

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 00001446

Date Listed: 11/22/2000

Perkins Building
Property Name

Peirce
County

WA
State

N/A
Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

[Handwritten Signature]
Signature of the Keeper

11/22/00
Date of Action

=====
Amended Items in Nomination:

Significance:

Criterion B was checked on the nomination cover form, but no person was identified. *Sidney Albert Perkins* is added under *Significant Person*.

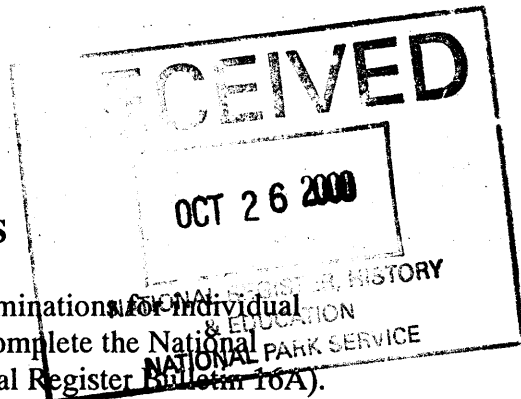
[The current narrative lacks a detailed comparative discussion of other potential properties associated with Mr. Perkins' career, but it is clear from the narrative that the nominated building served as a focal point for his important commercial and publishing interests.]

These revisions were confirmed with Lauren McCroskey at the WA SHPO.

DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form
Perkins Building
Pierce County, Washington
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



1444

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A).

Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a).

1. Name of Property

historic name Perkins Building

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 1101 A Street (11th & A Street)

not for publication

city or town Tacoma

vicinity 0513

state Washington

code _____

county Pierce

zip code 98402

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ___ nationally ___ statewide locally. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

[Signature]
Signature of certifying official

10/23/00
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

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Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A.

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Commercial/Trade Sub: Offices

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Other Sub: Under Rehabilitation

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Chicago School

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone masonry/concrete

roof concrete frame

walls reinforced concrete/brick veneer

other _____

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

=====
8. Statement of Significance
=====

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- a owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- b removed from its original location.
- c a birthplace or a grave.
- d a cemetery.
- e a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- f a commemorative property.
- g less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture
Commerce

Period of Significance 1907-1924 Significant Dates 1907/1910

Significant Person
X (Complete if Criterion B is marked above) _____

Cultural Affiliation _____

Architect/Builder Russell and Babcock

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____ HAER Inventory/Tacoma Union Depot Warehouse District, 1979

Primary Location of Additional Data

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: Tacoma Public Library, City of Tacoma Public Records

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10. Geographical Data

=====

Acreage of Property less than 1 acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone Easting	Northing	Zone Easting	Northing
1	10 542760	5234305	3	_____
2	_____	_____	4	_____

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

=====

11. Form Prepared By

=====

name/title Michael Sullivan/ Valerie Sivinski

organization Artifacts-Consultants in Architectural Conservation date _____

street & number 1109 A Street, Suite 1 telephone 253) 572-4599

city or town Tacoma state WA zip code 98403

=====
Additional Documentation
=====

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

=====
Property Owner
=====

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name B&H LLC. contact:: Robert Hollister

street & number 1725 Westlake Ave. N. #201 telephone

city or town Seattle state WA zip code 98109
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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

CONTINUATION SHEET

Section 7 Page 1 Narrative Description

name of property	Perkins Building
county and State	Pierce, Washington

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The Perkins Building is an eight-story reinforced concrete building with brick veneer facing on the upper finished levels, cut Wilkeson sandstone on the ground level and trim courses and an array of sheet metal and cast plaster flourishes on the cornice and window panels. The structure was completed in two distinct construction phases-the first 50 by 100 foot portion at the corner of 11th and A Street in 1907, and the second identical section of the same 50 by 100 foot size and height on the south in 1910.

The building was designed by the distinguished Tacoma firm of Russell and Babcock in the emerging Chicago Style of lofty skyscrapers that were beginning to reshape the skylines of American cities during the first decade of the 20th century. In Tacoma, the Perkins Building ushered in a series of 10 plus story Chicago Style buildings that clustered around the corners of Pacific and 11th Street. The burst of skyscrapers gave the city of Tacoma a distinct skyline and high-density center. It also marked the transition into new steel and concrete frame commercial buildings and ended the era of brick masonry and timber post and beam construction for the city's most prestigious commercial structures.

The first half of the building was originally seven and half stories with a full basement. It measured 100 x 50 in 1907 and grew to 100 x 100 in 1910 with the completion of the second nearly identical half. The building was the tallest concrete framed structure in Tacoma at the time the first half was built. It is also considered the first 'fireproof' and earthquake proof building constructed in Tacoma. In a memo to Perkins, it is reported that the building contains 43,000 square feet of rentable area (in the first half section of the structure).

The Perkins Building presents three ornamented facades on the east north and west elevations. The South party wall of the building faces a two-story building and is lit on the third through the eighth floor by double-hung steel frame windows with wire glass glazing. An open light well is centered in the building and opens into the floors through interior operable double hung sash windows and some fixed pane openings.

The most pronounced exterior feature of the building is the broad projecting cornice with rich cresting at the crown and sturdy rolled brackets underneath. The sheet metal and cut stone element wraps around three sides of the structure and is detailed with an amazing assortment of cherubs, masked dentils, wreaths, fruit clusters and a catalog of architectural details. "The roof is flat with a narrow eave line and metal fenestration" (Cullen). Decorative scrolled brackets found in its eaves are formed from heavy gauge sheet metal with iron bracing. Under the corner of the cornice facing 11th and A Streets, the words "Ledger" and "News" are engraved. Under the cornice facing the Federal building and directly above the entryway the words "Perkins Building" are etched.

A newspaper account claimed that the Perkins Building was the first building on the entire West Coast to have a parking garage for automobiles. This garage was added in 1924 and featured a valet, fuel and oil stations, a wash-rack, compressed air, security doors, and elevator service. The garage held automobiles for 40 tenants (TDL, February 1, 1925).

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Section 7 Page 2 Narrative Description

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When completed in 1909 the lobby interior and stairway were finished in fine white marble with tile mosaic floors and bronze light fixtures. On the upper floors marble wainscoting and tile floors graced the corridors and quarter-sawn oak was used to frame the windows, partitions and doorways. The window sash was typically Douglas Fir but in some offices it was faux painted to match the oak casings and frame trim. To ease cleaning chores, the building was plumbed with a central vacuum conduit system (TDL, April 11, 1909). The elevators were manufactured and installed by the Otis Elevator Company. Three car attendants were on staff to provide elevator service until 10 o'clock each evening. A subsequent express elevator was added to the building when the annex was created. A large chandelier hangs prominently in the lobby.

