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It took years to build the World Trade Center complex. This photo, taken in 1969, depicts the foundational construction. Usrlman, the photographer, tells us more about the image: "1969 view of the original WTC bathtub looking northeast. The frame of the south tower is on the left. PATH eastbound tunnel F can be seen in the center, penetrating the slurry wall on its way up Cortlandt Street to Hudson Terminal. The slurry wall runs along the west side of Greenwich Street. The IRT subway tunnel runs below the street (behind the slurry wall)." Public Domain.

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 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.

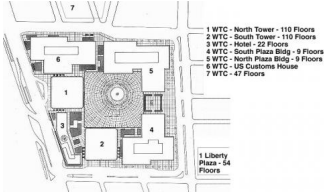
See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/BIRTH-of-the-WORLD-TRADE-CENTER-World-Trade-Center>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/BIRTH-of-the-WORLD-TRADE-CENTER-World-Trade-Center>

Media Stream



Trade Center Complex

Image online, courtesy the greatbuildings.com website.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Trade-Center-Complex>



Twin Towers and the Statue of Liberty

Image online, courtesy the Wayne State University website.

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Twin Towers of the World Trade Center

Image online, courtesy U.S. National Archives.

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View of the Site Prior to Trade Center Construction

Image online, courtesy U.S. National Archives.

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View of the Twin Towers in New York

Image online, courtesy U.S. National Archives.

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Debris in the Hudson River - World Trade Center Construction

Image online, courtesy the U.S. National Archives.

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Illegal Dumping Near the Trade Center Site

Image online, courtesy the U.S. National Archives.

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Industrial Waste Near the Trade Center Site

Image online, courtesy the U.S. National Archives.

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Manhattan Skyline and the New World Trade Center

Image online, courtesy the U.S. National Archives.

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Trinity Church and the Twin Towers

Image online, courtesy the U.S. National Archives.

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