

Old State Capitol 1853-1854
Benicia
Solano County, California

HABS Cal-1188
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PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Western Office, Division of Design and Construction
1000 Geary Street
San Francisco, California

Addendum

Benicia State Capitol (California State Capitol)
First and West G Streets
Benicia
Solano County
California

HABS No. CA-1188

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PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Architectural and Engineering Record
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

BENICIA STATE CAPITOL
(California State Capitol)

HABS No. CA-1188

Location: Northwest corner of intersection of First and West G Streets, Benicia, Solano County, California.

USGS Benicia Quadrangle, Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: 10.573900.4211500.

Present Owner: State of California Parks and Recreation Department, P.O. Box 2390, Sacramento, California 95811.

Present Occupant: State of California Parks and Recreation Department.

Present Use: Museum.

Significance: This Greek Revival-style brick and sandstone structure served as the California State Capitol between February, 1853, and February, 1854, when the capital was moved back to Sacramento. Thereafter, the structure remained the Solano County courthouse until 1858 and served at various times as the city hall, public library, fire department, and grammar school, in addition to housing many informal civic functions. It was thoroughly restored by the state in 1956-57 and has been maintained since then as a museum.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1852-53. The building was constructed extremely quickly. According to City Council Minutes, the decision by the Benicia City Council to construct the building was made on August 23, 1852. Bids were opened on September 27, 1852. Already by early January, 1853, the building was finished and accepted by the city, barely four months after the contractor's bid was accepted.
2. Architect: Apparently S. A. Rider and J. Franklin Houghton, contractor of San Francisco, prepared the plans. The committee for the construction of the building, originally intended as a City Hall, was charged to procure a "competent architect." (Minutes, August 30, 1852). According to the minutes of the City

Council, when the plans were presented on September 13, 1852, they were explained by a Mr. Rider and a week later the plans were again presented by Rider and a Mr. Houghton. The city subsequently advertised for bids based on these plans. The low bid was that of Rider and Houghton, who then did the actual construction. From this, it appears that initially, Rider and Houghton were contracted specifically to do the plans and it seems highly likely that a member of their office designed the building.

3. Original and subsequent owners: The building is located on lot 12 of block 20 of the original plat of Benicia. The land and the building were deeded by the City of Benicia to the State of California on July 24, 1853, on the condition it would be used for the state capitol. (Letter from John Bigler, governor, to the Senate and Assembly of the State of California, July 25, 1853. California State Archives, Sacramento. Copy on display at the State Capitol, Benicia.)
4. Original plans and construction: The committee appointed to supervise the building of the city hall prepared a set of specifications for the building, which are included in Supplemental Material, below. It was to be a two-story structure 45 by 80 feet, built of brick with stone foundation and trim. Each floor was to be composed of one large room and four small rooms.

Several changes were subsequently made in these specifications. In some cases these changes were debated and made by the City Council before construction began, as in the reduction of the number of rooms on the second floor from four to two (Minutes, Nov. 15, 1852). Other changes were made apparently during construction with the consent of the building committee. This was necessary since the specifications were based on an abstract division of the building space into rooms with no provision for elements such as entrance lobbies or stairways. The ceiling height of the first floor was reduced and the partitions were constructed of wood, not brick; otherwise most of the specifications were followed. The total cost of the building, according to the bid submitted by the contractor, was \$24,800 (Minutes, Sept. 27, 1852). According to Hitchcock and Seale (p. 101), the building's design was inspired by a painting of the Virginia Capitol. Other sources seem considerably more likely.

According to a long-standing local tradition, a part of the wood for the construction of the building was taken from old ships abandoned at the harbor. This was at least partly confirmed during the restoration when it was found that the Senate chamber columns, of New England cedar, were originally ships' masts, according to Orvel Johnson, the supervisor of the restoration.

5. Alterations and Additions: From the time of its completion until the 1950s, the Capitol underwent a series of modifications to adapt it to a variety of civic functions. After its use as the county courthouse, it apparently next became a school with an exterior stairway added to the west side. The most important addition was a brick structure in the rear of the Capitol to serve as a jail. This disposition is clearly visible in the 1885 aerial lithograph of Benicia and the 1886 Sanborn map. In 1886, for example, the notation on the map indicates that the ground level was used as the city jail, the second for dressing rooms and the third for a stage and scenery. Photographs of the building before restoration make it clear that the stage area opened into the upper floor of the Capitol through a large proscenium arch.