The building was substantially renovated at least three times and each time a significant investment was made in alteration. The 1924 renovation effected the basement and ground floor by moving heavy printing equipment and adding a garage but did not significantly alter the design or finishes in the lobby. It also reconfigured the mezzanine level and the business offices on floors three and four. Much of the corridor detailing was replaced at this time. An extensive marquee that covered the entire sidewalk on the west side was installed.

In the 1970's, the main entry doors were changed, a handicap ramp was constructed and the street level façade was refaced in areas with stone tile over the brick. The storefront at the corner was rebuilt and a smaller canopy was installed over the entry area. On some of the upper floors (4,5,7 &8), the corridors were reconfigured and new fluorescent lighting was installed.

In 1988-9, the interior of the upper floors was demolished down to the concrete post and beam structure. The elevator and stairway core was largely left intact and the inside exterior walls, including window frames, wall plaster and trim were left and patched. All the remaining interior partitioning, fixtures and trim was removed and a suspended ceiling system was installed. A section of the original office configuration is intact in the southwest corner of the 6th floor but typically all of the floors were converted to open plan areas and then reconfigured into classrooms, academic offices and common areas. The restrooms were reconfigured on each floor with new fixtures and ADA compliant areas and accesses. The marble detailed lobby and stairway are intact with original flooring and elevator detailing. Since the University of Washington has relocated, most of the suspended ceilings and light partitioning have been removed. The building is being rehabilitated for use as housing and today it appears much as it did before the University of Washington took occupancy. With the exception of some street level modifications the exterior of the building is nearly original and intact, including the massive cornice and fine ornamental detailing. The lobby and stairway to the mezzanine is in excellent original condition and the inside oak window framing and trim are intact though painting in most areas. The building retains most of its original character and panache and seems to have found its way to a dignified and lasting use as the new century begins.

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Section 8 Page 1 Narrative Statement of Significance

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The Perkins Building has achieved significance in two distinct areas: 1) as an archetypical example of early regional Commercial Style/Chicago School reinforced concrete construction, and 2) by direct association with a central figure in the Washington State newspaper industry and national level political-policy, Sidney Albert Perkins.

The saga of how the Perkins Building was planned and built as two separate constructions conveys a story of Tacoma's growth during the booming economic period prior to the First World War. A profile of the eventful life of Sidney Perkins presents a second perspective on the building as a backdrop and setting for some of the most important social and political episodes in national and state history. Finally, the building reemerges in the last part of the century as the home of the University of Washington Tacoma.

As an early example of the Chicago Commercial Style, the Perkins building displays an emphasis on ornamentation and decorative flourish that would diminish as the style developed. The heavily sculpted and pronounced cornice and extensive use of relief and Classical decoration marks the building's early skyscraper pedigree and its emphasis on appearing both imposing and highly formal.

Interestingly, just as the Perkins Building was going up as a highly formal example of reinforced concrete construction, a second competing project that employed the same new engineering and concrete material was being built just a few blocks away. The Sandberg Building (NR 1999), finished in 1908, reached two stories higher than the Perkins Building and displayed a much cleaner unornamented exterior that used much larger industrial steel frame windows and exposed concrete surfaces. Together the two buildings represent a broad early narrative chapter in Pacific Northwest architecture and engineering. They also illustrate the range of design preferences and construction alternatives that would emerge during the pre Depression skyscraper era.

As a reinforced concrete structure, the Perkins Building employed a system of columns and beams that resembled the familiar heavy timber post and beam construction of unreinforced masonry commercial buildings. The innovation came in the use of a continuous concrete material with interwoven reinforcing steel for the exterior bearing walls as well as in interior frame and structure. Even as the last forms were being removed from the top level of the structure, masons were adding a Denny pressed brick veneer and Wilkeson cut sandstone sills and facing on the street level façade as a concession to the lingering conventions masonry construction.

The concrete construction afforded the building several benefits including greater height and area in upper stories, fire resistance and a generous ratio of window area to exterior wall surface. The Perkins Building was designed with inset assemblies of windows within openings up to 18 feet wide, reaching from a 20 inch high inside sill to just below an 11 foot ceiling. "The ample windows and central light shaft provided plenty of daylight to the structure. No office lacked for ambient light by Russell and Babcock's design". The opening were filled with a variety of window configurations made up of movable double hung sash, large centrally fixed panes, transom lights and on the second level Classical relief panels placed as spandrels. The lights were divided by wood frames with a mix of moldings and cut stone brackets and ornaments.

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Section 8 Page 2 **Narrative Statement of Significance**

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The Perkins Building-Historical Development

David and Minnie Lister were the original owners of the property located at 1101 A Street, where the Perkins building now stands. The Listers' were prominent Tacoma pioneers. They lived in a modest two-story stick framed house at the corner of what is now 11th and Cliff Streets. In 1891, Minnie Lister applied for a permit to erect a three-story brick building as a boarding house. This building became known as the Lister Block and was located at the corner of 11th and A Street, just half-a-block from their home. Total cost of construction was \$10,650 (Diviney & TDL, January 1, 1891).

The retail level of the Lister Block contained a saloon called the Dawson Tavern and Sample Room owned and operated by John Lund, a pioneer from Alaska (TNT; January 22, 1961). The second and third floors were known as the Hotel Hauser. Entrance to the Hotel was made by a door located on the 11th Street side and toward the back of the building--few convenient steps to Minnie Lister's home (Diviney).

Life in the Lister Block was relatively uneventful. Most of the patrons of the Hotel and Saloon were railroad men who would clamber up and down the bluff to the Northern Pacific railyards some 70 feet below Cliff Street. On December 18, 1901 Samuel C. Holtzinger, a lonely, thirty-year old railroad brakeman and resident of the hotel stabbed himself in the leg with a homemade knife. Some say he did it on purpose. Others are not so certain. Either way he scrambled from his room while Mrs. Hauser prepared dinner for the boarders. He asked her to fetch a doctor. Mrs. Hauser attempted to use the hotel telephone, but someone else was already on the line. She then ran outside to summons a police officer. When the two bolted back inside they found Holtzinger dead in a pool of his own blood. He had collapsed on the stairway. The puncture wound, which seemed rather insignificant, had ruptured his femoral artery and he bled to death in less than a single minute (TDL, December 19, 1901).

The headquarters for the S.A. Perkins' newspaper empire was located within the Fidelity building in Tacoma. In January of 1905, Sidney Perkins unveiled his plans for a new and proper headquarters building to be located at the corner of 13th and Broadway (TDN, January 16, 1905). For some reason, the property was unsuitable, so by November of that year Perkins acquired the Lister property instead. He then shut down the hotel and evicted the saloon.

The detail of the plans and subsequent construction of the Perkins' headquarters building received unprecedented press coverage. Every aspect of the plan and construction of the building was found weekly within the pages of Perkins' journals.

