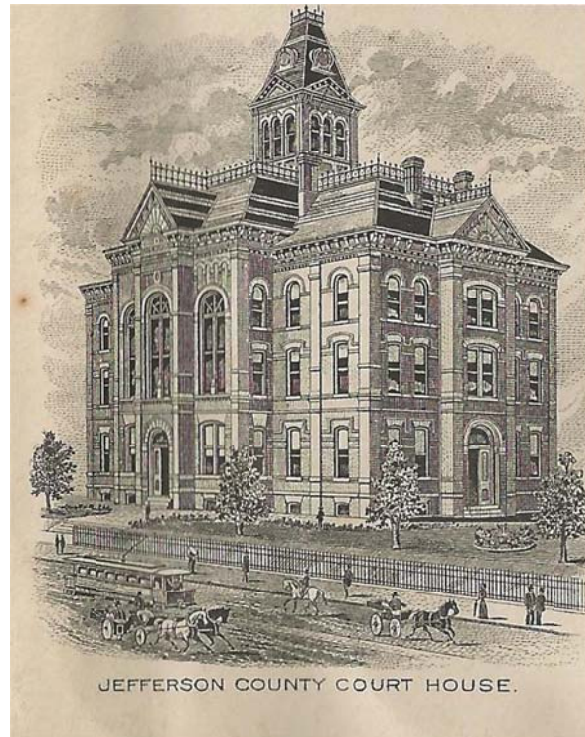


Jefferson County Courthouse 1893



Engraving of Jefferson County Courthouse
Built in 1893 from County Clerk's Stationary

The Jefferson County Commissioner's Court minutes have the following entries regarding the building of a new courthouse to replace the courthouse built in 1854:

August Term, August 12, 1891 – In the matter of building a new Courthouse in Beaumont, Jefferson County, Texas, after the same had been discussed generally, a motion was made by Mr. Johnson, Second by Mr. Sampson that the Commissioner's Court do build a new Courthouse and the same was unanimously carried.

Upon motion the following were appointed a committee to examine, plan, and correspond with parties in regard to building a new Courthouse: Thos H. Langham [Tax Assessor-Collector] and Jef Chaison [County Judge], the Commissioner's Court to be subject to the call of committee when this report is ready.

September Term, September 3, 1891 – Motion by Mr. Johnson, second by Mr. Collier, that all Courts be held in the City Hall until the New Courthouse is completed and ready for occupancy, motion carried and by the court approved.

Motion by Mr. Sampson, seconded by Mr. Johnson that the county donate the present Courthouse to the City of Beaumont for school purposes provided they, the city authorities, move the House on or before the 1st day of December, 1891, and further provided that the city give 10 days notice to the County officers of time of removal and further provided that they leave the County Clerk's office in good condition and provided further that the city furnish facilities for holding County Courts until the new Courthouse is completed.

It was ordered by the Court that E. J. Heiner plan for Courthouse be accepted subject to a revision of specifications by building committee and E. J. Heiner, architect.

Moved by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Mr. Collier, that Messrs. J. F. Keith, R. W. Sanders, and Frank Smith be appointed a building committee in the full power and authority to inspect and pass upon specifications of the plan of the Courthouse building this day selected making such changes as they deem beneficial for the best interest of the county.

November Term, November 19, 1891 – An now upon this day came on to be considered and examined by the Court the plans and specifications of E. J. Heiner, Architect, of Courthouse building for Jefferson County, and said plans and specifications were by the Court approved.

It is ordered by the Court that Bids for the building of the Jefferson County Courthouse at Beaumont, Texas, be advertised in the following papers, to wit: Houston Post, Fort Worth Gazette, Beaumont Enterprise, and Beaumont Journal, said advertisement to continue until Thursday, December 12, 1891.

It is ordered by the Court that F. J. Smith be and is hereby removed from Courthouse Committee and Mr. Thomas H. Langham appointed to fill such vacancy.

