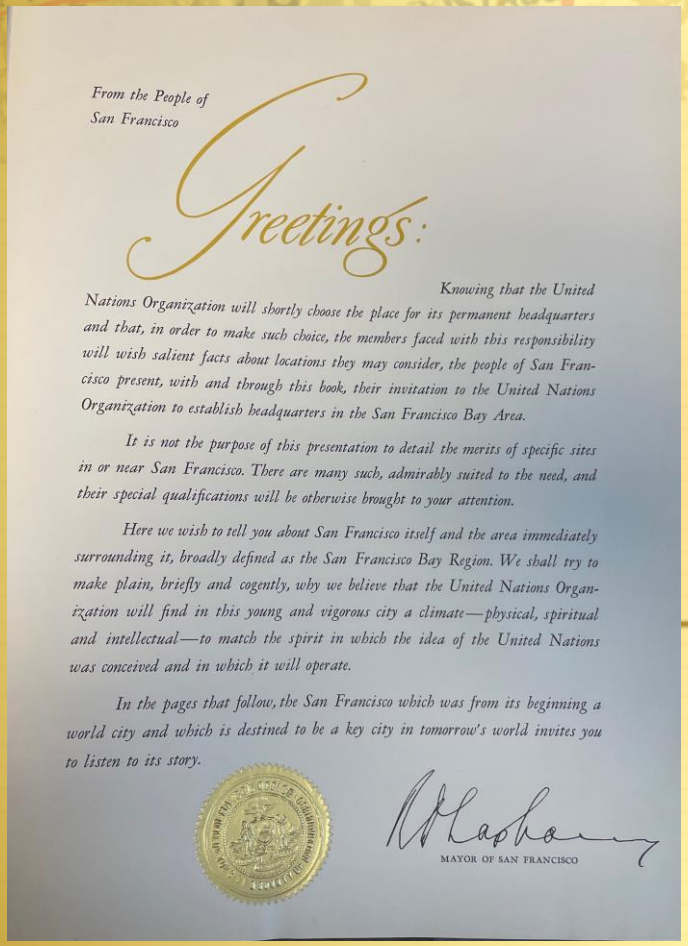
The World's Capital – UN Headquarters

Greg Galletti,
UN Convention at Philatelic Show
April 29, 2022

Setting the Stage - UNCIO

Delegates from around the globe were wined and dined by those that would love the UN to locate their Headquarters in their States.

Setting the Stage - UNCIO



From the People of
San Francisco

Greetings:

Knowing that the United Nations Organization will shortly choose the place for its permanent headquarters and that, in order to make such choice, the members faced with this responsibility will wish salient facts about locations they may consider, the people of San Francisco present, with and through this book, their invitation to the United Nations Organization to establish headquarters in the San Francisco Bay Area.

It is not the purpose of this presentation to detail the merits of specific sites in or near San Francisco. There are many such, admirably suited to the need, and their special qualifications will be otherwise brought to your attention.

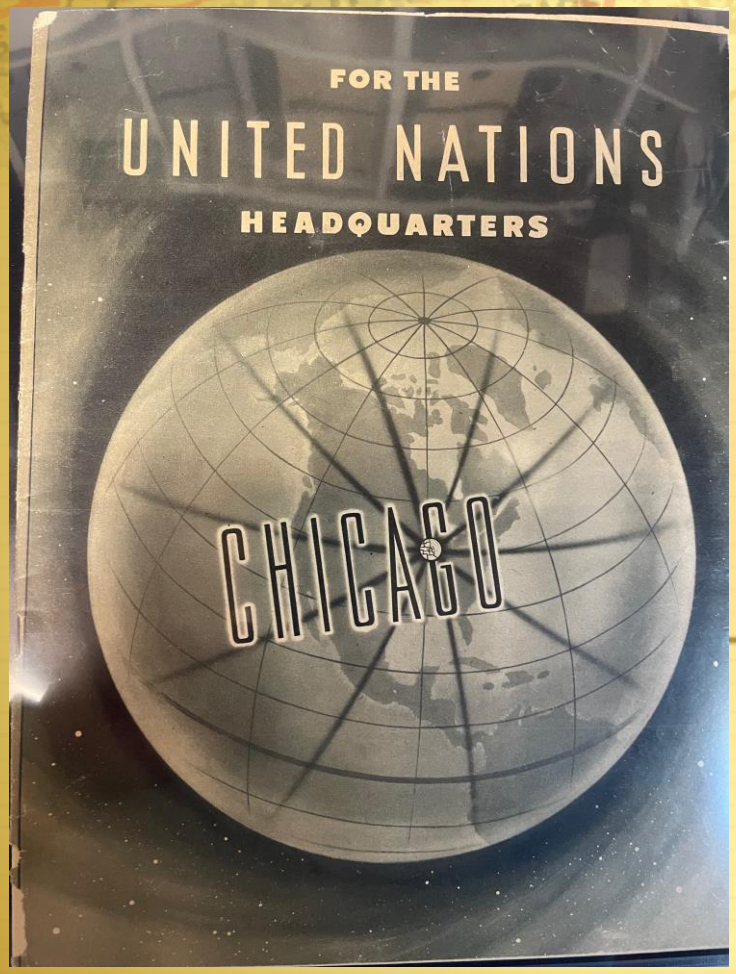
Here we wish to tell you about San Francisco itself and the area immediately surrounding it, broadly defined as the San Francisco Bay Region. We shall try to make plain, briefly and cogently, why we believe that the United Nations Organization will find in this young and vigorous city a climate—physical, spiritual and intellectual—to match the spirit in which the idea of the United Nations was conceived and in which it will operate.

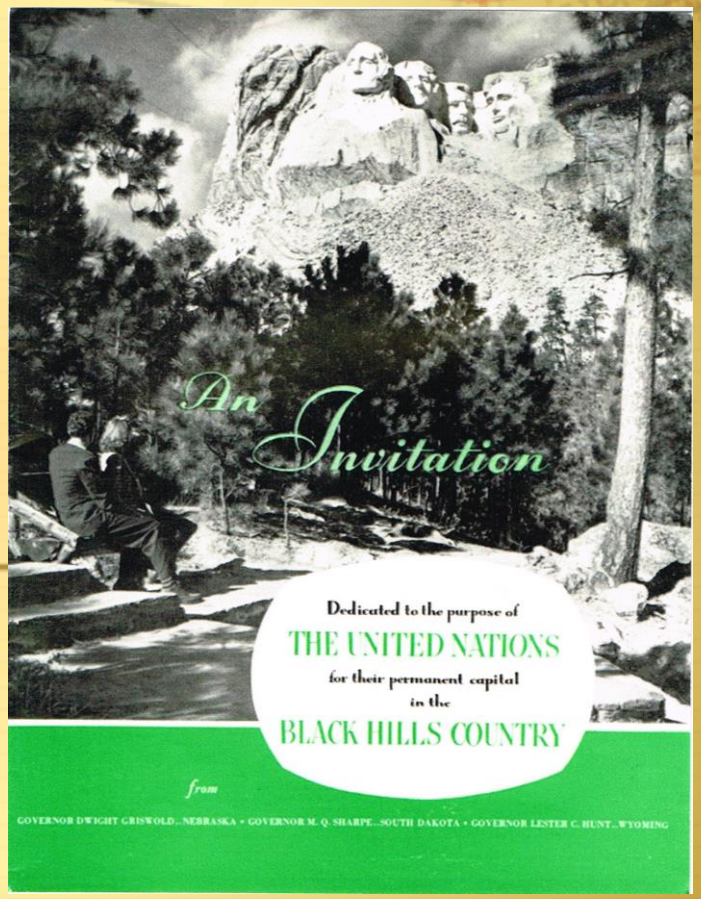
In the pages that follow, the San Francisco which was from its beginning a world city and which is destined to be a key city in tomorrow's world invites you to listen to its story.

MAYOR OF SAN FRANCISCO

San Francisco Mayor and Civic figures created their own presentation to sway the Delegates. Miss SF showing off the book.

