

419 NORTH SECOND AVENUE



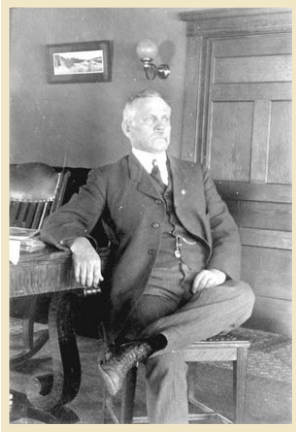
A W MELLON
SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY
JAMES A WELMORE
ACTING SUPERVISING ARCHITECT
1927

419 NORTH SECOND AVENUE

If the bricks could talk they'd tell us amazing stories about what they've seen and heard since 1928 when the building at 419 North Second Avenue was completed. Sit down and relax because our story about the building at 419 North Second Avenue will start before the building was even conceived as a good idea. Back to around the time Sandpoint became a city.

It's 1892 and L.D. (Lorenzo) Farmin was newly named the representative to Sandpoint of the Great Northern Railroad. The arrival of the railroad created all sorts of opportunities and Farmin and his wife, Ella Mae, having a bit of foresight, took advantage by buying the rights to 160 acres along the west edge of Sand Creek.

In 1898, Farmin hired a civil engineer, William Ashley, to survey and plat the city of Sandpoint. It's a well-told story that Ella Mae named the streets of the new town at her kitchen table, but she wasn't alone in that enterprise. Josephine LeHuquet, Mrs. Earl Farmin, L.D. Farmin and William Ashley were also there to help.



L. D. (Lorenzo) Farmin

In a story written by Sandpoint historian, Bob Gunter, L.D. Farmin determined that the Avenues would run north and south and be numbered streets: First Avenue, Second Avenue, etc. He also wanted the east west streets named after the many trees indigenous to the area.

"The honor of naming the first street fell to Miss LeHuquet and Pine Street got its name. The next to choose was Ella Farmin and she refused to follow her husband's direction and named her street Church Street because the only church in town was located there. Mr. Farmin named the main thoroughfare between the Great Northern and Northern Pacific railroads, Main Street.

"When the turn to name a street fell to Mrs. Earl Farmin she named her street Cedar. She had a special love for the tall cedars found in the area and would on occasion ride her horse through the

beautiful trees," Gunter related. And, so it went until all the streets in the original plat had names like Fir, Larch and soon to be a part of our story, Alder.

To say that Sandpoint was a little rough and tumble in those days would be an



understatement. Besides the population of indigenous peoples, there were around one hundred folks mostly working in the timber and

railroad industries, twenty-three saloons, several houses of ill repute, two stores, two hotels, one restaurant and, of course, a post office.

From 1882 to 1893 the post office was located on the east side of Sand Creek and was called Pend d'Oreille Post Office. In 1893, thanks to the development of the city, the name changed to Sandpoint Post Office.

It then moved a couple of times and from 1908 to 1928 was located on the Northwest corner of First Avenue and Main Street just one block south of where MickDuff's first restaurant was located at 312 North First Avenue.



U. S. Post Office on the east side of First Avenue & Main Street

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In early 1912, longest-serving Idaho Congressman Burton Lee French was encouraged to seek federal funding for a building to house the post office and federal offices. A notice in the Pend d'Oreille Review dated January 12 stated, "Here's hoping that Rep. French gets that \$100,000 federal building for Sandpoint."



Burton Lee French

A little over a year later, February 21, 1913, the Review announced that the House of Representatives had approved \$70,000 for the construction of the federal building.

"Options upon three sites were secured by Postmaster Wilson and forwarded to Washington. Where they were, and the amounts called for, will not be divulged by the postmaster, under his instructions from Washington. If the appropriation becomes immediately available it is likely the work of construction upon the building will be under

IDAHO. FRIDAY, MARCH 7, 1913

U. S. APPROPRIATION GOES \$70,000 Federal Building Further Assured for Sandpoint.

The following telegram received from Senator James H. Brady, Wednesday, by Secretary Mayne of the Commercial club makes it assured that Sandpoint will have a federal building:

"Samuel Mayne, Secretary Sandpoint Commercial Club:

"Acknowledge your letter of February 20, containing resolutions of your club. I am pleased to say that we were able to secure the enactment in the senate of the house provision appropriating \$70,000 for a federal building in your city and the bill was approved by the president.

"JAMES H. BRADY."

Pend d'Oreille Review

house the post office and local forestry bureau," the article said.

An advertisement in the Pend d'Oreille Review on March 25 summoned "tenders for a site for a new post office building. This site needed to be a corner lot, centrally and conveniently located and must be approximately 19,000 feet in area and if rectangular its dimension must be not less than 120 feet."

way in a year or two. If the appropriation provides 'when funds are available' it will be a longer length of time before actual work on the building will be underway. The new federal building would

A dispatch on April 15 was published in both The North Idaho News and The Spokesman-Review from Washington that stated several tenders had been offered including Citizens State Bank, \$11,000; L.D. Farmin \$4,000; Isaac Boyer donation; Mrs. Alice Steinlein \$4,000; Olive Wilson \$800; John A. Humbird \$7,500; Prater-York Co. \$7,000.

Things didn't move along very quickly, however. In October, the Pend d'Oreille Review's headline read: "Will take government two or three years to get around to Federal Building – French gives many reasons." Rep. French had replied to a request from the Review for an update. His response in part read:

"I am compelled to write you that the erection of public buildings, excepting in the case of emergency such as the disaster in San Francisco or at Galveston, proceeds upon the basis of a list prepared with relation to the time a building site may be selected in the several towns. Many buildings that were authorized two and three years ago have not been begun as yet.