Another building constructed on the property but not touching the Capitol was a frame fire company building also visible on the 1885 bird's-eye view, the Sanborn maps, and in early photographs of the Capitol. This structure later housed the police station. The Capitol itself was used for many years as the city hall, with offices on the first floor and the public hall above.

By the 1950s the building was in very poor condition. The brick, like much early local brick, had not been properly fired and was very soft. It had crumbled and the sandstone foundations had spalled badly. Already in the 1885 bird's-eye view a number of tie rod anchor pieces are visible. By the time restoration was considered, it was questionable whether the structure could be saved. State engineer Frank Johnson reported, "There may be buildings in use for human occupancy in as poor structural shape as this building but in my experience I have seen no worse. The building has been so weakened by neglect that very little factor of safety remains." The restoration costing some \$230,000 was done by the state between 1955 and 1957 and involved drastic measures.

The on-site supervisor of the restoration was Orvel Johnson, a self-trained engineer and builder. Assisted by Frank Hose, a structural engineer, Johnson made most of the decisions in the restoration. These two men were nominally under the supervision of two state architects, Alfred Eichler and R. Wastell. The techniques used in the restoration were largely developed by Johnson and Hose in earlier work done at Columbia, California, starting with the restoration of the Wells Fargo building there in the early 1950s.

To solidify the structure an entirely new structural skeleton was built into the old shell. After the tie rods were removed, the exterior walls were stabilized by wooden shoring and an area at

the foundations was chiseled out to allow the pouring of concrete for a reinforced concrete bond beam. Vertical channels 16" x 24" were cut into the brick on either side of the windows and reinforced concrete pilasters poured; these in turn supported a bond beam at the top of the wall.

The two Doric columns in front of the building were found to have been constructed of special chimney flue brick, creating a hollow interior space. The columns were opened at the top and at the rear of the shafts and reinforcing bars inserted, then concrete was poured into the cavity. The wood lintel above the columns was apparently retained but a similar 14" x 14" beam behind the front lintel was removed and replaced by a reinforced concrete beam. After the new skeletal structure was completed, the roof structure was examined. On the second floor the original flat plaster ceiling had been replaced by a higher ceiling of arched profile exposing the trusses, which were boxed. The bottom chords of the trusses had deflected significantly, sometimes as much as 5 or 6". These members were straightened and given a slight camber by the use of large jacks. The raising was done slowly over a period of three weeks to avoid lifting the trusses off the walls, since no tie-in had been provided in the original construction. A 6" x 6" ridge piece was then added at the top of the rafters and the truss members were held firmly in place by the addition of large metal gusset plates at the intersection of the central post and the rafters. The trusses were secured to the walls by metal shoes. A flat plaster ceiling was then added. The joists on both floors were retained and strengthened by the addition of plywood sheets laid over them. New random-width Ponderosa pine boarding was laid on this to reproduce the original floors.

The exterior of the building was restored by removing the later additions including the jail, the police department building, the door and entry porch on the east side and the second-story door and stairway on the west. The building was sandblasted and many of the bricks and much of the stone trim replaced. The foundations were in particularly bad shape and gunnite was liberally applied. This was painted to reproduce the mortar lines. New window frames and sashes were added and the trim painted. Window glass, manufactured by the House Glass Company of Point Marion, Pa., in the "Dutch Glass" pattern, was installed. A round window was inserted into both gable ends on the basis of a very small detail in an early photograph showing the building from south First Street. This window survived only a short period of time, for in the photograph of the building when it was used as a school in the 1870s it was already gone. The front stairways were rebuilt according to a new design,

apparently meant to resemble the staircase visible in the 1885 bird's-eye view. A new metal roof was installed, based on the evidence of a number of flat terne plates found on the jail roof, where they had apparently fallen off the original roof of the State Capitol. A small structure housing a toilet was built at the rear of the Capitol grounds to reproduce a privy structure built in 1853.

For much of the interior disposition there was less documentary evidence, and the restoration was therefore less exact. The original staircase stringers, for example, had left traces on the walls of the building, but these were not exactly followed in the restoration. The original stairways apparently had their landings at the windows. The current stairways cut across the windows and have their landings at the corner of the outside wall and the transverse partition at the end rear of the entrance area. The details of the balusters was apparently taken from a study of other old stairways in the area, including the house across the street at 150 West G Street, reputedly built in the 1850s. None of the original furniture survived. The present furnishings, including the desks and railings, are either period pieces or reproductions of period pieces.