Setting the Stage - UNCIO

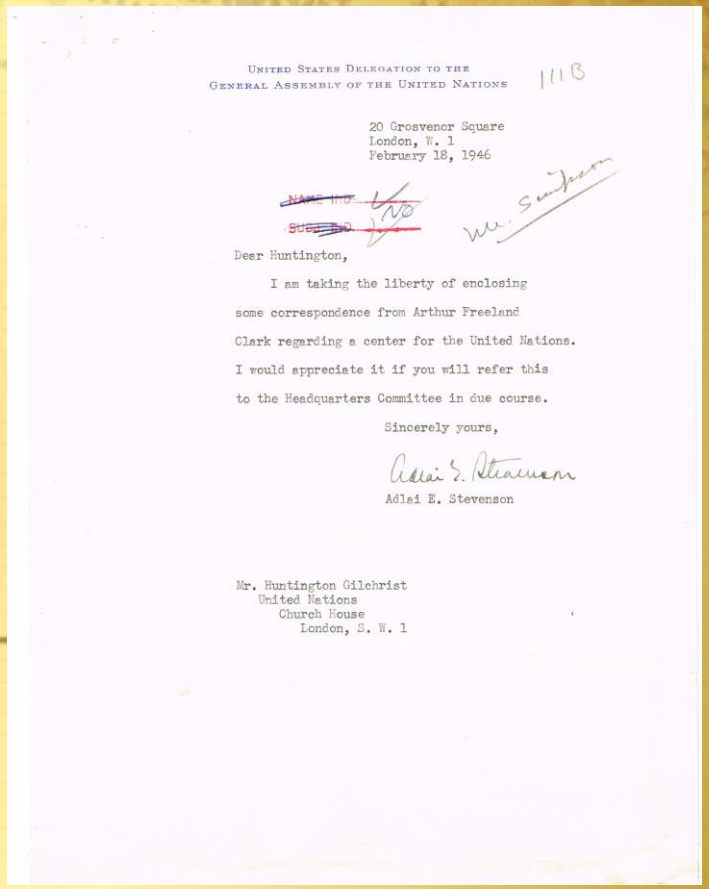




Other major and not so major locations in US created brochures given to the Delegates.

UN GA - London

Central Hall, London, Site of the UN General Assembly Meeting in 1946



UNITED STATES DELEGATION TO THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS

20 Grosvenor Square
London, W. 1
February 18, 1946

Dear Huntington,

I am taking the liberty of enclosing some correspondence from Arthur Freeland Clark regarding a center for the United Nations. I would appreciate it if you will refer this to the Headquarters Committee in due course.

Sincerely yours,

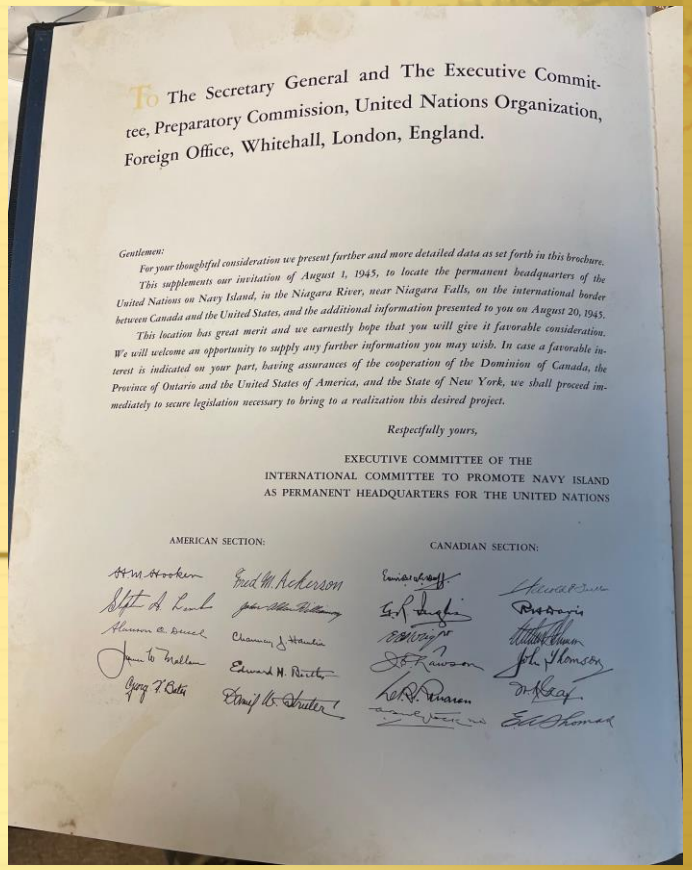
Adlai E. Stevenson

Mr. Huntington Gilchrist
United Nations
Church House
London, S. W. 1

UN Delegates even got into the conversation on the HQ.

UN GA - London

San Francisco Delegation in London to pitch their city



To The Secretary General and The Executive Committee, Preparatory Commission, United Nations Organization, Foreign Office, Whitehall, London, England.

Gentlemen:

For your thoughtful consideration we present further and more detailed data as set forth in this brochure.

This supplements our invitation of August 1, 1945, to locate the permanent headquarters of the United Nations on Navy Island, in the Niagara River, near Niagara Falls, on the international border between Canada and the United States, and the additional information presented to you on August 20, 1945.

This location has great merit and we earnestly hope that you will give it favorable consideration. We will welcome an opportunity to supply any further information you may wish. In case a favorable interest is indicated on your part, having assurances of the cooperation of the Dominion of Canada, the Province of Ontario and the United States of America, and the State of New York, we shall proceed immediately to secure legislation necessary to bring to a realization this desired project.

Respectfully yours,

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE
INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE TO PROMOTE NAVY ISLAND
AS PERMANENT HEADQUARTERS FOR THE UNITED NATIONS

AMERICAN SECTION:

CANADIAN SECTION:

Navy Island Brochure

Site Selection Commission

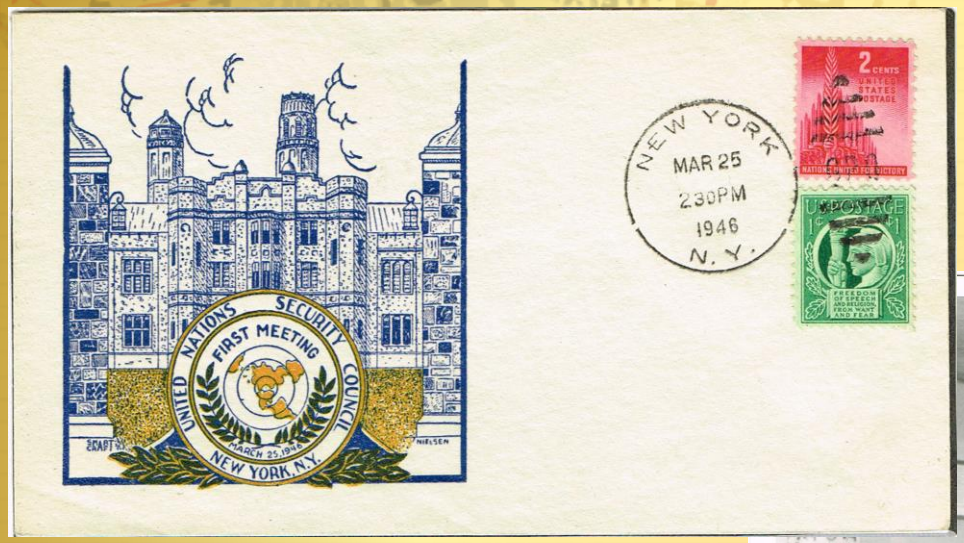
Resolution of the UN GA, London formed the Site Selection Commission that would report to the Permanent HQ Committee after evaluating proposed HQ site around the US

New York City,
Boston,
Chicago,
St Louis,
San Francisco,
Atlantic City,
Philadelphia,
Black Hills, SD,
Navy Island,

Commission
China,
France,
Iraq,
USSR,
UK,
Uruguay,
Yugoslavia.

Mr. Stoyan Gavrilovic (Yugoslavia), Chairman.