"Sites have been selected and construction work must necessarily be had on these buildings before the new ones will be undertaken. I do not know what may have been done looking to the selection of a site at Sandpoint, but I hope whatever site may be selected will be one the title to which will be clear and that no delay may occur in quieting the title as occurred at Coeur d'Alene. As a matter of fact, it will probably be a couple of years before the department will be able to undertake the building at Sandpoint, though I wish that I could write you that it would be earlier and it is possible that it may be earlier."

Sounds a bit like a politician talking. Was it mentioned that French was a long-serving Congressman? He served a total of 26 years in the U.S. House of Representatives although not concurrently.

A month later a dispatch to the Northern Idaho News from the Portland Chamber of Commerce stated that although Sandpoint had received the congressional appropriation of \$70,000, it could be three to five years before plans could be prepared.

"There are 734 authorized buildings at present in the architect's office at Washington, all subject

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subject to this same delay," the dispatch said. "The architect's office at Washington at present has virtually the same number of clerks that it had twenty years ago with the same wage rate, and no authority to increase either except by act of Congress." Can we spell bureaucracy?

The Chamber letter signed by E.C. Giltner, Secretary also said that there was a bill introduced in the Senate to "relieve this very unbusinesslike (sic) situation, and authorizes the architect's office, with certain limitations to employ outside architects so that these buildings may be constructed in the near future."

So, what's the "near future?" A short three years later, February 18, 1916, the Pend d'Oreille Review reported that a site had been selected. The United States Treasury Department had accepted Farmin & Sons' offer to sell three lots on the corner of Second Avenue and Alder Street for a sum of \$4,000.

"This site on the corner directly north of the First National Bank was one of four or five sites which the government had under consideration for some time," the Review article said. "The selection of the site did not mean that immediate preparations would be made for the erection of the building for it is well understood that it will be two or three years before the government would get to the Sandpoint building, but it was one step further toward the materialization of the coveted plum."

In January of 1917 a superintendent of construction for the United States Government, Engineer David C. Trott came to Sandpoint. Trott's expertise was in surveying soil to determine the feasibility of laying a foundation for the federal building. To do this he surveyed all the buildings in town to determine how much soil settling had occurred.

Trott, in conjunction with J.K. Ashley, Jr. made a

topographical survey of the federal building site. On January 12 he recommended to the Secretary of the Treasury that an appropriation of \$20,000 be allocated for the beginning of construction with the promise of a building start in "about a year or fourteen months."

But Trott and Ashley's testing continued. On January 26 the Pend d'Oreille Review reported

that Trott, who was overseeing a project in Kalispell, was to return to Sandpoint to observe Ashley's soil resistance testing.

"During the past week the uprights of the pile driver have been constructed and the steam tractor from Harry Millard has been secured for operating

power," the Review article said. Who Harry Millard was is anyone's guess. "When the uprights were being placed on the ground structure yesterday they slipped when a guy rope loosened and broke a number of telephone wires in the alley at the rear of the site but have since been replaced and everything is ready for the starting of the tests tomorrow.

"Five pilings are to be driven to a depth of 45 feet at various points of the site and the soil resistance recorded with each blow of the hammer, a 1,800 pound block loaned by the county for the tests which will take all day tomorrow and perhaps a portion of another day."

Then it snowed, and they had trouble moving the heavy equipment. However, they persevered and the testing was completed, and Trott trotted back to Kalispell where he was supervising the erection of a post office building.

Trott's report stated that pilings were driven to a depth of 43 feet and "while bedrock was not reached the piles met with so much resistance that they were shattered by the blows of the hammer. The plans for the foundation of the building will be adapted to the character of the soil."



Harry Millard on his steam tractor.

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On February 27 a letter was received by the Postmaster from the Treasury Department notifying him that the sketch plan had been approved. According to this plan, the frontage of the building would be on Second Avenue and suggested that the mayor and other prominent citizens be apprised of that decision and if any reasons for change arose they should be notified immediately. The Postmaster was given a week to reply "otherwise this department will proceed with the preparation of the drawings and will not at a later date give any consideration whatever to a change of frontage."

April 6, 1917. The U.S. declares war on Germany. The war to end all wars put an end to the idea of building a federal building in Sandpoint for several years. Not only was the government occupied by the war effort, prices were high. Then, after the war a recession that lasted several years was followed by a weak economy leaving federal public works projects on hold.

A glimmer of hope arose in December of 1917. A dispatch from Washington stated that the "Pacific Northwest figures little in the estimates for public buildings and two items, completing a building in Cordova, Alaska and \$30,000 for the Sandpoint post office building has survived."

Don't cheer yet. On March 7, 1919 an article in the Pend d'Oreille Review reported that the appropriation for the erection of a federal building in Sandpoint was "a victim of the Senate filibuster and languished with the many appropriation bills which failed to get up to vote before the adjournment of Congress on March 3."

But wait. The Northern Idaho News reported on March 25 that Supervisor Fitzwater of the Pend Oreille Forest had applied for office space – five rooms to be exact – in the new Sandpoint federal building and that County Agent Ludwick had asked for two. Washington replied that that the plans for a second story on the building would easily provide the space but there was no word as to when they could expect these offices to be completed.

It looked encouraging when on April 22 Northern Idaho News said that the federal building had advanced a step nearer reality by the government's request for bids.