B. Historical Context:

This building was originally constructed as the City Hall, but even before the time of the contract for its construction the City Council had passed a resolution to invite the state legislature to make Benicia the capital of California. On February 16, 1852, the council voted to offer the state two city blocks, each of which was 250' x 600', for state purposes. The offer was frequently renewed. On August 9, 1852, the mayor called for the erection of the "City Hall," but the speed at which the measure was adopted, the specifications set, and the building constructed, together with the fact that it immediately followed Benicia's bid to have the capital move to Benicia, make it extremely likely that the structure was intended from the first as a state capitol.

The state legislature had first met in 1849 at San Jose. In 1851 it was moved to Vallejo where General Vallejo had offered to lay out a new city. The town of Vallejo was found to be too small to accommodate the legislatures, and they moved to Sacramento. The flood of 1852 forced them to reconvene at Vallejo. Resolutions to change the capital were probably the major single item of business in the legislature during these years and the name of Benicia came up frequently in 1852. In February 1853 Benicia was named the state capital, with the state receiving the building and the single city

lot on which it rested as long as they would use it to house the legislature. When the legislature convened in Benicia in February, 1853, the members were not any more satisfied than they had been at Vallejo. The town was too small to accommodate adequately all of the legislators and there were insufficient facilities for the storage of the state archives.

The city of Benicia made several additional offers in an attempt to keep the capital in the city. On January 6, 1854, the governor reported that the city had offered certain other buildings for the state's use. Apparently another large brick building was started to house the state offices. But on January 13 came a report from a committee appointed to consider the question of removal. This report, included in Supplemental Information below, emphatically declared in favor of moving the capital to Sacramento and on February 4, 1854, a resolution to this effect was passed.

Subsequently, the building was used as the county courthouse until the county seat was removed to Fairfield. It served as a public school for many years, as the city hall, and at various times as a library, museum, and for various other civic functions.

Prepared by: Robert Bruegmann
Project Historian
Historic American Buildings Survey
Summer, 1976

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: This is a good example of the plain Greek Revival style so often used in public buildings.
2. Condition of fabric: Good.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: The two-story building measures 45'-0" across its three-bay front by 87'-10" deep.
2. Foundation: Sandstone, plastered over on the exterior to simulate the individual stones with sand-colored plaster and gray imitated mortar joints, forming a water table around the perimeter of the building. There are concrete piers under the building in the crawl space.

3. Wall: Red brick laid on common bond with a header course every eighth course. Doric pilasters capped by sandstone capitals on each corner and at each side of the front porch. The pilasters carry a slightly projecting brick architrave separated from the frieze by a two-course brick projection, the upper course of stretchers, the lower of headers. The inset walls of the front porch are pink plaster. Gable ends and the section of architrave over the front porch are random tongue-and-groove wooden siding.
4. Structural system, framing: Brick load-bearing walls and concrete pilasters with six columns on the first floor supporting the second-floor chamber. Wooden floor joists on first floor, wooden joists and beams on second floor and wood truss roof construction.
5. Porches: The recessed central bay has two large tapered brick Doric columns, in antis. The base and capital of the columns are sandstone. Shafts are plastered and fluted. There are eleven wood steps, splayed from the porch to the sidewalk. The wooden handrail is composed of two flat wooden rails and an added round handrail on the side of the top rail. The stair is enclosed with vertical tongue-and-groove wood siding, with an access door on either side to the crawl space under the porch. There is a series of bored vent holes on each side. A hole has been bored in the floor of the porch on each side flanking the Doric columns for removable flag staffs. There are two stone areaways, covered with wood slats, on the rear of the building leading into the crawl space.
6. Chimneys: There are four brick chimneys, two on each side of the building opposite each other. One is near the rear of the building and the other is about one-third back from the front. A two-course brick projection caps each. These chimneys are wall flues with no projection on the interior. Chimneys are not in working condition.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The main entrance in the center of the building has a very large six-panel wooden door, framed by paneled wooden pilasters with plinth blocks carrying an entablature with modillion cornice. On the side elevations of the recessed porch are side doors leading to the stair alcoves. The four-panel wooden doors have wooden surrounds with crossettes and plinth blocks. Each door has stone sills and wooden threshold.