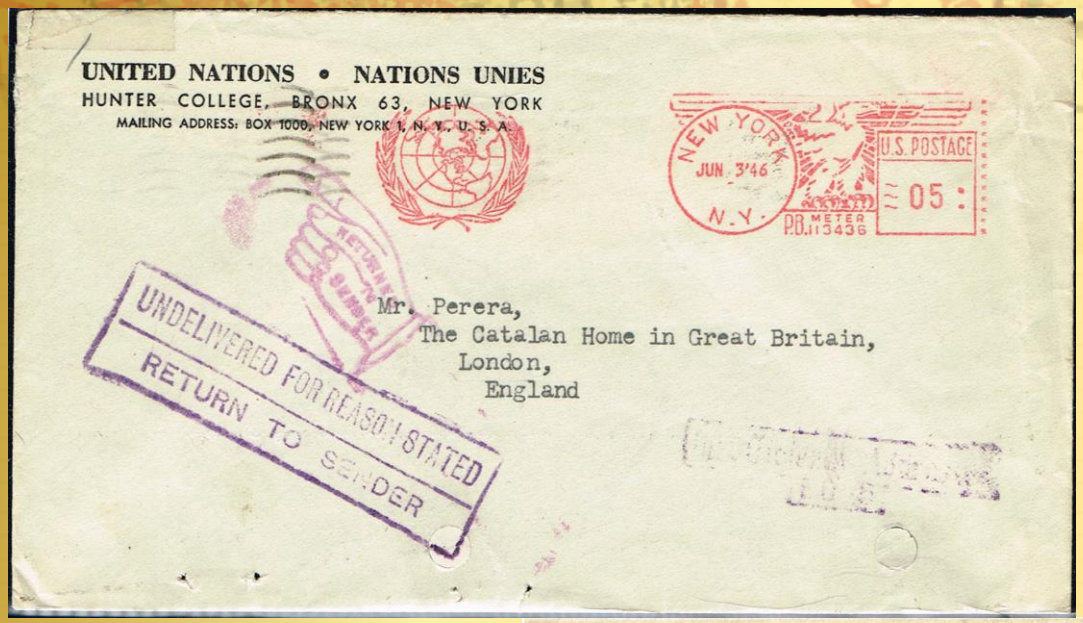
Temporary UN HQ



Opening of the UN Security Council Meeting at Hunter College, Bronx, NY

Hunter College was short-lived
As Students would be returning
In Fall 1946, to resume Class

Temporary UN HQ



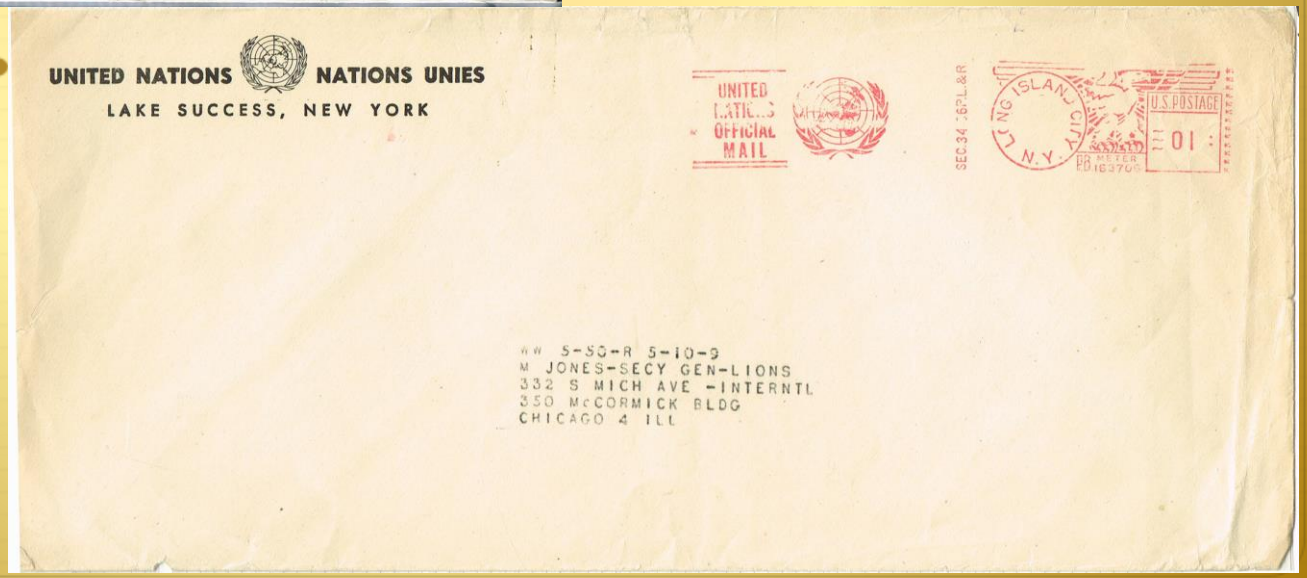
Service Cover from Hunter College

Box 1000 (Grand Central Station served as mail center

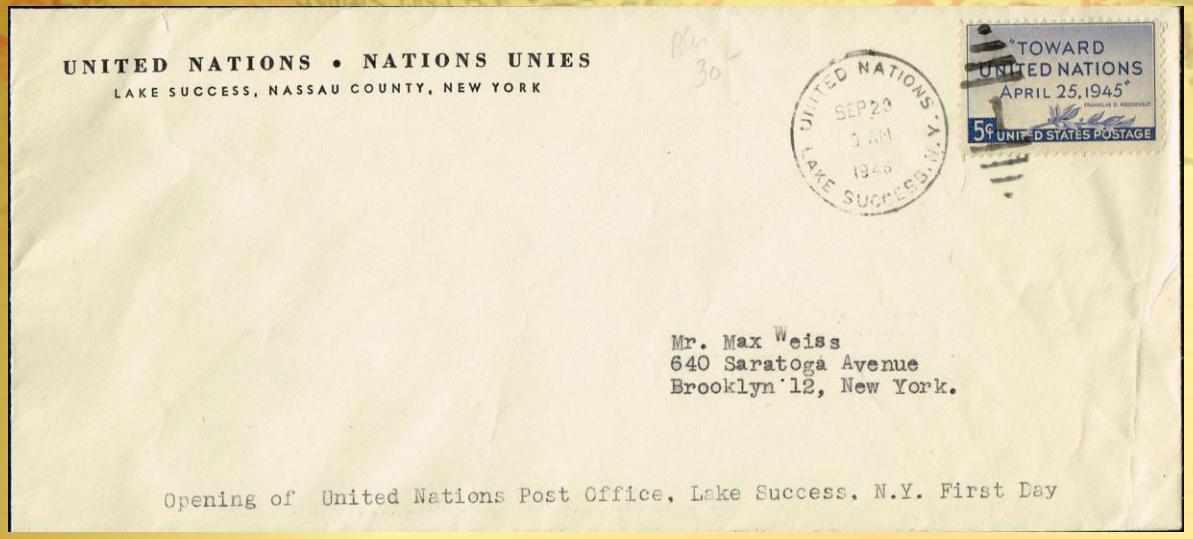
Meter Slogan Type II PB 113436

Lake Success, Long Island, Served as second temporary Location of the UN with Many Satellite locations.