Perkins enlisted the aid of architects Russell and Babcock to design the tallest and the most "thoroughly modern" structure in Tacoma. The new building was to be six full stories with a half-story and basement. The first three floors contained the office spaces for News and Ledger administration. The basement contained the presses. The upper most

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floors were leased to help finance construction (TDL, January 6, 1906). Early tenants to those upper floors included the Tacoma Eastern Railroad; Balfour, Guthrie Grain Company; and the United States Immigration Service (TDL, June 16, 1907).

A generous allocation of windows within the Perkins building gave it a spectacular, uninterrupted 360-degree view of the surrounding landscape when completed. To the North: City Hall, the Northern Pacific Headquarters and Commencement Bay. To the West: was the Tacoma city skyline. To the South: were Mount Tacoma and the industrial and warehouse districts of Tacoma. And to the East: were the Cascade Mountains and Commencement Bay.

Russell and Babcock set out to design the tallest reinforced concrete structure in the Northwest, the first completely fireproof building in Tacoma. The building had to drink in the surrounding beauty of South Puget Sound and it had to be expandable for Perkins' purposes.

Early on, Perkins realized that he did not have enough space to accommodate all his needs. Instead of demolishing the newly acquired Lister block, he picked it up and moved it—in one giant piece. Being a man set on promotion, Perkins saw this feat as a means of generating more interest in his empire. Perkins had been intrigued by the work of Tacoma based specialists who were making headlines all over the state with their ability to raise complete buildings and move them to more suitable locales. The team was the construction firm of Nichols and Handley. Nichols and Handley was awarded the contract to relocate several notable buildings in Seattle by the Great Northern Railroad as they tunneled under the city with a new north south mainline. Adding to their feats of daring, Nichols and Handley were contracted by Gonzaga College in Spokane to not only move a 100 by 62 foot stick-frame building 500 feet, but to spin it 180-degrees before settling back down to earth. With each new case, Nichols and Handley's fame on the West Coast grew.

To move the Lister Block required special attention by these now famous Tacoma professionals.

J. M. Nichols, of Nichols and Handley, stated yesterday that in order to move the structure the firm will tunnel under it, placing two big twenty-five foot steel beams across each end and 12x12 wooden beams across every two feet under the structure for its entire length. Two gigantic wooden beams, 16x18 in size, will be placed the entire length of the building and on these beams the entire structure will rest. When this is done the structure will be moved intact with rollers across the intervening lot to its new location. Mr. Nichols estimated that about twenty-five days will be required for the task and he will start at it at once. (TDL, January 25, 1906).

The Lister Building was the first brick building relocated in Tacoma (TDL, March 25, 1906).

As the preparations were made to move the Lister Block, an excavation contractor named McHugh was busily shaping the ground. Fill material from the excavation was moved half-a-block away to Eleventh and Cliff Streets and used as part of the original Eleventh Street bridge apron (TDL, February 11, 1906).

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On March 18, 1906, Tacomans got their first look at Perkins' vision. Perkins published Russell and Babcock's design sketches and announced that the Contracting Engineering Company had been named as General Contractor of the construction project. The total cost of construction was estimated in excess of \$150,000 (TDL, March 18, 1906) making it the most expensive building project since Stadium High School (TDL, April 1, 1906).

This block will be the highest building in Tacoma and the first structure to be erected in this city in accordance with the latest designs for a thoroughly fire-proof building, constructed of re-inforced concrete," said E. P. Babcock, who are the designers of the building, yesterday. "The first story of the building will be finished in Wilkeson cut stone, while the remainder will be of Denny pressed brick. A handsomely designed cornice surmounts the top story. (TDL, March 18, 1906)

Babcock referred to the centrally located site as "one of the most advantageous in the city" and told of plans to include an on-site electrical plant in the basement and a railroad loading dock along Cliff Street. President C. B. Hurley, of the Contracting Engineering Company expressed the significance of the Perkins building and foretold its future when he was quoted as saying, "The construction of a building of the character of the Perkins block is important in the building history of Tacoma for I think it will mark the inauguration of an era, locally speaking, of fireproof building construction. The building will be the tallest reinforced concrete building in the Northwest and will be a model of its kind." Hurley continued to talk about the incredible detail work that was involved with constructing a multi-story reinforced concrete structure. He said that designers and engineers had to determine how much weight each floor added to the one below while determining the right girders and the amount of rebar incorporated into the building's framework (TDL, March 18, 1906).

Nichols and Handley worked their building moving magic on March 24, 1906. The Lister Block was removed approximately 50 feet from its foundation on lot 1 to its new home on lot 3. The process took six hours under the intense scrutiny of builders and contractors from all over the West. Also in attendance were thousands of spectators that would filter by throughout the course of the afternoon. The move was less than spectacular with the building moving at a nearly imperceptible eight-feet an hour. "Two horses hitched to a capstan furnished the power for moving." Once

moved, the project was dubbed a complete success and McHugh went to work excavating the ground where the Lister block had once stood (TDL, March 25, 1906).

The permit taken on the construction of the Perkins Building in March of 1906 helped propel the city building department to a new all time high of \$488,000 worth of permits in a single month. The Tacoma Ledger reported the new city record as "unequaled" and added, "with construction work begun in handsome business blocks on all the principal business streets... Tacoma can certainly be said to be enjoying a building boom (TDL, April 1, 1906)."

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By mid-May McHugh was finished with the excavation work and of the Contracting Engineering Company was following close behind with the forming of the foundation. In mid-June, heating contractor C. A. Richardson was awarded the contract for installing the boiler and heating systems. In mid-July, the Tacoma Ledger published a comprehensive piece on how "liquid stone" buildings (like the Perkins Block) were constructed. In this piece we learn that tensile bars made of one inch twisted iron strips were laid into the floor to give it strength and stability. We also learn that the operation of heavy press machinery in the basement led Russell and Babcock to propose the reinforced concrete structure, "which is generally accepted as the most suitable for such needs" over other modes of construction practiced during that era (TDL, July 14, 1906).

As the top two stories were being added in August, work was rushed on the basement and entry level. Windows and interior appointments were added. Perkins wanted the machinery in place and the ground floor offices occupied by the Ledger while heavy construction continued overhead. Rather optimistically, it was reported that the lower floors would be ready for the Ledger to occupy in the matter of a month. It was also at this time that we notice a change made to the Lister Building. On August 26, 1906 it is referred to as the Junior Block. Why Perkins would waste time to rename a temporary building that would only stand for about three years at its new location is open to speculation.

Seven months behind schedule, on March 16, 1907, the Ledger relocated from the Fidelity Building to their new headquarters. By that time, most of the interior construction was complete all the way up to the third floor where S. A. Perkins took up residence. Meanwhile the Daily News remained at the Fidelity Building until late spring (TDL, March 17, 1907).

