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Salt Lake City and County Building  
451 Washington Square  
Salt Lake City  
Salt Lake County  
Utah

HABS No. UT-104

P H O T O G R A P H S

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

## SALT LAKE CITY AND COUNTY BUILDING

Name: Salt Lake City and County Building (National Register Site)

Location: 451 Washington Square, Salt Lake City, Utah  
Today the building's main entry faces east toward Second East Street. The building's original main entrance faces west toward State Street.

Present Owner: Salt Lake City and Salt Lake County

Present Occupant: Salt Lake City and Salt Lake County

Present Use: Government Offices

Significance:

The Salt Lake City & County Building has served as the municipal headquarters of Utah's two most populous local government entities since its completion in 1894. Jointly owned and constructed by Salt Lake City and Salt Lake County, the building's northern half houses the City's offices and the southern half the County's administrative operations. It was also used as Utah's first State Capitol Building until the present one was completed in 1915.

This prominent landmark is an excellent example of nineteenth century Romanesque revival architecture and was designed by the firm of Monheim, Bird and Proudfoot. The building is situated in the center of one of Salt Lake City's most historic ten-acre blocks known as Washington (previously Emigration or 8th Ward) Square. Its massive gray sandstone structure rises out of the tree-filled landscaped grounds to dominate Salt Lake City's southern downtown skyline - a distinction befitting such a civic monument.

Historical Information:

A. Physical History

1. Elaborate cornerstone laying ceremonies were conducted on July 25, 1892 by the Masonic Order. The Salt Lake Tribune and the Deseret Evening News reported the acclamations of Mayor Robert N. Baskin, Judge G. W. Bartch, LDS Church President Loofborow, and Governor Thomas. According to one account, the cornerstone was laid in the rear of the building as a protest against the Federal Edmond-Tucker Law (1887) outlawing any person belonging to a church that taught or practiced polygamy.

The building was completed and dedicated on December 28, 1894, approximately three years after initial groundbreaking in 1891. The dedication ceremonies were conducted by LDS Church President Wilford Woodruff, Salt Lake City's Mayor Baskin, Territorial Governor Galeb B. West, and other government dignitaries. A highlight was the unveiling of "Columbia", the statue mounted on top of the central clock tower.

2. Architect: The architectural firm of Monheim, Bird and Proudfoot of Salt Lake City was chosen to design the building after their plans were selected in a competition conducted by the Joint City and County Building Committee. Their recommendation was accepted by government authorities and an agreement entered into in April, 1891.

Henry Monheim, the only Salt Lake City native in the firm, had practiced independently before his partnership with Bird and Proudfoot in 1891. Although acclaimed to have built "more structures in the City than any other architect", little is known of his earlier works. George W. Bird & Willis T. Proudfoot had been associated under the firm of Proudfoot & Bird in Wichita, Kansas during the 1880's. All three architects had a preference for the Romanesque revival style of architecture (the latter partnership designed the Wichita City Hall, similar in design to the Salt Lake City and County Building). Their partnership did not last long, due to the death of Henry Monheim in June of 1893 at the age of 69. The City and County Building was well underway by then and the two remaining architects resided in the City until 1896 when Bird left for Philadelphia and Proudfoot left for Kansas City.<sup>1</sup>

3. Builder, suppliers: Construction of the City and County Building was often interrupted for numerous reasons; the structure was ultimately completed fourteen months beyond the stipulated date. Some of the difficulties were caused by poor soil conditions, others by disputes between the contractor, Mr. John H. Bowman, on the one side, and the architects, the Joint Committee, and some of the subcontractors on the other side. After the first six months of construction, the contractor was accused of deception and bad faith, and this confrontation remained unresolved until Mr. Bowman's dismissal in 1893.<sup>2</sup>

The gray Utah kyune sandstone, long thought to have been quarried in Summit County, has been determined to have originated from the Castle-Gate Kyune Junction area in Carbon County.