Slogan Type V LIC
PB 1637xx



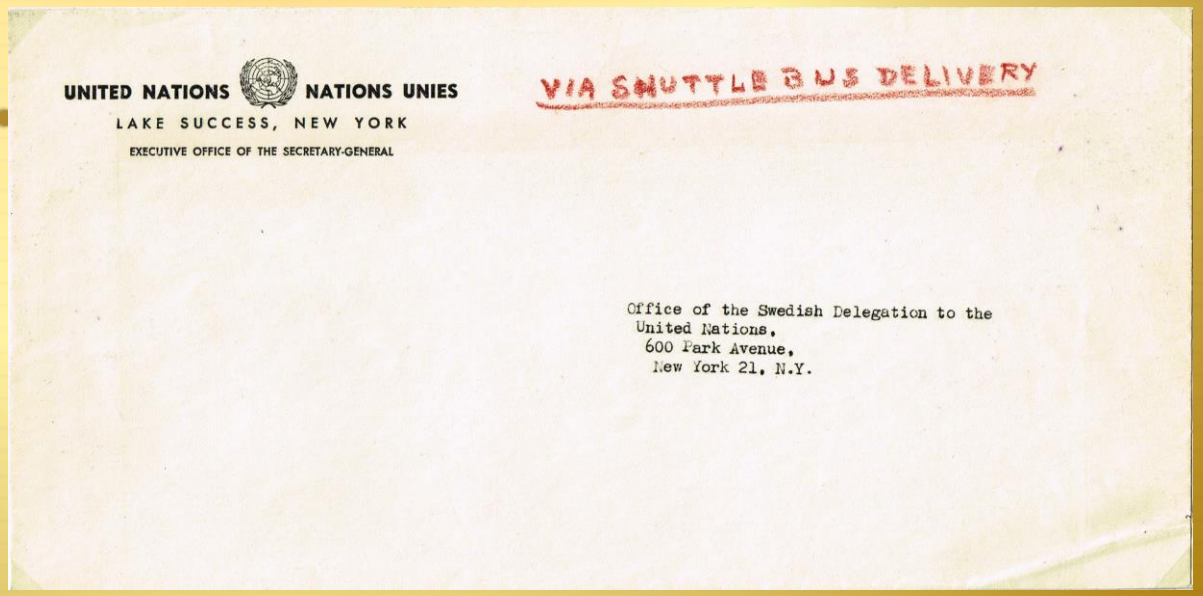
Temporary UN HQ



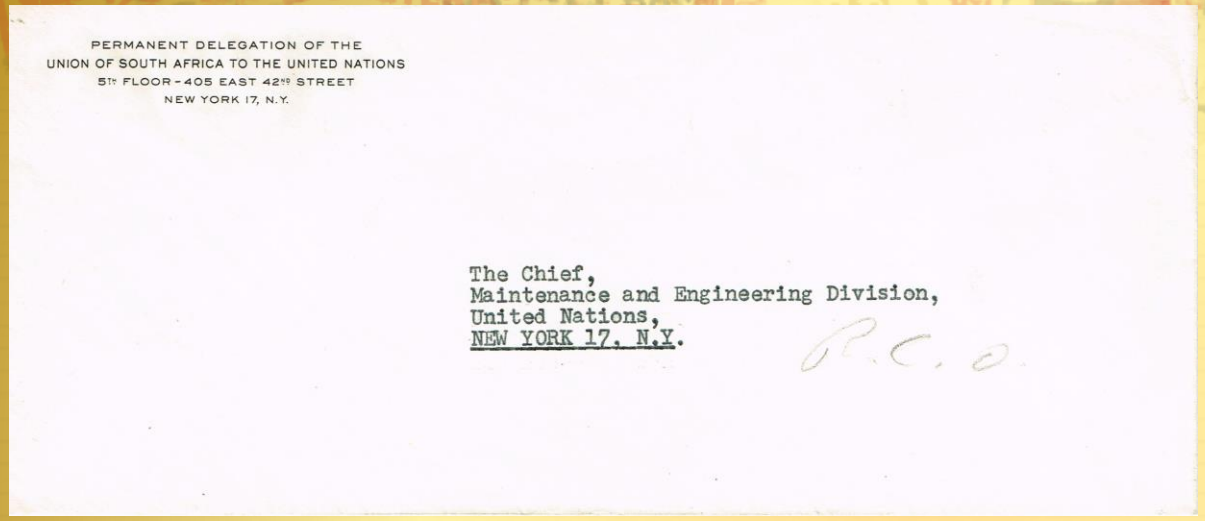
Post Office relocated from Manhattan to Lake Success

Machine and hand cancels Used from September 1946-1950.

Shuttle Services needed to Move mail throughout Metro Area to other temporary locations



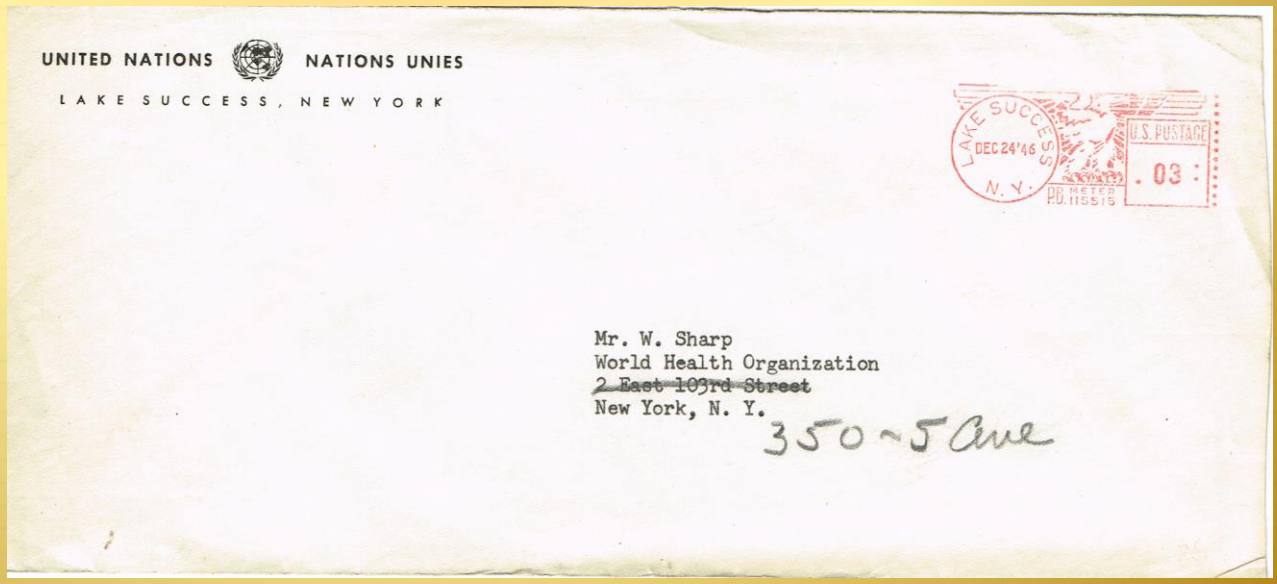
UN Agencies and Offices


PERMANENT DELEGATION OF THE
UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS
51st FLOOR - 405 EAST 42nd STREET
NEW YORK 17, N.Y.

The Chief,
Maintenance and Engineering Division,
United Nations,
NEW YORK 17, N.Y.

Delegations and Internal Sections of the UN were Housed around NYC and often relocated.

Specialized Agencies were also scattered Around NYC.

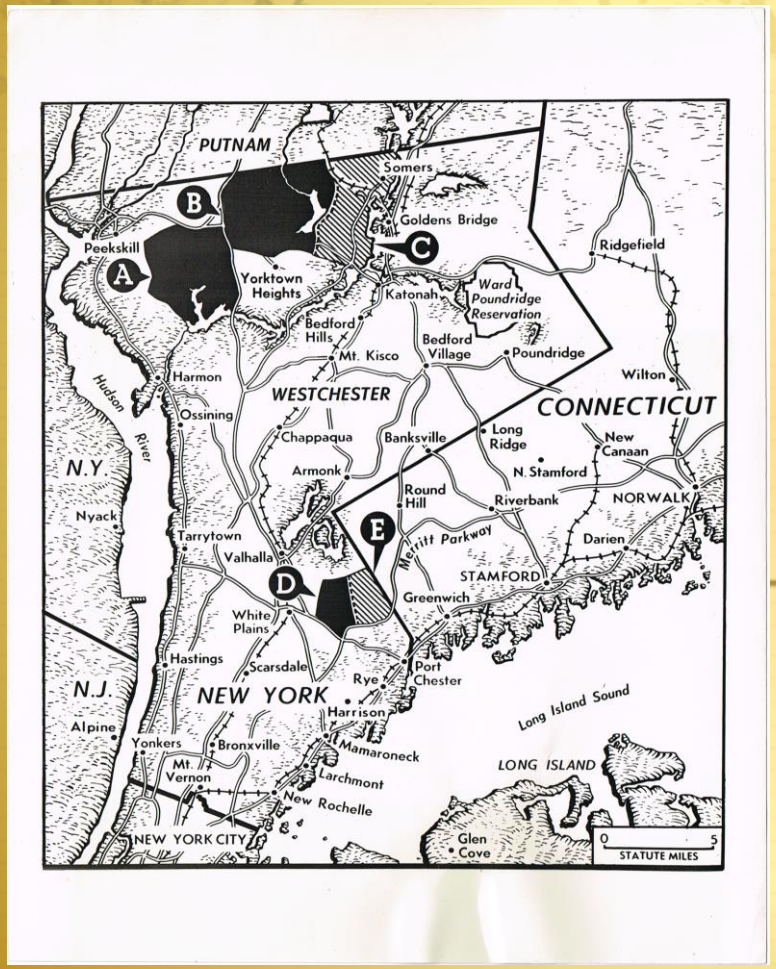

UNITED NATIONS NATIONS UNIES
LAKE SUCCESS, NEW YORK

LAKE SUCCESS N.Y. DEC 24'46 U.S. POSTAGE .03 METER PD. 115515

Mr. W. Sharp
World Health Organization
~~2 East 103rd Street~~
New York, N. Y.
350 - 5 Ave

Site Selection Committee

Meanwhile our Site Selection Commission was busy studying sites and preparing reports. After significant effort, a site in Westchester County, NY was selected.

