



Timeline Photography

TOWER OF CHANGE

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News from the Cuyahoga County Juvenile Justice Center Project

A Quick Glance Back

When we celebrate a new year, it can help to glance back at the past. What were the successes? What can be different? How can this year benefit from last?

As Deputy Director Lee Trotter closed a chapter on his 16-year service with Cuyahoga County, he discussed his involvement with the Juvenile Justice Center Project.

Described as a project that “has no beginning and no end,” Trotter explained the challenges they overcame to ensure our youth’s future.

Long Before the JJC gives a quick glance at the turn of the century, when the Peerless Motor Car Company and The Carling Brewing Company contributed to Cleveland’s economic viability.

Constructing the Vision

It is hard to imagine that the building scraping the skies over the Fairfax community began with a vision over 20 years ago. “The project started with plans to modify the existing facility on East 22nd Street,” said Lee Trotter, Deputy Administrator for Cuyahoga County. “The facility no longer worked for the kids’ treatment needs. We needed a new facility to make sure all their needs were met.”

Trotter and those working with him had to get the community to agree with their plans. They looked at more than 75 different sites. The Richman Brothers factory on East 55th Street, the Coit Rd. plant in Collinwood, along with several more east and west side locations were possibilities. “Where we are now was acceptable to the community and also appropriate for building the structure,” he said. The Goldilocks and The Three Bears story illustrates his point, “Some were too hot, and some were too cold. We found a location that was almost just right,” he said.

Originally called The Youth Intervention Center, the vision for the facility was youth intervention, where healing and behavior modification was the focus rather than a place for punishment. “We firmly believe that our youth need a restorative rather than punitive process to redirect their lives. This is a better approach as they engage in our justice system,” said Trotter. Trotter explains that there is no razor wire, looming walls and picket fences. “We focused more on protecting our kids

from outside intrusion and programs appropriate for their individual diagnostics treatment needs.

The entire project was, “a unique undertaking. The community chose the building’s design. Its architect, Ralph Tyler Companies, is an African American firm and a first for a project of this size in our County. Major contracting awards showed the greatest amount of diversity and competence. We are letting the youth of various disadvantaged communities know that they can aspire to what they want and attain it,” Trotter emphasizes.

As Trotter’s county service ends, he wants the community to understand that the government can do well, can benefit the community, and can build a building with respectful inclusion, communication, and collaboration - from the design to completion and occupation. “Government projects can be respectful of the values, contributions, and aspirations of the neighborhood through programming that is inclusive and developmental,” offers Trotter. “I believe this project could serve as a model nationwide on how to get inclusion and positive economic

benefits for a neighborhood in transition. “The project promised inclusion and diversity and delivered,” stressed Trotter, “from the architects, engineers, and designers to the people who will plant the flowers and turn the last screw.”

