

## **HISTORICAL SUMMARY OF OLD TOWN HALL**

*The following research and historical summary were prepared by MTFA Architecture on behalf of the City of Fairfax with the final draft issued on September 25, 2023.*

On November 8, 1897, Joseph E. Willard purchased the future Old Town Hall lot at the corner of Fairfax and Mechanics Streets, as Main Street and University Drive were then known, in Fairfax Courthouse, Virginia from C.W. Huntt. the time of purchase, an existing wood-framed building stood on the parcel which was demolished for the construction of the Old Town Hall. Earliest documentation of the Old Town Hall began in June 1899. Willard along with the architects and contractors, originally referred to the building as the Fairfax Masonic Hall. Although the reviewed documentation did not confirm Willard's membership as a mason, it is highly likely that a man of his position and affluence, as well as one who would donate the building itself, would belong to the organization. Willard, a wealthy attorney and politician, owned and operated the Willard Hotel in Washington, D.C., possessed several homes one of which was Layton Hall in Fairfax Courthouse, and was continuously searching for his next business endeavor.<sup>1</sup>

In early summer of 1899, Willard likely began the search for an architect for the Masonic Hall. Due to Willard's several commercial building projects and renovations at Layton Hall, Willard had a level of an existing relationship with the Washington, D.C.-based firm Marsh & Peter and selected their firm as architects for the Hall. Architectural drawings indicate that Walter G. Peter provided a design to Willard in June 1899. On July 12, 1899, Willard formally awarded Arthur Thompson the bid to work as contractor for the Masonic Hall. Willard noted in his various correspondence that Thompson's bid came in the lowest at \$4,995.00 which was several thousand lower than the competition.<sup>2</sup>

Throughout August and September of 1899, Willard called upon his vast network of builders and contractors to gather a team to complete the Masonic Hall. Willard hired firms and companies, often intermingling individuals and companies from his various commercial and personal projects. Willard's July, August, and September ledgers provide clarity into the those that supplied materials and/or labor for the construction, in addition to general contractor Arthur Thompson, of the Masonic Hall: builder W.M. Poole, building material suppliers E.R. Swetnam and John Cannon, and well driller Henry M. Daniel.<sup>3</sup> In July and August, Willard corresponded with C.F. Perkins of

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<sup>1</sup> *Deed for Masonic Hall from Joseph E. Willard and Belle L. Wyatt Willard to F.W. Richardson, C.V. Ford, R.W. Moore, W.P. Moncure, and James M. Love, Trustees*, July 30, 1900. Deed. Library of Congress, Willard Family Papers, 1800-1968, Box I:225, Folder "Deeds, Notes, Sketches, Etc.;" Walter G. Peter, Architect. *Fairfax Masonic Hall*, June 30, 1899. Architectural Drawing. Library of Congress, Peter (Walter G. & Walter G. Jr.) Collection in AIA/AAF Collection, 1880s-1971, Unprocessed Box 26.

<sup>2</sup> Peter, *Fairfax Masonic Hall; Joseph E. Willard to Arthur Thompson, Esq.*, July 12, 1899. Letter. Library of Congress, Willard Family Papers, 1800-1968, Box I:25, Folder "1900-1904.;" W.P. Poole to Walter G. Peter, *July 10<sup>th</sup>, 1899*. Letter. Library of Congress, Willard Family Papers, 1800-1968, Box I:25, Folder "1900-1904." Poole estimated a stone foundation would cost \$5,569.24 and a brick foundation would cost \$5,701.35. The bid was several thousand less than other construction firm, Richardson & Burgess, whom Willard used repeatedly for past projects. Prior to selecting Thompson, Willard had worked with local contractors and builders such as W.P. Poole to determine material choices. On July 10<sup>th</sup>, Poole wrote to Peter and provided a cost estimate for a stone foundation versus a brick foundation for the Masonic Hall. Poole noted that his estimate was based off the plans and specifications provided to him by Willard

<sup>3</sup> *Joseph Willard to Thomas B. Love, August 19, 1899*. Telegram. Library of Congress, Willard

the Grand Rapids Furniture Company for seating and furniture options within the Hall. Perkins quickly responded to Willard, asking for a floor plan of the building and promising circulars and a seating plan with his next letter. On the back of the letter, an unsigned sketch visualizes a potential newel post for the Hall. It remains unclear if Willard selected the Grand Rapids Furniture Company to furnish the Masonic Hall or if the sketch of the newel post came to fruition.<sup>4</sup>

In the fall and winter of 1899, construction of the Hall was well underway. By November and December, Thompson's team installed the roof and lathes and Henry M. Daniel completed well drilling.<sup>5</sup> After pausing work from December through March, construction resumed in April of 1900. Throughout the month of April, Willard's urgency to finish the building became apparent when writing Walter G. Peter: "Referring to the matter of the town hall being built under your superintendence at Fairfax, I shall expect this work to be pushed as rapidly as possible."<sup>6</sup> Delays from his contractor, Arthur Thompson, further exacerbated Willard's insistence to complete construction. At this time, Willard wrote to Thomas B. Love and C. Vernon Ford that he was prepared to replace Thompson if he could not or would not complete the work promptly and replace him with Richardson & Burgess.<sup>7</sup>