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<sup>1</sup> From Beall and Goss, 1972.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

4. Original Plans and Construction:
5. Alterations and Additions:

The City and County Building has been standing for over three quarters of a century. During this time numerous changes have occurred on both the exterior and the interior due to a combination of man-made and/or natural forces. The most affected area from these impacts has perhaps been the exterior, as noted by Kaliser in his Engineering Geology of the City and County Building (Salt Lake City, 1971). One of the most serious problems is the weathering of the gray Kyune sandstone, which almost exclusively covers the building's exterior walls. Large quantities of this stone were frequently rejected by H. Willard, the building's construction superintendent, as inferior. What is taking place is a constant sloughing off of portions of the stone surface. This weathering was noted within thirty years after the building's completion. This had led to some remedial action, mostly in the form of removal of ornamental stone and ironwork. The second serious problem which resulted in similar removal actions was the effect of early earthquakes. Between weathering and earthquakes, removal of exterior features such as capstones, statues, gargoyles and balustrades has occurred. Some repair work has taken place every twenty to thirty years.<sup>3</sup>

The five original sheet metal statues on top of the building were fabricated in Salt Lake City but were removed as they became hazards after the 1934 earthquake. These works included Columbia atop the tower, Liberty on the north facade, Justice on the south facade, and Commerce on both the east and west facades. One original statue found in a local museum has been duplicated and returned to its original place above the east facade. The four other statues have not been located and are believed to have been destroyed as they were removed from their perched positions.

Although extensive remodeling and "modernization" has occurred, the interior of the City and County Building still retains much of its original character. Alterations over the years have included the addition of a storage mezzanine on the fourth floor (county side), construction of false ceilings, the creation of additional office space in the north and south ends of the building, and the removal of the original chandeliers. The

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<sup>3</sup> From Beall and Goss, 1972.

majority of lighting involves fluorescent fixtures although several replicas of the original chandeliers have been installed. Many of the modifications to date in the public spaces are relatively reversible.

Perhaps the most major interior alteration of the original design is the removal of the light well on the fifth (top) floor and the solid infilling or covering of the glass in the dome above the original well (indicated on the original architect's drawings). An early account describes these original features: ". . . the central dome, beneath the tower, . . . is of polished oak set with stained glass of beautiful design . . . About the main stair landing, on the third [today referred to as the fourth] floor, rises a dome in white Moorish design to a height of, forty feet. On the fourth floor [today the fifth] a light but strong and handsomely designed steel railing shuts off the corridor into a balcony promonade and the walls and arches are finished in artistic designs, in keeping with that of the dome itself."<sup>4</sup>

## B. Historical Context<sup>5</sup>

### EARLY DISCUSSIONS AND THE FIRST SITE OF THE PROPOSED JOINT CITY AND COUNTY BUILDING

The joint authorities of the City and County, impressed in 1889 with the potential for future growth in the Salt Lake Valley, considered the replacement of their inadequate facilities with a new structure large enough to handle the expected increase in public transactions. There was a request in September of 1889 by the County Court of Salt Lake County before the City Council, asking the Council to take immediate action regarding the acquisition of property relative to the erection of a joint City and County Building. The County was very anxious to have such a facility erected, and the motion was referred to the Committee on Improvements. The following month, the committee on Improvements discussed an agreement to purchase property on First South and First East Streets, to be used as the site of the proposed building. This site was recorded in the Council Record as being unsatisfactory to the County since it was their wish to have a site

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<sup>4</sup> Argus, 1894.

<sup>5</sup> From Beall and Goss, 1972.

more central to the business district of the City, and preferably one on State Street, the main artery that would ultimately connect to the future State Capitol building. Several sites were considered and despite the County's protest against the First South and First East site it was ultimately acquired.