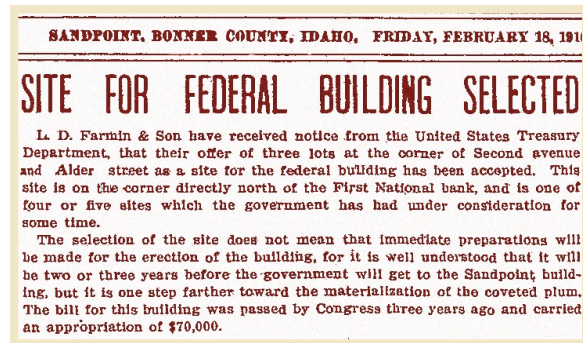
The specifications were for a "brick structure trimmed with stone, two stories in height, 72 feet wide, by 38 feet deep, with an alcove one-story high and 25 feet wide extending back 14 feet. It will front on Second Avenue. The entrance in the center is reached by three steps to a platform 47 feet long and 10 feet wide and flanked by balustrade. The vestibule gives entrance to the lobby

which is 14 feet wide extending across the front of the building.

"The boxes form one wall of this lobby. At the extreme left end of the lobby will be the money order, war savings and registry window, 15 x 22 feet, and at the right the postmaster's office, 10 x 15, while in the center will be the stamp and general delivery windows. Both the postmaster's office and the money order department are provided with large vault rooms. The workroom is 25 x 36 and has a vestibule entrance from the back to receive the mail. The upstairs of the building is 72 x 36 feet with a longitudinal corridor running through it and dividing it into two parts.

"The front part is divided into five office rooms and the rear part has two office rooms, a large civil service room and toilet rooms. There is a full basement under the building, with ample room for storage, boiler room and other purposes, including a swing room for the carriers when not on duty. In accordance with the rule for post office buildings, lookouts are provided at important points.

"Not a thing is overlooked in the plans, even the number and width of the stripes that shall be painted on the door of the vault. The sidewalk, curbing, landscaping and seeding of the lawn, fans for the workrooms, waterproofing of the basement, and so on. Everything of high quality characteristic of government work. Altogether there are 26 sheets of plans and about 60 pages of specifications. Contractors must bid on the job as a



Pend d'Oreille Review, February 18, 1916

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A track meet in early 1920s—Looking north on Second Avenue between Cedar and Alder Streets.

whole and copies of the plans and specifications will be furnished to those who are able and desire to do so. Bids will be opened at the office of the supervising architect, Washington DC on the 22nd of May," The North Idaho News reported.

While the Feds were determining who would get the contract for work, in August the Commercial Club was trying to agree on a "suitable and feasible" memorial to Dr. Malcolm McKinnon. Dr. McKinnon was a prominent physician who was killed in July when his car overturned after hitting a chuckhole in Eastern Oregon while the doctor, his wife and another couple were on vacation. None of the other passengers were injured.

The Commercial Club decided that a memorial fountain in front of the new federal building would be appropriate and certainly more affordable and less of an undertaking than erecting a hospital in Dr. McKinnon's name. The club agreed to ask Washington for the necessary space and to make the design. Washington must have balked, because there is no other news about this proposed memorial.

In October, with a little misplaced zeal, the city fathers decided to put in a walk on the east side of the federal building site. Then came notice that the government wouldn't pay for the improvement so work on the north side stopped. Officials decided to fund the work and to seek reimbursement. But in December of 1920 the North Idaho News told of a communication from Rep. French that although he would present the

matter it was his opinion that "no provision was made for such bills."

Then came good news. Post Office officials were notified in March, 1921 that the building had Congressional approval for appropriation and that construction would begin as soon as prices of materials became more stable. At that time the Post Office was renting space in a building owned by, you guessed it, L.D. Farmin and Sons.

But in September, when asked when officials could expect construction to begin Rep. French said that he didn't believe any federal buildings would be constructed soon because of the "tendency of Congress to cut down expenditures wherever possible.

"There is hope that Congress is to start up the languishing steel and iron trade and may consider it necessary in the interests of assistance to that industry to order the construction of Federal buildings," he said. "Sandpoint will take its turn with other cities."

And, so they waited. Patiently? Maybe. Maybe not. Maybe the citizens of Sandpoint decided they didn't like the location.

An article in the Northern Idaho News published on March 18, 1924 reiterated why the location at Second Avenue and Alder Street was chosen while explaining that city officials were now questioning whether the site was "convenient."

One of the two reasons given for the government choosing the site was because the land was donated. But, remember that L.D. Farmin

NEW FEDERAL BUILDING HERE LOOMS AS POSSIBILITY FOR COMING YEAR

After Laying Dormant for Past Five Years, Question Is To Be Pushed To Fruition--Site Already Acquired Near First National Bank

Now that Sandpoint has entered upon a new year—one that promises great results in all lines of endeavor—the question of constructing the new postoffice building here is up once more and it is hoped that before the good old summer time rolls around that active work will be started on the site that has already been secured by the government.

The site which consists of three lots, located a short distance north of the First National bank, was donated for government use, is a most central one and the erection of a federal building there will add greatly to the appearance of that portion of the city.

History tells The Review that just before the world-wide war started that the sum of something like \$40,000 had been appropriated by the congress of the United States for the purpose of erecting a suitable federal building here for the purpose of housing the local postoffice and other federal offices but as the war progressed, all federal building appropriations were diverted into the channel of winning the war and that as soon as possible.

Dormant for Over Five Years

Nothing has been done in the matter of hastening work on the building. The question, however, has been revived again, and it is expected that the local Chamber of Commerce will within the next few days move to bring about the desired end that has been slumbering for so long a period.

According to local historians Congressman Burton L. French was instrumental in having the original appropriation passed. He is known to be favorable to the location of such a building and will no doubt be glad to take up the question of securing the

much desired building at an early a date as possible.

Means Much to Sandpoint

The erection of a permanent federal building here would mean much to Sandpoint as the construction work would give employment to a large number of skilled artisans during the summer months. It would also be the means now bringing more ready money into the city which would mean much to the merchant, butcher, baker and candle-stick maker.