During these final months of construction, Willard was likely preparing to launch his 1902 campaign for Lieutenant Governor of Virginia. This newest endeavor would take more of his time and financial resources which could potentially explain his sudden urgency to complete the Hall. Meanwhile, his April correspondence shows a distinct change of referring to the building as the Fairfax Town Hall and not the Masonic Hall. By May, Willard wrote to his personal attorney and friend, C. Vernon Ford, that Thompson's work on the hall was nearly complete and that he wished to begin the conveyance process.<sup>8</sup>

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Family Papers, 1800-1968, Box I:25, Folder "August 1899."; *August 1899 Cash. Ledger*. Library of Congress, Willard Family Papers, 1800-1968, Box I:25,

Folder "August 1899."; *September 1899 Cash. Ledger*. Library of Congress, Willard Family Papers, 1800-1968, Box I:25, Folder "September 1899."; *Henry M. Daniel to Joseph E. Willard, September 21, 1899*. Letter. Library of Congress, Willard Family Papers, 1800-1968, Box I:25, Folder "September 1899."

<sup>4</sup> *C.F. Perkins to J.E. Willard, July 24, 1899*. Letter. Library of Congress, Willard Family Papers, 1800-1968, Box I:25, Folder "1900-1904." *Joseph Willard to Grand Rapids Furniture Co, August 2, 1899*. Letter. Library of Congress, Willard Family Papers, 1800-1968, Box I:25, Folder "August 1899.";

<sup>5</sup> *B. Kennon Peter to Joseph E. Willard, November 21<sup>st</sup>, 1899*. Letter. Library of Congress, Willard Family Papers, 1800-1968, Box I:25, Folder "November 1899."; *H.M. Daniel to Joseph E. Willard, November 14, 1899*. Letter. Library of Congress, Willard Family Papers, 1800-1968, Box I:25, Folder "November 1899." *B.K. Peter to Willard, December 23, 1899*. Letter. Library of Congress, Willard Family Papers, 1800-1968, Box I:26, Folder "December 1899."

<sup>6</sup> *Joseph E. Willard to Walter G. Peter, April 5, 1900*. Letter. Library of Congress, Willard Family Papers, 1800-1968, Box I:26, Folder "April 1900."

<sup>7</sup> Richardson and Burgess had submitted a bid for the construction of the Fairfax Masonic Hall, but their proposal came in at nearly \$8,000, well above Arthur Thompson's winning bid. *Joseph E. Willard to Walter G. Peter, April 5, 1900*. Letter. Library of Congress, Willard Family Papers, 1800-1968, Box I:26, Folder "April 1900."; *Joseph E. Willard to C. Vernon Ford, April 7, 1900*. Letter. Library of Congress, Willard Family Papers, 1800-1968, Box I:26, Folder "April 1900."; *Joseph E. Willard to Thomas B. Love, April 14, 1900*. Letter. Library of Congress, Willard Family Papers, 1800-1968, Box I:26, Folder "April 1900."

<sup>8</sup> *Joseph E. Willard to Thomas B. Love, April 14, 1900*. Letter. Library of Congress, Willard Family Papers, 1800-1968, Box I:26, Folder "April 1900."; *Willard to C. Vernon Ford, undated May 1900*. Letter. Library of Congress, Willard Family Papers, 1800-1968, Box I:26, Folder "May 1900."

On July 30, 1900, Joseph E. Willard and Belle L. Wyatt Willard conveyed the deed to the Hall to trustees Thomas B. Love, C. Vernon Ford, F.W. Richardson, R.W. Moncure, and R.W. Moore. It remains unclear exactly why or when exactly Willard reframed the use of the hall from strictly Masonic events to one that would also “benefit of the town council.”<sup>9</sup> However, in the deed Willard emphasized specific requirements for use of the Hall: The Masonic chapter, Henry Lodge No. 57 were permitted to hold regular and special meetings on the second floor, access to a room in the NW corner of the second floor which would be solely dedicated to use by the lodge, the Mason’s meetings would not be disturbed or interfered with by the white inhabitants of Fairfax, and use of the Hall would be restricted to white people.<sup>10</sup>

Upon completion, the Classical Revival style building consisted of a symmetrical, temple front supported by four columns. The building sat upon a rubble stone foundation and featured wood clapboarding and shingle-clad roof. The color of the exterior of the building remains undetermined, however, a ca. 1905 photograph suggests there was a contrasting color scheme between the light trim elements, medium-colored clapboards, and darker color on the shutters and tympanum’s semi-circular vent. The original layout of the Hall included a first floor which served as a community hall and second floor which served as a lodge. Upon entering through the portico, members would pass through double-leaf doors to an entrance hall with a dressing room on the left and a flight of stairs to the right. After passing through another set of double-leaf doors, the remaining space was an open hall area for gathering. On the second floor, the floor plan was like the first with a vestibule at the stair landing and another set of double-leaf doors leading to an anteroom and then to the open hall. The anteroom was flanked by two rooms, the larger of which was to be used by the Henry Lodge No. 57 Masonic Chapter as a dressing room for current members and the second was presumably a candidates room or a storage room.