#### THE FIRST ARCHITECTURAL COMPETITION AND EARLY CONSTRUCTION

Later that same month the City Recorder was advised to advertise a competition for building plans and offer a cash prize of \$250 for the best plan as determined by a Joint City and County Building Committee and a \$100 prize for the second best set of plans. Apparently, response to the advertisement was poor and the City Recorder was then advised to change the advertisement, extending the deadline to December 15, 1889, and stipulating in the new advertisement that the outside of the building was to be executed in Utah stone. The Council Record of December 17, 1889 reported that the chairman of the special committee on the City and County Building received five sets of plans in answer to the new advertisement. No decision was reached at that time since the County portion of the committee failed to appear at the meeting to examine the plans. The winners of the competition were not disclosed by the Committee on Improvements until January 2, 1890. The winner of the first prize was a Mr. C. E. Apponyi, whose plans were judged as "best adapted to our wants" and the second prize was awarded to a Mr. William Ward. The Committee recommended to the Council that the excavation be started immediately for the basement of the building.

The following day the Salt Lake Herald reported the Committee's decision that Mr. Apponyi was the successful competitor. A Hungarian, Apponyi had only been in Salt Lake City for a short while, and was formerly a resident of San Francisco. The newspaper account described his design as a five story building in the Romanesque style. On February 25, 1890, at a meeting of the Council, newly elected Mayor George M. Scott reaffirmed the Committee's selection of Apponyi, and recommended that he be engaged to prepare plans and specifications necessary to proceed with construction. Bids for construction were referred to the Committee on Improvements in May of 1890. At the end of May, the Committee reported to the Council that no formal contract with Apponyi had been executed, and recommended that one be

immediately prepared for work he already completed. The work completed at that time included the foundation excavation and partial construction of the concrete foundation. Although Apponyi's appointment was reaffirmed under the new administration, they later feared that building costs would exceed the estimated figure of \$279,000. Sometime between May and November, Apponyi's plans had been scrutinized and it was discovered that they were unsatisfactory "in many important particulars". The Committee on the City and County Building recommended to the Council that Mr. Apponyi be discharged from further work, and that a settlement be made for the work he completed to date.

#### REVISION OF THE BUILDING PLANS

Within a week of the recommended dismissal of Apponyi, the Committee on Improvements instructed the County Authorities to engage an architect to complete, revise, and perfect a plan and specifications (or adopt a new plan) for the City and County Building and to superintend the construction of the building. The resolution was adopted and acted upon by the next meeting in which the Committee recommended that architect Richard Kletting of Salt Lake City be engaged to do work as set forth in their earlier resolution. Introduced at the same meeting was a letter from Mr. Kletting describing certain conditions and his fee schedule. In closing his letter he listed his references and noted an impressive list of buildings designed and supervised by him. No definite action was taken on the Committee's report. The matter was instead referred back to the Committee on December 2, 1890 with the request to confer with the County on the propriety of preparing entirely new plans, with competition left open to all local architects. Nearly a month later, on January 6, 1891, the Committee, in consultation with the County, recommended that the City Council with the County Court: First proceed with the erection of the City and County Building on the plans furnished by Apponyi, and second, appoint Mr. Kletting to correct the plans and supervise construction. Action on this motion was deferred and at this same meeting a resolution by various architects of Salt Lake City was read, in which they complained that an earlier resolution by them to the City Council was not acted upon. One of their resolutions stated that it was unfair that one architect was considered to receive work, "regardless of the rights of resident architects and taxpayers of the City and County". They also complained of the lack of

a competition for such a building. Their entire list of resolutions was signed "architects and three hundred citizens." Despite these resolutions and complaints, at the end of January the Committee submitted for approval an agreement between the City and County of Salt Lake and Richard Kletting to "revise, improve and perfect the plans of C. E. Apponyi for the construction of the Joint City and County building on First South and First East Streets". By the end of the following month, Kletting had still not entered into a contract with the City and County and he had serious reservations as to certain conditions enumerated in the proposed contract. The matter was apparently dropped due to dissatisfaction on the part of both parties.

