

THE OLD MARKET MAY GET A NEW POLICE STATION

Maxwell St. Project Up to Voters June 4

BY RICHARD PHILBRICK

(Picture on page 4)

After more than 25 years of discussion, Maxwell st. police station may be replaced. A provision to build a new station in the 22d district is included in the \$20 million bond issue to be voted on in the judicial election June 4.

If a new station is built it will be the second erected on the west side since World War II. The first was the Monroe st. station which took the place of the old Desplaines st. station.

Condemned in 1924

Need of a new station for many years has not been argued. In 1924 Dr. Herman Bundesen, commissioner of public health, condemned its cell block as unsanitary. The cells are in the basement, and the toilet facilities at that time consisted of a water trough which ran thru each cell.

The fire department in 1930 declared the cell block was a fire hazard. Since then police and civic officials have repeatedly called for its replacement.

Solve Peddlers' Problems

The station, at 943 Maxwell st., was built in the 1880s. WPA archaeologists who tore up a floor in the building, said it was built in 1887. Their clues were an old bail bond receipt, a cigaret picture card, and the aroma of an old cigar butt.

A stone over the entrance reads "7th district," but for some years

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City Hopes to Replace Old Station

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the station has served the 22d police district. Stretching eastward from the building for about a mile is the Maxwell st. market, famed the country over for its peddlers' carts, street stands, and shops that sell almost everything.

Until 1931 the minor disputes that occurred in the market and its vicinity were heard in a courtroom on the first floor of the station. That year the court was moved to the old Desplaines st. station. The Maxwell st. courtroom became the squad room, and the second floor, where the squad room had been, has not been used since.

District "Peaceful" Now

Capt. Kyran Phelan, commander of the district for the last four years, keeps the building spotless despite its age and the number of people who visit it daily. Desk sergeants are frequently called upon by residents of the district to solve problems that would try the wisdom of Solomon, he said recently.

"There are people in the district from nearly every country in the world. And once in a while we get a descendent of the original settlers—an Indian," he said. "Many of them have a touching faith in our ability to help them with their difficulties."

Old timers in the police department say the present relatively peaceful conditions in the district are a far cry from the prohibition era when the area was plagued with hoodlums such as the "42 gang."

Had Moments of Glory

In 1930 when police were arresting every known hoodlum they could find, some gangsters expressed resentment one night by throwing a gallon of gasoline into a squad car parked outside the station and setting it afire.

The station has had its moments



Maxwell st. police station, 943 Maxwell st., 22d district headquarters, will be replaced if a 20 million dollar bond issue is approved in the June 4 election. The station, one of the oldest in the city, is insulated between floors with cinders.

(TRIBUNE Photo)

of glory, tho, veterans say. When the late acting Capt. Phil Parodi commanded the district in 1932 he had two palm trees set up in front of his office. In his private office he had a beautiful marble fountain installed. It was about four feet high and lighted by electric bulbs of many colors.

It's Whisked Away

Station personnel had scarcely become accustomed to its splendor before the late mayor Anton Cermak visited the station, admired the fountain, and whisked it off to his summer home near Antioch.

Another short lived innovation was introduced the morning prohibition was repealed. There was a water cooler in the captain's office. Some kind hearted citizen

emptied the cooler and filled it with cold beer. "It was a nice idea," a policeman who remembers the incident said, "But it caused a small riot, and we had to go back to ice water."