Would Mean Other Activities

Once work on the federal building was started it would undoubtedly mean that other building activities would begin throughout the city.

It is a well known fact that scores of new homes are needed in Sandpoint as there has been a demand for modern residences for the past number of years to take care of the growing population of the city and all will admit that Sandpoint is steadily growing.

Real estate men find it impossible to supply the demand for rented houses of the better kind and there is only one remedy for this—build more and make them as attractive as possible.

Now Is the Time to Start Things

The first of the year is also a good time to start things. It is a good time to think about the new federal building, to organize and then present the claims for the construction of the same. It is also a good time to plan other developments looking to the beautification of the city as during the long winter evenings that are now at hand everybody has plenty of time to devote to such ideal measures.

And in the meantime let us all wake up and go out and land that federal building!

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and Sons was paid \$4,000 back in 1916. That's perhaps a reporting error.

The second reason mentioned in the article was that the location was within the 80-rod limit within which a railroad had to deliver the mail to the post office without incurring a cost to the government. But, the Interstate Commerce Commission quickly ruled out the 80-rod rule that allowed the government to get away without paying the railroads for their services.

Then the plot thickened. The newspaper said, and perhaps this is an editorial opinion, "The present site is altogether too far on one side of the business district. If we had but one grocery store and it was located as far from the center of the business section as the federal building site is, what an enormous amount of extra trouble would imposed upon the public.

"Yet a post office is used more than any store in the city. In large cities the central post office does not make so much difference. Only a comparatively small district can be served from one center anyway and the situation has to be met by the establishment of stations throughout the city. But in the case of Sandpoint it may be a generation perhaps two of them, before there will be sufficient for a substation.

"This city could well afford to pay for a site and donate it to the government and have the post office centrally located, not only as a convenience to the people but for the maintenance of a logical development of the city which by all considerations of city buildings should be around the school house square."

This controversy was put on hold when the Mayor, E.W. Wheelan, appointed a finance committee at the end of March to work with the Chamber of Commerce and citizens to hasten the construction because appropriations for the plans as drawn were now insufficient. The estimate to build was now \$115,000, not \$70,000.

The city councilmen thought that the building would be built sooner if they took steps to increase the appropriation \$45,000 rather than redrawing the plans that could take several years and increase the building costs exponentially. They decided to take up this scheme with Rep. French and Congressman Addison T. Smith who also represented Idaho. And, so they did.

July 9, 1925 the Treasury Department of the United States advertised for bids to erect a two-story brick post office building at the corner of Second and Poplar Streets. Is that an error on the location? It isn't known. But, what is known is that all the bids submitted were rejected as reported in the Pend d'Oreille Review on August 13.

"Roe & Scevenius, local bidders, were notified of this fact the first of the week," the article said. "Checks with the bids have been returned and the building will be redesigned and bids will again be received."

The opposition to the location continued. February 17, 1926 an article published in the Spokane Chronicle told how business interests were "not at all pleased with the announcement that the lower house of Congress has passed the general building bill, carrying an item of \$115,000 for a federal building in Sandpoint and that the bill is expected to pass the Senate."

The elusive federal building seemed to be close to a reality when on June 10 the Review reported that Postmaster C.J. Shoemaker got word that a federal building inspector was due in Sandpoint in a few days. The inspector was to "look over the present post office building site at Second Avenue and Alder Street as well as other sites which may be suitable."

Now here's the quandary. Congress had authorized \$80,000 for the federal building here. (The first reports were that \$150,000 had been appropriated, but that was incorrect.) Some citizens had written to the post office department protesting the location which many thought was why the inspector was on his way. However, the fear by some of the business interests was that the inspector might agree that the site wasn't appropriate and that may set this project back several years, perhaps indefinitely.

So why not the Second Avenue and Alder Street location? What were locals' objections? Here's what the Northern Idaho News wrote on June 15, 1926:

"There is no business institution in the city that is used so much day after day by the people of all classes as the post office. Probably every businessman visits it from four to eight times a day. The prospect therefore of having four or five blocks added to the length of each trip is not a

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very inviting one to these constant users of the mails.

"The general public feels this additional and unnecessary distance during the holiday season with considerable force. They throng the stores buying their gifts and then carry them by the armfuls to the post office for mailing. Why should the post office be carried away to one side of the town? One argument which the department uses in the location of post office buildings regardless of the business center is that the mail of the business part of the city is taken care of by carrier and by sub-station. That holds good in large cities. Mails are coming in every few minutes and there is a constant stream. Carriers make hourly deliveries, perhaps right up to the close of the day.

"In our case the last afternoon delivery leaves at two o'clock. Some of the most important mail comes in near the close of the afternoon and the town would have to grow more than it is likely to in several decades before the department would consent to putting on a late afternoon delivery, and it will be as long a time until we get a sub-station.

"Businessmen therefore should wake up to the importance of moving it now if there is to be anything done about this post office site matter. It would not be difficult to find one much more centrally located and convenient to the patrons than the present one on the north side. It assuredly will be built there, if it is built at all, unless pressure is brought to bear upon the two departments having the matter in their hands."

So, the mayor appointed a committee whose recommendations were either accepted or not because there's no word about what they

determined should be done about the location. What we do know is that in November the project went out to bid for a federal building at Second Avenue and Alder Street.