December Term – December 17, 1891- Moved by S. Landrum, second by D.W. Sampson, that a committee of three be appointed to select and try to obtain another site to build the Courthouse upon, subject to the approval of the Court: The following were appointed, J. H. Rachford, W. A. Fletcher, and T.H. Langham.

Order by the Court that the bid of J.M. Brown of Little Rock, Ark. For completion of the Jefferson County Courthouse, to be finished with 1st quality St. Louis pressed brick, trimmed with Bedford limestone, the whole building to be completed according to the plans and specifications furnished by E.J. Heiner, architect, and adopted by the Court on Sept. 3rd, 1891 for the sum of \$38,880.00 be accepted, and that the said Brown have until the 12th day of January, A.D 1892 to furnish bond in the sum of \$19,440.00 payable to the County Judge of Jefferson County and his successors in office.



Photograph of Jefferson County Courthouse built in 1893 and Jail
Photo credit: Jefferson County Clerk's archives

January Term – January 12, 1892 – On motion of Ben J. Johnson and seconded by D.W. Sampson, to build the new Courthouse on the present Courthouse site in the northwest corner thereof, which motion was submitted by the County Judge in due form to a vote of the Court which was unanimously adopted by the vote of all the members of the Commissioner Court, a full board being present and voted thereon, that said Courthouse be erected on the present Courthouse Square in the Northwest corner thereof.

It is ordered by the Court that this Court at its regular term in February, 1892, issue fifty thousand dollars, \$50,000.00, worth of bonds and levy a tax to meet the payment of same to be used for the building and furnishing the new Courthouse.

February Term, February 10, 1892 – It is ordered by the Court that the old Courthouse that is now situated on College Square in the City of Beaumont be designated as the place for holding the District Courts of Jefferson County until otherwise ordered by this Court.

November Term, December 5, 1892 – To the Hon. Commissioner's Court Jefferson County, Texas. In the matter of the building of the Jefferson County Courthouse, I beg to say that under the contract between your Hon. Body & myself, said Courthouse should have been completed by the 1st day of November 1892, but on account of the unusual bad conditions of the elements in the early part of the construction of the building and misunderstanding at various times of the plans and specifications on the part of the material men whom I had procured to furnish material together with said other necessary delays, I would most respectfully ask your Hon. Body to grant me an additional period of time in which to complete said building. I believe I can complete the House in every particular by the 1st day of May 1893. Respectfully submitted, J.M. Brown, Contractor

To the Hon. Com. Ct., Jeff. Co. Texas, Sirs: I recommend that the time for the completion of the Jeff. Co. Courthouse be extended the contractor until the 1st day of March, A.D., 1893, Eugene J. Heiner, Architect, Jefferson County Courthouse

Now comes to be considered by the Court the application of J.M. Brown Contractor of the Jefferson County Courthouse, for a grant of additional time in which to complete the Courthouse, and the same having been recommended by Mr. E.J. Heiner, the architect as in accordance with section 1 of the contract, on motion of Commissioner Johnson, Second by

Commissioner Merriman, it was ordered by the Court that the time in which to complete the Courthouse be extended to the first day of March, A.D. 1893

February Term, February 25, 1893 – It is ordered by the Commissioner's Court of Jefferson County that the bonds of said county be issued to the amount of \$45,000.00 with interest coupons thereto attached for the purpose of erecting a Courthouse....

It is further ordered that a tax of one fourth of one percent on the one hundred dollars valuation of all property in this county be and the same is hereby levied and shall be assessed and collected and shall be annually levied, assessed, and collected to pay the annual interest on said bonds....

March Term, March 8, 1893 – It is ordered by the Court that the bid of Geo. D. Barnard & Co. of St. Louis presented by J. T. Franklin, their agent, to furnish the various rooms and vaults of the Jefferson County Courthouse as per their contract now on file with the County Clerk be and the same is hereby accepted.