On June 16, 1907, the Tacoma Daily Ledger printed the first building directory for the new Perkins Building. The first three floors, basement and half-floors were occupied solely by the operations of the Tacoma Daily Ledger and the Daily News. From the ground up, the basement contained the presses and other heavy machinery. Floor A: the mailroom. The first floor contained the entry, business offices, advertising and circulation departments. Floor B: the newspaper library and historical department. The second floor was dedicated to composing and stereotyping. The third floor contained S. A. Perkins private offices and the offices of his editorial staff.

The upper floors contained leased space. The fourth floor was held entirely by the Tacoma Eastern Railroad and sister companies North Coast Timber, Mineral Lake Lumber Company, and the East Creek Coal Company. Balfour and

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Guthrie Grain leased the fifth floor with Sutton & Company Grain holding one small office. On the top floor, the US Immigration Service held the most suites, Lucas Lumber Company, and the Wilkin's Investment and Promotions Firm also had offices there.

Next door, at the Junior Block, you would find, F. T. Crowe and Company building materials on the first floor; T. V. Copeland job printers who shared space with Hayes and Haines electrical contractors on the second and on the third floor was Tacoma Engraving; another company owned by Perkins (TDL, June 16, 1907). Now with everyone moved to their respective places, the Tacoma Daily Ledger announced with some measure of pride, "there are no better appointed newspaper offices of the Pacific Coast" (TDL, July 1, 1907). Later the boast would become more audacious, "In fact, there are no better appointed newspaper offices in the world" (TDL, January 13, 1909).

In less than two years after the initial occupation, Perkins announced plans for the subsequent construction of the building addition and the demolition of the Junior Block (TDL, April 11, 1909). Perkins ordered the tenants out of the quaint but doomed building. Tacoma Engraving and Copeland Printers had no problem meeting the deadline but F. T. Crowe & Company Building Supply was in the process of building a new warehouse in the vicinity of 13th and Dock Streets. Crowe & Company waited as long as they could before finally vacating the Junior Block. Hurley-Mason general contractors performed the demolition work as part of their contract to build the addition (TDL, April 25, 1909). The demolition process started promptly on May 1st and two weeks later, no trace of the Junior Block could be found (TDL, May 16, 1909).

The building addition was contained in the original plans drafted by Russell and Babcock. In correspondence to Perkins, that portion of the building was commonly referred to as the building annex. The annex is a mirror image of the original Perkins Block. General contractors, Hurley-Mason (the same principals who were involved in the Contracting Engineering Company) obtained a building permit for the annex in the first week of June 1909 from Tacoma Building Inspector T. L. Hebblethwaite. The estimated cost of construction was again \$150,000 (TDL June 16, 1909).

The construction of the annex was troublesome for Hurley-Mason from the start. Steel was delivered weeks late and union organizers stirred up the workers. By August, construction superintendent L. H. Osterud had hoped to be building forms for the fourth floor but he had only finished the first and was preparing forms for the second (Diviney & TDL, August 15, 1909). Osterud rushed to get the forms poured before the weather set in. By October he had stripped the forms on the fourth floor and was pouring the fifth (TDL, October 10, 1909). With all the forms poured, Osterud could keep his men working under cover throughout the winter. By February of 1910, the annex entered the finishing stage of construction. Part of this process involved knocking holes in the wall that separated the building from the annex to create the building corridors (TDL, February 27, 1910). In May of 1910, it was announced that the building was finally ready for occupancy.

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It was at this time that the railroad spur was either constructed or re-constructed. Charles W. Maxham was awarded the contract to grade Cliff Street behind the Perkins Building. Maxham's team of men and horses were given 90 days to properly prepare the roadbed (TDL, January 16, 1910).

The Perkins empire soon over burdened its headquarters. The first remodeling was relatively minor compared to later improvements. In 1916, most of the interior walls on the second and third floors were removed to eliminate stuffy and crowded offices creating large single rooms. New chandeliers were also added. The papers made sport of their open surroundings and liberal quotes from desk editors were made in a tongue-in-cheek fashion. The following quotes were found in the November 26, 1916 combined Sunday News-Ledger.

City hall reporter: "Regular big city news room layout now. Can't realize yet that it's the same newspaper office. As my desk is between the sporting editor and marine editor, I will be regaled by the latest vaudeville jokes by these masters in badinage."

Court house reporter: "Nope, I'm not registering any kick about this moving proposition." Adding, "This thing of having plenty of room to lean back and wait for the big inspiration more than offsets the gas attack the fresh paint and varnish is making along all fronts. It will now be possible to continue pounding out the throbbing sentences without being interfered with in any way by the sporting editor as he expands over the construction of a golf poem until he jabs me in the back—a torture that I have borne with long suffering patience."

The sporting editor said: "Not being autochthonous to the upper stratum in which we formerly pursued with much compatibility our various departmental activities, I will say that the decision to descend to a trifle closer juxtaposition to terra firma elicited something more than mere satisfaction. In fact, elevator service being suspended after 11 p.m. makes the accomplishment of three flights a titanic task to one who is developing embonpoint and a perfect 45 measurement amidships...."

In 1918, Sam Perkins divested the Daily News by selling the newspaper to Frank S. Baker, Publisher of the Tacoma Tribune (TNT, January 22, 1978). It was Baker's paper, the Tacoma News Tribune that survived into the modern era.

Nine years after its completion, the first extensive building remodel took place. Once again, Perkins pressed into service Hurley-Mason, general contractors to do the work. Hurley-Mason had been busy. Since constructing the Perkins building they had also constructed the magnificent Union Station. And the firm had just finished constructing an entire community of 48 homes for Todd Shipyard's employees when Perkins inquired about adding a floor to the Perkins building. Perkins had three floors above the ground floor removed and a fourth added in 1919 (TDL, April 13, 1919).

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One year after the remodel, (which added a new floor to the building) Perkins constructed a grand portico to cover the sidewalk in front of the building. This pedestrian shelter stood on 13 iron posts. Atop each post was a decorative lighted globe. Beneath the roof of the shelter were more lights to illuminate the steps of passersby. Tacoma's Commissioner of Public Safety, H. Roy Harrison was quoted in the Tacoma Daily Ledger as saying,

The new work is costing in the neighborhood of \$5,000 from which the management of the building can hope to get little direct benefit. The scheme of placing the marquee on posts eliminates danger of a chain rusting and letting the roof fall on passing pedestrians, and will give the shelter an aspect of a closed room. (TDL, -- September 26, 1920)

In 1921, the half-floor above the basement underwent some remodeling to accommodate the special needs of the Consumers' Central Heating Company who relocated their offices to the Perkins Building. The main entrance for the contractor was located off Cliff Street. A secondary egress was built leading to 11th Street (TDL, July 3, 1921).