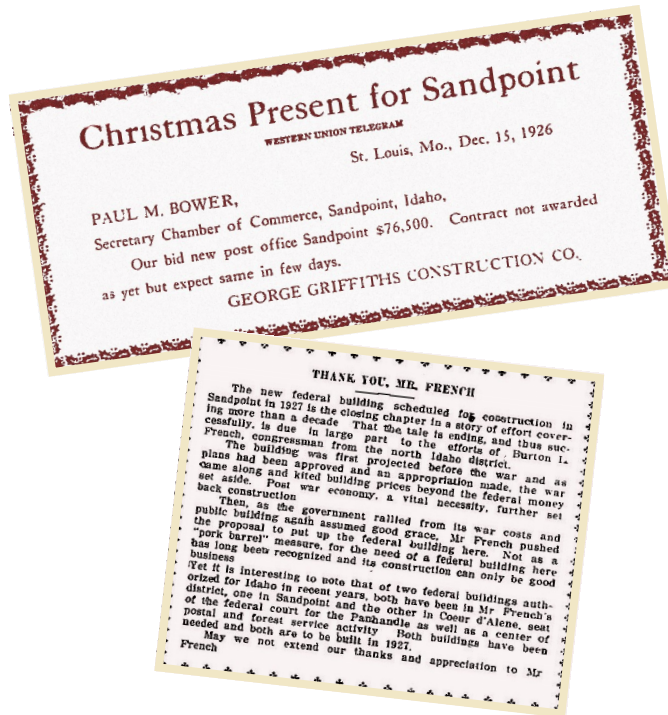
The request for bids didn't include the site or the required time for completion, but did indicate that the building would be constructed in 1927. The specifications stated that the building would have an overall dimension of 76 feet six inches by 79 feet four inches.

In December of 1926 it was announced that George Griffiths Construction Company of St. Louis, Missouri had the low bid of \$76,500 which was \$3,500 under the authorized expenditure. But, at that point the company wasn't

awarded the contract, even though the Pend d'Oreille Review ran an ad calling the bid a Christmas present for Sandpoint.

There was no cause for celebration. Put down the glass of champagne. Since the price exceeded the Treasury Department's appropriation, they issued new specifications in late January, 1927, cutting the size of the building to 54 feet by 77 feet with a one-story rear wing measuring 19 feet by 27 feet.

And, no surprise here, the sizable resizing required new bids from contractors. Coming in at \$73,300 was W.D. Lovell of Minneapolis who was awarded the contract. Then finally, despite bad spring weather conditions, construction began in April under the supervision of H.W. Sedvert. Although the Treasury Department's James A. Wetmore is credited as "acting supervising architect" an underling working in Arizona actually designed the building.



1927

INTERNAL REVENUE

FEDERAL BUILDING WORK IS RUSHED

Excavation Nearly Complete — Summon Jury Panel for District Court.

SANDPOINT, Idaho, April 15.—(Special.)—Work on the new postoffice building for Sandpoint is going ahead rapidly. The excavation for the foundation is far advanced and the material for the concrete part is being placed on the ground. W. D. Lovell of Minneapolis has the con-

NORTH →

September—Looking Northeast



WANTED—6 FIRST-CLASS BRICKLAYERS, 1 brick foreman, Monday morning; new postoffice bldg. W. D. Lovell, cont., Sandpoint, Idaho.

May

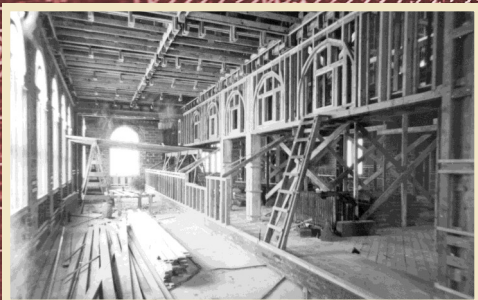


May



June—Looking East, ELEV. ϕ 2069.58

December



October

BUILDING U.S.P.
CITY SANDPO
DRAWN BY FRANK
CHECKED BY
E.B.M.
10-4-26
DRAWING

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The Society of Architectural Historians describes the building:

“Located one block north of Sandpoint’s commercial district, the federal building was deliberately set apart to communicate its civic importance. In contrast with the densely built commercial blocks, the federal building can be viewed from all sides. The building’s designer, likely unfamiliar with northern Idaho’s architectural traditions, here followed national revivalist trends.

“The Sandpoint Federal Building is an eloquent blend of Italian Renaissance Revival in its siting, massing, implied symmetry, and faux effects, and Spanish Colonial Revival Style in its detailing and materiality. This is a clear departure from the brick block buildings of Sandpoint’s commercial district.

to an identical set of glass entry doors surrounded by decorative, unglazed terra-cotta tile at each end of the main facade. On the second story, pairs of tall, wood sash casement windows are centered directly above each entry door and appear to open onto faux balconies. A wrought-iron railing runs along the outer edge of the single-story lobby’s roof enclosing a terrace-like space; second-story office windows open directly onto this space from each of the building’s three sides.

“The Spanish Colonial Revival style is most evident in the use of brick, rusticated stucco-covered concrete, and terra-cotta ornamentation. The architect also used red clay tile on the building’s shallow-pitched hip roofs, an unlikely material to select given the freeze-thaw cycles of Sandpoint’s cold climate. Use of wrought-iron



Nearing completion 1927

“The building stands on a pedestal in the form of a raised, single-story concrete basement level; its prominence is further enhanced by its location on a large corner lot, which affords maximum exposure of its brick and terra-cotta elevations. A grassy berm slopes steeply up from the sidewalk, reinforcing the building’s separation from the street. The building is configured as a seemingly symmetrical two-story ‘U’ shape enclosing a slightly inset, single-story arcaded lobby featuring Palladian windows with raised paneling below.

“A steep flight of concrete steps leads directly

railings, balconies, courtyard roof gardens, and terra-cotta window surrounds is also typical of Spanish Colonial Revival, especially in the southwestern United States and California. If the building’s stylistic features were imported, most of its materials were locally sourced.”