#### A NEW SITE AND A NEW COMPETITION

At this same time some thought was being given to changing the site and enhancing such a public building by surrounding the site with a public park. It was felt by some that Apponyi's building, which was designed to cover the entire site might give the appearance of a commercial block instead of a handsome public structure. This feeling was coupled with the fact that Salt Lake City was supposedly growing at a tremendous rate and perhaps Apponyi's design would prove to be inadequate in the near future. In less than a week, the City Council adopted the motion of the Joint City and County Committee, that they consider changing the site to that of the Eighth Ward Square. In March of 1891, the City Attorney reported no problem in the appropriation of the Eighth Ward Square, and secondly the problem of title and construction on the earlier site be settled. However, shortly after the adoption of these resolutions, on March 17, 1891, a petition of protest by prominent businessmen of the City was logged against the City Council for changing the building site and further delaying construction. Despite the threat of legal action, the resolution was lost. In great haste, during the same meeting of the City Council, a report of the Joint Committee recommended that plans for the building be opened to local competition. The recommendation was carried in the form of a resolution at the Council's next meeting.

In almost one month since the adoption of the idea for a competition, the Joint Committee recommended that the plans of Messrs. Monheim, Bird and Proudfoot of Salt Lake City, Utah territory be accepted on the condition

that they submit a full set of specifications and plans. This recommendation was accepted at a later meeting on April 27, 1891.

Architectural Information:<sup>6</sup>

A. Description of Exterior

The walls of this Romanesque Revival style structure are made of rough-hewn kyune sandstone and faced with brick on the inside. They have a width of over five feet, which slowly tapers off with height. Four floors in height, it is 267 feet long and 128 feet wide, and a total of 239 feet from the ground to the top of the clock tower.

Surrounded by newly planted trees and gardens, the building's massive symmetrical form contrasted sharply with the 1890's Salt Lake City skyline. It remained one of the City's tallest buildings well into this century.

Approaching from the west, one is struck by the imposing center section of the facade, which is dominated by the three arches of the entrance portal and the arcade of the balcony, while a tower on each side adds strength to the total effect. The rhythm of the windows never gets monotonous. With the arches they create an openness which is inviting and relieves the heavy fortress quality of the stone, while the crisp acanthus leaf ornament lends the building an intriguing elegance. The majestic belltower, rising like a sentinel, dominates the entire complex.

There are four entrances, the west side originally being the main one. In design it corresponds to the east entrance, as the south and north approaches correspond to each other in a simpler design. The east side is now used as the main entrance.

The building's most noteworthy exterior features include elaborately sculptured ornament on all facades and the five pressed metal statues, which originally set one atop each gable, (most were subsequently removed) high above the buildings four entrances and one atop the tower. The sculpture, some of which is most intricate near the entrances, is believed to have been executed by a Mr. Linde, and his fine relief work has been interpreted by some to be highly symbolic of the early heritage of the

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<sup>6</sup> Portions of this section are taken from the Beall/Goss Report.

pioneers and the Utah Territory (see Vlam, Utah Architect, for a detailed description). The main entrance, which faces west onto State Street, is the most elaborately decorated facade. Its most distinctive feature, as compared to the East facade, is a series of three medallions near the entry, containing the busts of Salt Lake City Mayor Robert N. Baskin, mormon pioneer leader Jedediah M. Grant and Federal Judge Jacob B. Blair, presiding head of the county at the time of the building's construction. The intricate facade details can be viewed in the original architect's drawings of the building. The roofing material is slate. The building is similar in design to Wichita's City Hall (Kansas) designed by Proudfoot and Bird.

#### B. Description of Interior

The interior of the building contains over one hundred rooms, including the basement [first floor] level. The floor plans which can be viewed in the architects' original drawings, indicate a cross axis which is well established on the main floor by the building's four entrances. The space created at the point of the crossing of the broad axial corridors functions as a lobby space, and aids in separating the two basic functions of City and County operations. The City offices are located in the northern portion and the County offices in the southern portion.

The interior walls of the hallways on the two central [second and third] floors are wainscoted with Utah onyx mined at Pelican Point on Utah Lake. The other three floors have oak wainscoating which matches the decorative oak mouldings and doors found throughout the building. The floors are covered with attractive, multi-colored tiles. The seventeen foot high vaulted ceilings are decorated with wide plaster mouldings and give the interior a very spacious and ceremonial feeling. The numerous offices and chambers were well decorated with attractive chandeliers and other furnishings appropriate to the period. The majority of material from which the building was constructed came from suppliers within the State of Utah, except for some equipment such as the fireproof vaults and the electric elevator. The structure included the latest and best quality materials available and even had its own separate power plant. The plant supplied both steam heat and electric power by way of an underground conduit to the main structure.