After Sam Perkins sold off the Tacoma Daily Ledger, he entered into yet another remodeling phase. This time the effort was focused on the basement floors, which held the massive machinery for printing newspapers. Sam was an automobile aficionado and decided to renovate the vacant space into a parking garage. But in true Sam Perkins spirit, it could not be an ordinary garage but rather it turned out to be the first parking garage on the entire West Coast. The garage held space for 40 automobiles. Automobile owners, like Perkins, who worked in the building, had first opportunity to lease available garage space. Any remaining spaces were offered to Sam's friends.

Reporting of the development, the Tacoma Daily Ledger printed "If they wish to take advantage of the service offered, they may drive into the garage, which is in the big basement of the building, leave their car with an attendant and take the elevator directly to their offices. No exposure during inclement weather is necessary at all. (TDL, March 2, 1925)"

In speaking of the merits of parking garages, Sam Perkins was quoted as saying, "Providing parking space for the automobiles of tenants is a thing that all office buildings will have to come to soon," Mr. Perkins said in explaining his plan. "In a few years you will find all office buildings will have to devise some plan to care for their tenants' automobiles and new buildings of the future will have a storage place for automobiles designed as one of the first and most necessary features." (TDL, February 1, 1925).

News of Perkins' accomplishment spread quickly because it was also reported, that several building owners on the West Coast and Los Angeles had announced similar plans for garages (TDL, March 2, 1925).

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Sidney Albert Perkins

In 1911, Perkins entertained President William H. Taft on a trip through Tacoma. Repeatedly the President erroneously referred to Sidney as Sam. Not wanting to embarrass the President by pointing out the gaff, Sidney Perkins became Sam Perkins.

Sidney Albert Perkins came to Tacoma to celebrate his 23rd birthday. Perkins was a travelling salesman peddling manufacturing equipment when he arrived on May 6, 1888 (TNT, May 6, 1938). While in town, he met up with William Bonney who convinced Perkins to team up with him in a drug store partnership called Bonney and Perkins. The two met with some success until the economic panic of 1893, when they were forced out of business. Perkins worked menial tasks until he was able to repay his debts. Perkins' eventually found suitable work with the Republican Party and then became the personal secretary and confidante of Mark Hanna of Ohio, a powerful and influential mid-westerner who was running Willian McKinley's campaign for the presidency. Hanna owned several industrial enterprises in Cleveland including the *Cleveland Herald*. While working for Hanna, Perkins helped orchestrate the McKinley Presidential campaign and after victory, Hanna was promoted to General Secretary of the Republican Party. A year later in 1897 Hanna was himself elected to the U.S. Senate. Senator Hanna took Perkins as his personal secretary and together they moved into the central workings of the majority party. For the remainder of his life, Perkins would be an influence on the policies and candidates of the Republicans not only at the State and regional level but also at the heights of American politics. During his career Perkins was elected several times to the Republican national committee, where he served on both the executive committee and the campaign committee. (Diviney & Encyclopedia Americana).

While acting as Senator Hanna's secretary, Sidney Perkins purchased the Tacoma Evening News in 1898 for \$18,000 with financing coming from his friend Chester Thorne, President of the National Bank of Commerce. A year later, Tacoma Daily Ledger President C. M. Schultz made Perkins an incredible deal in offering to sell him the Ledger. Perkins refused at first, but then relented. In 1900, Perkins Newspaper Empire grew to include the Aberdeen Washingtonian, the Bellingham Herald, the Everett Herald, the Olympia Recorder and the Olympian. By 1901, The demands of this burgeoning empire caused Perkins to depart from Senator Hanna in favor of running his western Washington newspaper chain. Not surprisingly his editorial positions always favored Republican candidates and political positions. (Diviney).

In 1900, Perkins hired Albert Johnson from the Washington Post to edit the Tacoma Daily News. Once he personally took control of the chain from his Tacoma base, he sent Johnson to oversee and eventually own the Aberdeen newspaper. In 1914, with powerful help from Perkins, Johnson was elected to the House of Representatives from the district that reached from Grays Harbor to include Tacoma. From 1919 to 1933 Johnson was chairman of the House Committee on Immigration where he lead the campaign for Alien Exclusion laws. In 1920, Albert Johnson and the entire U.S. Congressional committee held hearing in the Tacoma Federal Building, immediately across the street from the Perkins Building. The testimony and findings led directly to the federal Alien Exclusion laws of 1921 and 1923.

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effectively preventing immigrants from Japan and other Asian countries from receiving the privilege of citizenship and basic civil rights. On the national and regional level, the laws were the most repressive civil rights legislation since the civil war. In Tacoma the laws against ownership of property in the 1920's eliminated the basic reason for the Japanese community to return from relocation following the attack on Pearl Harbor. Congressman Johnson and the Tacoma hearings stood at the very center of the episode.

Before the advent of radio, news of significant events of any duration was carried via the wire services to the press. Therefore, if it was imperative to know the outcome of an event, and you could not wait for the newspaper to come to you—you went to the newspaper. Perkins saw to it that his building was equipped with the latest telegraph and teletype services. For the better part of a decade the corner of 11th and A Streets was the modern day equivalent of Times Square in New York. Tacomans would congregate there to learn of the outcome of each pitch of the World's Series. The news would travel as Morse code via wire to the Perkins Building to a telegrapher who would type up each update. The message was then sent to a *newsie* who, while sitting in the second-story windowsill, would broadcast the message to hundreds of eager fans waiting below. The process, though laborious, meant you could have play-by-play updates of all the games within a matter of minutes from the time each pitch actually took place (TDL, October 13, 1912 and October 8, 1916).

A similar situation occurred for election night coverage. Massive crowds huddled in the wind and rain to hear precinct-by-precinct returns. These crowds typically would be entertained with a marching band--which played patriotic hymns while the crowd waited for updates (TDL, November 7, 1912).

The growing prominence of 11th and A Street meant that other cultural events must take place there as well. In 1913, the corner was the starting point for a motorcar rally to Longmire Lodge. Sam Perkins loved automobiles and filled Sunday papers with pages of automobile news. He also sponsored automotive events. The outcome of these events became news and the publicity drove sales for the local dealership. The autos: Cartercar, Reo, Packard, Regal and Cadillac, were displayed in front of the Perkins Building for public inspection prior to bone rattling rally to Mount Tacoma.

Easily the most violent and newsworthy event ever associated with the building came in the summer of 1935 when striking Longshoremen and waterfront workers marched across the 11th Street Bridge into a picket of National Guardsmen posted between the Perkins Building and the U.S. Courthouse. The clash turned into a pitched battle between sides with tear gas and bayonets in full use. Newsreels and press photos went all over the world with the Perkins Building as the backdrop for street fighting in Tacoma Washington.