- b. Windows and shutters: Windows have six-over-six-light double-hung sash, wooden surround, stone sills and stone lintels. The lintels on the first floor are flat while those on the second floor are pedimented. The interior jambs of the first floor windows are splayed. Above the main entrance is a large window with six-over-six-light, double-hung sash flanked by narrow sidelights with two-over-two-light double-hung sash. They have wooden trim with a pediment head and wooden sills. There is a round wooden window, divided into eight parts by muntins radiating from a smaller round section in the center, in the center of each gable. All double-hung sash windows are held open with brass spring pins.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: There is a gable roof with seamed metal covering.
- b. Cornice, eaves: There is a wood cornice across the gable ends of the building with wood modillions. The boxed eaves have a built-in gutter, wood modillions and a continuous vent slot in the center of the soffit. There is a brick molding at the joint of walls and soffit. A painted metal downspout is on each corner of the longitudinal elevations.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. Crawl space: There is a crawl space under the entire building with a concrete slab and concrete piers.
- b. First floor: The center entrance opens into a large foyer flanked by a stair alcove on either side. The hall leads out of the foyer on axis with the main door. There are two small committee rooms on each side. At the north end of the center hall is a large chamber across the entire width of the building on the rear. A wooden rail separates the room, reserving the south one-fourth for spectators, the rest being for the Senate. A row of three columns on each side of the room divides it into three bays width.
- c. Second floor: The second floor is similar to the first-floor plan. The two stairways lead into a foyer which opens into a central hall, on either side of which is a small committee room. At the end of the center hall is the large assembly chamber, the width of the building. The chamber is divided by a rail, about one-fourth the way for spectators.

- d. Attic: There is an attic that is inaccessible.
2. Stairways: There are two main stairways in open wells to the second floor. Each open string stairway has wooden treads and risers and runs straight for nine treads to a curved landing, turns 90° and continues up to the top in a straight run of twelve steps. The simple wooden handrail has spindle balusters. The newels have natural finish knobs on top and pendants on the bottom below the first-floor ceilings. The first step at the first floor splays out.
3. Flooring: The floors are wide wooden planks. Flooring planks change direction of run in the second-floor foyer from the stair opening to the front wall of the building.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: The walls and ceilings are all painted plaster. Walls are beige in all rooms except the foyer and halls which are also ivory. There is a crown molding at the ceiling line. An inaccessible scuttle to the attic is in the ceiling of the second-floor foyer.
5. Doorways and doors: All doors are four-panel wood with heavy wooden surrounds and a three-light window. Each door has white porcelain door knobs, surface-mounted iron lock set, brass butts and a wooden threshold.
6. Decorative features: There is a simple wooden paneled rostrum in the first and second-floor chambers. A plaster shelf is located at the curved landing in each stair. A simple wood rail with spindle balusters divides the spaces in the first- and second-floor chambers.
7. Mechanical equipment:
 - a. Heating: There is a wood stove in each of the small rooms and two in each chamber. A modern central heating system has been installed.
 - b. Lighting: The second-floor chamber has two four-light branch hanging chandeliers of brass and crystal with milk-glass globes. On each side of the room and on the rear wall are brass and milk-glass swing-arm wall lights. There is a similar fixture in each small room and on the side and rear walls of the first-floor chamber. The second-floor foyer has a four-chimney, hanging brass chandelier with milk-glass shades. The center hall on the first floor has a hanging fixture with large milk-glass shades over glass chimneys. The base of the lamp is painted porcelain. The first room on the

left of the main entrance has a hanging brass fixture that was formerly lowered by a spring, but due to electrification is now stationary. This fixture is perhaps the only original lighting fixture.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation. The Capitol faces south on the northwest corner of West "G" Street and First Street, in the business district of Benicia. There are retail businesses to the east and north with residential areas to the west and south. A landscaped lawn with iron fence is on the east side of the building with several large trees. On the west is a landscaped lawn with brick walks leading to the rest room building and the adjoining gardens of the Fischer-Hanlon House. In the garden are several bronze plaques in brick walls, a large wooden flagpole and a wooden water trough. There is an iron hitching post on "G" Street in front of the building.
2. Outbuildings: There is a modern rest room building housing toilets on the north side of the building. It has board and batten siding, a gable roof with wood shingles, an exposed overhang and eaves and concrete foundation. The interior has gypsum board walls with ceramic tile wainscot, concrete floor, exposed beams and tongue-and-groove ceiling and translucent glass in the gable ends. Doors are solid wooden panel with wooden surrounds. The building is in very good condition.

