

FDR's legacy

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dent of the Vermillion County Museum Society.

"It was a great thing. I think they kept about \$5, and the rest of the money went home to their families. There were some great ideas then. So many people were unemployed, there was not a lot of opposition."

New building in Champaign had all but halted in 1933, when FDR assumed the presidency, McCollum said.

"I was born in the middle of the Depression. What I remember is everything stopped in terms of building. For my whole early life, in new areas of the city, virtually nothing happened," the mayor said.

More than a thousand unemployed residents found work in Roosevelt's New Deal agencies, which aimed to encourage economic recovery by "priming the pump" with jobs and improving the nation's infrastructure, even its cultural resources.

"Roosevelt and his brain-trusters recognized that the situation was indeed a crisis. They very quickly threw in the 100-day alphabet soup of agencies to cope with it," McCollum said.

Two of the largest new agencies were the CCC and WPA.

Crews from the WPA tore down the 1889 Champaign City Hall and built the new municipal center, modeling it after the Los Angeles city hall. Construction was completed in 1937 for about \$213,000.

"The street was all brick. They tore it up and had to carry the bricks out," recalled George Mayes, a longtime Champaign County farmer, in a 1989 News-Gazette article. "Between the pavement and the city building, they made quite a few jobs."

On campus, New Deal money funded construction of two of the most recognized buildings at

Clinton accepts for nation new memorial for FDR

WASHINGTON (AP) — A nation that bears his indelible stamp paid tribute to Franklin Delano Roosevelt today by dedicating a granite and bronze memorial that evokes the man and the times that demanded his leadership.

"We gather to pay tribute not to a man, but to an era," said Roosevelt's grandson.

Accepting the memorial for the nation on a sparkling spring morning, President Clinton called the four-term president "the greatest president of this great American century."

The president noted that the last time a presidential memorial was dedicated was in 1943, when Roosevelt participated in the opening of the Jefferson Memorial, a short walk away along the shores of the Tidal Basin.

David Roosevelt, the president's grandson and a member of the memorial commission, said that his grandfather's 12 years in office — marked by the Great Depression and the Second World War — were "an era surpassed perhaps only by the Civil War in its infliction



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of pain and travail on the people of this nation."

Roosevelt urged those who visit the memorial to use it to remember "the hopelessness and despair of those days from 1933 to

1945 and feel the qualities of a personality which gave hope and direction to a nation and its people could triumph."

Clinton noted that Roosevelt had said he wanted no elaborate memorial.

"It is right that we go a little beyond his stated wishes and dedicate this memorial as a tribute to Franklin Roosevelt, to Eleanor and to the remarkable triumphs of their generation," he said.

The ceremony took place before an audience of thousands at the entrance to the memorial where carved in granite are Roosevelt's words: "This generation of Americans has a rendezvous with destiny."

the UI. The north portion of the Illini Union facing Green Street and Gregory Hall on Wright Street were WPA projects built by crews of unemployed workers.

The president's wife, Eleanor Roosevelt, attended the first anniversary of the Union's construction in 1942.

Scholars praised Roosevelt for his bold moves to use government to rescue the U.S. economy.

"Roosevelt was the man who

dared to do it on a wide scale," Albert Z. Guttenberg, a UI professor of urban and regional planning, told The News-Gazette in 1982, on the occasion of FDR's 100th birthday. "He was the guy who symbolized it all and had the courage to do it."

Roughly 1,300 WPA workers were employed in Champaign County in 1936, according to local records, which are incomplete. The workers ranged in age from 18 to 72, with the average being around 40.