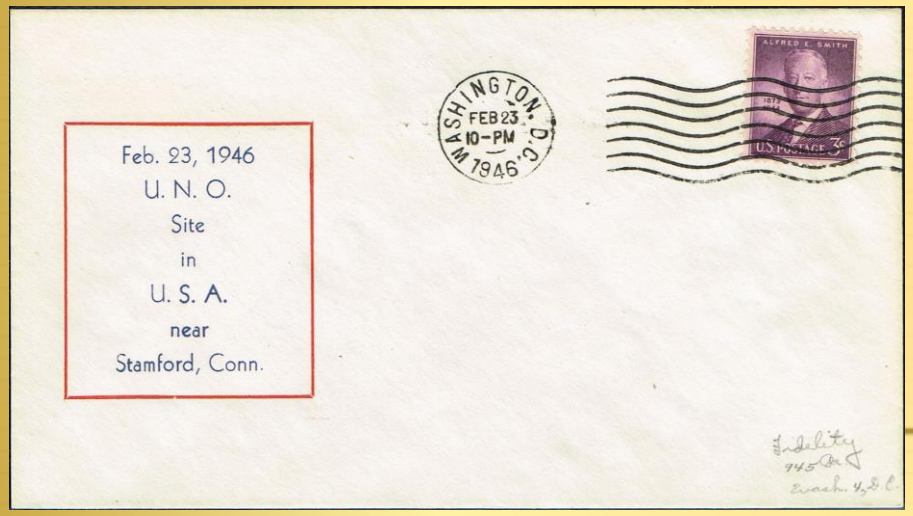


Site D Chosen

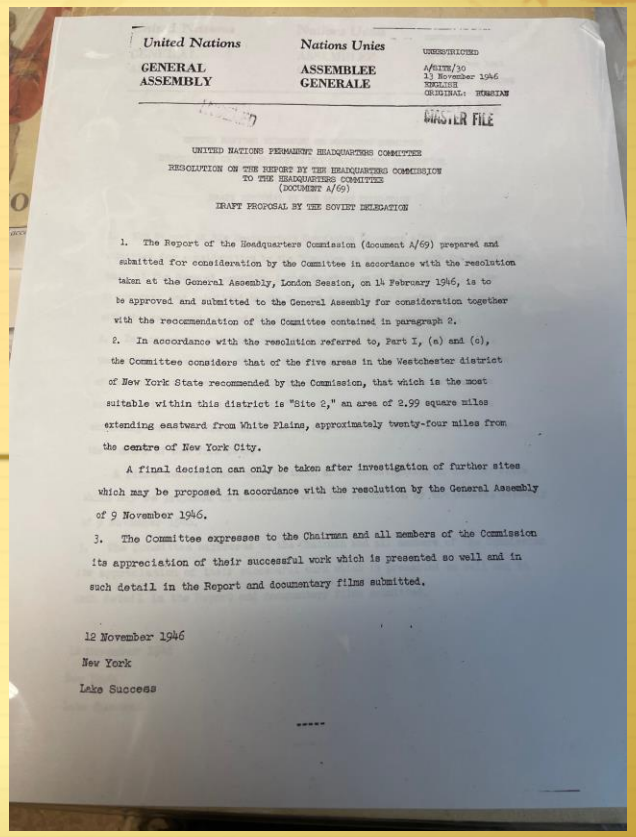
Model UN, Twin Peaks, San Francisco

Committee Findings and Reports

Public Support varied amongst the various site locations.



Commemorating the Selection


United Nations — Nations Unies

GENERAL ASSEMBLY — ASSEMBLEE GENERALE

UNRESTRICTED

A/BUR/30
13 November 1946
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: RUSSIAN

DISASTER FILE

UNITED NATIONS PERMANENT HEADQUARTERS COMMITTEE

RESOLUTION ON THE REPORT BY THE HEADQUARTERS COMMISSION TO THE HEADQUARTERS COMMITTEE (DOCUMENT A/69)

DRAFT PROPOSAL BY THE SOVIET DELEGATION

1. The Report of the Headquarters Commission (document A/69) prepared and submitted for consideration by the Committee in accordance with the resolution taken at the General Assembly, London Session, on 14 February 1946, is to be approved and submitted to the General Assembly for consideration together with the recommendation of the Committee contained in paragraph 2.

2. In accordance with the resolution referred to, Part I, (a) and (c), the Committee considers that of the five areas in the Westchester district of New York State recommended by the Commission, that which is the most suitable within this district is "Site 2," an area of 2.99 square miles extending eastward from White Plains, approximately twenty-four miles from the centre of New York City.

A final decision can only be taken after investigation of further sites which may be proposed in accordance with the resolution by the General Assembly of 9 November 1946.

3. The Committee expresses to the Chairman and all members of the Commission its appreciation of their successful work which is presented so well and in such detail in the Report and documentary films submitted.

12 November 1946

New York

Lake Success

The Commissions Report

Public Response

Thousands Gather in Connecticut to voice Their concerns.

County Politicians fight back

United Nations — *Nations Unies*

A/SITE/13
11 February 1946

GENERAL ASSEMBLY — **ASSEMBLEE GENERALE**

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

PERMANENT HEADQUARTERS COMMITTEE

COMMUNICATION OF THE FRENCH DELEGATION

The French Delegation has the honour to bring to the attention of the Members of the Permanent Headquarters Committee the following telegram:

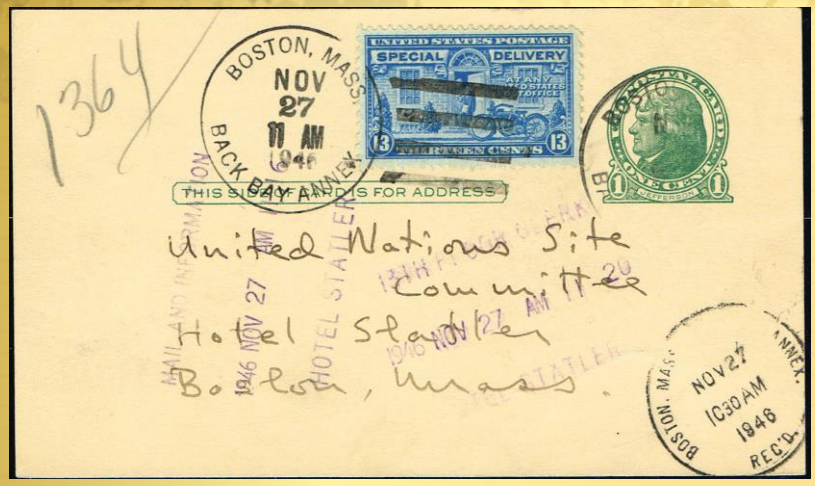
"253 Armonkvillage N.Y. 169 1/57 9 723 P.

