

November 6, 1940

[Hyde Park Post Office Cornerstone Ceremonial]

FDR Speech File

1341

# STATEMENTS FILE

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## INFORMAL REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT ON THE OCCASION OF THE LAYING OF THE CORNERSTONE, HYDE PARK POST OFFICE, HYDE PARK, N.Y., NOVEMBER 6th, 1940

I am standing herewith rather mixed feelings today because, since I was a small boy, the little old post office, either there or next door was a feature of the Village. However, things have changed and with our increasing population the Post Office Department felt, as we say in the Navy, that we needed a new building - so here it is.

For some of you who don't know the full story about this building, I think it is worth while to call attention to the fact that we have tried here in Dutchess County to copy in our government buildings some old historic buildings as closely as we can.

The post office in Poughkeepsie is really an enlarged version of the old Dutchess County Court House that was taken down nearly a century ago. The building at Wappingers Falls is very similar to the old Mesier homestead. The post office in Rhinebeck is a replica of the old Beekman House that was built about 1700 down near the River.

When we came to the problem of Hyde Park, we tried very hard to get a picture of the old Stoutenburgh homestead that stood within the memory of some people now living over here on the brow of the hill, about a block and a half west of here. But we could not get a real picture of what it looked like; it was all hearsay. We did find, however, a pen and ink sketch that was done by Mr. Sexton about seventy or eighty years ago of the original old John Bard house that stood, as far as we can make out, about halfway between St. James' Church and the Vanderbilt barn. It was a very interesting sketch because it showed not merely the ground plan and the elevation of a building that looked just like this -- except it was of wood -- but it also showed the roof plan, and the roof of this building is quite unique.

The Bard House was built, as I remember the date, about 1760, and the roof line is found only in two or three other buildings in this country. In other words, it is a piece of architecture of about 1760 that is well worth preserving. All we did was to copy that plan of the old Bard house, except that this building is in stone.

As you know, the Bard place up here is probably the oldest estate in the north that has been kept as an estate for nearly two hundred years and under most careful supervision and care. And now part of it has gone to the United States Government. Thereby we commemorate not merely the fact that John Bard was the grandson of the original patentee of the land north of the Creek and called it Hyde Park in honor of the Hyde family -- Lord Clarendon in England at that time -- but also because he was a very great naturalist. His son, too, was a great naturalist, as ~~was~~ his son's partner, who owned a place up here, Dr. David Husey, and the two Walter Langdons, father and son. And, in our recent memory, so was Mr. Fred Vanderbilt.

From the name of that grant up there, the Village gets its name, Hyde Park, and so we can see the appropriateness in having this new post office copied after the old John Bard House.

I don't think we need any more ceremony, except that I would like to thank the men and the contractors and the builders and the architect who were responsible for this very lovely building.

I think it will last us for a good many years to come and all of us in Hyde Park are very proud to have this new post office.

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The post office in Poughkeepsie is really an enlarged version of the old Dutchess County Court House that was taken down nearly a century ago. The building at Happingers Falls is very similar to the old Kesler homestead. The post office in Rhinebeck is a replica of the old Beckman House that was built about 1700 down near the River.

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Franklin D. Roosevelt Library

This is a transcript made by the White House stenographer from his shorthand notes taken at the time the speech was made. Underlining indicates words extemporaneously added to the previously prepared reading copy text. Words in parentheses are words that were omitted when the speech was delivered, though they appear in the previously prepared reading copy text.

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