

# *Our Story*

The History of the Columbus Iron Works



COLUMBUS GEORGIA  
CONVENTION & TRADE CENTER

*Make History.*



HAER GA -28-10

## *Columbus Iron Works*

opened in 1853 and began manufacturing kettles, brass castings, steam engines to power grists, lumber mills, riverboats, and cotton gins.

The Civil War expanded the capacity and scope of the Iron Works and the city's other industries. As the textile mills tripled their output and new companies started manufacturing uniforms, swords, pistols, and rifles, the Iron Works began fabricating small cannons for local military units. These weapons included the "Ladies' Defender", which is currently on display in the Trade Center's History Museum.

swords, shells, shot, iron plates and gunboats.



This inside view of the mammoth foundry of the Columbus Iron Works Company is shown in the above photo.

HAER GA-28-19

By 1862, the Iron Works was molding and manufacturing mortars, brass twelve-pounders, and wrought-iron rifled cannons under contract from the Confederate Ordinance Department.



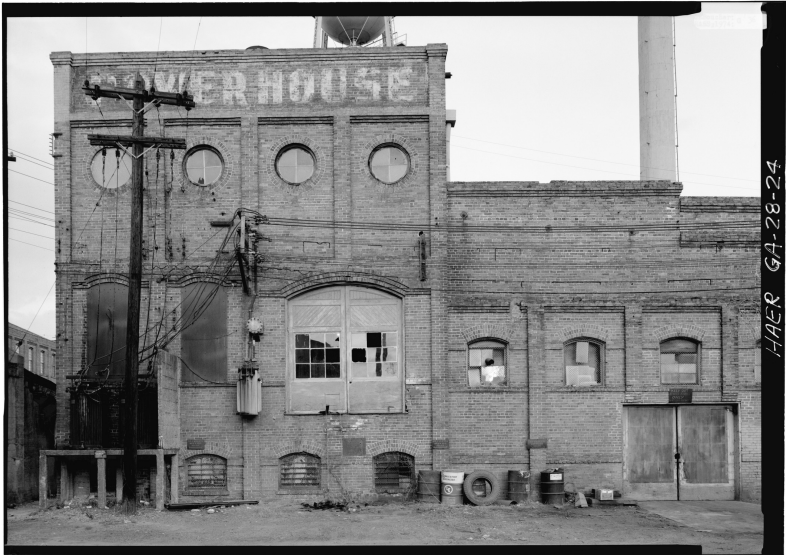
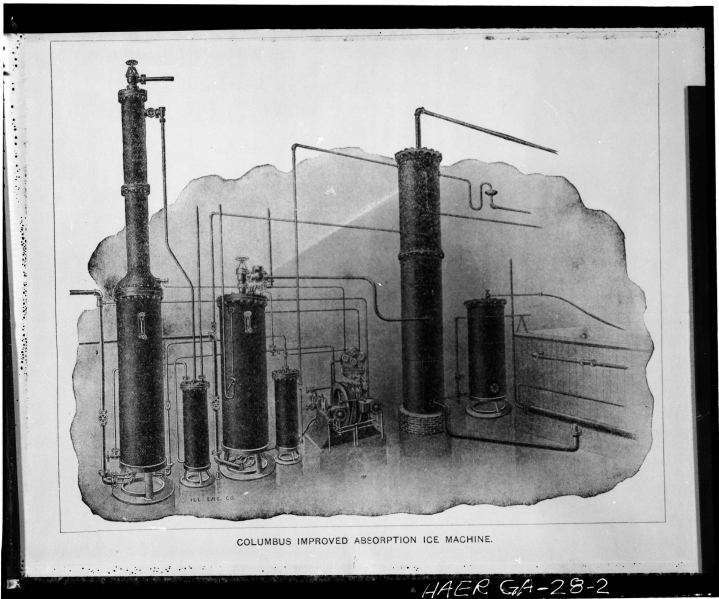
South Hall





Powerhouse

In 1865, Union troops burned the city's cotton warehouses and all war-related industries, including the Iron Works, which collectively had supplied the Confederacy with more manufactured goods than any other city except Richmond, VA. The Iron Works was rebuilt and resumed operation in an expanded facility in 1866.



Top: Columbus improved absorption ice machine.  
Bottom: Outside view of current day meeting rooms 103 & 104.