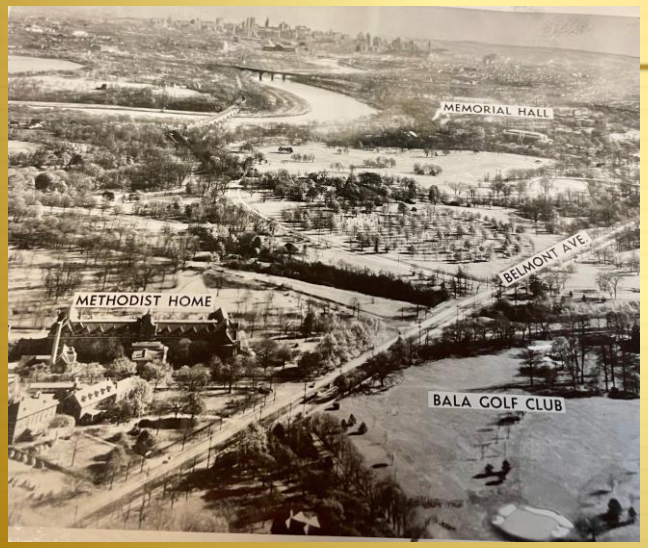
"This is for your information. We are the Chief Executive Officers of all the towns in Westchester County State of New York whose land is taken by the Stamford Plan. All of the towns are unalterably opposed to the Stamford site because the town was not consulted and because of the immense area taken. The town of Greenwich has gone on record also against the site. Therefore seven out of the eight towns in New York and Connecticut and representing about eighty-five per cent of the land in the site are opposed to the site. UNO Sub-committee acted hastily. E.P. Goodrich engineer of site admitted in newspaper yesterday that plan was prepared in thirty-six hours. Please present these views to the proper authorities.

James B. HOPKINS, Supervisor town of Northcastle
E.P. BARRETT, Supervisor town of Bedford
Robert B. STEWART, Supervisor town of Newcastle
Hugh COYLE, Supervisor town of Lewisboro
William D. SHINE, Supervisor town of Poundridge
Elbert C. CURTIS, Supervisor town of North Salem."

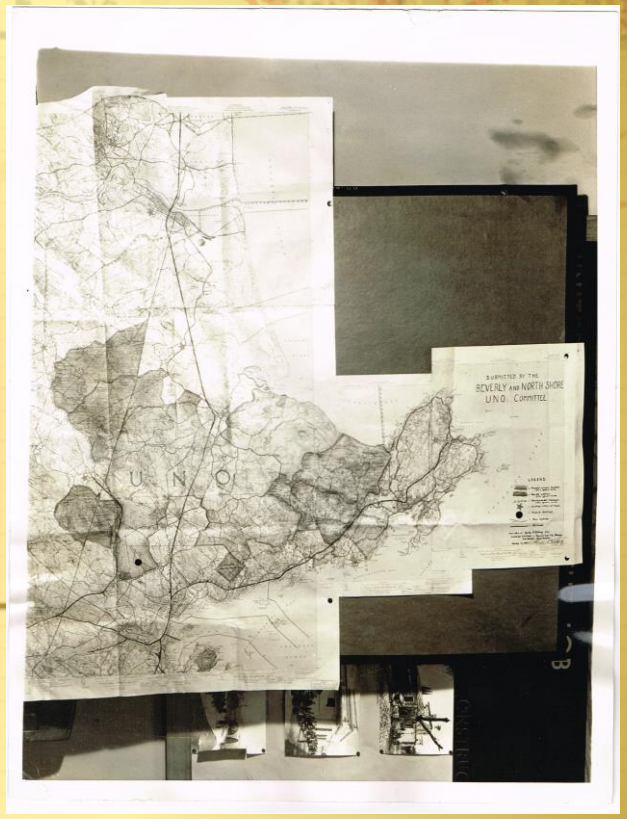
Site Reconsideration

Selection Commission goes back to work





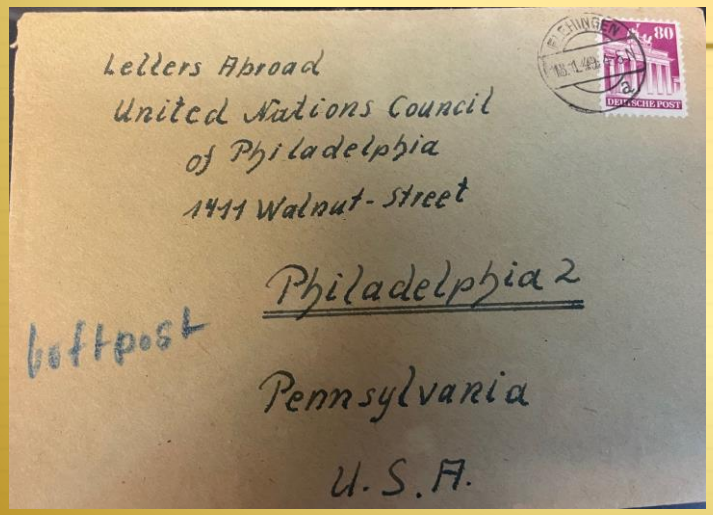
Philadelphia



Boston and surrounding areas

Almost a Winner

Given the rapid turnaround needed to report to the UN GA, the Site Selection Commission Reported back that the most desirable location would be one of the Philadelphia Sites.



Independence Hall

The Proposal

While the Commission did their work, the NYC Mayor's Office and NYC Hospitality Group worked diligently to find a NY Solution. Many high level UN figures quietly preferred to stay in NY including SG Lie.

Nelson and John Rockefeller

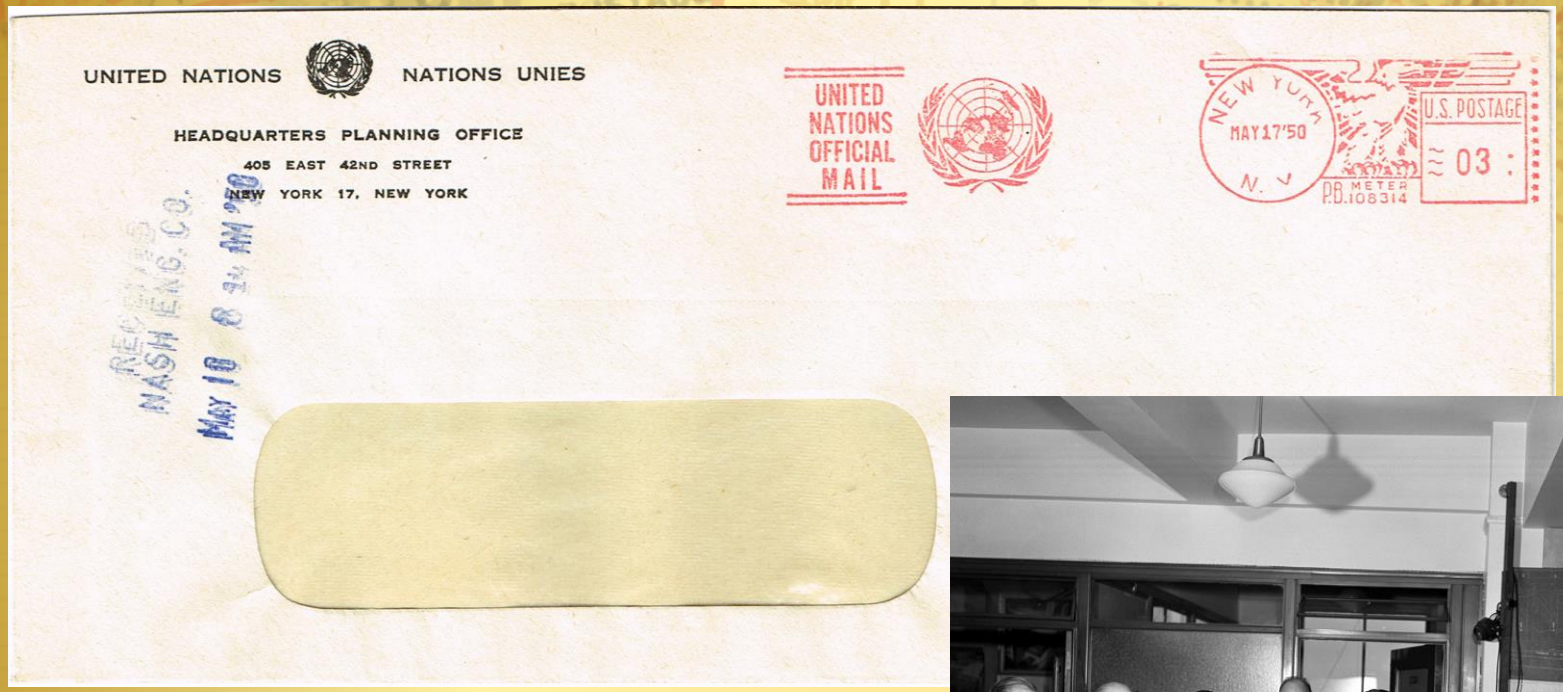
William Zeckendorf, Partner in development firm, Webb & Knapp read of the UN's dilemma and proposed X-City site for UN HQ