There is little documentation of changes to the building in its first decades. The apparent first major change involved the removal of the wood shutters, sometime before 1930. In the following decades, the exterior paint color was changed to the current all-white building from the multi-colored appearance with dark shutters setting off a middle field color and white trim. In 1965, the foundation was repaired and the exterior painted. It is likely that the wood porch was replaced with a concrete one in this period as well. Significant work was undertaken beginning in 1979 with plumbing and electrical system improvements, repairs to windows and the failing northwest column, and exterior repainting.

After years of planning, a rear addition providing a kitchen, restrooms and new interior stair was built by the general contractor Bildon in 1987 per a design by Rust Orling and Neale Architects of Alexandria. The addition was part of a larger multi-year phased rehabilitation project at the building, which included significant stabilization and repair work as well as alterations on the interior of original portion of the building. In order to address space and accessibility needs, the rear addition was heavily reworked and expanded in 1995 by the Charlottesville firm of Browne Dalgliesh Eichmann Gilpin Paxton. The original portion of the building was also altered as a part of the project. The renovation project included a new south porch, an elevator, new restrooms, and

<sup>9</sup> *Joseph E. Willard to C. Vernon Ford, April 7, 1900.* Letter. Library of Congress, Willard Family Papers, 1800-1968, Box I:26, Folder “April 1900.”; *Deed for Masonic Hall*, July 30, 1900.

<sup>10</sup> *Deed for Masonic Hall*, July 30, 1900.

other improvements to the addition, while the original building received new lighting, fire protection system, and wood flooring. During the construction project, the original portion of the building caught fire as the painting contractor used a heat gun to strip paint from upper wall and window at the south elevation. Extensive damage to windows, roof structure, attic, and interior finishes occurred. These damaged items were repaired as a part of the ongoing project. Since the 1995 project, additional system improvements and various maintenance efforts have been completed.

On August 14<sup>th</sup>, 2020, the northwest portico column failed and fell into University Drive in the early morning. Deterioration at the base causing the column to sink and then become loose at the capital, eventually causing the column to fall to the ground. As a part of Phase 1 of this project, the front portico was restored, including installation of a new column, replacement of the modern concrete porch with a traditional wood porch, and the provision of the north stairs and south ramp to the front porch. Phase 2 seeks to continue this effort so that Old Town Hall can serve the City of Fairfax for years to come.

## LIBRARY OF CONGRESS FINDINGS FOR OLD TOWN HALL

### **Box I:25 July-November 1899 (Correspondence)**

#### July Folder

*W.P. Poole to Joseph E. Willard, July 10<sup>th</sup>, 1899.* Letter. Library of Congress, Willard Family Papers, 1800-1968, Box I:25, Folder “1900-1904.”

W.P. Poole provided cost estimates to Walter G. Peter and Joseph E. Willard for a stone foundation versus a brick foundation.

Dear Sir:-

I respectfully submit herewith my estimates for constructing the Masonic Hall at Fairfax Courthouse, Virginia, in accordance with the plans and specifications furnished by you.

For stone foundation – Five thousand five hundred sixty-nine dollars and twenty-four cents, (\$5569.24).

For brick foundation – Five thousand seven hundred and one dollars and thirty-five cents, (\$5701.35).

Copy of the above estimate furnished Mr. Walter G. Peter, Architect this date.

Very respectfully,  
W.P.Poole

*W.P. Poole to Walter G. Peter, July 10<sup>th</sup>, 1899.* Letter. Library of Congress, Willard Family Papers, 1800-1968, Box I:25, Folder “1900-1904.”

W.P. Poole provided cost estimates to Walter G. Peter and Joseph E. Willard for a stone foundation versus a brick foundation.

Mr. Walter G. Peter,  
Architect,  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Sir:-

I respectfully submit herewith my estimates for constructing the Masonic Hall at Fairfax Courthouse, Virginia, in accordance with the plans and specifications furnished me.

For stone foundation – Five thousand five hundred sixty-nine dollars and twenty-four cents, (\$5569.24).

For brick foundation – Five thousand seven hundred and one dollars and thirty-five cents, (\$5701.35).

Very respectfully,  
W.P.Poole

*Arthur Thompson to Walter G. Peter, July 11, 1899.* Letter. Library of Congress, Willard Family Papers, 1800-1968, Box I:25, Folder “1900-1904.”

Mr. Walter G. Peter  
Dear Sir  
My estimate to furnish all  
labor and material to build  
Masonic Hall for Mr. Jos E. Willard  
as per plans + specifications  
prepared by W.G. Peter architect  
situated at Fairfax Court  
House is \$4995.00 to use  
brick for foundation \$175.00  
Additional to the above.

Yours truly,  
Arthur Thompson

*Richardson & Burgess to Joseph E. Willard, July 12, 1899.* Letter. Library of Congress, Willard Family Papers, 1800-1968, Box I:25, Folder “1900-1904.”

On July 12, 1899, Richardson & Burgess wrote to Willard proposing their firm as the contractor and builder for the Masonic Hall for \$8,193. However, later documentation confirms that Willard did not select Richardson & Burgess’s bid.