June Term, June 15, 1893 – Be it remembered that on this 15th day of June, came on to be considered by the Court the matter of insuring the new Courthouse of this county against fire for a term of one year and it appearing to the Court that there are three local insurance agencies her to wit: Weaver & Curry, V. Wiess, and Bibb & Co. and that the premiums agreed by them were the same. It is the order of the Court that the new Courthouse of Jefferson County be insured against loss by fire in the sum of \$40,000.00 for a period of one year and that one third thereof be insured by Weaver & Curry in the Home Insurance Company of New York, the Liverpool & London & Globe Insurance Company of Liverpool, the National Fire Insurance Company of Hartford, the Aetna Insurance Company of Hartford, the American Insurance Company of St. Louis, the Pennsylvania Fire Insurance Company of Philadelphia, and the Insurance Company of North America of Philadelphia, and that one third thereof be insured by Bibb & Co. in the Home Mutual of San Francisco, the Alamo Insurance Company of San Antonio, the Milwaukee Mechanics Insurance Company of Milwaukee, the Orient Insurance Co. Of Hartford, the British America Insurance Company of Toronto, the Saint Paul Insurance Company of Saint Paul, the New York Bowery Fire Insurance Co. of New York, for one year each, the other one third by V. Wiess in the Royal Insurance Company of Liverpool, the Palatin

Insurance Co. of Manchester, the Phoenix Insurance Co. of Brooklyn, The Western Assurance Co. of Toronto, The Hartford Fire Insurance Co. of Hartford, the Lancashire Insurance Co. of Manchester, the Southern Insurance Co. of New Orleans, for one year and the County Clerk is instructed on delivery of the policies of said companies by said agents to draw a draft on the County Treasury on the General Fund in favor of each Weaver & Curry, and D.A. Bibb & Co. for \$130.00 to meet said premiums and V. Wiess the sum of \$140.00.

It is ordered by the Court that the old fence around the Courthouse Square, save and except the fence around the Jail, be and is hereby given to John Collier conditional that he remove the same within a reasonable time or when so notified by the Commissioner's Court to remove same.

It is ordered by the Court that an underground concrete cistern be and is hereby ordered to be built at the new Courthouse and that a committee be appointed to superintend the locating and building of said cistern of such size and capacity as they may think proper to build whereupon the Court appointed P.D. Stockholm, Thos. H. Langham, Ed. P. Gray, W.H. Daily and S.W. Pipkin of said committee.

August 15, 1893 – Came on the heard the proposition of R. L. Feazell to put lightning rods on the Courthouse, and the proposition having been thoroughly discussed by the Court and its members, was submitted by the County Judge for a vote, which said vote was For Lightning Rods, two votes, Hon. Ben Johnson and M. E. Merriman, and Against lightning rods, two votes, Hon. John Collier and S. Landrum, and it being a tie vote the County Judge, E.P. Gray, gave the casting vote in favor of putting lightning rods on the Courthouse, and it so ordered by the Court that the Courthouse be rodded as per proposition submitted by said R.J. Feazell, and that his proposition & contract be accepted, which was accordingly done and signed in Court.

September Term, September 8, 1893 – It is ordered by the Court that the new Courthouse be received and that the County Judge be authorized to make settlement in full with J. M. Brown, the contractor for amounts as follows, to wit: \$38,880.00 being amount of his original contract and for the following extras, to wit: Cornerstone, \$488.00, Gables \$25.00, Stone Steps \$438.00, aggregating the amount of \$39,831.00. It is understood that such settlement not to be made by County Judge until paid contractor has completed all the work as required in bill of exceptions No. 7, 9, 15, 16, 17 & 19, and in ascertaining whether said requirements have been completed

with, the said County Judge is authorized to call to his assistance Thom H. Langham, one of the building committee, and further that said settlement is not to be made until the said contractor has furnished sufficient evidence that all bills and claims outstanding against said Courthouse have been paid....



Photograph of County Clerk's office situated in 1893 Courthouse, County Clerk, J.R. Jefferson, and others circa 1918

Photo credit: Jefferson County Clerk's archives