Prepared by: John P. White
Project Supervisor
Historic American Buildings Survey
June, 1976

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Architectural Drawings:

Drawings made during reconstruction of the Capitol, 1956. Direct Construction Dept., State Architect's Office, Sacramento. One set of ten sheets contains the major architectural drawings and is labeled "State of California, Department of Public Works, Division of Architecture, Restoration of the Benicia State Capitol, designed A. Eichler, R. Wastell, Nov. 27, 1956, Drawn W. Rank, W. O. Nov. 27, 1956." These sheets include:

1. Plot plan, index, general notes, and location map (HABS No. CA-1188-4)
2. First floor plan (HABS No. CA-1188-5)
3. Second floor plan (HABS No. CA-1188-6)
4. North and south elevations (HABS No. CA-1188-7)
5. East elevation (HABS No. CA-1188-8)
6. West elevation
7. Longitudinal section (HABS No. CA-1188-9)
8. Interior stairs
9. Door and window schedule
10. Paint finish and color schedule

There are also eleven sheets of details numbered D1 - D11, two sheets of electrical drawings numbered E1-E2 and two sheets of plumbing details numbered P1-P2. These restoration drawings, with notes on the changes to be made in the building, are not complete and were not followed exactly, since many changes were made in the course of construction.

B. Early Views:

1. Drawings:

"City Hall, Benicia," signed C. Hyatt Sons (?). Engraving from the Placer Times and Transcript. Reproduced in Benicia's Early Glory, p. 7. This view is probably very inaccurate: the proportions are distorted and it shows the building with no window in the pediment and with panels in the front pilasters.

"Benicia City Hall," Inset view in 1885 bird's-eye view. This view shows the capitol with a square window in the pediment and a large flagpole extending through the front gable. The brick addition at the rear is visible as well as the frame structure on First Street labeled "B.F.D." (Benicia Fire Department), and the frame porch protecting the door cut into the fourth bay of the side elevation.

Engraving, 1888, by Charles H. Holmes, Sacramento, taken from an old photograph. Bancroft Library.

2. Photographs:

"Main Street, Benicia, 1856." Photograph of First Street from the south, with the Capitol pediment visible above the surrounding houses. California Historical Society, neg. 590. This photograph is important because it seems to be the only source for the round window in the pediment of the front elevation.

Photograph of the Capitol showing the exterior from the southeast, with a large group of children in front, 1870s. Collection Lenoir Miller, Benicia; copy, California State Library. The accompanying typed legend reads, "Benicia Public School in the 1870s. In the picture are Richard Snell, Principal, Miss Charlotte Bates, Teacher, Miss Sarah Garretson, Teacher, Presented by Warren E. Hyde, Benicia '67-'85." The building appears to be in its present state but has no circular window and a flagpole runs through the gable. There is also a high wood fence enclosing the building grounds to the east along the street.

Photograph of the Capitol during a fire, undated. Direct Construction Department, State Architect's Office, Sacramento. The hood at the gable top apparently shielded a ridge ventilation system.

Photographs showing the Capitol before and during reconstruction. Direct Construction Dept., State Architect's Office, Sacramento. These photographs were taken by Orvel Johnson.

Album of photographs taken during the reconstruction by Orvel Johnson. Collection State Capitol, Benicia.

C. Interviews:

Interview with Orvel Johnson, July 1976.

Interview with Frank Hose, July 1976.

D. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Minutes of the Benicia City Council. City Clerk's Office, Benicia.

Eichler, Alfred, "Restoration of the Benicia State Capitol."
Mimeographed Collection, State Capitol Building, Benicia.

Johnson, Orvel, "Restoration, Benicia Capitol," Direct
Construction Dept., State Architect's Office, Sacramento. This
is the handwritten daily log kept during reconstruction of the
building.

2. Secondary and published sources:

California State Blue Book, 1899, pp. 271-288.

California Legislature, House Journal, 1853, 1854 passim.

Hitchcock, Henry Russell, and Seale, William. Temples of
Democracy. Philadelphia, 1976. This book is a detailed account
of the architectural development of state capitols in the United
States.

Hussey, John Adam. "The Old State House at Benicia, A Relic of
California's 'Capitol on Wheels.'" California Historical Society
Quarterly, Vol. XVII (1938), pp. 260-270.

Johnson, Orvel. "Restoration, California's Oldest State
Capitol." Solano County Historical Society, Benicia's Early
Glory, n.p. 1958, pp. 97-108.

Marinez, Tyrrell, "California State Capitol, Solano County,
Benicia." California Historical Survey Series, edited by Clark
Wing. Berkeley, 1939.

Severson, Thor. Sacramento, An Illustrated History: 1839-
1874. San Francisco, 1973. This book contains an excellent
pictorial record of the early California state capitols.