The Proposal

X-City Location in Turtle Bay, NYC

Artist Rendering of UN HQ and Grand Boulevard

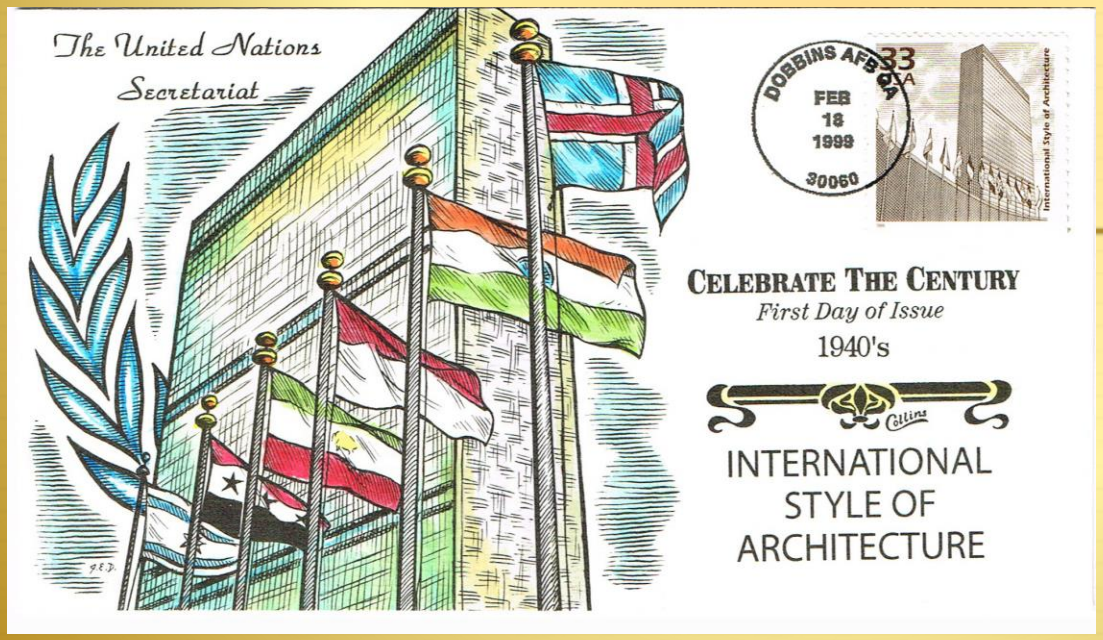
The Planning Office



Members of the International HQ Planning Office Architectural and Design team

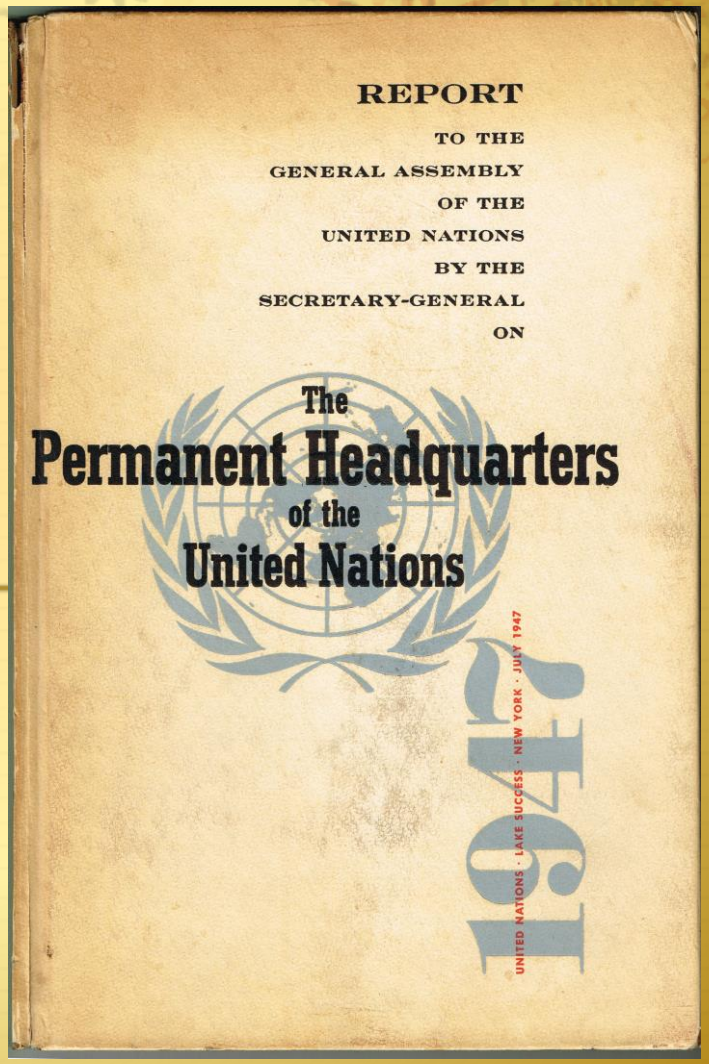
The Design Evolves

Modern Design takes center stage.
International Collaboration ushers in
new designs and contemporary architecture



The Design Evolves

Code name Project 23C



HQ Planning Office creates detailed Report for the SG to submit to the General Assembly

Breaking Ground and Construction

Demolition begins to remove Slaughter Houses and Tenement Apartments

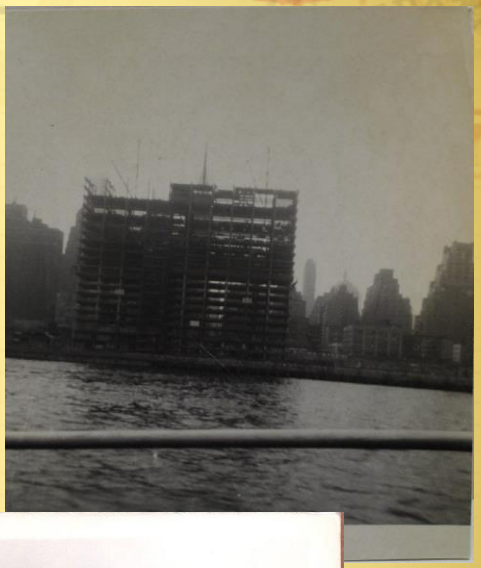
View looking South

View looking North

Breaking Ground and Construction

Ceremonial "First Shovel" of dirt removed

Secretariat Frame takes shape



UN GA Building followed

Cornerstone Celebration

First Lady and Human Rights Commissioner Eleanor Roosevelt attends the celebration.

