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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

EARLY BUILDING OPERATIONS

by

B. T. Galloway

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Extracts from notes entitled "Some Recollections and Comments Relating to the Evolution of the U. S. Department of Agriculture."

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These recollections and comments have been set down from time to time without regard to consecutive dates or time periods. They are glimpses of work and workers connected with the evolution of a branch of the Federal Government with which I have been associated for nearly 50 years. - B. T. Galloway.

EARLY
BUILDING
OPERATIONS

rain Administration Building of the Department of Agriculture were the first structures authorized after the appointment of a Park Commission. This body came into existence in 1901 in accordance with a resolution sponsered by the late Benator McMillan. The Park Commission submitted a voluminous report on a plan for the improvement of the entire park system of the District of Columbia. The Park Commission consisted of Daniel H. Burnhan of Chicago, Frederick L. Olmstead of Brookline, Massachusetts, and Charles F. McKim of the architectural firm of McKim; Mead and White, New York.

and Secretary Wilson asked me to serve as chairman of a committee to look after all matters relating to the location and construction of the building or buildings. The other members of the committee were Dr. D. E. Salmon, Chief of the Bureau of Animal Industry, and Dr. A. C. True, Chief of the Office of Experiment Stations. The full records of the work of this committee will be found in offi-

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prepared and submitted to the Secretary.

Being the first buildings planned for erection on the Mall we found ourselves at once confronted with a good many difficult problems regarding location and other matters. Conditions were further complicated by the fact that the Congress at that time, and especially members of the House Appropriations' Committee, were more or less hostile to the elaborate and costly plans of the Park Commission. The Park Commission, however, was fully supported by President Roosevelt who was in thorough sympathy with the great scheme for the beautification of Washington and the surrounding territory. When authorization was secured for an appropriation of oneand-a-half million dollars for the Abricultural Department building or buildings certain influential Congress/indicated that there was no necessity for the erection of classical marble structures and that we could get far more room for the money appropriated by constructing good types of commercial buildings of brick and terra cotta. The Park Commission, however, was opposed to the erection of any such structures on the Mall and were further opposed to the encroachment on the Hall of any buildings except as planned for the greater improvement of that part of the city.

After much discussion and many tedious delays it was at last decided to erect buildings on the south side of the Mall and far enough back to the south so that no encroachment would be made on the Mall proper. Before reaching this point, however, we had difficulty with the first architects. These architects had won a competition which with the aid of the Supervising Architect of the

cully published documents, oriestly five and a reformation I propared and submitted to the secretary.

dis the tirst building planned for er coion o dis all should ourselves at once confronted with a contampo burch or problems regarding location and other matters. Conditions were forther complicated by the fact that the Congress at that time, whe erracially cabers of the 'ouse 'opropriations' Co iste, were oror less detile to the elaborate and costly place of the Com-Laion. The Firk Commiston, nortver, was fully supported by Plusicer Tooserelt van vas in torough symmathy mith the great sore, for the corntific tron of ashington and the sarrounding territory. When althorization we secured for an appropriation of oncanibility the street formularity, our tot and los noilly "thun-s-buc or ouldings contain influential congrets/in icates that there as but semminaris efere lasicals to moissere end not vitames and -, o ye bachiror a yelo i set tol soo oro. It is blues so wall rest on role to anishing leist too to recet boo, which are cotts. The Park Commission, herever, as onnoted to the er ction of ity such structures on the fall and sere for an or or or to no en tol o mel. .. Josope syministic yet to flat out no descence grouter lagrand on that wert of the city.

The rand discussion and emptions deloys it as a factored to erect buildings on the anath sine of the full and factored on our or the state so the meaning a property of the factored received and the field of the factored and the factored factored for the factored factored factored for the factored fa

from Congress. An appropriation of \$5,000 was made for this work. The building approved by the committee of architects was a beautiful structure but not designed to meet our urgent needs for laboratory work. We asked the architects, hard and Hewlett of New York, to revise their plans and to consider the erection of two wings with the idea that eventually we should obtain authority to erect a central structure and later extend our buildings to the south across B Street. The architects refused to do this and the Secretary discharged them and we then secured the services of Rankin, Kellogg and Crane, of Philadelphia, who fell in with our wishes and immediately began work preparing plant for two separate structures designed primarily for laboratory use.