Perkins managed his regional newspaper empire from the building that bore his name for almost half a century. In 1918 he sold the Ledger and News to Frank L. Baker's growing Tacoma Tribune Company that merged the evening Tribune with the News and continued to publish the morning Ledger. In the 1924 the papers moved operations to

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Perkins Building

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the Tribune Building on St. Helens Street but Sam Perkins kept his office on the third floor of his building and began re-tailoring the building to business and office uses. The Daily Ledger finally ceased publication on June 22, 1937 leaving Tacoma as a one-paper town. From the Perkins Building however, Sam continued to control papers in Bellingham and the state capital Olympia. He operated one of the most celebrated steam yachts on Puget Sound, *the Primero*, from whose deck four presidents admired the shores of Commencement Bay. When he died in 1955 at the age of 90 he still owned the Perkins Building and its ownership since has only passed through three hands.

In 1989, the University of Washington selected the Perkins Building as the site of its first branch campus. The decision to expand academic services to Tacoma was shared with the Washington State Legislature that resolved the question of

whether the University of Washington or Washington State University could build a campus in the State's second largest urban area. Once selected, the University of Washington moved quickly to lease a location and the owners of the Perkins Building were prepared to completely equip the building to academic requirements. During the 1989-90 academic year, the first students enrolled at the University of Washington Tacoma took classes in the storied Perkins Building. The administrative offices and student commons were on the sixth floor with the library on the fifth and classrooms and academic offices newly configured throughout the upper floors.

In August 1997, the University of Washington moved to its permanent campus in the historic warehouses across from Union Station on Pacific Avenue leaving the Perkins Building largely empty. Today the Perkins Building is being rehabilitated for housing in yet another chapter in its long and illustrious history.

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Written Legal Description

Lots 1 to 4 inclusive, in Block 1101 of MAP OF TACOMA, WASHINGTON TERRITORY, according to Plat filed for record February 3, 1875 in Tacoma Pierce County Washington

Together with the West 20 feet of Cliff Avenue abutting thereon as vacated by ordinance No. 370 of the City of Tacoma.

ALSO TOGETHER with that portion of A Street abutting Lots 2 and 3 in Block 1101 of said Plat as vacated by City of Tacoma Ordinance No. 2289 recorded April 11, 1963 under Auditor's No. 8304110318, described as follows:

Commencing at the Northwesterly corner of said Block 1101; thence Southerly along the Westerly line of said Block a distance of 37.2 feet to the true point of beginning; thence Westerly at a 90° angle 4.00 feet; thence Southerly parallel to the Westerly line of said Block 1101 25.75 feet; thence Easterly 4.00 feet to a point on said Westerly line 25.75 feet Southerly from the true point of beginning; thence Northerly 25.75 feet to said true point of beginning.

Situated in the County of Pierce, State of Washington.



PERKINS BUILDING, 1101 A STREET, TACOMA, WA.

Historic Photo, ca 1916.

Chamber of Commerce Collection, Washington State Historical Society

Looking south on A St. from S. 11th St., with Perkins Building at left, Tacoma.

Image Description

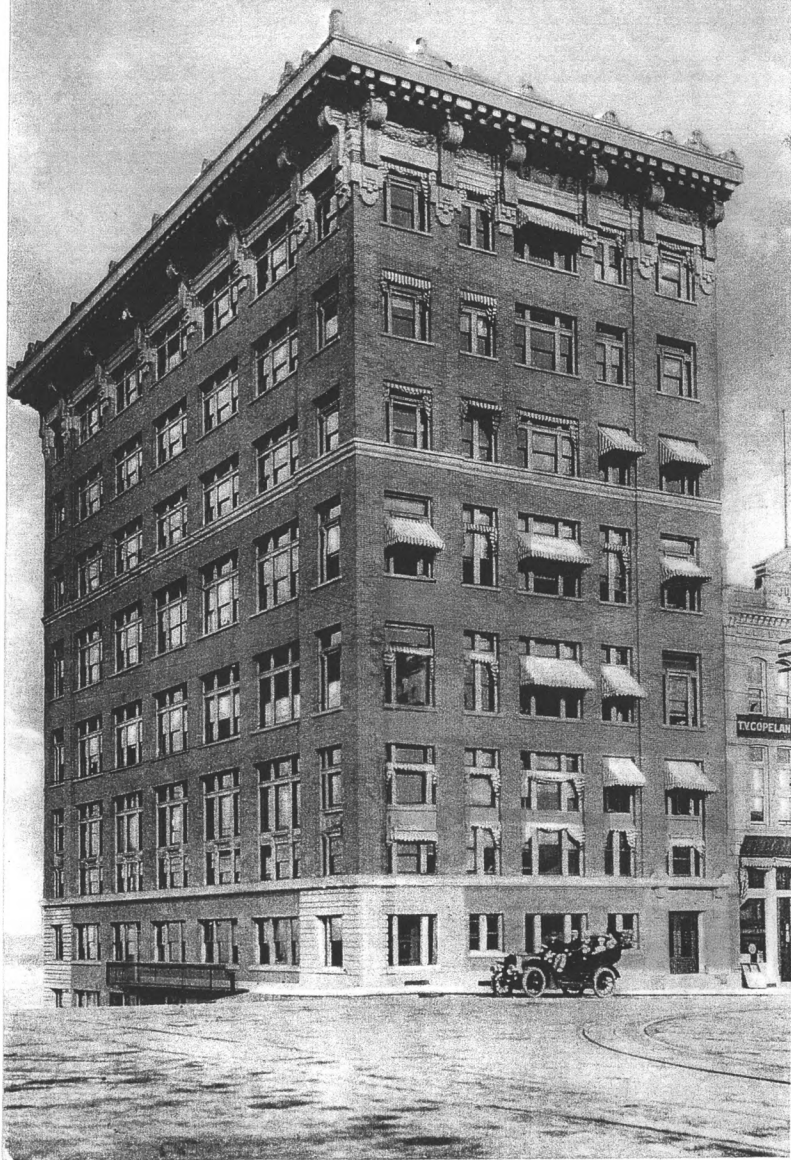


PERKINS BUILDING, 1101 A STREET, TACOMA, WA.

Historic Photo, 1908.

University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections, Digital Photographs

Perkins Building, Newspaper Row, Tacoma, Wash.