Upon entering the building from the east side, one can admire the beautifully ornamented doorplate, the only one left since the door on the west side was replaced by a modern one. The thirteen steps leading to the second floor are purportedly commemorative of the Original Thirteen Colonies.

There are a number of safes in the building, installed by the Mosler Bahmann Company of Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1894-95, the doors of which are decorated with 11 by 13 inch landscapes. Each door has a different one done in the romantic tradition of the mid-19th century. The painter is unknown. Also of interest is a life size portrait of Brigham Young, which hangs in the Salt Lake City Council Chamber. It was painted in 1866 by E. W. Perry, who included in the background the completed Tabernacle and Temple, which were not completed respectively until 1867 and 1894. The painting has a magnificently carved mahogany frame which took Mr. Cummings ten years to complete. Almost a foot wide, it is decorated in high relief with the tools and crops of agriculture and crowned with the Beehive.

The original Otis elevator, installed in 1894, was one of the first in the state of Utah. It was replaced in 1970.

One-hundred fifty-three steps lead up to the bell chamber in the tower from the fifth floor (fourth above ground level.) Four gold alloy bells, cast in Cincinnati, Ohio, were installed in 1894. They are stationary and have no tongue, but are acted upon by a 750 pound striker. The largest of the bells weighs 2500 pounds, while the other three each weigh 1500 pounds. They could be heard for miles and miles around, chiming the hour and every quarter hour thereafter. But the city was forced to disconnect them after the earthquake of 1934. Prior to this, the larger weight of 1750 pounds that worked the striker had crashed twice through the tower, fortunately hurting nobody.

Most of the tiled fireplaces and marble mantelpieces installed throughout the building's offices still exist. Very few of the original wash stands and mirrors still remain.

#### C. Site

451 Washington Square, the official address of the City and County Building, is one of the most historic spots in Utah. The site was established as one of four public squares several weeks after the Willard Richards Company had entered the Salt Lake Valley on July 23, 1847, and had

made their camp on that very spot. There Orson Pratt dedicated the land and William Carter then proceeded to plow the soil, which was possible only after it was softened with City Creek water. Thus the first irrigation in Utah by white men was begun on Washington Square.

Later when the City had achieved a more permanent character, the grassy square was used for semi-annual cattle drives, as a haymarket, for the circus and carnivals, for medicine shows, as a skating rink, for jousting tournaments and for baseball games. In 1887 Washington Square was given to Salt Lake City by the LDS Church to be maintained as a public park. The block was commonly known as Eighth Ward Square and Emigration Square. It was officially named by the Salt Lake City Council in honor of George Washington in 1865.<sup>7</sup> On February 7, 1957, acting on City Historian Newell Knight's proposal, Mayor J. Bracken Lee officially reconfirmed the square's name after George Washington.

From the belltower one has a magnificent view over the city and the valley. It also provides an interesting view over the roof with its many tall chimneys, hidden from sight at ground level. These grounds, originally landscaped by Martin Christofferson, from Norway, are planted with nearly 300 trees of 45 varieties, only two of which are native. Brigham Young had urged the Mormon immigrants to bring shoots of trees from their native countries to plant in the valley. Therefore Washington Square now boasts many varieties such as the Austrian Pine, the Norway Maple, the Golden Rain Tree, the Japanese Cherry and Plum, the English Hawthorne and Eastern Catalpa, while 90 Elm trees form a border around the square.