Woodruff, Jacqueline C. Benicia, The Promise of California,
Vallejo, 1947, pp. 41-49.

E. Supplemental Material: Specifications for the new city hall, from
Minutes of the Benicia City Council, August 23, 1852.

Dimensions of building to be 45 x 80 feet. Stone foundation of 4
feet. Lower floor in the clear 16 feet. One room 60 x 45. Four
rooms 17 x 10, brick partitions plastered and hand finished.

Second floor in the clear 15 feet. One room 45 x 45, four rooms 17 x 17, brick partitions plastered and hand finished. Thickness walls lower story 16 in. upper story 12 in., stone caps and sills to windows, stone steps, pillars and high stone ornamental finish over door Hall 10 ft. wide.

Report of the Committee on Removal, Jan. 13, 1854, California Legislature, House Journal, 1854, pp. 90-91.

The undersigned, a majority of the Select Committee, to whom was referred so much of the Governor's Message as relates to the present condition of the State Offices, together with a communication from the State Treasurer, also, a proposition from certain citizens of Benicia, tendering the use of a secure building, for State Offices; also propositions from the County of Sacramento, and preamble and resolutions of the Common Council of Sacramento, relative to the removal of the Capitol to that City having bestowed careful consideration on the subject, beg leave to report that they have personally examined the condition of the State Offices and found them in a condition of insecurity, which demands prompt action on the part of the Legislature, to provide places of greater security and safety for the preservation of the Archives and other valuable property of the State kept in the State Offices.

Your committee would also beg leave to state that they have made a personal examination of a certain building, which the citizens of Benicia have tendered to the State free of rent as long as the same may be required for State Offices, and found the same to be a substantial brick building, about 34 long by 22 wide, two stories high, containing in all, six rooms [believed to be the building at 126 East D Street]. Said building if finished according to its design, will afford convenient offices for the Treasurer and Comptroller, but not entire security.

A majority of your Committee, in order to enable the Committee to present an accurate exhibit of the subject, deemed it their duty to visit Sacramento and make a personal investigation of the advantages claimed for that city as the location of the Seat of Government.

The building offered for a State House, is the same that was occupied for that purpose during the session of 1852...

Your committee found at Sacramento, a condition of things which has justly elicited from visitors to that city, enthusiastic eulogies upon the dauntless energy which in the short period of twelve months, has created within a space of two hundred acres, laid completely bare by the great conflagration and subsequently, from the consequences of long continued rains and inundations, converted into one vast and almost impassable swamp--a city in substantial wealth, commerce and population, the second in California...

Having no facilities at Benicia for printing, the public printing has to be done at San Francisco, and in consequence of the delay occasioned by sending the printing away from the Capitol, each House remains in profound ignorance of the proceedings of the other for a period of twenty-four hours; and it is a fact well known, that during the last session of the Legislature, many important bills were acted upon while they were at San Francisco being printed.

The want of a law library at Benicia is another serious inconvenience that cannot be remedied except by a large appropriation of money, which the State is not in a condition to make...

A very large portion of the people of the Northern and Middle sections of the State, are called frequently to Sacramento on private business and can transact any and all business with the State, and pass on without delay; whereas but few persons are called to Benicia, except upon business of the State, and to stop there at all, involves a loss of twenty-four hours. In addition to this, Benicia having no inland trade, being mainly dependent for support on the business attracted by the location of the seat of government, living will necessarily be a greater tax here than at a point where there is already an extensive competition between hotel and boarding house keepers...

If the Capitol remains at Benicia large appropriations must be made to erect safe and secure public buildings; in fact a bill for that purpose has been already introduced...

Believing that Benicia possesses but few of the advantages and elements referred to--that the subject will be agitated and discussed session after session at great cost to the people until the removal is finally accomplished--a just regard for the interests of the State and the people seems to your Committee to command its removal now.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey in cooperation with Exxon Company, U.S.A. (a division of Exxon Corporation) and the Benicia Historical Society. Under the direction of John Poppeliers, Chief of H.A.B.S., the project was completed during the summer of 1976 at the Historic American Buildings Survey Field Office, Benicia, California, by John P. White (Assistant Professor, Texas Tech University), Project Supervisor; Robert Bruegmann (University of Pennsylvania), Project Historian; Kenneth Payson (Cornell University), Architect; and student assistant architects Scott Barnard (University of Pennsylvania); James L. Cook (Texas Tech University); and Gary A. Statkus (University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign). The written data were edited by Alison K. Hoagland in the HABS Washington office in January, 1981.