ofter complying with the wishes of the Park Commission in locating the buildings south of the Mall line, it was decided to center the Administration Building on 13th Street. Le had secured the services of Capt. John J. Sewell, of the Engineer Corps of the U. 3. Army, to advise and assist us in our work. Captain Sewell made it a point to keep in touch with the Park Commission at all times so as to avoid misunderstandings and conflicts. Early in 1904 we began construction work on our buildings and after expending about \$18,000 for excavations we were informed by the Park Commission that we should not have centered our structures on 13th Street, as this was contrary to the plans for the improvements on the Mell. We were further in-Die a star Tarriot. formed that the Administration Building when erected should be placed in the center of the Dopartment grounds, which would place it con-PERFERENCE siderably further west than 13th Street.

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locating and calleing south of the visit, it and cooled to consist one calleing and colon of the value of the colon of the

Naturally this decision of the Park Co mission coming after we thought all matters with them had been adjusted aroused the Secretary and also some of the leading members of the House who got wind of what was going on. Our work was stopped for a while. In the meantime influential Benators were besieging the President urging him to have us comply with the Park Commission's instructions and plans. Now we want to record two episodes for which the foregoing is more or less of a background - episodes showing the resourcefulness and human side of President Roosevelt.

One day at a Cabinet meeting he called Secretary wilson to hir and asked him about the trouble we were having with our building operations. Secretary Wilson gave him an outline of some of our controversies and discussions with the Park Commission and intlinated that the Commission did not seem to know its own mind for any length of time. The President listed with close attention, then in his characteristic way, he said - "I'll fix thingsl" He told the Becretary he would be down that afternoon and look at the excavations we were making for the buildings. The President said to expect him around about 4:30 and that he would walk over from the White House. It was a beautiful soring day and at 4:30 the Secretary and I walked cut in front of the old brick building and strolled among the flower beds awaiting the coming of the President. Time passed and the President did not come. Over on the Ellipse back of the White House the high school cadets were having a sham battle. Gans were firing, drums were boating and there was much noise and yelling over in that part of town. Along about 5:30 P.M. the Secretary remarked that he suspected the President had got into the sham battle. Near & o'clock

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of well gressrop, a the or this or this de the this gripf in The est, griver ores to ordeon out so in part but to operations. Secretary illimitate in a continue of our is the form rates and the case with the Personal Services the the Co. Ission itd not see to now it? or mind for my longth of the . The real at list description, then it is course peristic way, he cald - 'I'll i'l the taingas' He told the Jeeretary is would be nown that afternoon and look at the excuvations we The Printer of the Park Street, Street ware sucking for the buildings. The Fres was a sid to exwet in around soot 4: 1 th the fire walk over from the 1 the Boass. is the a new titie arring day and to be the term and a cor si out in trope of the old are a building out to store it to bed soniting the could o the rest ont. It will the the NAME AND ADDRESS OF THE OWNER, TH President did not come. Uver on the filty o each of his fronte of some or an analysis of the second the sire action collect were mying a case bettle. Our vere firm, Countries for carried frequency under hard-filled real-property and drams were boating and there was rech noise and Juling over in that the party of the last of the l ret of town. Long about 5:30 2.L. th oner that he for COUNTY OF SALES AND ADDRESS OF THE PARTY NAMED IN COLUMN 2 IN COLU supported the President and of the out total and before

we saw the President coming across the monument grounds, hat in hand and walking fast. When he got near enough we could see that his face and hands were grimy and his clothes covered with dirt and dust. He was in a happy mood and remarked that he had been having a bully time with the boys in the sham battle. He apologized for being late but said he could not miss all the fun going on and asked the Secretary to pardon him for the delay. Then guickly turning he said - "Where are the controversial holes in the ground, Mr. Secretary?" We lead his to the excavations and with a few simple diagrams explained the predicament we were in. The President listened and asked a lot of questions about our plans and some about the Park Commission. Then turning to the Secretary he said in substance. 'Mr. Secretary, there are about a dozen fine old Senators who are after me all the time not to swerve an inch from the plans of our Park Commission and I know it would break their hearts if we swerved as much as these plans indicate." Then with a grin and a chuckle. he said - "Mr. Secretary, you would not want me to break the hearts of these Senators. " The Secretary smilingly said he could not think of being a party to such a catastrophe. The President then said -"I think you had better revamp the excavations so as to conform with the suggestions and plans of the Commission. " This was done as the present beautiful structure now testifies. It is true that 13th Street has disappeared along with the avenue of Ginkgos but gradually as new plans unfold it is evident when you look forward to the future as presenting something really beautiful.