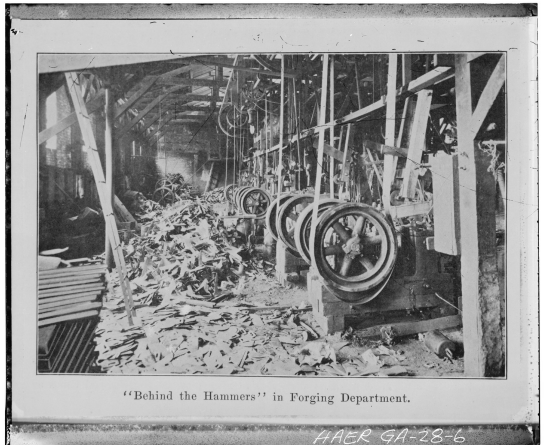
In 1872, the Iron Works erected the city's very first ice machines. The Iron Works was one of the three companies within the United States to begin mass-producing ice machines in the early 1880's. For the next 20 years they developed the nation's best selling ammonia-absorption machines and were installed in ice plants throughout the United States, Latin America, and Canada.

Columbus led the South in textile production, with many of the pulleys and drive shaft systems fabricated in the Iron Works. Using the skills developed during the war, the Iron Works continued to fabricate a wide range of steam engines for plantations, mills, and riverboats and the Iron Works was the only place manufacturing steam engines within Georgia.

On April 11, 1902, the Iron Works burned down, again, and within the two-block complex, only the 1890 Foundry survived. The building was once again rebuilt, and it remained unchanged for sixty-five years. In the Foundry (now South Hall), molten iron from the cupola furnace was poured into hundreds of sand molds, which lined the floor.



Top: Cupola in South Hall.  
Bottom: Forging Department

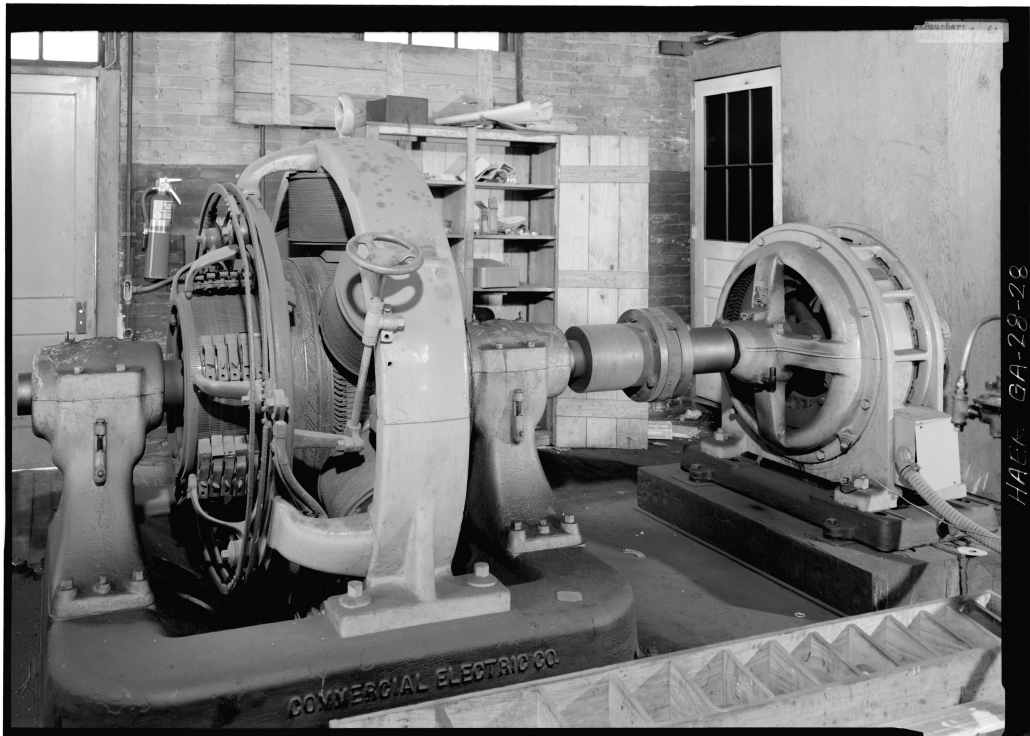


“Behind the Hammers” in Forging Department.

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In the Machine Shop (now North Hall), ice machines, steam engines, stoves, cane mills, and hundreds of other products were machined and assembled. In the Powerhouse (now meeting room 104), a steam engine turned the plant's electrical generator.



Equipment used in the Powerhouse.

In 1925, the W.C. Bradley Company acquired control of the Iron Works and the Iron Works started to concentrate on fewer, more marketable items such as stoves and heaters, tractor-drawn implements following World War II, and forged parts for other manufacturers.



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In the 1940's, the company experimented with barbeque grills, selling the first Charbroil Grill in 1953.