“Locally sourced” means that the lumber was provided by the Humbird Lumber Company whose mill was right in Sandpoint. The bricks came from the kilns at Clayton, Washington which is roughly 62 miles from the building site.

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One resident was apparently dissatisfied with new construction. This woman, ironically named Dame Rumor, started a rumor that both the Panida Theater, then under construction, and the post office buildings' foundations had cracked. An article in the North Idaho News on December 12, 1927, stated that "there is not the least bit of truth to the report."

The federal building at 419 North Second Avenue finally opened to the public in March 1928. Townspeople flocked to see it. It was



The post office had offices and a swing room in the south wing of the second floor that was used as a rest area for carriers and other postal workers. There was also a shower room for carriers.

And so, for the next 38 years the building at Second Avenue and Alder Street bustled with the day-to-day business of the United States Postal Service. People came and went. Letters and packages were sent and delivered. The mail brought good news and bad and sometimes expected or anticipated communiques didn't come at all.

A mother waiting for news from her son during the Korean War had an experience that made the news. An article in the Montana Standard Sun dated October 14, 1951 told of Mrs. John Carr leaving the Sandpoint post office on the Saturday prior.

"She was coming down the steps with an empty feeling, no letters in her box again about her soldier son," the article said. She had received a telegram informing her that her son had become a prisoner of war and she was desperate for news. As she walked down the stairs she saw a soldier, an amputee on crutches whose sleeve bore the patch of the Seventh."

Her son was in the Seventh. She asked him if he might possibly know him. He told her that there were a lot of guys in that division, that he didn't live around here, was just passing through on his way to Montana to find his buddy's mother.

"She teaches school over there," the soldier said. "[I] have some news for her." Mrs. Carr had been teaching in Montana when she got the telegram. She had recently moved to Sandpoint.

This is how the article described what happened next: "My buddy's name is Jimmie Carr. The mother gasped. Her son. The soldier's be doggoned. This was special delivery, right outside the post office."

No points will be given for good journalism, but it's a great story about how he was able to tell Mrs. Carr about the battle when her son got captured. Mrs. Carr was so excited and flustered she neglected to ask the soldier's name.

Here's how YOU can win the Gold Bars of an Army Officer

TWO NEW WAYS TO JOIN THE RANKS OF AMERICA'S YOUNG LEADERS

DIRECT COMMISSION

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POSTOFFICE BUILDING
SANDPOINT, IDAHO

Recruiting poster published in the Sandpoint News Bulletin January, 20, 1949

estimated that over one thousand came through the building in the first hour of its opening. The post office was on the main floor; the U.S. Forest Service took over most of the second floor, while the Internal Revenue Service, civil service and military recruitment offices were in the basement.

419 NORTH SECOND AVENUE

It's now 1966 and our story about the building at 419 North Second Avenue continues. A new post office building has been erected at the corner of Fourth Avenue and Church Street. The now "old" post office building will become the "new" East Bonner County Library site.

Bob Gunter wrote, "The keys worked well in unlocking the knowledge of the world for the citizens of Bonner County, both young and old. More and more people appeared at the library and the once 'spacious and beautiful' facility was full to overflowing."

On a chilly morning, December 15, 1971, a near disaster occurred. A 12-year old newspaper carrier named William (Bill) Burns was delivering The Spokesman-Review when he saw flames in the

Revival style."

A couple of years earlier a woman named Juanita Rhodes passed away bequeathing a quarter of her estate to the library. Her estate must have had some difficulties because it took a decade for the library to receive the funds. On March 13, 1981 the library board announced that they had invested \$70,000 in money market certificates in advance of purchasing new books which is what Ms. Rhodes had restricted the funds to be used for.

The love affair between the citizens of Bonner County and the library started to get strained. Although there were many sentimental attachments to the building, it began to lose its functionality.

A request for a levy in the sum of \$700,000 to expand and renovate the library went to vote in 1986. The proposed levy would annually assess citizens \$22 for every \$50,000 of property value.

"That's the cost of one good hardback book," Library Director Karen Strege said. The list of needed improvement were extensive starting with expanding the basement to add needed space and



The Spokesman-Review, Wednesday, Jan. 13, 1971.

Good Deed Is Lauded

Young Burns accepts citation from Sandpoint mayor.

library. He ran to the hospital to call for help, waited for the fire fighters to arrive, watched as they put out the flames and then continued his route before attending his sixth grade classes.

The building survived any serious damage. And young Bill received a citation from Sandpoint's Mayor, Floyd L. Gray for his heroism. Gray commended the youth for "quick action and quick thinking. Without question, Sandpoint's library would have been lost in the fire except for Bill's actions."

In 1973, the building was listed on the National Register of Historic Places for its "architectural significance and detailing representing the Spanish