Massive Crowd awaiting President Truman's dedication

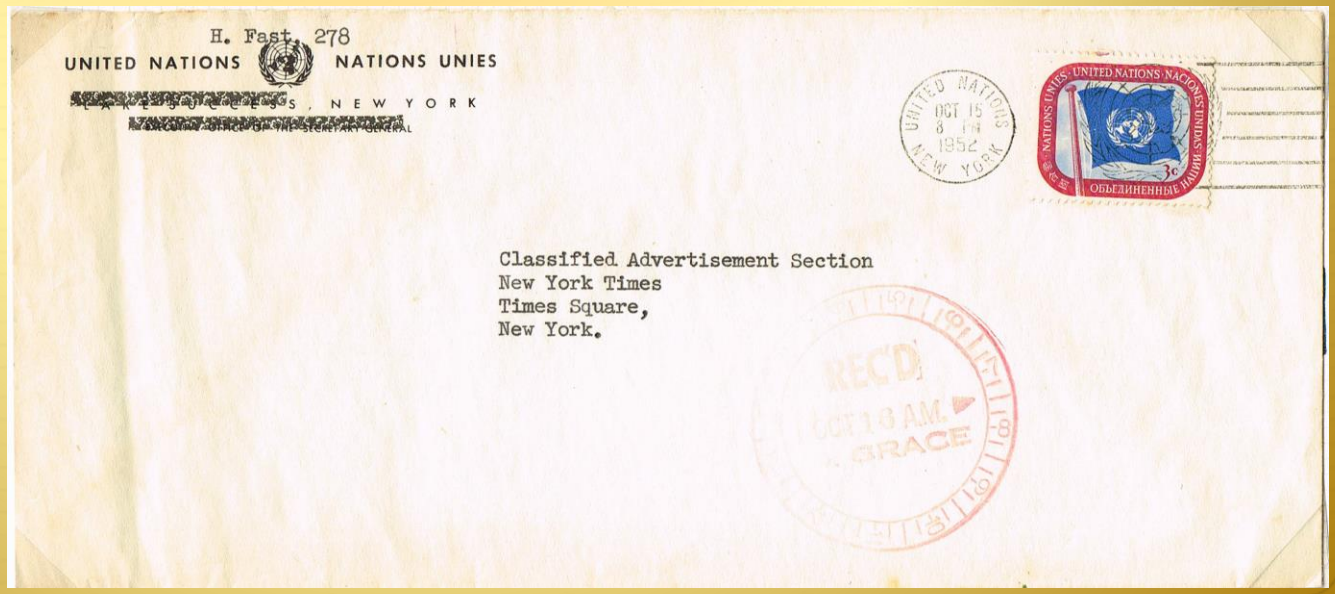
The General Assembly Convenes

UN Secretariat occupied starting in 1950 while Assmebly Building was being completed.

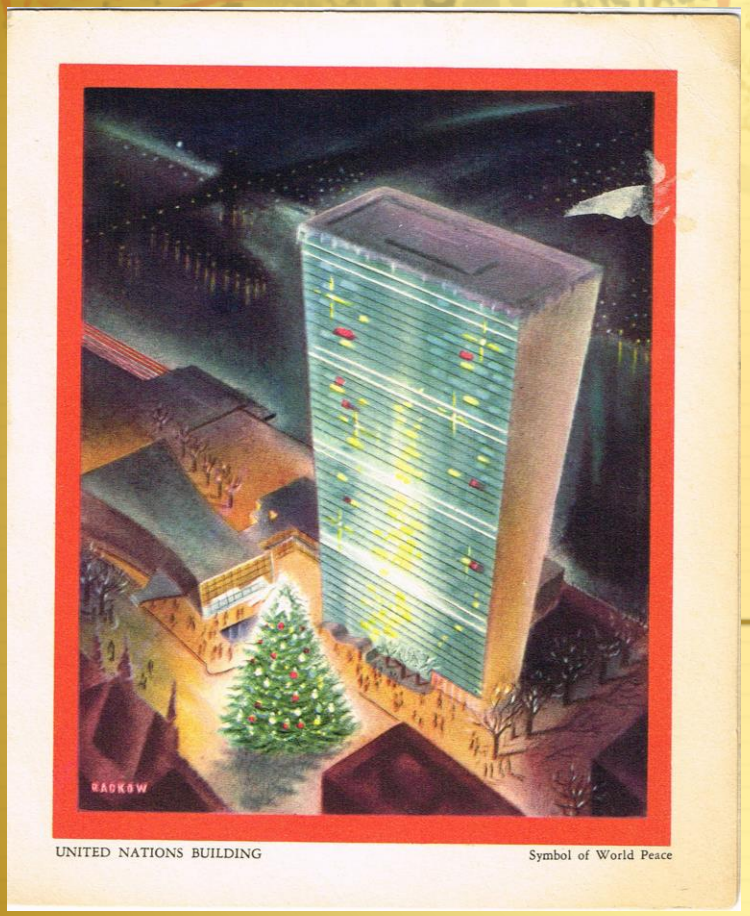
First Meeting of the GA at the New Permanent HQ – October 1952.

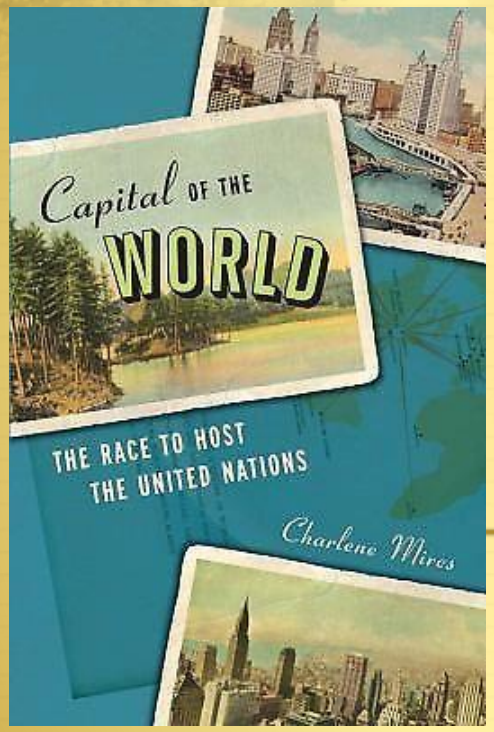
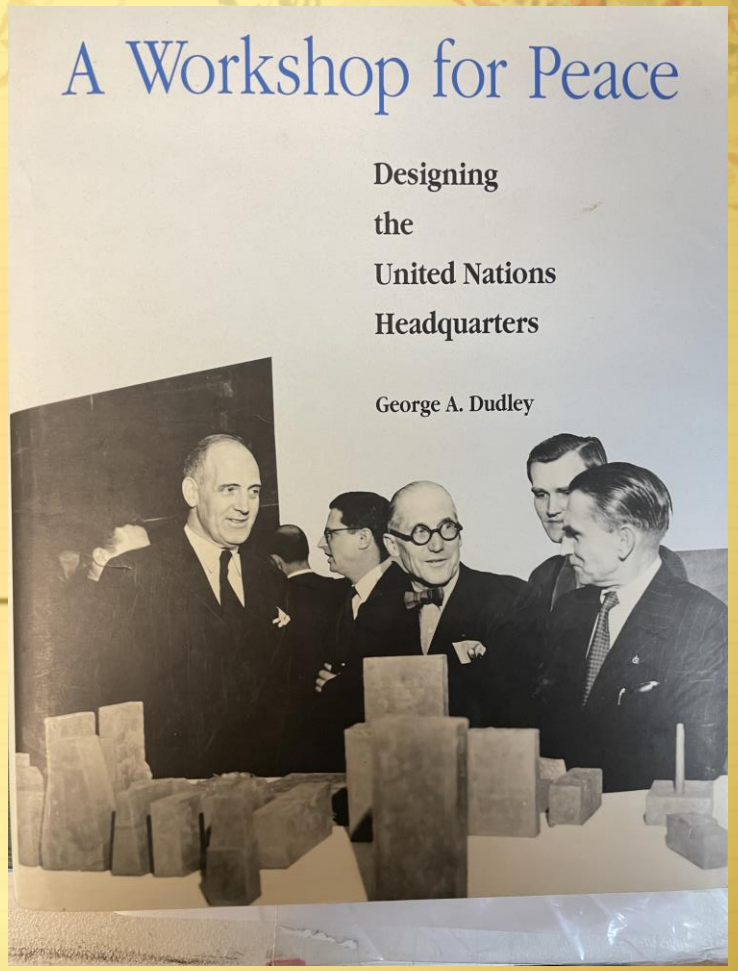
Service cover posted from UN HQ during GA Meeting – October 1952.

Stationery revised to remove reference to Lake Success.



The Iconic HQ



The UN HQ is a shining light of Peace and Goodwill. Featured on Advertisements and Holiday cards and other ephemera for decades.

Additional Reading