Capt Jos. E. Willard,  
Wyatt Building,  
City,  
Dear Sir:-

We hereby propose to furnish all the labor and materials necessary to erect and complete, according to the plans and specifications prepared therefor by W.G. Peter Esq., architect, the Masonic Hall for you, at Fairfax Court House, Virginia for the sum of Eight thousand, one hundred, ninety-three Dollars (\$8193.)

Respectfully,  
Richardson + Burgess.

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*Joseph E. Willard to William Gorham, Esq., July 12<sup>th</sup>, 1899.* Letter. Library of Congress, Willard Family Papers, 1800-1968, Box I:25, Folder “1900-1904.”

Willard writes a reply to William Forham, Esq. informing him that he could not lend him the money he requested. LOC correspondence records include large volumes of letters from people asking Willard for either assistance in employment or personal loans. In this occasion, Willard informed Gorham that he could not lend him the money as he has his own financial endeavors in Fairfax. The assumption is that this “extensive building” is likely the Masonic Hall, or Fairfax Old Town Hall. The letter reads:

Wm. Gorham, Esq.,  
West End, Va.

Dear Sir:

Your letter of the 11<sup>th</sup> inst. at hand. I regret very much that I cannot let you the money you desire, but I am about to commence some extensive building in Fairfax myself.

Very truly yours,  
Dict. Jos. E.W.

*Joseph E. Willard to Arthur Thompson, Esq., July 12, 1899.* Letter. Library of Congress, Willard Family Papers, 1800-1968, Box I:25, Folder “1900-1904.”

Willard writes a letter to Arthur Thompson to award him the work as contractor at the Masonic Hall. Additionally, Willard makes the introduction of Thompson to Walter G. Peter, architect. The letter reads:

Arthur Thompson, Esq.,  
Fairfax, Va.

Dear Sir:

Yours was the lowest bid on the Masonic Hall to be erected at Fairfax Court House.

Please come in on Friday, the 14<sup>th</sup> inst., and see Mr. Walter G. Peter, architect, at his office, 1503 Pa. Ave., N.W. at ten (10) o'clock A.M.

Very truly yours,  
Dict. Jos. E.W.

*John Cannon to Joseph E. Willard, July 12, 1899.* Letter. Library of Congress, Willard Family Papers, 1800-1968, Box I:25, Folder “1900-1904.”

On July 12, 1899, John Cannon wrote to Willard proposing himself as the contractor and builder for the Masonic Hall for \$5,490. However, later documentation confirms that Willard did not select Cannon’s bid.

Capt. Jos. E. Willard,

Dear Sir

I will build the  
Masonic Hall at Fairfax C.T.H Va. according to  
The plans + specifications for the sum of  
Five Thousand four Hundred and ninety dollars (\$5490.00.)

John E. Cannon

*Joseph E. Willard to Messrs. Richardson & Burgess, July 18, 1899.* Letter. Library of Congress, Willard Family Papers, 1800-1968, Box I:25, Folder "1900-1904."

The letter reads:

Gentlemen:

I beg to advise you that Arthur Thompson's bid for the construction of the Masonic Hall at Fairfax C.H., Va. Was \$4995.00, and being the lowest I have awarded the contract to him.

Very truly yours,  
Dict. Jos.E.W.

*Joseph E. Willard to Earl E. Seitz, July 24, 1899.* Letter. Library of Congress, Willard Family Papers, 1800-1968, Box I:25, Folder "1900-1904."

Earl E. Seitz asks Willard to join him in the building of the Virginia Central Railroad. Willard responds that he will not be participating in the creation of the Virginia Central Railroad "As I have on hand at this time a matter which will use all my available funds." At this time, Willard has started working on the masonic temple and has plans to construct an electric railroad from Fairfax to Dunn Loring.

*C.F. Perkins to J.E. Willard, July 24, 1899.* Letter. Library of Congress, Willard Family Papers, 1800-1968, Box I:25, Folder "1900-1904."

Letter from manager of Grand Rapids School Furniture Works inquiring seating needs of the building. On the back of the letter is a sketch resembling a newel post. The letter reads:

Hon. J.E. Willard,  
Fairfax Court House, Va.  
Dear Sir:

We understand that you are interested in the seating of a Masonic Hall. Send us floor plan of your room, and we will send you circulars and seating plan relative to a most desirable chair for use in such structures.

Please let us hear from you with the very least possible

delay.

Yours respectfully,  
C.F. Perkins, Mgr.,  
Grand Rapids School Furniture Works.

*E.R. Swetnam to John E. Cannon, July 21, 1899.* Letter. Library of Congress, Willard Family Papers, 1800-1968, Box I:25, Folder "1900-1904."

E.R. Swetnam, a building materials merchant in Fairfax Station, VA, provided John E. Cannon a quote for bricks. The letter reads:

Mr. Cannan [sic].

Dear Sir,  
I cannot  
get a better price than  
\$8.00 an A.T.P. brick unless  
we can get a better rate of freight. I find the  
Alexandria Brick Co. about as  
low as any of them. I  
told them that you wanted  
the brick + to write you [.] You  
can do as well with  
them as I can. hope you  
can make a deal with them  
they are clever people

Very truly yours.,  
E.R. Swetnam

*John E. Cannon to Joseph E. Willard, July 24th, 1899.* Letter. Library of Congress, Willard Family Papers, 1800-1968, Box I:25, Folder "1900-1904."

