

## Aniqa's Script

Nestled between skyscrapers that reach to touch the heavens, is the monolith of all railroad stations: Grand Central Terminal. GCT is not just a train station- it is so much more. It took time, effort, and manpower to not just build what we see today, but to transform it so that GCT would be up and running for every generation that passes through its halls. Transforming to meet demands of the current trends is no feat for GCT, especially since Grand Central Terminal is located at the heart of midtown Manhattan, and is composed of not just the terminal, but the surrounding buildings that make up Terminal City. So how do we closely see how much GCT has changed? By understanding the changes that transformed GCT through the changes of one of GCT's most visited halls: the Waiting Room. You're probably wondering what part of GCT is that? Don't remember the location? And for a very good reason, since the Waiting Room was actually renamed Vanderbilt Hall. Vanderbilt Hall today is a major attraction to everyone who passes through GCT, but the Waiting Room was once a public space, for passengers waiting to board the next train out of the city, loiters hanging out in a larger than life building, conmen looking for their next victims, and eventually transformed to the commercialized space we see today that is utilized to simply pursue the economic interests of Grand Central Terminal.

And that is what GCT was intended for- a place where New Yorkers and travelers coming into GCT could find a city within a city, and be able to easily access everything that the city had to offer. Grand central terminal wasn't always the terminal it is today though. It's the third iteration of Grand Central Depot, and was transformed into GCT because of chief engineer William J Wilgus who dreamed of an underground electric trains, that would replace the old steam-powered locomotives. And so Wilgus and his financial backer Cornelius Vanderbilt began the new Grand Central Terminal.

Within the vast building of GCT is the originally known Waiting Room. Its earliest use, when GCT opened in 1913, was just that- a beautiful opulent place where people would wait for the next train out of the city. Catered to the public, the waiting room became one of NYC's most known public space.

During the 1913, many of New York City's buildings were inspired by the 1893 Worlds Columbian Exhibition in Chicago, which led eventually led to City Beautiful Movement. Proponents of this movement created grand aesthetically pleasing public spaces that not just beautified the city but created monuments that sent messages of grandeur through the resonance of time. In NYC the creation of public spaces became a norm- the creation of GCT was rivaled with the creation of other grand spaces like Penn Station that was being built over on 34th street. These public spaces were inspired by the beaux arts architecture that was inspired by Parisian Ecole des Beaux Arts, and meshed with greek mentality of grand public spaces- like the ancient greek baths of Caracalla. GCT was and certainly still is a public space, but the original waiting room was the first public place where NYers were able to gather in such an opulent place.

Like all grand places however, the surrounding times really dictate the uses of these public spaces, and the changing time of war also changed the waiting room