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world's 'most beautiful' post office

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Photouring Florida

By HAMPTON DUNN



THE WORLD'S 'MOST BEAUTIFUL' POST OFFICE

By HAMPTON DUNN

FORT MYERS --- The world's "most beautiful" Post Office isn't a post office anymore. Fort Myers has a new structure for its mail facilities and the one that brought fame to the town now serves other Federal offices.

The handsome building is strictly tropical South Florida. The designer, Nat Gaillard Walker, caused quite a stir in architectural circles when the mail facility went up during the depression days.

Material featured in the building is coral formations, sea shells and limestone. The material was quarried in the Florida Keys. Across the front runs an open loggia with eight massive stone columns. Behind the columns were mail boxes which could be reached by the holders from the outside.

The site of the old post office, on west First Street was where the first Army post in southwest Florida stood, way back in the 1840s when this community was known as Fort Harvie.

One of the great admirers of the old structure is a local author, Jack Beater, a prolific writer of Florida folklore. In his book, "True Tales of the Florida West Coast." Beater relates his pique over political credit grabbed on the cornerstone of the magnificent building. Beater reported that the post office was authorized and nearly finished as a Public Works Administration project under President Herbert Hoover. The cornerstone, part of the original contract, recognize the project as a "Republican" job with credit to Hoover and his Postmaster General. But the administration changed before dedication day, and Franklin D. Roosevelt's Postmaster General, Jim Farley, got the credit.