John E. Cannon, General Contractor and Superintendent of Construction, Stone, and Woodwork of Manassas, VA, writes to Willard with a cost estimate for supplies needed to construct the Masonic Hall. Cannon quotes Willard that per the plans and specifications provided by Willard, the cost will be \$13, 623 with brick costing \$8. The letter reads:

"Captain Jos. E. Willard,  
My Dear Sir  
I have made the  
estimate and find that the memo  
\_\_\_\_\_ of pm house as per plans  
and specifications will Cash [sic] \$13623

thirteen Thousand Six hundred  
and twenty three dollars. I also  
enclose your letter from \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ quoting brick at \$8.

Truly yours,  
John E. Cannon"

August 1899 Folder

*August 1899 Cash. Ledger.* Library of Congress, Willard Family Papers, 1800-1968, Box I:25, Folder "August 1899."

Willard's August 1899 cash ledger shows on August 18th he wrote a check to William P. Poole per R.J. Lester Poole for \$275. On August 24th, Willard writes a check to Arthur Thompson for 100.00. The following day on August 25th, Willard pays cash to William Poole "out of check of 275.00 Lester Poole" for \$250.00.

*Joseph Willard to Grand Rapids Furniture Co, August 2, 1899.* Letter. Library of Congress, Willard Family Papers, 1800-1968, Box I:25, Folder "August 1899."

Willard responds to previous letter sent by Grand Rapids Furniture Company and sends a plan of the Masonic Hall. He asks Grand Rapids Furniture Company to reply immediately, as correspondence in the following weeks indicates that construction of the building is beginning in the coming weeks. The letter reads:

Grand Rapids Furniture Works,  
814 Constable Building, N.Y.

Gentlemen:

Yours of July 24<sup>th</sup> at hand. I herewith enclose plan of floor of the Masonic Hall to be erected at Fairfax, Va.

Please let me hear in reply at your earliest convenience. Also return plat.

Very truly yours,

Dict. Jos. E.W.

I ENCLOSURE.

*Joseph Willard to William P. Poole, August 11, 1899.* Letter. Library of Congress, Willard Family Papers, 1800-1968, Box I:25, Folder "August 1899."

Willard writes to his builder, William P. Poole, to inform him that lumber (most likely for the construction of the hall) will be delivered to Fairfax Court House. The letter reads:

William F. Poole, Esq.  
Dunn Loring, Va.

My Dear Sir:

I suggest, after a conversation with the Superintendent of the Southern Railroad that, when it is practicable all shipments of all building materials be made in car load lots.

One or more car loads of lumber from B.B. Jackson & Company reached Fairfax Station this morning and will be hauled to Fairfax Court House at once.

Very truly yours,  
Dict. Joseph E.W.

*Joseph Willard to Thomas B. Love, August 19, 1899. Telegram. Library of Congress, Willard Family Papers, 1800-1968, Box I:25, Folder "August 1899."*

Willard writes to his lawyer and future Old Town Hall trustee, Thomas B. Love to look "at the Layton Hall file" to see previous freight rates provided by Eckles to Mr. Bunch. This telegram proves that Willard was working on the Masonic Hall and Layton Hall simultaneously. The telegram reads:

Received at Wyatt Building, Cor. 14<sup>th</sup> & F Streets, Washington, D.C. August 19, 1899  
Dated Fairfax Station Va  
To Thos. B Love Wyatt Bldg Washin DC

Look in layton [sic] Hall file and find a letter from Eckles to bunch [sic] quoting freight rates from Washington to Fairfax on Building [sic] material at about one dollar + twenty per ton Lumber [sic] has come to station recently with charges two forty per ton Please [sic] inquire through mr. [sic] Bunch in regard to this matter Washington freight office quoted me one twenty per ton car load Lots [sic].

Jos. E. Willard

September 1899

*September 1899 Cash. Ledger. Library of Congress, Willard Family Papers, 1800-1968, Box I:25, Folder "September 1899."*

September 1899 cash ledger shows transactions with W. P. Poole (builder), E.R. Swetnam (building materials merchant), Arthur Thompson (contractor), and John Cannon (contractor) etc. all of whom supplied materials and/or labor for the construction of the Masonic Hall.

*Joseph E. Willard to John A. Cannon, September 7th, 1899. Letter. Library of Congress, Willard Family Papers, 1800-1968, Box I:25, Folder "September 1899."*

Willard writes to Cannon, a builder, asking for his receipts for reimbursement at Fairfax County. It remains unclear if this is in regards to his work at the Masonic Hall or Layton Hall. The letter reads:

John A. Cannon, Esq.,

Manassas, Va.

My Dear Mr. Cannon:

Please mail me your bill to Fairfax immediately upon receipt of this; including therein your entire Services to date and use of your machinery for moving house.

Please let me hear from you by return mail.

Very true  
Dict. Jos. E.W.

*Joseph E. Willard to Harry Baker, September 11, 1899. Letter. Library of Congress, Willard Family Papers, 1800-1968, Box I:25, Folder "September 1899."*

Willard writes to Harry Baker of Winchester, Virginia recommending Walter G. Peter as architect for an undisclosed upcoming project.

