

The history of “The 1895”

Jacob Bell

Early Days of the City Hall

In 1883 Rockdale began making plans for the Rockdale City Hall with a bond election providing \$10,000 for its construction.

In 1894, rockdale began locating a sight and commenced construction at the north East corner of Burleson Street and cameron avenue in 1895. In 1896, the Sanborn map shows city hall as being unfinished, but was completed on the 1901 survey.



The Rockdale City Newspaper

In 1906, R. W. H. Kennon merged the Rockdale Reporter & Rockdale Messenger newspapers and set up shop in the southeast office of City Hall.

In June 1911, John Esten Cooke purchased the paper & continued operations at the city hall for several decades. It is believed the Rockdale Reporter & Messenger operated at the City Hall until the 1939 renovation.



1938-1939

In October 1938, the City of Rockdale's application for \$20,000 in WPA funds for improvements to the City Hall received federal approval. Work began February 1939, and was completed November 1939. The project "modernized" the building, resulting the exterior brick being stuccoed, plastered interior walls, and provided new wood floors. This is also when the iconic bell tower was removed and it is unknown why the back half of the upstairs was removed.

In 2020, a new Vision for “The 1895” was born with a goal to restore the building to its original Victorian glory. Vision Historic Preservation Foundation purchased The 1895 from the City of Rockdale with the Mission to enrich the arts & cultivate economic development by restoring the historic 1895 City Hall for the citizens, businesses, and visitors of Rockdale.

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1938 - 1939

Another
revamp

Revamp the
building

2020