In the early 1970's, W.C. Bradley moved their foundry and forge to new plants and the city of Columbus decided to purchase the building. In 1975 the Iron Works was converted into a convention and trade center.

Page 2 Supplement to The Sunday Ledger-Enquirer, Sunday, September 9, 1979

## Columbus Dream Comes True

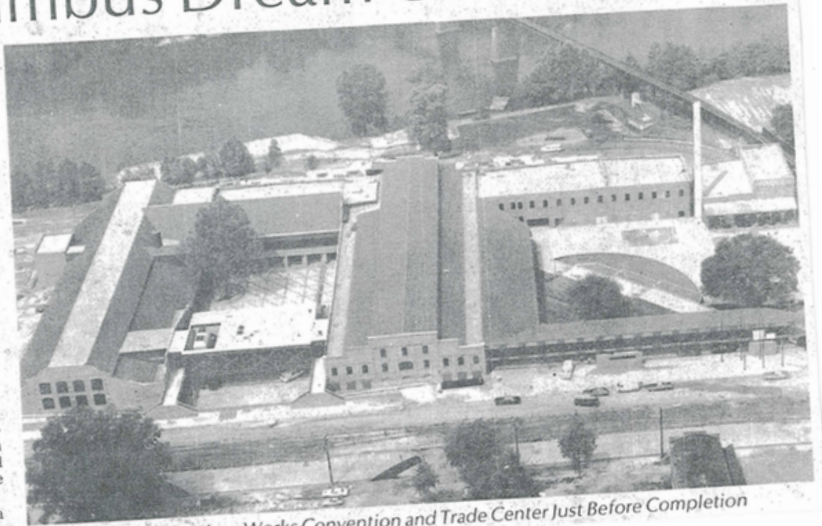
By Constance Johnson  
Ledger Staff Writer

Columbus' lack of a convention center had been a sensitive subject for a long time when in 1969, the chamber of commerce came out with an elaborate catch-up plan.

The chamber proposed that the city build a three-part civic-convention complex on Ninth Street, south of the new Government Center then under construction.

It would be another 10 years, during which ideas were launched, shot down and new ones brought forth, before the Columbus Iron Works Convention and Trade Center became a reality.

During that period, a way had to be found to pay, for the convention



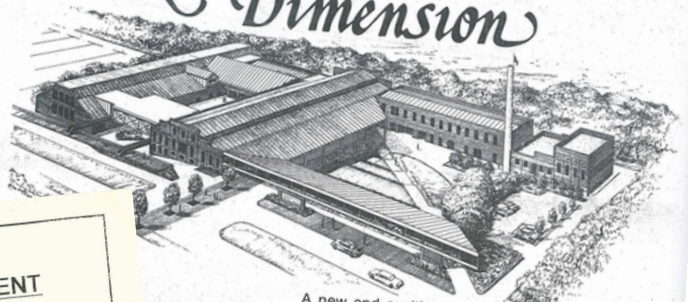
Columbus Iron Works Convention and Trade Center Just Before Completion

*Columbus Georgia Convention & Trade Center*





# Forging A New Dimension



A new and exciting dimension

## MISSION STATEMENT

TO SERVE AS AN ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO EXCELLENCE IN ITS OPERATION AND SERVICE DELIVERY.

TO SERVE AS A CATALYST FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND STABILITY FOR COLUMBUS.

TO SERVE AS A POSITIVE FORCE FOR COMMUNITY IDENTITY AND CITY IMAGE.

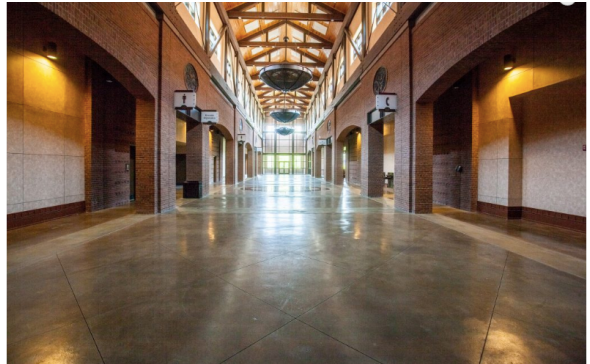


Columbus Iron Works Convention and Trade Center



In 1978, the Columbus Iron Works was declared a National Historic Landmark. In 1979, the Columbus Georgia Convention and Trade Center opened to the public.

Consistent with its long history, the Trade Center once again expanded and reopened in 2004 with double its meeting space - the configuration to its present day.



*Make History.*

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