Harry Baker, Esq.  
Winchester, Va.

My Dear Mr. Baker:

This will be presented to you by my friend, Mr. Walter G. Peter, who is an architect in this City. Mr. Peter will visit your City in regard to some buildings proposed to be erected there. He has done a great deal of work along the line of this profession for me, and I have no hesitation in saying that it has been uniformly satisfactory. One building in particular which he erected in this City for me has been most favorably commented on by all who have seen it.

Any courtesy which you may be able to show Mr. Peter Will be very much appreciated by myself.

Please give my warmest regards to Mrs. Baker.

Very truly yours,  
Dict. Jos. E.W.

*Henry M. Daniel to Joseph E. Willard, September 21, 1899. Letter. Library of Congress, Willard Family Papers, 1800-1968, Box I:25, Folder "September 1899."*

Henry M. Daniel, owner of a well drilling business in Manassas, Virginia, writes to Willard with a quote for drilling a well at the Masonic Hall. The letter reads:

Capt. Jos. E. Willard

Dear sir:- In

## Regard to drilling well I

Take pleasure in quoting  
You the following price.  
For the first 100 ft. \$2.00 per ft.  
" second 100 ft. 2.20 "  
" third 100 ft. 2.40 "  
Hoping to hear from you favorably, I am  
Yours truly  
H.M. Daniel

October 1899

*Henry M. Daniel to Joseph E. Willard, October 9, 1899. Letter. Library of Congress, Willard Family Papers, 1800-1968, Box I:25, Folder "October 1899."*

Henry M. Daniel writes to Willard and confirms that he has been selected to drill the well at the Masonic Hall after providing an estimate on September 21, 1899. Daniel asks that Willard confirm which materials he would like so that Daniel can confirm work. The letter reads:

Capt. Jos. E. Willard  
Dear sir:- I have  
Received quotations on casing  
This morning and will be pleased to drill you  
a well, at the estimate made you Sept. 21. [sic] putting  
in six inch, black wrought  
iron pipe, which is six  
inches inside and weighs  
nearly nineteen pounds  
per foot. Or if you wish the same pipe, galvanized  
I can furnish that, at sixty cents per foot, additional  
on the estimate of Sept. 21.  
I am about completing  
a contract here and  
can move to your place  
in a day or two if you  
wish. If I do not hear  
from you soon I will  
begin another contract  
here, and could not come then for a week or  
more. I would be glad  
to know if you have made  
other arrangements.

Yours truly,  
H.M. Daniel

November 1899

*H.M. Daniel to Joseph E. Willard, November 14, 1899. Letter. Library of Congress, Willard Family Papers, 1800-1968, Box I:25, Folder "November 1899."*

*Mr. Walter G. Peter,*

Dear sir:- yours  
of 10<sup>th</sup> inst. received enclosing  
our Willards check for \$333.20  
in full for drilling well  
which amount is entirely  
satisfactory to me and for  
which please accept thanks.  
I regret the misunderstanding  
between Russel and myself.

Yours respectfully  
H.M. Daniel

*B. Kennon Peter to Joseph E. Willard, November 21<sup>st</sup>, 1899. Letter. Library of Congress, Willard Family Papers, 1800-1968, Box I:25, Folder "November 1899."*

B.K. Peter, Willard's private secretary, habitually sent weekly (at times even daily) reports to Willard to keep him abreast of projects while he was out of town. While Willard is at the Homestead Hotel in Hot Springs, Virginia, B.K. Peter informs him on the progress at both the Masonic Hall and Layton Hall, often interchanging between locations throughout his reporting. At the Masonic Hall, B.K. Peter reports that Thompson is working on the roof, but the culvert is not finished. W.G. Peter is working on the fences, plumbing, and culvert projects at Layton Hall and, according to B.K. Peter, is preparing a sketch for the main drive at Layton Hall. It is unclear from the letter what specific area of Layton Hall or the Masonic Hall that Poole is working on. Particularly important passages from the letter include:

"I stayed in Fairfax this morning and came in on the ten o'clock car from Falls Church. Mr. Poole is making progress with his work. Mr. Thompson is putting the roof on the Hall. He has not changed the culvert, but, as usual, promises to do so at once..."

#### **Box I: 26 December 1899 – June 1900 (Correspondence)**

December 1899

*B.K. Peter to Willard, December 23, 1899. Letter. Library of Congress, Willard Family Papers, 1800-1968, Box I:26, Folder "December 1899."*

B.K. Peter, Willard's private secretary, habitually sent weekly (at times even daily) reports to Willard to keep him abreast of projects while he was out of town. While Willard is away, B.K. Peter informs him on the progress at the Masonic Hall:

“Everything is running smoothly here in Fairfax. Thompson is ready to put the lathes on the Hall. Mr. Peter will then stop the work until spring. He gave me his certificate for \$1,000. [sic] on which to pay Thompson.”

April 1900

*Joseph E. Willard to Walter G. Peter, April 5, 1900.* Letter. Library of Congress, Willard Family Papers, 1800-1968, Box I:26, Folder “April 1900.”

