

Better Living Building / February 13, 1963

GROUNDBREAKING AT THE NEW YORK WORLD'S FAIR 1964-1965



Following is a transcription of remarks made by Better Living Building and World's Fair officials at the groundbreaking ceremony for the Better Living Building, New York World's Fair, February 13, 1963.

DOUGLAS LAPHAM, [Vice President for the Better Living Building]: Mr. Stone, distinguished guests. Welcome to the groundbreaking ceremony for the beginning of the construction of the Better Living Building. I would first like to introduce the head of the Industrial Section of the Fair, Mr. Martin Stone.

MARTIN STONE: I want to welcome all of you here

to the site of the Fair. As you can see, a great deal of construction is going on, and a good deal more will be seen through the following months. We are particularly delighted to have you here for the occasion of the Better Living Building groundbreaking. We have seen the blood and the sweat and the tears that have gone into this moment, and we are delighted to see it happen. Thank you.

DOUGLAS LAPHAM: Thank you Martin. Just before our ceremony, I would like to call attention to some of the distinguished visitors who are here with us today. Mr. George Spargo, Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority; Mr. Ed Cunningham, of the Grocery Manufacturers of America; Mr. Munro Gill of Mohasco Industries; Stan Finch of the Gas Pavilion, who is one of our neighboring exhibitors in the area. Mrs. Dorothy Draper is on the platform with us. Mrs. Draper is designing a Dream Home in the building. Mr. F. M. Sloan, vice-president of

Cover: The Better Living Building will dramatize all the major aspects of our daily lives under one roof. Situated on a three-and-one-half acre plot, the three-story pavilion will be the largest in the Industrial Area. Architects, John Lo Pinto & Associates. Contractor, Thompson-Starrett Construction Co., Inc.

Westinghouse Electric Corporation. Mr. John Lo Pinto, architect for the Better Living Building. Mr. Van Raalte, chairman of the board of Thompson-Starrett Company, the contractor for the building. Mr. Gary Pizzarelli, president of Dorothy Draper's enterprises. Mr. W. W. Paddon who is president of Sunshine Biscuits, one of our exhibitors in the building.

Mr. John W. Red, Jr., executive vice-president of the Canada Dry Corporation is also on the platform with us. Mr. William Ewen of the Borden Company. Mr. Whitford Mays, president of Morgan-Jones Company. And finally, Mr. William Berns, vice-president for Fair Communications and Public Relations.

And now I am going to ask Mr. Martin Stone to step before the microphone again to present the plaque on the beginning of the building. Mr. Stone.

MARTIN STONE: I am sorry that Mr. Moses could not be here for this occasion but in his stead, I have the privilege of presenting this medallion to Edward Burdick, here in behalf of the Better Living Building. I think it is particularly appropriate that a medal be struck for Ed Burdick. No one has shown more faith, more confidence,

or more integrity than Ed Burdick, and in behalf of the New York World's Fair I am delighted to present him with this official medallion of the Fair.

EDWARD BURDICK: Mr. Stone, officials of the World's Fair Corporation, distinguished guests and exhibitors, members of the press: Thank you all for coming. I had written "under these adverse weather conditions." I changed it to "under this beautiful sun" and now I will add "under this rather bad wind."

I accept this World's Fair plaque as a tribute to our exhibitors who have materially expressed their confidence in our undertaking, and to our staff who have worked so tirelessly over a period of two years to make this occasion possible. As many people have said, it has not been easy. I don't think anything in life that is worthwhile is easy. We have had the specific problem of on the one hand, to get exhibitors without a building; and on the other, to get a building without exhibitors. So it's been a rather interesting situation.

Seneca, the ancient Roman philosopher, said "Life is a gift of the immortal gods, but living well is the gift of philosophy." To substantiate Seneca's thinking, we today



With Elsie, the Borden Cow, and her keeper, supervising, Edward Burdick pushes a plunger which blasted for the start of construction on the Better Living Building. Watching are (left to right) William Ewen, director of advertising for Borden; Martin Stone, director of the Fair's Industrial Section; J. P. Van Raalte, chairman of the board for Thompson-Starrett Construction Co., Inc.

are breaking ground and starting actual construction of the Better Living Building. In this building we will present to our exhibitors not a trade show, not a county fair with rows of Aunt Matilda's pickles, the latest antimacassars or the local strong man exhibition — but a pre-planned, coordinated free flow of series of major exhibits, visually showing the present and future keys to a productive and satisfying life.

Exhibits in our building will include not only the home, its planning, construction and furnishing, but also stress the cultivation of the mind, the spirit, and our physical well-being through proper food, and beverage, exercise, entertainment and leisure time activity. Of importance in our presentation of better living will be the outside influences, materials and sources upon which our contemporary civilization relies.

