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The World Trade Center, located near the "Battery Park City" section of New York, was built on reclaimed land. This photo, taken by Carol Highsmith sometime between 1997 and 2001, is part of the [Carol M. Highsmith Archive](#) at the Library of Congress.

The idea of a center for world trade, to be located at the tip of Manhattan Island, began to seriously take shape when John F. Kennedy was America's president. It was a time of dreams: to put a man on the moon; to achieve lasting world peace; to create a central place where worldwide commerce could be conducted.

[Minoru Yamasaki](#), a Japanese-American with [humble beginnings](#) whose architectural firm was in metropolitan Detroit, created the center's design. Leslie Robertson was its chief structural engineer.

To [support](#) such a [massive structure](#), one-quarter mile high, engineers had to dig to bedrock—70 feet below the surface. Designers used innovative techniques (referred to as "a bathtub") to keep the waters of the Hudson River out.

It took nearly ten years to complete the twin towers and the trade center complex. From the South Tower's observation deck, one could look north to midtown Manhattan, east to the Brooklyn Bridge and south to the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island.

Photographs from the U.S. national archives, and a [movie produced](#) by the [Port Authority](#) of New York and New Jersey, document the birth of the twin towers—once the tallest structures in the world:

- When the towers were [built](#), rotting [pier timbers](#) and [debris](#) floating on the Hudson River (from illegally [dumped industrial waste](#)) were clearly visible.
- In 1973, Manhattan had a new [skyline](#) from the East River perspective.
- People traveling to the city on the Staten Island Ferry in May of 1973 had an [awesome view](#) of the new twin towers.
- An old neighbor (the historic Trinity Church on Lower Broadway at the foot of Wall Street) [welcomed](#) a new one in the spring of 1973.

Both neighbors, and everything else in the surrounding area, were threatened on the morning of September 11 as two planes, flying at about 500 miles an hour, approached the World Trade Center.

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/WORLD-TRADE-CENTER-America-Attacked-9-11>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/WORLD-TRADE-CENTER-America-Attacked-9-11>

Media Stream



WORLD TRADE CENTER

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World Trade Center - Planning and Construction, 1

This documentary was made, in 1983, by The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey.

It contains footage of the twin towers during their construction years - from the mid 60s through the early 70s.

Port Authority documentary, part one.

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World Trade Center - Planning and Construction, 2

This documentary was made, in 1983, by The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey.

It contains footage of the twin towers during their construction years - from the mid 60s through the early 70s.

Port Authority documentary, part two.

View this asset at:

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