

It was a substantial two-story brick building, some feet from and above the street level. It was reached by several steps, and during the winter season the footway and street approaches were in a terrible state of mud and puddle. Yet in those primitive times the progress of the erection was regarded with much interest, and not only the people, but the newspapers, actually felt a pride in it as one of the coming constructive wonders of the Antipodes.

One of the latter thus gushingly referred to it :-" The Hall of Arts is nearly complete, and will be ready for occupation in the course of a few days ; the size, arrangements, and architectural proportions of the building will make it, when finished, the noblest edifice in the Province." On the ground-floor were the Library and Reading-room, and for years the Town Clerk had his official quarters in another portion of the building. The meeting place for the Town Council was upstairs in the large room. This larger apartment or "hall," as it used to be grandiloquently styled, was one of the most historic places in Early Melbourne, for here were held some of the most important gatherings in Port Phillip-social, charitable, and political.

*The chronicles of early Melbourne* by Garryowen (Edmund Finn), 1888.