Library levy becomes a hot issue

By Clare Nichols Marley
SANDPOINT — The library that will be the subject of Tuesday's \$700,000 levy vote may be a hushed place, but the election campaign has been anything but quiet.
East Bonner County Free Library District board members have talked with more than 15 area organizations about their plan to expand and renovate the 60-year-old Sandpoint library. The issue has sparked letter-writing campaigns, some last-minute arguments over the architect and changes of election mulling.
"I've said we'll get the biggest turnout we've ever seen," board member Evelyn Snodden said. "There's a lot of interest in it — both pro and con."
The owner of property worth \$50,000 will pay about \$22 for each year of the two-year override levy, library officials estimate. "That's the cost of one good hardback book," said Library Director Karen Strege.
Snodden was the only library trustee to vote against the levy proposal Jan. 6, citing the area's high unemployment rate. Yet the board member said the plan to vote for the levy on Tuesday.
"I can afford it," Snodden said. "I also don't believe we can leave all these problems to our kids."
Officials will apply for a \$78,000 state library grant to pay for furnishings.
If approved, the project would be started in the spring of 1987 and would double the "public access" floor space at the library, Strege said. Deer Park Wash. architect Ernest Robeson has proposed a basement-level addition that would retain the library's original mission-style architecture. Renovations on the next two levels would include construction of a mezzanine, reading and meeting rooms and offices.
Library officials have a long list of reasons for the project.
■ Crowded conditions. The former post office was remodeled in 1967 to serve a community of 4,000 people. "The building is now being asked to serve 20,000 more people than the original remodeling," Strege said. State library standards call for a 7,000 library for a population of 21,000. The district library has 30 seats and 24,000 people.
■ Shelf space. With no room to add more shelves, the library is at its book maximum of 30,000, yet standards call for 48,000.
■ Asbestos. The cancer-causing substance covers all exposed pipes in the library basement.
■ Outdated wiring and plumbing. Experts have said the building's antiquated pipes are dangerously close to corroding through. Wiring is substandard and portions of the electrical system are a fire hazard.
■ Inefficient heating and cooling systems. Strege refused levy opponents' charges that a simpler, cheaper plan could have been proposed.
"The library is going to be made to last 20 years and built as inexpensively as we can," she said. "It is not a Cadillac. It is not a luxurious library."
Joan Head, an outspoken opponent of the library plan, said she would favor a project at half the proposed cost, such as one offered by Sandpoint architect Royal Shields.
"Gosh, it's not that I'm against the library," said Head, a school district librarian. "I just feel the taxpayers could be saved more money and they (trustees) are not doing that."
Head complained that officials did not seek larger grants for the building project, although the library director said he had a chance of getting such funds in 1982.
(See Library on page 2)

The Spokesman-Review February 23, 1986

shelves; removing asbestos; replacing outdated wiring and plumbing; and replacing the heating and cooling system. The levy didn't pass.

In September of that year the library discontinued using the basement as a public meeting area because a fire inspection revealed that it was unsafe. Strege said that the problem was that there was only one fire exit from the basement. The Fire Chief, Don Keck, said that he would enforce a rule to contain occupancy to fewer than 10 people.

It's now five years later, January 18, 1993. The Spokesman-Review reported that the East Bonner County Library Board had "opted to renovate its

419 NORTH SECOND AVENUE

cramped 65-year-old building instead of building a new one.” The cost to renovate was estimated at \$2.2 million. The cost to build a new building at another location was \$2.1 million.

“Renovation costs a bit more, but the board feels the library is in an ideal location,” Library Director James Murray said. “We can be a community service center in downtown Sandpoint which is the hub of the district.”



Gale McLaughlin of Hope, holds month-old grandson Tyler Lantz in her arms as she looks for something to read in the crowded aisles at Sandpoint's city library. This was Tyler's first visit to a library. McLaughlin has been coming to the library for 25 years.

Renovation planned for Bonner library

By Kevin Keating
Staff writer

SANDPOINT — After more than five years of debate, the East Bonner County Library Board has opted to renovate its cramped 65-year-old building instead of building a new one.

“That is the direction the majority of the board is taking,” Chairman Dan Stagliard said. “I think we are at a point where we can put the debate behind us and head in a common direction.”

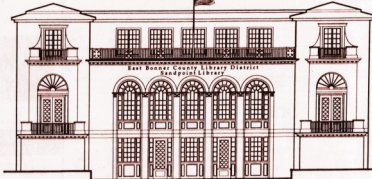
For years residents and the board have quibbled over whether to build a new library or renovate the downtown structure, which has a leaky roof and a condemned room in the basement containing asbestos.

The decision may not be agreeable to 100 percent of the people, but we’re getting to the point where we need to solve some of the problems,” Stagliard said. “We can’t do two more years of study. We have to get moving.”

The cost to renovate the library is estimated at \$2.2 million, while building a new one on another site was estimated at \$2.1 million.

“Renovation costs a bit more, but the board feels the library is in an ideal location,” Library Director James Murray said. “We can be a community service center in downtown Sandpoint, which is the hub of the district.”

The district has a branch library in Clark Fork and serves residents as far west as Lathrop, about 15 miles from Sandpoint.



This is an artist's drawing of the proposed renovation to the Sandpoint library. There has never been any disagreement that the library needs more space and updating, Stagliard said. The two-story building is stuffed full of books on the main floor, leaving little room for patrons or to expand and buying financing plans. The board expects to land a grant and a low-interest bank loan. “We are trying to fund it without having to go to taxpayers for a hand or levy,” Murray said, adding that

The Spokesman-Review January 18, 1993

That idea didn't last long. May of 1998 voters were asked to approve a 20 year, \$3.5 million bond to build a 31,818 square foot library which was nearly triple the size of the current facility. That one did pass and the new library building at the corner of Cedar Street and Division Avenue was completed in 1999.

Many will recall the mile long human chain passing books from the old location to the new one which was a throw-back to the human chain of Sandpoint High School's 1968 seniors who moved books from city hall to the what was then the “new” and is now the “old” library in the same manner.

The now “old” library was purchased by Jones/Bottier Trust as rental property in 2000 and an ad published in the Bonner County Daily Bee on October 12, 2001 announced the Grand Opening

of an Antiques and Artisans collective.

An interesting security surprise was revealed to the new owners after they took possession.

Because of the amount of money and valuable stamps needed to run a post office, a large vault had been installed when the building was constructed. Not in use since the post office moved out, it's not such a surprise that the combination to the lock on the door had been lost decades earlier. So the Jones/Bottier Trust folks called a locksmith.