It turned out that we had not heard the last of this forced change in our plans for the President was determined to read the

br al fed .cur. a fre wood edf acorpa al no froblest! out vat and dring and to not near enough ve could not and face and names were gramy and its clothes core so vich dirt and dust. He was in a day noon our remark of the or saw been having ibuli; one num the boys in the man battle. He acologist or cath, late that said ne could not miss and the earn oing in and asked to dictionary to da don in for the delag. There quienty turning ... said - "where are the controversial noise in the ground, ir. Secre--rib ele is you a nitre bas and suverse eld bit of in bref of '.y.r J prist organization the product of the resident listened and asked a til or outstions about our plans and some about the like Commission, into bring to the secretary he said in substance. "..)ed chary, there are amout a cozen fine old perstors the are and to said and not not in every or you exid out all on note Cara Commission for a most is that it means if we are reved is rach is these clams indicate. ' Then with a prin and a concell. ne said - ' 1. Jeersta y. you would not hant se to break the hearts of these 3 natural The Becretary smilingly sid he could not tairk of coing a marty to such a catastrophe. Inc exeriant thur said -"I think you had bester row so the excavations so as so coulon with the surgostions and of an or the Commission. This was actions and precent leastiful same or testifica, it is or that lifth treet has dir, poured work with the avenue of his sal years studied it is evicence to look for the lotter and look for alulitumed that a print of animas a sa

It turned out that we had not a rise had of this forced of the course had not the

Park Commission a lesson and incidentally placate certain members of the House who had been berating the Commission for what was then considered its extravagant plans. so a little later the President called a conference at the White House. He confided his plans to Jecretary of War Taft and left him to arrange the details. Briefly the plan was to call the Park Commission on the carpet. so to speak, having present certain members of the House of Representatives to witness the slaughter. The President also desired to have present witnesses who could show that the Commission had wabbled a number of times in connection with our buildings and this wabbling had cost the Government considerable money. Long afterwards Mr. Taft wrote a humorous story for The Saturday Evening Post" about this meeting. There were present the entire 16 members of the House Committee on Agriculture. Mr. McKim who was to be the "goat" was present representing the Park Commission. Our three architects were on hand, also Captain Sewell, our technical advisor and engineer. The President called on the witnesses. Mr. Kim. Captain Sewell. our architects, and myself for any statements we desired to make. Fr. McKim briefly outlined the work of the Commission and how it had experienced difficulties as to just what to do about the location of our buildings. He said some of the problems involved had come upon the Commission before it had been given time to study the whole situation and necessarily mistakes had been made. Our architects were cautious and merely stated that they were working under the direction of Secretary Wilson as represented by our committee and Captain Sewell. Captain Sewell, however, was rather blunt and outspoken when it came his time to detail the difficulties he had

in the insien a lesion and incluentally place to purvise the of the Hoxer and had been not tell to the land of the thes cousin red its extrave, at place, so a limite law to Trentent culled a conf rance the interiouse. I confident which to deer any of the fact and will it to trange to detaile. ricily the dat was to call the Luk condiction on via cryp t, so to spite ive res at contain a the soul violent of tenes when tivue to irrest the sloughter. He irraident his to rate a beinder bad toist and out that the Commission and tabuled a number of time in John thion with our wilding and this wabling and cook the poveragent considerable fore a bong after and the dands 'tai' prinar quarata' sair iol yrota suora in a store the tale time. Cherchen out due car error and a gair e alat Touse Co. nict riculture. .r. . cHi who rat to be the "goat" ves present remestating the fark Corriction. Our times sauniteets here or hand, also Cantain Sevell, our rechalcal Cavisor and or gianer. in greatuant entire on the thomoses, it. in. Custain se the our archicous, and agreal flor any statements, to unsired to the. Ir. regin arially outlined the work of the Constitute and some it and experienced difficulties as to just what to do about the contien of our buildings. In all tous of the proof as volved and come apon the Colmusion before it had be distincted stady on note alcustion on coularily attached bett ado. Our protitests whre contions and more, about that the more marking arest estir to to to be established as actific that is no moisour and and finitely to all the contract of the contract and ate year to this end listed or a it are more to represent esta experienced in getting definite things from the Commission and the costly bills thereby resulting.