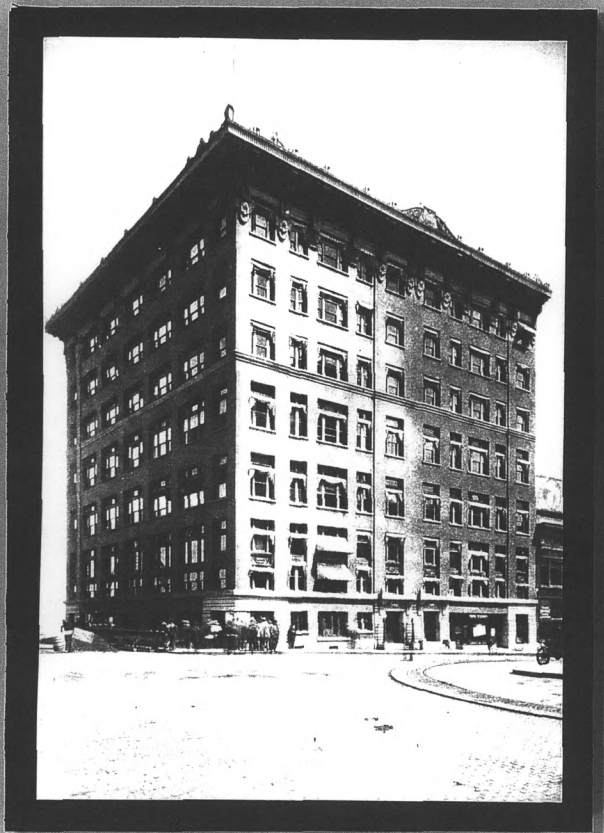


PERKINS BUILDING, 1101 A STREET, TACOMA, WA.
Historic Photo, Post Card View 1908

Tacoma Public Library, Northwest Room Collection



PERKINS BUILDING, 1101 A STREET, TACOMA, WA.
Historic Photo, 1910, Progress photo of Perkins Annex.
Tacoma Public Library, Northwest Room Collection



PERKINS BUILDING, 1101 A STREET, TACOMA, WA.
Historic Photo, 1910 at completion of second section



Perkins Building
Home of the Morning Ledger & Evening News, Tacoma Wash. 2721

PERKINS BUILDING, 1101 A STREET, TACOMA, WA.
Historic Photo, ca. 1915, Post Card View

PERKINS BUILDING, 1101 A STREET, TACOMA, WA.
Historic Photo, November 1918



Tacoma Public Library, Northwest Room Collection

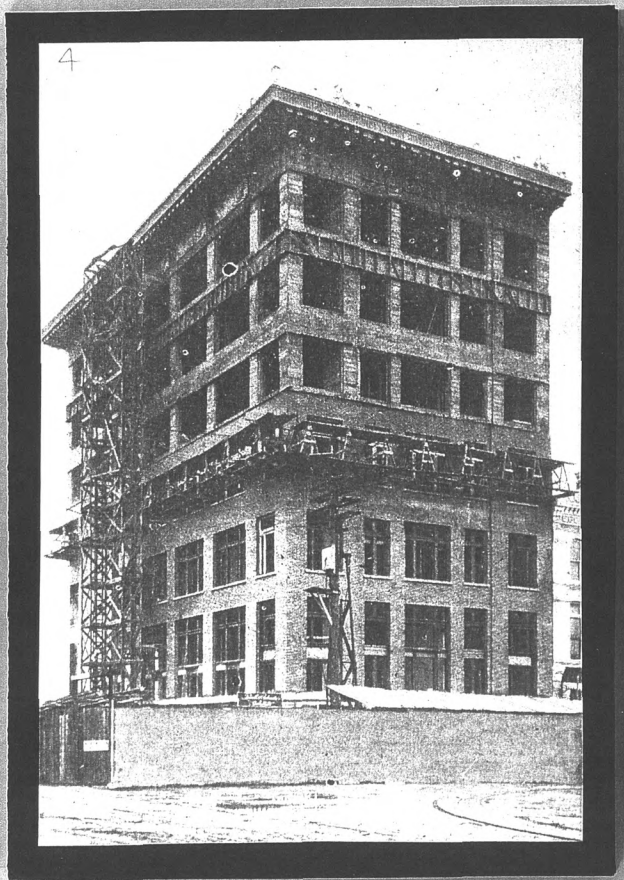
Looking south on 11th St. from the City Waterway, Tacoma, Washington, ca. 1916

Image Description



**PERKINS BUILDING, 1101 A STREET, TACOMA, WA.
Historic Photo, ca. 1916, west elevation.**

University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections, Digital Photographs



PERKINS BUILDING, 1101 A STREET, TACOMA, WA.
Historic Photo, 1906, Under Construction with brick veneer partially completed

PERKINS BUILDING TO BE ERECTED AT SOUTH ELEVENTH AND A STREETS



The contract was awarded yesterday for the handsome fireproof structure which is to be the new home of The Ledger and the Daily News, and which will cost about \$150,000.

THE Contracting Engineering company of this city was yesterday awarded the contract for the erection of the handsome seven-story building to be erected at the southeast corner of Eleventh and A streets by S. A. Perkins and to be occupied by The Ledger, the Daily News, and the Tacoma Engraving company. Work on the building will commence on or before April 1, and it will be ready for occupancy October 1. The total cost of the structure will exceed \$150,000.

"The block will be the highest building in Tacoma and the first structure to be erected in this city in accordance with the latest design for a thoroughly fire-

proof building, constructed of re-inforced concrete," said M. P. Babcock, of Architects Russell & Babcock, who are the designers of the building, yesterday. "The first story of the building, will be finished in Wilketon cut stone, while the remainder will be of Denny pressed brick. A handsomely designed cornice surmounts the top story."

"Will Have Power Plant." "The contract we let today to the Contracting Engineering company does not include plumbing, electric wiring, heating or the elevators, bids for which will be received as the work on the building progresses. Arrangements are yet to be made for a power plant and it is probable that a complete electric power plant, furnishing light and motive

power, will be installed in the building."

"The site selected for the building is regarded as one of the most advantageous in the city, as it is centrally located, commands railroad facilities, and at the same time overlooks the bay, affording a magnificent view of the tidelands and Tacoma harbor."

New Era in Local Building.

