thomas Blood, the first dentist to settle in Fitchburg, who lived there until 1852 when the property was taken for the site of City Hall. Dr. Benjamin Snow, son of Dr. Peter Snow, bought the house and had it moved to Cottage Square in the rear of the Central Block.

City Hall (then Town Hall) was built by Col. Ivers Phillips at a cost of \$14,630. The sum of \$535 was paid to Merriam & Holden of Westminster for settees. Ward B. Farrar, a local carpenter, had charge of the carpenter work and he was assisted by William H. Goodwin. Deacon S. A. Wheeler did the stone work with granite from Rollstone Hill. The first pressed bricks ever used in Fitchburg were put into the walls.

At first there was a meat market in the basement, but later it was taken over as the police station and used as such until the present police station on Elm Street was built about 1900. The police force in Fitchburg had been organized in September, 1869.

About 1854 the U. S. Postoffice moved from the Torrey & Wood Block and occupied a room in the new Town Hall until 1872 when it moved into the former Trinitarian Church, now the home of the Central Hardware Co. In 1859 the town bought the 1600 volume library of the Fitchburg Athenaeum (a private library) and moved into the Town Hall, thus starting the first public library. The county court held sessions in this building from 1863 to 1870 when it moved into the present County Courthouse which had just been completed on Elm Street.

In 1872 when Fitchburg became a city the Town Hall became City Hall. Over the years the auditorium in City Hall was used for public gatherings and theatrical productions. In 1894 this item appeared in the Fitchburg Sentinel: "The La Tosca comedy and spectacular company which occupied City Hall last night was one of the greatest travesties on theatrical attractions that has been seen here for a long time. Outside of expert Indian club swinging and skillful rifle maneuvers, there was little of merit. Several of the six women in the company went into the Heywood chair shop in the afternoon, 'chinned' the men and distributed their announcements with 'true maidenly modesty.'"

In 1879 City Hall was extended backward, the lines of the addition being clearly visible. The library then moved into a room in the extension and remained there until 1884 when it moved into the Wallace Library and Art Building which had just been erected on the corner of Newton Place.

The site on which the extension was built was occupied by two small dwelling houses, both owned by the city. These were sold at public auction. One house, of brick, was sold to Dr. J. W. Palmer for \$50 and the other, of wood, was sold to Alderman E. A. Goodrich for