

## *Federal Building*

The French-German influence of the architecture of the Federal Building kept pace with some of the other imposing structures being built in downtown Quincy at the time of its completion in 1887. In fact, the Federal Building was a refreshing change to an almost exclusive Romanesque period in local architecture. The design was the work of a Treasury Department architect at a time of a building boom in post offices. Completed at a cost of \$175,000 it housed the working areas and public windows for 12 carriers and eight clerks.

Prior to that time the post office location had been changed many times due to outgrowing existing space or due to fires. Quincy's first post office had been in the Tillson Building on the northwest corner of 4th & Maine opened in 1829. In 1850 it moved to the basement across the street, and in 1857 it moved to the Kendall Building at 6th & Maine. Its last location before the Federal Building was built was in the Rogers Building at 6th & Hampshire.

The new three-story structure at 8th & Hampshire would serve the purposes for which it was built for 22 years, until 1909. Included in the building were offices for the postmaster and assistant postmaster and for the Federal Court, judges chambers, grand jury room, and related offices. By 1909 the employees had grown in numbers to 30 carriers and 22 clerks, and additional office space was needed, as well as general delivery mail windows, carrier windows, additional mailing room and loading platform space, a postal saving bank, letter cases, and a money order window.

A temporary quarters was built at 8th & Maine for housing the post office functions while a major addition was made to the Federal Building. While entrances had been on both the west and southsides of the original building more interior useable space was provided by closing the south entrances and adding a 100 foot north wing to the entire building on two levels. Re-trimming of the building was done in oak at the time, with marble steps and a cast-iron and steel balustrade to the second floor. Remodeling of the lovely Federal Court room was done at this time with new wainscotting added. The new additions were completed in 1911.

Among the many interesting cases tried in the court room were two involving famous crime mobs, the Egan gang of St. Louis and the Shelton gang from southern Illinois.

Several years ago the Post Office Department decided Quincy needed another new post office and felt that with Quincy's imminent growth to the east that the new facility should be placed in the eastern portion of town; and so it was, in the northeast corner...all but "out-of-town." Now Federal Building post office function has been diminished to that of a sub-station, and the building was sold several months ago at auction to the highest bidder. It is to be hoped that many new uses may be found for one of Quincy's two most prominent buildings.

## **Quincy Preserves!**

*An independent community organization working to preserve Quincy's architectural and historic heritage*