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The early Arkadelphia Post Office

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HISTORY

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CLARK COUNTY CHRONICLE

The early Arkadelphia Post Office

By Wendy Richter

For the Siftings

At this time of year, many people begin to make preparations to send or receive packages by mail during the holiday season.

Today, practically all homes and businesses receive some sort of communication each day the United States Postal Service operates. But, many don't stop to think about the improvements that have taken place in that service through the years.

Prior to the availability of the telegraph, telephone, radio, television, or the internet, mail provided the only means of communication between different locales. And, in the United States, early on, the mail system proved to be primitive, slow, and unpredictable. But, as the new nation grew and expanded, so did its mail system. By the beginning of the twentieth century, new post offices were being constructed across the nation in order to provide dependable, affordable mail service to the American people.

One of the towns re-

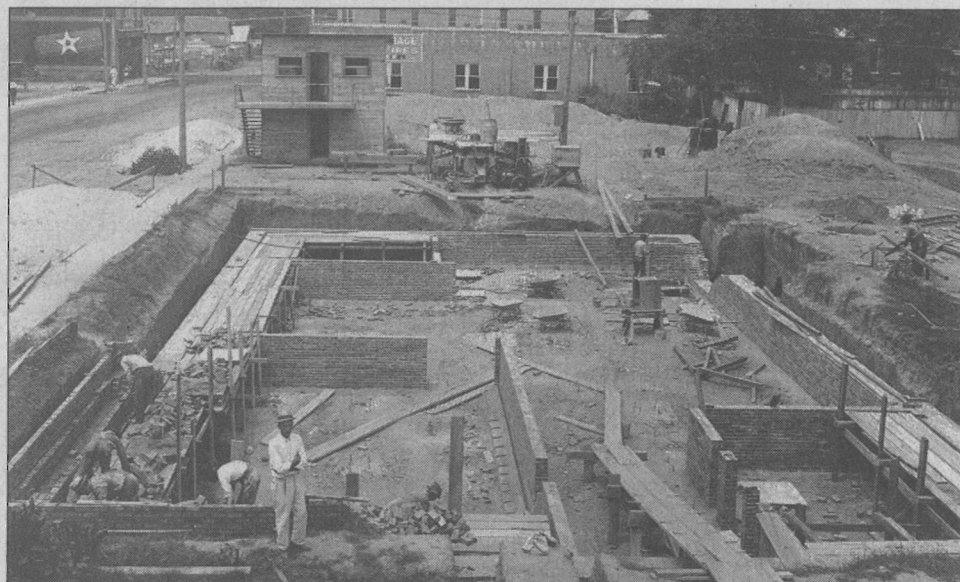
ceiving one of those new federal buildings was Arkadelphia. One hundred years ago, Arkadelphia's Southern Standard newspaper reported that enough construction had been completed on the city's new post office building for operations to begin there.

A headline in the paper's December 20, 1917, edition stated: "Post Office Moves into Its New Home." The story read: "Postmaster Sam Carpenter moved his outfit over into the new building Monday and the force has been busy getting things lined up in their new home. The new post office building is not yet completed as to the inside finishing, but this work can be carried on just the same. The new building stands on the northwest corner of Clinton and Sixth streets and is indeed a structure which our city should be proud of. It is built of a yellow brick and stone and cost the government about \$50,000. The site was donated by Captain R.W. Huie, one of our most patriotic citizens, and in the entrance of the building there is a bronze table

in his honor for donating the site.

"The new post office is so built so as to afford all the modern conveniences for the handling of the ever-increasing mail which goes through this office, and for the convenience of the patrons in receiving their mail and attending to business with the post office officials. Upon entering the big double doors there is a large circular space around which are arranged 635 boxes in numerical order, while on the left as one enters are the various windows for parcel post, stamps, general delivery, etc. Each box has a Yale lock on it and Postmaster Carpenter is requiring a deposit of 20 cents for each key which he issues to box renters."

For information about Clark County history, visit or contact the Clark County Historical Museum (www.clarkcounty-history.org) or (870) 230-1360 or the Clark County Historical Association's Archives at the Ouachita Baptist University Library (www.obu.edu/archives) or (870) 245-5332).



Construction of the Arkadelphia Post Office on Aug. 1, 1916. Arkadelphia's iconic Caddo Hotel is shown across the street. IMAGES COURTESY OF THE CCHA



The building as it neared completion on Dec. 1, 1917.