Willard writes to his architect Peter and is pushing for the completion of the Hall. He asks Peter to finish with or without Thompson, suggesting Richardson and Burgess take over if necessary.

“Referring to the matter of the town hall being built under your superintendence at Fairfax, I shall expect this work to be pushed as rapidly as possible. If you find that our present contractor, Arthur Thompson, cannot or will not complete this work promptly, according to the terms of his contract, you may take this work out of his hands under the terms of this contract, after a reasonable notice, and have Richardson and Burgess complete the work. Before taking any steps in this matter, you will, however, consult my partner Mr. Ford, in regard to any legal points involved, and be guided by his advice.”

*Joseph E. Willard to C. Vernon Ford, April 6, 1900.* Letter. Library of Congress, Willard Family Papers, 1800-1968, Box I:26, Folder “April 1900.”

Willard writes to friend and attorney C. Vernon Ford and encloses a copy of his letter to Walter G. Peter. Willard asks that Ford represents his legal interests in the matter.

“I enclose you [sic] copy of letter to Walter G. Peter, architect. Will you be good enough to represent my legal interests in this matter, but not to permit any delay whatever and to see that the completion of this hall is carried out promptly.”

“It is very possible that Tom [Love] will have to refer to you further matters with Arthur Thompson, resulting from delay in his various contracts with me. In all the matters I want the letter of the contract carries out and I must further request that you act promptly and in accordance with these directions when circumstances demand...I shall discuss with you further.”

*Joseph E. Willard to C. Vernon Ford, April 7, 1900.* Letter. Library of Congress, Willard Family Papers, 1800-1968, Box I:26, Folder “April 1900.”

Willard urgently writes to his friend and attorney C. Vernon Ford. The letter discusses the continued problems with Thompson's work at the Hall and the transfer of Fairfax Hall to Ford, Judge Love, and Richardson as trustees.

"Please do not fail to give your personal attention...to the matter of the Fairfax Hall and Arthur Thompson whenever directed by the architect Mr. Peters. Mr. Moore advised me that you had rough outlines of papers relative to my conveying the hall to trustees for the use and benefit of the town council. Please call this matter to my attention. I take the liberty to suggest that you insert as trustees in this matter yourself, Judge Love and Richardson."

*Joseph E. Willard to C. Vernon Ford, April 7 1900.* Letter. Library of Congress, Willard Family Papers, 1800-1968, Box I:26, Folder "April 1900."

Again, Willard urgently writes to his friend and attorney C. Vernon Ford. The letter discusses the continued problems with Thompson's work at the Hall and the transfer of Fairfax Hall to Ford, Judge Love, and Richardson as trustees.

"I suspect that Walter Peter will call on you by telephone or otherwise very shortly in regard to Thompson's work on the hall, in which event I have suggested to Mr. Peter that all the correspondence with Thompson be confined exclusively to you as my attorney. If this matter comes to an issue I approve your suggestion that I appear only as defendant in the matter, not as plaintiff. I also suggest that you draw deed for the entire tract of Kayton Hall for Mrs. Willard and have ready for my execution at any time. Also suggest that you complete papers in regard to transfer of Fairfax Hall property to yourself, Judge Love and Richardson as trustees, in accordance with my letter of a day or two ago."

Judge, and Richardson as trustees. No mention of why or who can use it.

*Thomas B. Love to Franklin Sherman, April 12, 1900.* Letter. Library of Congress, Willard Family Papers, 1800-1968, Box I:26, Folder "April 1900."

Love writes to Franklin Sherman updating him on all insurance matters: the Aetna Company has responded in regards to the small building near the barn at Layton Hall. Additionally, the Home Insurance Company issued a permit for the purpose of making changes in the dwelling at Layton Hall. Lastly, Love writes that Mr. Ford will renew the builders' risk insurance on the Masonic Hall.

*Joseph E. Willard to Thomas B. Love, April 14 1900.* Letter. Library of Congress, Willard Family Papers, 1800-1968, Box I:26, Folder "February 1900."

Willard asks how Thompson is getting along with Fairfax Hall. This is the first mention using this name instead of the Masonic Hall.

*Joseph E. Willard to Thomas B. Love, April 14, 1900.* Letter. Library of Congress, Willard Family Papers, 1800-1968, Box I:26, Folder "April 1900."

Willard writes to Love asking for updates on the Hardenburg, Willard Hotel, investments, and dues for the New York City Club. Towards the end of his letter, Willard asks Love: "How does Thompson get on with Fairfax Hall?" This is another reference to the building as Fairfax Hall and not the Masonic Hall.

May 1900

*Willard to C. Vernon Ford, undated May 1900.* Letter. Library of Congress, Willard Family Papers, 1800-1968, Box I:26, Folder "May 1900."

"I am advised that Thompson is about to complete hall. Please look up data in regard to this conveyance and let me know also as early as possible.

Arthur Thompson to Joseph E. Willard, May 25, 1900. Letter. Library of Congress, Willard Family Papers, 1800-1968, Box I:26, Folder "May 1900."

After some alluded to health problems, Thompson reassures Willard that he can complete the fence for Layton Hall. The same health problems held up work at the Hall.