Bob Gunter wrote on September 26, 2001, “Inside the cavity of the door were several wires that ran through a hinge, over the top of the doorframe to the other side of the door. There the wires connected to a small, glass enclosed unity

A new lease on life



— Photo by MARY BERRYHILL

The Old Library antique mall was given its official christening last Friday with a grand opening ceremony. Marianne Duarte and Charlie Coen, both vendors at the restored historic building, are shown with some of the offerings.

The Bonner County Daily Bee—October 13, 2001

that looked like a trip hammer.

“From this the wires continued on the inside of the vault casing and disappeared into an innocent metal box with no bottom. ...When the locksmith removed the front of the metal box he was confronted with three canisters of tear gas.” It was quite an extraordinary security system for its time. The tear gas was disposed of by the sheriff's department.

419 NORTH SECOND AVENUE

Subsequently First American Title moved into the building, but not until they partially restored and further adapted the building for office use.

Jones/Bottier owned the building for around 18 years and then put it up for sale. Rumors flew around town about what would become of the

create a viewing area from what will become the main dining room. The first floor will also be home to an expanded kitchen while the top floor will become offices. Bathrooms and entrances will be made ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) accessible. An outdoor patio finished with pavers



Mickey and Duffy Mahoney during renovations of MickDuff's at 419 North Second Avenue, 2020

historic building, now a fixture in the expanded downtown sector.

An article appeared in the Sandpoint Reader on August 22, 2019. Staff writer (now Editor-in Chief) Zach Hagadone announced that MickDuff's, a popular local brewery and brewpub, owners Duffy and Mickey Mahoney had "taken possession of the keys to their new kingdom."

"The approximately 12,000-square-foot building will first require asbestos removal, then Duffy said MickDuff's will close on a Small Business Administration loan to perform the necessary remodels. All the while, the brewery will have to work closely with the Sandpoint Historical Society to ensure its many early-20th century features and flourishes remain preserved," Hagadone reported.

He also said that remodeling would include putting a three-barrel pilot brewery in the basement and removing a part of the first floor to

will provide a large dining area for warm summer evenings.

The "soft" opening for the restaurant and brewery occurred on December 10, 2020. The Facebook post said that the beer would flow, but patrons should expect delays while they worked out the kinks and the restrictions in place because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Tomorrow and going forward, we anticipate being open for regular business hours and are excited to see all our favorite friends and muggers," the Facebook post said. "We are excited to welcome you into our new home, please come experience the new Brewpub at your leisure; we are not going anywhere any time soon."

And, the story about the building at 419 North Second Avenue is to be continued ...

TUESDAY, MARCH 25, 1913

the sale or donation to the United States of a corner lot, centrally and conveniently located and suitable for a federal building site in Sandpoint, Idaho. The site measures approximately 19,000 square feet and if the lot offered its minimum dimensions will be less than 120 feet. Upon application the applicant will supply prospective purchasers with a circular giving requirements and a plan of the lot. By same date.

Library ends utilization of basement

The East Bonner has halted basement utilization

What's behind door number three?

By BOB GUNTER
Daily Bee Correspondent

stayed hidden for many years but recently it was discovered, and what a surprise it was.

When you visit the old building you will notice a room just off the main floor area. People will remember it as the children's library when the building was used to house the East Bonner County Library. In this room there is a huge walk-in vault that has been open since the days of the post office. The door to the vault is massive and, as expected, has a large combination lock on the door. No one



has become an antique mall. Everyone that saw the old vault wondered if a combination to the lock could be obtained. A local Locksmith was called and he felt sure that he could make the old lock work again. He first removed the plate from the inside of the door and that is where the fun began.

Inside the cavity of the door were several wires that ran through a hinge, over the top of the door frame to the other side. There the wires were attached to a small, glass container that looked like a

fire that Keck a rule r than

is mean ng room meeting will be organizations,

ROOM, Page 3

150 people a week during the list times, Stregé said. also will be off limits children because of he said.

ary's storytime probably will be moved to floor, but could mean puppet shows and mov- children because of lim- and lighting problems,

d. gs of the library board ions may have to be sched- where because of the exit s, she said.

are no funds to install ad- basement exits, she said. rary board is preparing a 00 grant application for fed- assistance for possible future library improvements

r this ould money which

FEDERAL BUILDING FACES OPPOSITION

Sandpoint Business Interests Oppose Project because of Location.

SANDPOINT, Idaho, is not all pleased with the business interests of the men that passed the bill, carrying an amount of \$1,000,000 for a federal building point and that the bill passed the senate. The factional fight over north side which purchased several which many business districts not suitable for business. If the bill fourth time an appropriate. Each time reloped by though the far as the we dropped. A house also



Land Transferred

Sandpoint, Idaho, Mayor Floyd Gray (seated at left) and H. John Runkel, acting director of the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Region 8, Denver, put their signatures on the documents finalizing the transfer yesterday of U.S. land formerly occupied by the Sandpoint Post Office. The site will be used for a new library facility. Looking on are City Clerk Kenneth Hackworth (at left) and Clayton S. Brown, regional representative of HEW's Division of Surplus Utilization. (Ross Hall Studio photo.)



Sandpoint Occupies New City Library

The Sandpoint, Idaho, library is closed until next Tuesday. When it reopens, it will be in new quarters—the remodeled former post office building on Second Avenue. Sandpoint High School seniors are shown as they helped Mrs. Les Mosher, city librarian, carry the 18,000 volumes from the old shelves on the second floor of the City Hall. City officials and employees began the move last Wednesday by transferring furniture and equipment. Approximately 100 students carried the books Friday, each student making about 10 trips. At left they receive armloads at the old library; at right, they load books to Mrs. Mosher for placing on new shelves. The job was completed well before the 1 p.m. deadline and students got the remainder of the day off. (Billman photo.)

Compiled by staff and volunteers at
BONNER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEUM
March, 2021