

Newark, Public Buildings

New Post Office Will House All Local Federal Bureaus

KEEP

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Exercises Tomorrow Will Celebrate Laying of Cornerstone—Total Cost of \$6,150,000 Divided Almost Equally Between Land and Building

Newark's new postoffice and Federal building, which will be the scene of cornerstone exercises tomorrow, will cost approximately \$6,150,000 when completed and will be the home for all federal bureaus in this vicinity.

The cornerstone will be laid at 11 A. M. by Postmaster General Farley, who will make an address. Prior to this, Mayor Ellenstein and Governor Moore also will speak. After this ceremony a luncheon will be held at the Robert Treat Hotel.

The site for the building, which is bounded by Franklin, Walnut and Mulberry streets and Vroom alley, was purchased by the government for a little more than \$3,000,000. Forty-two tracts of land were acquired. The building will cost approximately \$3,000,000.

Wrecking of the old buildings started September 29, 1931, after the government had engaged in a series of court hearings to gain title. Ground was broken for the new edifice August 26, 1932, when Federal Judge Guy L. Fake operated the steam shovel at this ceremony. Three days later the actual work began.

The Italian classical design of the edifice is similar to that of other Treasury Department buildings now being erected. The facade will be laid with a base of granite and the balance will be of Indiana limestone. The building is five and a half stories high.

Large Floor Space.

The site occupies 166,000 square feet, of which 95,000 are devoted to the building. There will be 475,000 square feet of space on the various floors. The cubature of the edifice totals 7,300,000 feet.

The main public spaces and some of the five court rooms will be finished with a variety of American marble. The postmaster's office, the judges' chambers and the other courtrooms will be finished with various American woods. Eight high-speed elevators and six stairways will be in the building. A special ventilating system will be installed.

The basement will house the Department of Labor (Bureau of Naturalization), Navy Department, Naval Reserve personnel, Bureau of Marine Corps, Navigation, customs appraisers, stores, stamp and envelop stores, rifle range and storage rooms.

The first floor will be utilized by the postal department for postoffice working space, stamps, money orders, registry and other postal functions.

Postmaster on Second Floor.

On the second floor will be the postmaster, the assistant postmaster, cafeteria, medical unit, postal inspectors, offices, work space, lockers, lavatories and the swing room, where the letter carriers assemble between deliveries.

The third floor will be for the Department of Justice. This floor will be devoted to the courts, five judges' chambers, probation officers' quarters and the United States marshal.

The fourth floor will be used by the court clerk, the United States attorney and his assistants, the referee in bankruptcy, the Grand Jury, Secret Service, Civil Service commissioner, Veterans' Bureau and Department of Agriculture.

The Internal Revenue, Bureau of Industrial Alcohol, customs and the organized army reserves will be on the top floor.

The building was designed by William E. Lemman of Newark and George Oakley Totten of Washington. Major Willis B. Hayes is the engineer directing erection of the structure and Maceo Falco and Roy S. Eyre are assistant engineers. N. P. Severin Co. of Chicago is the general contractor.

Orphans to See Races

Children of the Hebrew Sheltering Orphan Home will be taken to the Nutley Velodrome Sunday afternoon to see the bicycle races as the guests of Harry Mendel, manager of the track. Miss Bertha Wolfson and Miss Maxine Polaner, members of the Junior League, will accompany the children. Refreshments will be served.

Eagle on Porch

All that ever turned up was the huge stone eagle that had graced the front of the building. It was found years later on the porch of a private house in Upper Montclair.

Even before the post office expired in the face of the drive for bigger and better things, the old Morris Canal had met its death.

The advent of railroads sounded the initial death knell for the famed water highway. Its business slumped rapidly, perked up briefly during the Civil War and then skidded again.

In 1871, the Lehigh Valley Railroad leased the canal from the state to supply an outlet to the New York market because it then had no New Jersey line. By 1910, the railroad reported that it had lost \$1,873,328 in its operation of the canal.

Din Over Ditch

Throughout the state, a civic din arose to abandon the canal because it had become an unused watery ditch. It made an ideal swimming hole for the youngsters in some spots, but at other places it was an odorous eyesore of stagnant water.

In March, 1923, the Legislature gave final approval to terms under which the Lehigh Valley retained the canal basin in Jersey City as a railroad terminus and the right-of-way through Jersey City and Phil-

lipsburg. In return, the railroad turned all the other canal property back to the state and also paid \$875,000.

The Morris Canal Abandonment Acts were passed by the Legislature in 1924, directing that the water be drained and the canal's highway bridges be removed and replaced with fill at roadway grade. Most of the cities along the route subsequently bought the canal land from the state.

Newark decided to use the canal for a city transit system and a highway overhead at a construction cost of \$11,000,000. The section of Raymond boulevard from Lock to Broad streets and the City Subway beneath it were formally opened on November 2, 1932.

New, Modern Building

In the meantime, public demands for a newer and bigger post office and Federal building grew louder and louder in the 1930s and finally could no longer be denied. The cornerstone for the present post office was laid in 1934 and the huge, handsome building was opened for business March 30, 1936.

WPA wrecking crews were turned loose on the old post office in October, 1936, and a year later it had disappeared from the face of downtown Newark. It left a barren hole, filled with memories of past service to the city and hopes for the future.