

MIAMI DAILY NEWS

Weather—Partly cloudy tonight and Sunday, possibly showers Sunday. Details on page 16. Water temperature, 11 a. m., 76. Air temperature, 2 p. m., 78.

MIAMI, FLA., SATURDAY, JANUARY 2, 1937

Daytona's Woman Mayor Refuses to Quit, Ready to Fight



—Associated Press photos.

DAYTONA BEACH, Jan. 2. Mayor Irene Armstrong, shown right above at her desk directing armed resistance to hold the city hall, sat tight today, victor at least until Monday over Gov. Dave Sholtz, who ordered her removal from office on grounds of malfeasance in office, neglect of duty and incompetency. The feminine mayor refused to surrender the city hall to officials named by the governor to succeed her and her commission. Police are pictured (above, right) on guard inside the city hall. Adj. Gen. Vivien B. Collins (left below, waving hand) seemingly was not worried when he arrived here to make an effort to enforce the Sholtz order. Mrs. Armstrong, with more than 90 armed guards providing protection, removed city records and files from the city hall. Removal of the records is shown at right below.

DAYTONA WOMAN MAYOR STICKS BY HER OFFICE

**Policemen, Other Armed
City Workers, Defend
Commissioners**

MILITIA ENJOINED

**Sholtz Had Mobilized Na-
tional Guard to En-
force Ouster**

(By United Press)

DAYTONA BEACH, Jan. 2.—“I don't want to be dramatic or cast myself in the role of a heroine, but I intend to hold this fort against all invaders until convinced that I should surrender,” today said Mrs. Edith Irene Armstrong, the 50-year-old grandmother, whose refusal to obey Governor Dave Sholtz' orders that she quit as **mayor** of **Daytona Beach** nearly resulted in civil war in this wealthy resort city yesterday.

Mrs. Armstrong said the governor's charges against her, “malfeasance and misfeasance in office, neglect of duty and incompetency,” were patently ridiculous, since she did not take office until Dec. 10 and had not had time to prove whether she was a good, bad or indifferent **mayor**.

“The governor is not actually accusing me, but using me as a means of venting his personal hatred on my husband, whom I succeeded. I would be a weak character, indeed, to allow the governor to so ruthlessly dominate the affairs of this city. We have no idea of yielding this well, I guess you call it a fort.”

And the city hall in the palm trees is just that. The windows are barred, the front door is fortified with planks and an iron safe, and the defenders inside are well supplied with arms and ammunition.

It has been stripped of all municipal documents. Truck loads of papers and filing cabinets were removed yesterday and cached on the beach side of the city.

City Manager M. S. Couch and Francis Mills, city clerk, moved into the city hall with the guards and declared they would remain in the building until matters were

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settled. They slept on cots in the engineering department.

The crisis precipitated by Governor Sholtz' mobilization of the national guard to force Mrs. Armstrong and her commission to vacate their offices, and Mrs. Armstrong's mobilization of all city employes was solved by Circuit Judge Herbert Frederick, who enjoined Governor Sholtz and the commanders of four companies of militia.

All municipal business was suspended today by order of **Mayor Armstrong**. She proclaimed the extension of the New Year holiday, thus closing all city offices.

Judge Frederick's injunction is returnable Monday afternoon when he will decide to make it permanent or dissolve it. Governor Sholtz, implacable political enemy of Mrs. Armstrong and her husband, whom he forced to resign as **Daytona Beach's mayor** last November, leaves office at the expiration of his term Monday midnight.

A new crisis threatening the same grave consequences as did last night's was feared, no matter which way he ruled. Governor Sholtz was felt to be determined to remove the Armstrong government and replace it with one of his own choosing. A proclamation of martial law would suspend all civil authority, including that of courts.

Such a proclamation apparently was feared by the Armstrongs as they made no move to relax their guard, though hastily mobilized soldiers had been disbanded to their homes. No one was permitted in city hall or on its lawn. Persons who approached were challenged and ordered away. Cots had been moved in where the guards slept in relief.

"I am determined, as constitutional **mayor** of **Daytona Beach**, to exhaust every legal and legitimate means available to keep Governor Sholtz and his cohorts from taking charge and control of the city for the purpose of exploiting it," said the spirited, middle-aged woman who was named **mayor** only a month ago when her husband resigned.

Although granting of the injunction relieved tension in a situation that for a time threatened to cause open warfare in the heart of the state's winter playground for the wealthy, Mrs. Armstrong saw to it that any surprise attack would be repulsed by her police forces. The city hall bristled with submachine guns.

The determined **mayor** immediately packed the city hall with the full police force and defied Sholtz or any of his followers to move her out. The governor replied by ordering Collins to mobilize the national guard.

It was feared that Sholtz' new commission might order dismissal of the city's entire police and fire departments. American Legionnaires hurriedly organized patrols to take over routine policing duties.

Demobilization of the national guardsmen was ordered by Adjt. Gen. Vivian Collins, a member of the new commission which Sholtz appointed to take over the city.

"There is nothing we can do until Monday," Collins said. "This begins to look like a long drawn-out affair. There is little danger of bloodshed now."

Trouble started when Sholtz, who steps down from his office next Tuesday, ordered removal of Mrs. Armstrong, City Commissioners Mrs. Eliza Robinson, Lyle C. Ramsey and Ralph M. Richards, City Clerk Francis Mills and City Manager Milton S. Couch. He charged them with malfeasance of office and incompetence.

With the city fearing violence, Collins called out guardsmen here and at nearby Sanford. Sheriff S. E. Stone, who served the ouster notice on Mrs. Armstrong, said the troops would "preserve the peace" and disclaimed any intention of charging the city hall or engaging in any combat with the mayor's "army."

Sholtz, a former Daytona Beach resident, has an old feud with the Armstrong family. He attempted to oust Mrs. Armstrong's husband, who preceded her as mayor, but he resigned to forestall the action. Sholtz is leaving the governor's mansion next week to devote his full time to the office of exalted ruler of the Elks.