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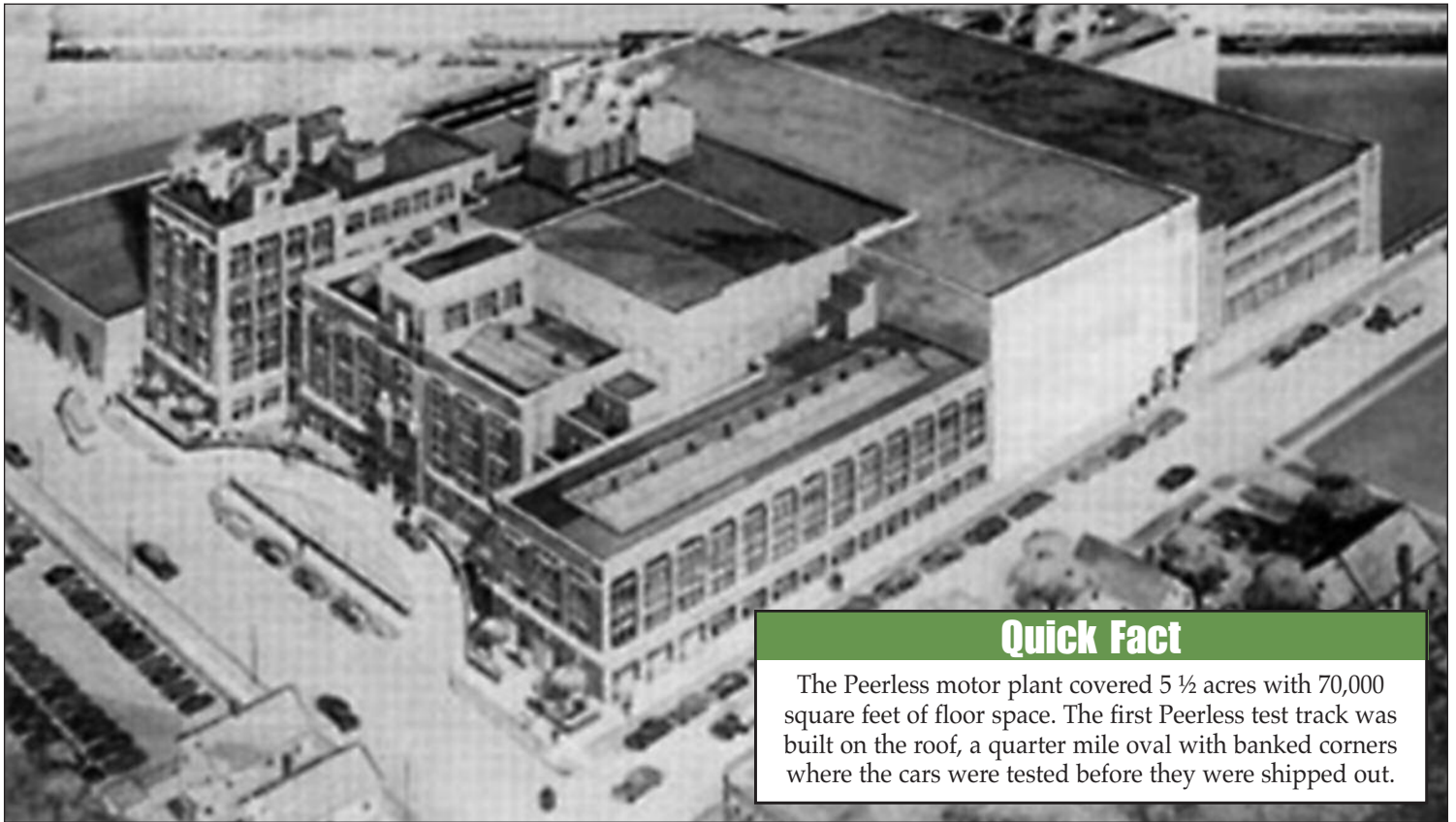


Eric Benson

Lee Trotter, Cuyahoga County’s Deputy Administrator for Infrastructure, Procurement and Diversity, Development, Workforce and Justice Services

“Don’t find fault, find a remedy” – Henry Ford

Long Before the Juvenile Justice Center



Quick Fact

The Peerless motor plant covered 5 ½ acres with 70,000 square feet of floor space. The first Peerless test track was built on the roof, a quarter mile oval with banked corners where the cars were tested before they were shipped out.

Carling Brewery (1930s) and former Peerless Motor Company

Peerless Motor Company

At the turn of the century, the site of the Juvenile Justice Center was at the forefront of economic prosperity. Peerless was a high-end automobile produced by the Peerless Motor Company. The company was known for building high-quality, precision luxury automobiles at 9400 Quincy Avenue.

At the time, Cleveland was the thriving center of automotive production in the United States. In early speed races, Peerless proved the durability of the product and set world speed records. Peerless was noted for its use of flat-plane crankshafts in its engine designs.

As the company continued to thrive and grow, it, along with the Packard and Pierce-Arrow, became known as the “Three Ps” of premium vehicles in the United States. Peerless set the standards for engineering in the auto industry and had many firsts in design. The short list includes: an engine under the hood; a drive shaft with floating rear axle; a stamped steel frame; the first side entrance touneau; a tilting steering wheel; an accelerator pedal; the use of aluminum to save weight; the first enclosed body; engine starters and electric lights.

Auto Factory Becomes a Brewery

When the Great Depression hit in 1929, the auto factory did not fare well. By 1931, the luxury car market began to dry up. The owners decided that investing in a more lucrative business was best.

As Prohibition ended, the investors decided a brewery was a better investment. Peerless purchased the bottling rights from Carlings of Canada and changed the Peerless automobile factory into one of the nation’s largest breweries. This was the largest construction job in Cleveland during 1932 and 1933.

In October 1933 the name was changed to Peerless Corporation and three years later, the company became the Brewing Corporation of America.

The company’s grand opening and open house drew 20,000 visitors to see Carlings Black Label and Carling Red Cap Ale brewed in the old Peerless factory

Sources:
peerlessmotorcar.com, heymabelblacklabel.com

The Tower of Change is a monthly publication of Cuyahoga County. For comments, suggestions and story ideas, please contact Montrie Rucker Adams at 440-684-9920 or info@visibilitymarketing.com

“When you are looking for obstacles, you can’t find opportunities.” – J.C. Bell