After we had all had our say the President addressed his remarks to Ur. McKim and gave the Commission a down-right scolding. He said, however, he wanted to support the Commission as he believed the plans and being made were vital to the future development of tashington and its curroundings. It might be well to interpolate at this point that the Commission was largely a creature of the President. This was one of the reasons why so many members of the House were hostile. As the President warmed up to his task ar. McKim fidgeted under the tengue lashing the Commission was receiving. The President finally closed with an admonition that he would expect in the future that the Commission would be careful of its decisions and actions and not cause any needless expense. I did not know for a long time after that Mr. McKim had been forwarned by Mr. Wait of the scolding he was going to get and that he must not take the scolding too seriously. The Congressmen were highly elated at the turn of affairs but seemingly overlooked the fact that the President would stand by his Commission in the big task he had assigned them. As the meeting broke up and we were going out hr. Paft put his are around Mr. McKim's shoulder and said .- 'McKim you have won a great victory.' Mr. McKim replied - Wes, Mr. Becretary, and one more victory like that and 1 shall be a dead man. We had no further difficulties with the Commission although it was a uniter of regret to us that we yere required to put our buildings so far down in the ground. Time has shown that this was unnecessary as witness by later changes in the treatment of the central portion of the 'all and the grading plans.

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OF AGRICULTURE:

BUILDINGS

The Why of Two Wings

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For more than 25 years the two marble buildings standing on the south side of the grounds of the Department of Agriculture, and known as the last and west wings were the subject of comment as to why they were constructed as two separate units when the law authorizing construction provided for a building for the Department of Agriculture. We have already referred to the construction of these two wings in another note but we did not fully explain how it came about that we put up two buildings with a space be-tween for a central or main structure. The fact of the matter is that at the time we were making our plans for the buildings we were not a little embarrassed and to a certain extent harassed by a set of conditions for which Langer Langer we were in no way responsible.

numerous matters. The great trust busting game was on and r. Theodore Roosevelt was driving ahead using the big stick right and left. Commissions of many kinds were being appointed for many and stadry purposes. The commissions were a constant source of irritation to certain members of Congress who lost no opportunity to belittle their recommendations and block their activities. When we began to plan for our buildings we ran afoul of one of the commissions but of this we have spoken elsewhere.

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additional made by a mails to such that all

As a starting point we got a plan for our housing needs through a competition conducted for us by the then Supervising Architect of the Treasury, a Mr. Taylor. Congress made an appropriation of \$5,000 to secure the necessary plans, specifications, estimates; and costs of a structure that would meet our needs. A half a dozen or more architects entered the competition and the award was made by a jury of five architects selected by the Supervising Architect of the Treasury. In carrying out this work we drew up an outline of our general needs, but the architects did not follow this very closely. They evidently seemed more bent on providing a structure that would be beautiful and classic and which might meet the terms of the competition as drawn by the Supervising Architect. The firm of Lord and Hewlett cated in New York City was the successful competitor and they submitted a really beautiful design but not at all adapted for laboratory purposes. We endeavored to bring the architects to our point of view as to the need for laboratory facilities and the kind of light and space generally required for this kind of service. In this effort we were not successful.

there developed in the minds of our building committee the germ of an idea for a series of buildings all eventually to be connected and forming one more or less harmonious whole.

With this idea in mind and under Secretary Wilson's direction,

I drew up a ground sketch showing a central administrative building with wings on each side and extensions in the rear

abe a gaigned rue and a first a plan for our housing a eds turough a competition conducted for us by the then Supervising irenit et of the irensury, air, legior. Commess aus an appropriation of .5.000 to necessary of ms. specifirstons, estimates, and costs of a structure that rould wrot our neces. I half a lover or rore architects ent red the competition and the eard was the by a jury of five architects selected by the date vising frontect of the erector. In cirrying out this work we drew up an outline of our general needs out the architecta dia not follow this very closely. Lie, evidentle seered ore bent or providing a structure that sured edd deem id; he do into bus olasalo bus fullinaed ed bluov of the competition as drawn by the laparvising troblteet. The firm on brd and Hewlett cated in ser York City was the successful competitor and they subjected a really be utiful design but not at all gapted for laboratory purposes. He of as welv to Jaio and attentions and paint of below atme the so, if to build out bus a listifical grouperous from boom one space generally retriced for which the of survices In this effort a were not successful.