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<sup>7</sup> Deseret News, Bob Koenig, June 2, 1965.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Architectural Drawings: Drawn in 1891, located in the Salt Lake City Engineer's Office. Redrawn by Mr. Burtch Beall, FAIA, in 1972 to assist in the building's restoration.
- B. Early Views: Many early photographs exist in the Utah State Historical Society's photography library in Salt Lake City.
- C. Bibliography

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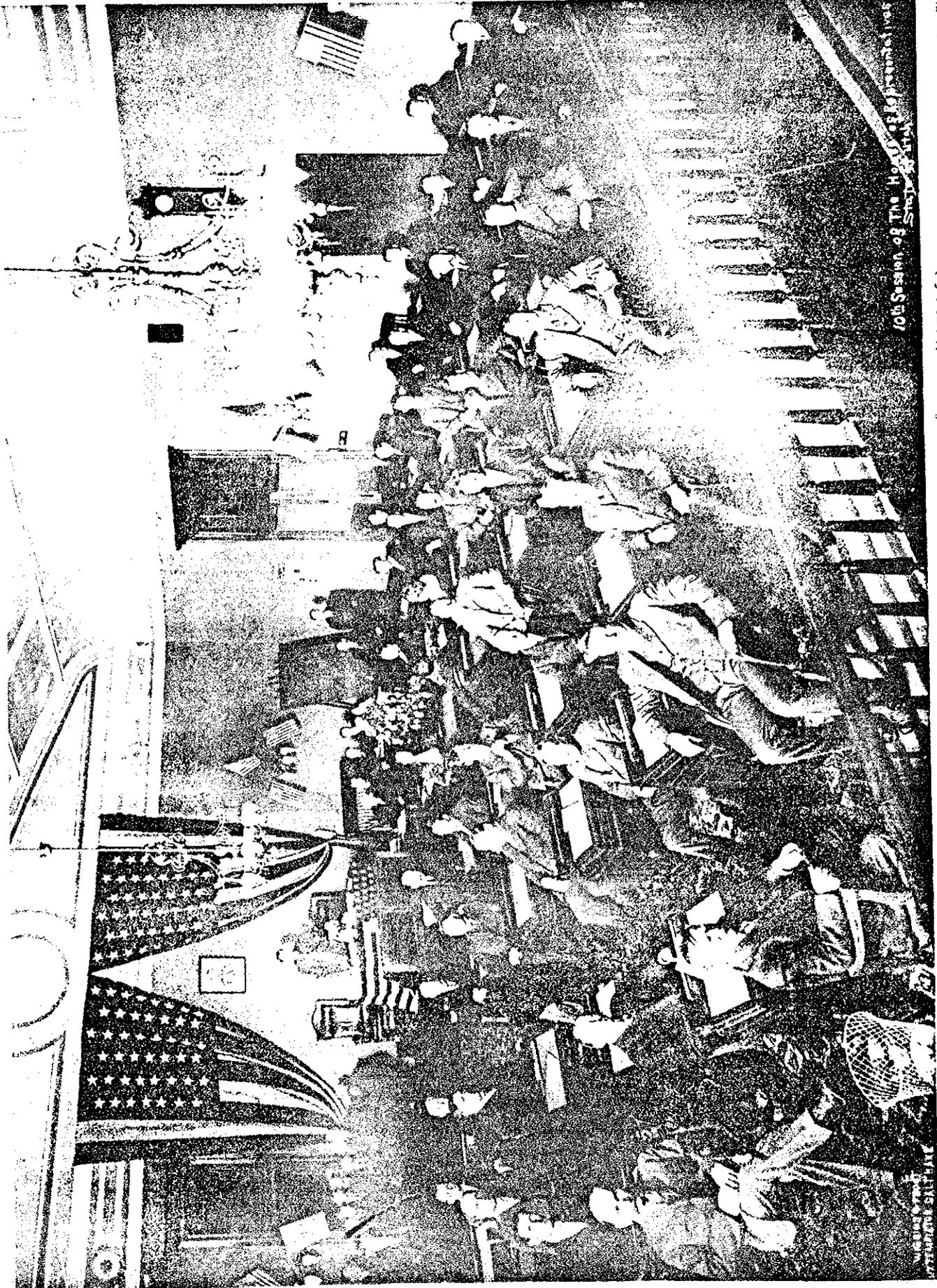
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10th Session of The House of Representatives  
State Capitol

UTAH STATE HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY PHOTOGRAPH  
Photo # 353, p. 2

HABS  
No. UT-  
(P 14)