Coordinated exhibits by individuals and group interests, each keyed to an overall explanatory theme, will explain the general fields of health, outdoor living, fashion, youth activities, recreation, security, sports and science as well as the machines and equipment in our workaday world that directly and indirectly contribute to a better way of life. Ten feature areas are planned at present and

are under various phases of development.

1) A special major area within the building to be known as the Grocery Manufacturers of America Pavilion, presenting a cooperative exhibit, tying in with the GMA theme — Life Line of America — Food from Farm to Table.

2) A major location featuring the resources council of the AID, and their sponsorship of a coordinated bevy of room settings, product displays and material exhibition of the finest available in home furnishings.

3) A coordinated exhibition showing how industry serves youth, and a special area devoted to youth activities.

4) A specially designed, completely equipped and furnished home by Dorothy Draper, the internationally famous designer and interior decorator, showing her concept of a 1964-plus dream home.

5) A world of jewelry exhibition, featuring precious gems and rare metals.

6) A toy and hobby pavilion, showing not only the use but the methods of manufacture in a thematic setting.

7) An unusual and exciting crystal palace of fashion, featuring a coordinated series of daily style shows and exhibits of good grooming.



At the groundbreaking ceremonies: Martin Stone, director of the Fair's Industrial Section; Mrs. Dorothy Draper, designer of a Dream Home that will be featured in the Better Living Building; Edward Burdick, president of Edward H. Burdick Associates, Inc., sponsors for the Better Living Building, who accepted the official Fair medallion.

8) An enclosed high fidelity salon, demonstrating the finest in music and sound.

9) A feature area with audience participation covering outdoor living and sports of all seasons.

And 10) a special area — Man's Health and His World, combining medical, pharmaceutical and health agencies.

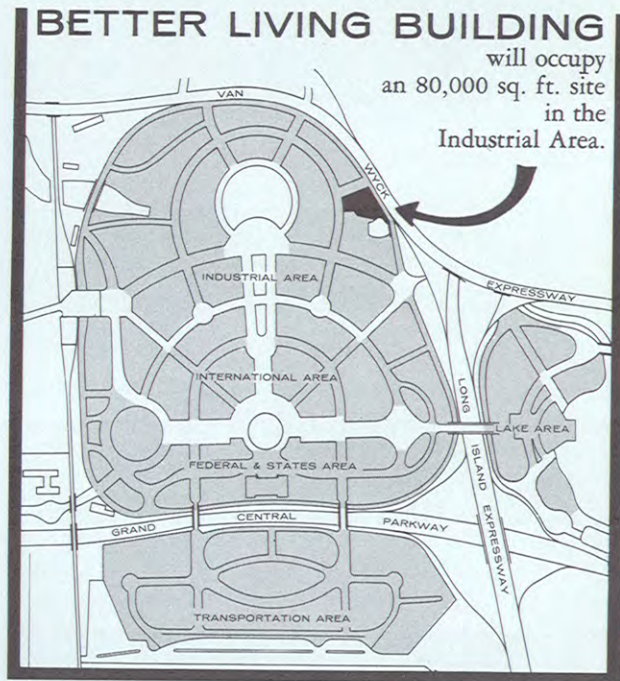
The Better Living Building will contain 4,000,000 cu. ft. of air-conditioned space. Right now we are not worried about air conditioning, are we? Comprising the largest edifice now planned in the Industrial Area of the Fair, the eighty-foot high structure will be faced with translucent plastic, allowing the entire building to glow like a jewel at night. Access to six levels of exhibits will be by electric escalators to the top floor, and to the lower floors by ramp.

We who have been so closely associated with this project over the past three years, and in my case through experience in the preceding six World's Fairs, feel confident that our building will be a must stop on the agenda of all 70,000,000 Fair visitors. Our reasoning is based upon the great diversity of human interest exhibits that will attract and hold the attention of men, women and children, of all ages, and of all interests in life.

Finally let me say we are proud to be an important part of what should be the greatest World's Fair in history, and proud to play our role in its theme "Peace through Understanding." And now the actual ceremony, placing the structural aspects of this exciting building in the very capable hands of our architect, Mr. John Lo Pinto, and our builders, Thompson-Starrett. Thank you.

DOUGLAS LAPHAM: And now to the actual groundbreaking ceremony. We are going to have a groundbreaking featuring this famous lady who is in front of us here, Borden's Elsie, and at this moment if Mr. Van Raalte, Mr. Stone and Mr. Burdick would go down in front of the platform, we'll have the first groundbreaking ceremony after which we would like Mrs. Draper and Mr. Sloan of Westinghouse, to be pictured, then we would like the Canada Dry representatives to be pictured; and finally, we would like the Sunshine people to be pictured. We will thus have all of these very famous personalities involved in the groundbreaking.

If you will stand aside from that portion of the ground where the switch is located, Elsie will officially supervise setting off the blast to begin the building.





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