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across 3 Street. S. W., covering the blocks from 12th to 14th Streets. We were convinced that the Bepartment was destined for a great growth and development and that we would eventually need all the space indicated by our ground plan. Secretary Wilson gave his hearty approval, and support to the plan, and authorized us to take it up with the architects. As we did not have sufficient funds at the time for a central building and two wings it was decided that we would have general plans drawn for the central building and detailed plans for two , wings. We submitted our ideas to the architects who had been successful in the competition and found that one of them. Mr. Hewlitt, was not only cold but actually hostile to our suggestions. Mr. Hewlitt seemed firmly convinced that we should erect one classical building and went so far as to say that if we did not have money sufficient to complete such a building we should at least start it with the funds we had and go back to Congress for more money to complete it. This proposal did not please Secretary Wilson at all. When I showed Mr. Hewlitt the squares and blocks representing our ground plan and their connections he rather sarcastically remarked that the sketches looked more: like a "school of fish" than anything else. Capt. John S. Sewell, of the Engineers Corps of the Army, had been assigned by the Secretary of War to aid us in our construction work. Captain Sewell suggested that inasmuch as he could hardle the construction work that we ask the architects to draw plans for the central building and two wings and

that we would pay them a 3 per cent commission for the work.

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In this way we would save 2 per cent commission on construction which would amount to about \$30,000. Captain Sewell took the Colorado and one there ground that the architects would not have to spend any time in he come as far as I as some, seem of the allegance supervising the construction and could be called in from tire to time if needed and paid for such time. When these matters were submitted to the architects they declined to have anything the state of the Company of the state of the to do with the proposition and insisted that we revert to the original plan of their building. The Secretary then authorized is to dismiss the architects which was done. The Becretary further authorized as to endeavor to secure the services of other architects with the result that we finally engaged the firm of Rankin, Kellogg and Crane, of Philadelphia, to underto see the first of the first terms. take the preparation of plans practically as outlined by us. 1. 5 - The series of the serie Rankin, Kellogs and Crane prepared tentative plans for the the matter broke he sent a second recording to the contract of central building and completed plans for the two wings. The The first of the second of the beautiful structure as it now stands is a monument to their 3 to the company of the contract of the contra ideals and vision as architects.

central building and two wings so the Secretary authorized that two wings be put up first to take care of our laboratory workers. None of us expected that it would be nearly 30 years before a central building could be provided. For nearly two decades after authorizing our structures Congress seemed to lose interest in buildings for Government use in the District of Columbia. It was lavish in its appropriation for renting buildings and when such matters were brought before committees and suggestions made that buildings be erected Congress usually

In this way or would o ve 2 her commission on constraint with rost flevel minter to acout the follow of the sevel took the the this the bunks of ever to bird storthing the bull but the s is ron at belies on place but appointed in from at a on the if resided only for each time. John share without vers sabuited to the traditions to your localine to inve on the and of terms of the delation and rolling or or all in on of Original plan of early brilling Secretary then authorized windersel all senou sev asily edou. Moth the fer all the to short suthorized as to mideavor to secure the services of ont begine arolived the result that we finally assemble fire of Marin, Koliogg and Crare, of Philadelphia, to amourt ke the preparation of class aredically as outlined by as markin, 'llog and trans prepared tentative lane for the central building and consistent, dans for the tribility land The state of the manual of the state of the amount a little and tourison in moisiv sur, along

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took the ground that it was cheaper to rent buildings than to construct and own them.

No one, so far as I am aware, ever officially questioned the erection of two separate wings. In fact, when explanations were given Congressmen and others as to the why of the matter, this action of the Secretary was approved. As an aftermath of the discharge of Lord and Hewlitt this firm tried in several ways to block our work. First an appeal was made to the President through an attorney, ex-Secretary of the Navy Tracy, on the grounds that the writer of these notes, acting as chairman of the building committee, had sought by collusion with the firm of Rankin, Kellogg and Crane to have the firm of Lord and Hewlitt dismissed. The President promptly rejected Mr. Tracy's appeal. Lord and Hewlitt then took the matter into the courts and were defeated before two tribunals. It is gratifying to have witnessed the day when our "school of fish" plan materialized into one of the outstanding developments of Washington's great building program.

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