"G. B. Hurley, president of the Contracting Engineering company, said yesterday:

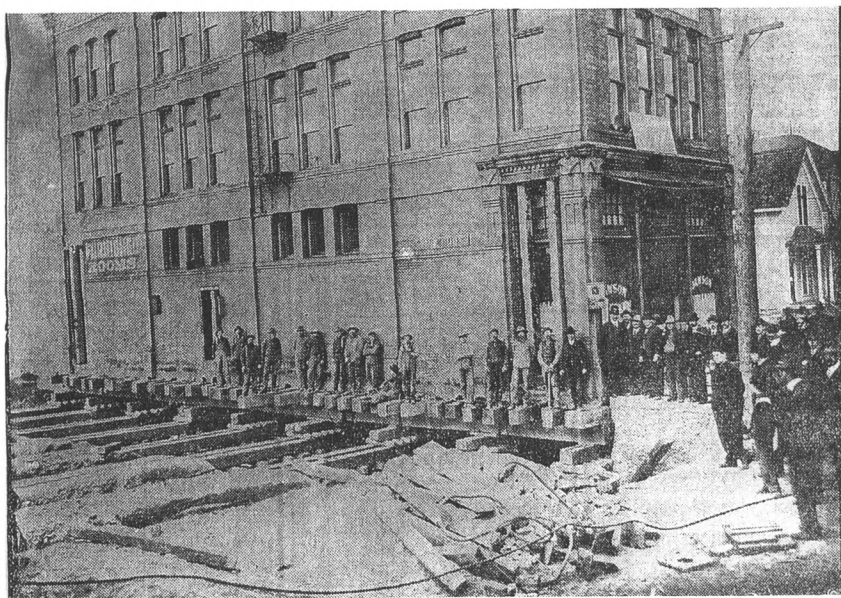
"The construction of a building of the character of the Perkins' block is important in the building history of Tacoma for I think it will mark the inauguration of an era, firstly signifying, of fireproof building construction. The building will be the tallest re-inforced

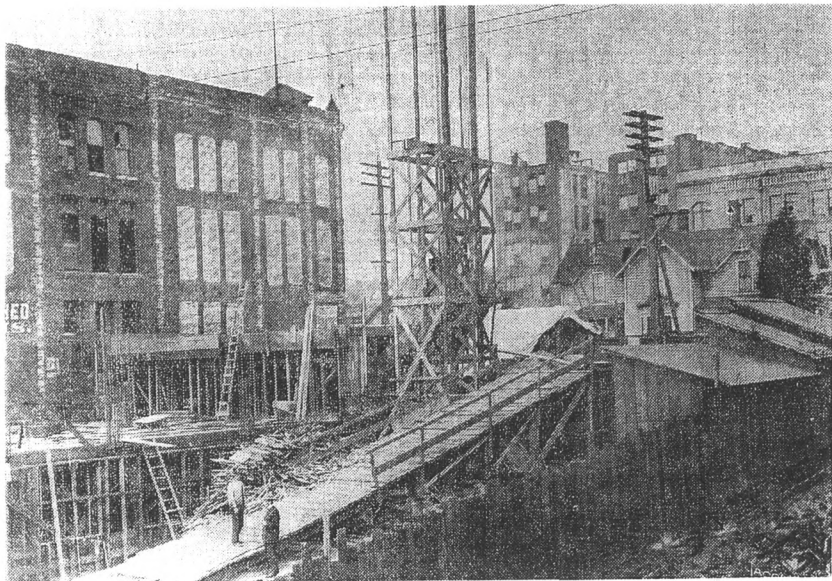
concrete building in the Northwest and will be a model of its kind."

"A tremendous amount of detail work is involved in planning and getting ready for the actual construction work on such a building. All of the designing, so far as the concrete work is concerned, is done by our firm. The architect furnishes us with the weights to be borne by each floor and then we have to figure out the sizes of steel girders and concrete reinforcement sufficient to carry the weights specified. These detail drawings have to be made for all of the different walls and floors. Contracts for material will be let immediately and work on the building will be pushed ahead in such a manner as to insure its completion by October 1."

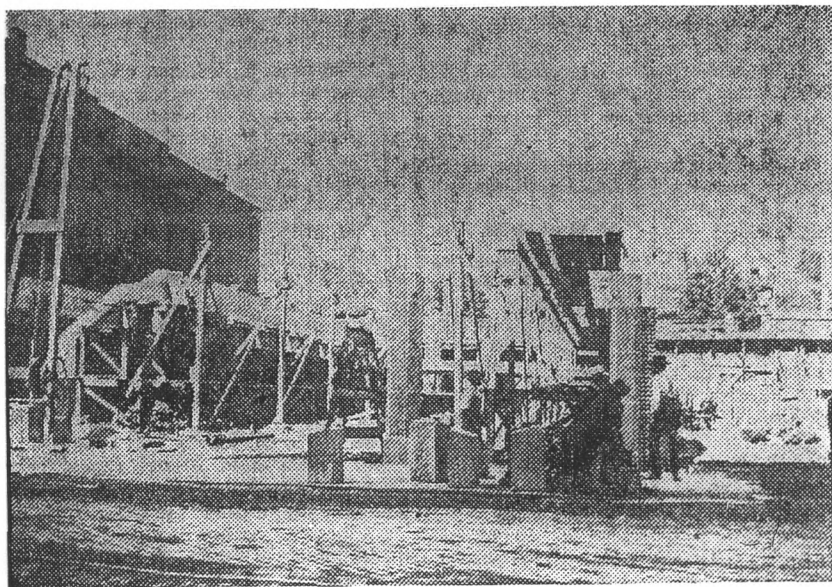


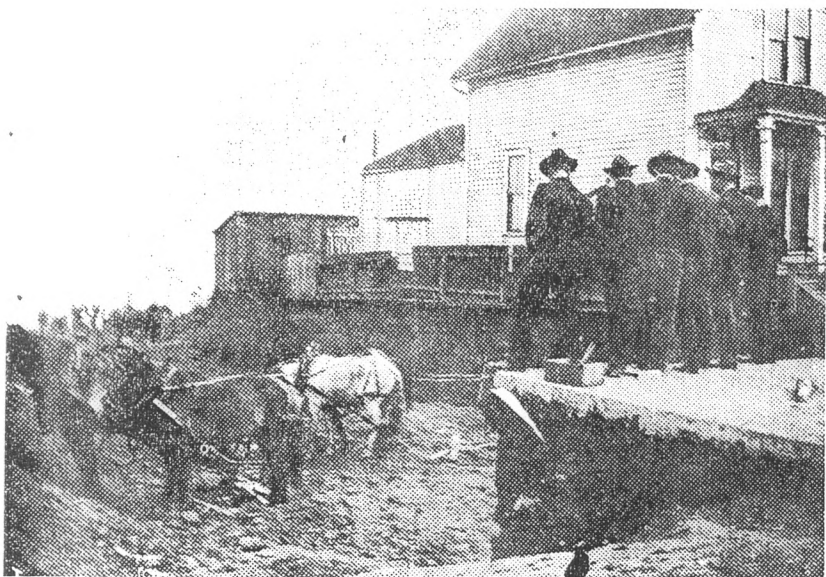
**PERKINS BUILDING, 1101 A STREET, TACOMA, WA.
Historic Photo, 1906 Moving Lister Block,**





**PERKINS BUILDING, 1101 A STREET, TACOMA, WA.
Historic Photo, 1906, Site excavation, Rebar and form work**





**PERKINS BUILDING, 1101 A STREET, TACOMA, WA.
Historic Photo, 1906 Site excavation, Rebar and form work**

