

7 Newark Public Buildings

No Public Buildings

In 1836, but City Has Progressed Far Since Then

Beautiful public buildings have been reared in Newark, by the city itself, by Essex County and by the Federal Government. But when the city received its charter a century ago there was nothing that could be called a public building within its boundaries, beautiful or not.

The first session held by the governing body, after the charter was granted and accepted by vote, was held in a room over St. John's Lodge, F. & A. M., in the second home of Newark Academy, at Broad and Academy streets. The first Common Council met there at 2 P. M. April 15, 1836.

The Academy building was not particularly suited to its new use and April 7, 1837, the city purchased the Market House property, situated on the south side of Market street a little east of the present Nutria street. There the city conducted its business until April 10, 1838, when the building was destroyed by fire. From an architectural standpoint it was no loss.

City Hall-Court House.

The city and county then combined to construct the old Court House at Springfield avenue and Market street. It was the first building constructed for public use in the City of Newark. The building was of brownstone in the Egyptian style of architecture. It was modeled after Tombs Prison in New York and was a gloomy structure. Here the city and county governments were conducted ten years from the time of its occupancy, January 2, 1838.

The city in 1848 desired to have quarters of its own, and accordingly the third floor of Library Hall, located in Market street on the north side east of Halsey street, was rented at \$100 a year. By 1854 these quarters became so inadequate that the old Center Market Building was increased in size to accommodate the city government. The entire second floor was given over to city departments and the police station and jail were housed in the east end of the building, which was situated in what is now Raymond boulevard, between Broad and Mulberry streets. The cost to the city of these quarters was \$53,766.

Growing Steadily

Newark was growing steadily, and by 1860 the city fathers were casting about for a more suitable City Hall. Three years later the Mc-

Gregg House, or City Hall, at Broad and William streets was purchased for \$89,048. The building was occupied with appropriate ceremonies September 21, 1864. This rambling structure was altered and improved in 1889, and a fourth story was added to accommodate the growing city departments.

At the turn of the century, for the first time Newark thought about building a City Hall. The present one was constructed of New Hampshire granite, its interior marble. The building has a rotunda seventy-seven feet high finished in Italian marble. It was constructed at a cost of \$2,097,156 and it was occupied December 20, 1906.

At the time it was predicted the building would be adequate to house the city government and departments for 100 years. Already, however, the police headquarters and Board of Education annexes have been built behind City Hall.

First Federal Building.

The first federal building was built in Newark when the Post Office was constructed in 1858 on the site of the former one in Broad street. It was a handsome building for those days, being practically square, of three stories, and with an entrance on Broad street of five classic arches.

About 1870 the postal business taxed the capacity of the building and agitation was begun for a new one. The movement bore fruit in 1890 when plans were approved for the old building in Broad street. During construction the postal authorities were housed in the Old First Baptist Church in Academy street. They moved into the second building in Broad street in 1898.

The corner stone for the new Post Office Building in Federal Square was laid by Postmaster General Farley in April, 1934. The huge beautiful building will be occupied this year by the post office and many federal departments in the city.

Razed

The old County Court House was razed by the county shortly after the beginning of the century to make a place for the present Court House, which was occupied in 1907. The building has an exterior of white marble and cost about \$2,000,000. All county officers were housed in it until 1928, when the Hall of Records, behind the Court House and fronting on High street, was completed.

At that time all county offices except the courts were moved into the Hall of Records, constructed of Indiana limestone at a cost of more than \$3,000,000. The building is four stories and has an entrance of eight marble columns.

The Newark Public Library was first opened to the public in 1889 in rented space at 14 West Park street. The present library building in Washington street at the junction with Broad street was completed March 14, 1901. The vestibule of the building is constructed of white Italian marble in mosaic. It opens into a central rectangular court with wainscoting of marble. An imposing marble staircase rises through the middle of the court.