Dear sir

The lumber  
for fence is at the station and  
will haul it tomorrow. as [sic] to  
posts I have about one third  
enough at hand and agreeable  
to promise of some posts will have the rush  
in two weeks time or less although  
I am hardly able to be about. I will  
commence fence and push it  
along as fast as I possible can,  
you name what day you can  
meet me to show where you  
want the fence and I hope then  
to be better able to tell you  
what I can do. Truly yours  
Arthur Thompson

**Box I: 28 July 1900 – August 1900 (Correspondence)**

July 1900

*Joseph E. Willard to M.E. Church, July 9, 1900.* Letter. Library of Congress, Willard Family Papers, 1800-1968, Box I:26, Folder "July 1900."

Willard writes to M.E. Church informing him that he now has a telephone but that he has trouble using it. The correspondence noticeably drops off around June and July 1900 and is certainly linked to Willard's new telephone.

"I find that I can use my phone from Washington to Fairfax with the greatest difficulty. Of course at times the service is good, but for the past thirty days most of the time the service has been very poor, and on several occasions it has been utterly impossible for me to use the instrument, but the instrument seems to be the first class one."

#### **Box I: 121 1897-1901 (Legal papers regarding real estates)**

##### Legal Papers – 1898 Folder

Reviewed various leases. No mention of racial covenant.

##### Legal Papers – 1899 Folder

Articles of Agreement between Arthur Thompson and Joseph E. Willard dated 7/19/1899  
(scanned)

Page 1

Construction contract for "the erection and completion of a Masonic Hall building." Notes architect as Walter G. Peter. Price \$4,910.

Page 2

First payment for \$800 when the first-floor joists are set

Second payment for \$1,200 when the sheathing is completed

Third payment for \$1,000 when the building is clapboarded and roof shingles are on

Fourth payment for \$1,000 when the plastering is complete

Fifth payment for \$910 to be paid when complete and drawings and specifications returned to Walter G. Peter.

Page 3

William Marsh, Peter's partner, executed the contract.

Receipt from Arthur Thompson to Joseph E. Willard October 10, 1900 (scanned)

\$247.60 paid to Arthur Thompson for "material furnished said Thompson and used by in construction of the Masonic Hall at Fairfax, Virginia."

Payment certificate no. 48 for Arthur Thompson dated 10/27/1899 (scanned)

\$800 owed from total cost of \$4,910 for work upon Masonic Hall in Fairfax, Virginia.  
Walter G. Peter architect. This appears to be the first payment to Arthur Thompson.  
Signed by Joseph E. Willard.

Payment certificate no. 49 for Arthur Thompson dated 11/21/1899 (*scanned*)

\$1200 owed from total cost of \$4,910 for work upon Masonic Hall in Fairfax, Virginia.  
Walter G. Peter architect. Second payment to Arthur Thompson.

Payment certificate no. 50 for Arthur Thompson dated 12/22/1899 (*scanned*)

\$1000 owed from total cost of \$4,910 for work upon Masonic Hall in Fairfax, Virginia.  
Walter G. Peter architect. Third payment to Arthur Thompson.

#### **Box I:178**

##### General Correspondence, 1896-1898 folder

Unaddressed letter by Willard dated March 1, 1898  
Discusses Masonic Order, but nearly illegible.

#### **Box I:225**

##### Deeds, Notes, Sketches, Etc.

Deed for Masonic Hall passed from Joseph E. Willard and Belle L. Wyatt Willard to F.W. Richardson, C.V. Ford, R.W. Moore, W.P. Moncure, and James M. Love, Trustees dated 7/30/1900 (*scanned*)

Willard purchased lot for Old Town Hall on 11/8/1897 from C. W. Hunt. Deed indicates that building can be used by county for any purposes on first floor, but that second floor is to be used by Masonic Lodge, including exclusive use of small northwest room. Also deed stipulates that building is to be only used by whites. Any lack of adherence to the restrictions will cause the building ownership to revert to the heirs of Joseph E. and Belle Wyatt Willard.

Sketches for Swimming Pool from Mr. Ossinger to Mrs. Willard, undated (*scanned*)  
Watercolor sketches of swimming pool options. Unclear if for a specific location, such as Layton Hall, or just a general suggestion.

Portrait of Charles Ford (Antonia's Brother) Killed in Action in Civil War (*scanned*)

**Box II: 3**Folder 5: Joseph E. Willard Estate, 1925-1930 folder

Protest Letter regarding Estate of Joseph E. Willard, deceased from Belle Wyatt Willard

Page 3

Two lots in Fairfax, Virginia.

“The decedent at the time of his death owned two lots in the town of Fairfax, Virginia – one on the Falls Church Road near Little River Turnpike, and the other on Mechanics Street, immediately adjacent to the Town Hall.” Discussion of their valuation.

**Peter (Walter G. & Walter G. Jr.) Collection in AIA/AAF Collection, 1880s-1971****Box 26 (Unprocessed)**

Peter, Walter G. Architect. *Fairfax Masonic Hall*, June 30, 1899. Architectural Drawing. Library of Congress, Peter (Walter G. & Walter G. Jr.) Collection in AIA/AAF Collection, 1880s-1971, Unprocessed Box 26.