

Detroit Saturday Night

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BOOK BUILDING SECTION

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A MASTERPIECE OF MODERN CONSTRUCTION

The 33-story Book Building, Washington Boulevard and Grand River Avenue, Detroit, as it will appear when completed

New Firm Triumphs in Erecting Book Building

THE Book building, a masterpiece of construction, is distinctly a triumph for the firm of general contractors who have supervised its erection. In bringing it to its present stage of completeness, in the face of

unusual labor conditions and a national scarcity of materials, the general contractors have accomplished a phenomenal thing.

Another source of congratulation for them is that, owing to the careful planning of the job and the efficacious safety measures taken, there has not been a single death or serious accident during its progress. This is unique in the history of big buildings.

Walbridge-Aldinger Co., general contractors, is headed by men who have had many years of experience in handling big building jobs, but the company is, nevertheless, a new one. It began business in March, 1916. Yet, so widely known were the two men at the head of the concern, that it has since taken nineteen big contracts, some of the principal ones being illustrated on this page.

A stupendous task like the erection of the Book building required an unusual organization and exceptional ability to direct that organization. The general contractors had to take the plans of the owner and architect and transform them from ideas on paper to realities in steel and stone. They had the responsibility of selecting the most competent sub-contractors for the various divisions of the work, of supervising their work and seeing that only the very best materials were used.

It is a real triumph, therefore, for a company which has been in business less than a year to have such an achievement already to its credit. And, while the Book building on Washington Boulevard and the National Bank of Commerce building on Fort Street West are among the best known structures for which Walbridge-Aldinger Co. have been general contractors, there are less conspicuous operations in progress at the same time which are even greater in scope.

As specialists in the construction of railroad terminals and buildings devoted to railroad uses, Walbridge-Aldinger Co. have now under way some projects which are of the greatest importance. The construction attendant upon the grade separations in Detroit is not only of great cost in money value but also requires a peculiarly careful and painstaking method of working.

In the new roundhouse and buildings of the Michigan Central at Jackson, Walbridge-Aldinger Co. have undertaken something of a sort peculiarly adapted to the genius of this firm. The big modern factory buildings now under construction by this firm in and around Detroit are also fine examples of what is now demanded of general contractors.

The organization of Walbridge-Aldinger Co. is an especially strong one in all branches. It begins with an engineering force trained in the methods of modern office building and factory construction and also familiar with railroad construction work. The purchasing department has unusual scope because of the large number of jobs under contract by this big firm at any one time and is able to get prices and deliveries to greater advantage than a smaller concern could have. Inspection has also been highly organized.

The new construction included in the present contracts of Walbridge-Aldinger Co., now in progress, amounts to several million dollars.

Both of the men who head this large contracting company started their active careers with the late Daniel H. Burnham of Chicago, the most famous of American architects and builders. George B. Walbridge studied at Lafayette and took a post-graduate course at Cornell. Albert H. Aldinger graduated from Purdue. In the Burnham office the two young men were placed on big tasks, for the Burnham firm operated from New York to San Francisco.

Mr. Aldinger next became general superintendent for Wells Bros. of Chicago, a firm that handled immense operations. Later he went to western Canada and became a member of the firm of Carters, Hall, Aldinger Co., general contractors and engineers, which made a specialty of railroad work.

Mr. Walbridge went to New York and eventually became one of the vice-presidents of the George A. Fuller Co. He was placed in charge of the Detroit office and while in complete charge handled such jobs as the Michigan Central terminal, Hotel Statler, the Peoples State Bank building, the Wayne County and Home Savings Bank building, the Pantlind Hotel at Grand Rapids and others of a like nature.

Both Mr. Walbridge and Mr. Aldinger saw the wonderful opportunities for individual initiative in the building field in Detroit and they therefore united their forces and organized the company bearing their names, the incorporation being made early this year. The standing and ability of the two men at the head of the company were so well known that

they were able to secure almost a score of big contracts within the ten months which have passed.

The offices of Walbridge-Aldinger Co. are in the Penobscot building.



View of the first unit of the Book building, Louis Kamper, architect.



Work in progress on the National Bank of Commerce, Fort Street West, Albert Kahn, architect.



Factory building for Fisher Body Corporation, Detroit, Louis Kamper, architect. This building is 600 feet long and five stories high.



Kirby Avenue East grade separation of the Michigan Central and Grand Trunk tracks, Detroit.



The Ireland & Mathews Manufacturing Co.'s new plant, Detroit.



Grade separation in progress at Wabash Avenue and the Michigan Central and Grand Trunk tracks, Detroit.



Grade separation work, Twelfth Street and Michigan Central and Grand Trunk tracks, Detroit.



Michigan Central freight house, foot of Third Street, Detroit, built in 12 days.



Michigan Central roundhouse and adjoining building at Montrose, Canada.



Michigan Central roundhouse and adjoining buildings at Jackson, Mich.