

## 55-Acre Montgomery Mall to Open Wednesday

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The Montgomery Mall, featuring three major department stores and 58 other establishments, will open with formal ceremonies on Wednesday morning.

A special "champagne preview" for business, civic and government leaders was held yesterday from 6 to 9 p.m. Another preview will be held today for the center's more than 2000 employees and their families.

One of the largest shopping centers in the East, the 55-acre complex is located in Bethesda on Democracy Boulevard at its intersection with Rte. 270. It is also near the Capital Beltway and Old Georgetown Road.

### Major Stores

Major stores in the regional center are the Hecht Co., Sears, Roebuck & Co. and Julius Garfinckel & Co. A fourth department store, Woodward & Lothrop, is planned for the second construction phase in three to five years.

The first section, opening this week, has more than 850,000 square feet on two levels. The entire center is enclosed, with a huge center mall air-conditioned and heated to retain a constant 72-degree temperature in all seasons.

Parking space is provided for 4500 cars and two filling stations are already in operation.

More than half of the enclosed space, or 450,000 square feet, is occupied by the three department stores.

The Hecht store with 157,000 square feet is on the west end, Sears with 205,000 square feet (including its auto center) is on the east end and the Garfinckel store with 90,000 square feet is in the mall's center section.

### Opening Program

Opening ceremonies are set for 9:30 a.m. Darby Nelson, promotion director, said various store officials and County dignitaries will participate. Music will be provided by the Walter Johnson High School Band.

"We are purposely keeping the ceremonies brief," Nelson said, "because we know the opening day crowd will be anxious to see the many features."

One of the special features is a group of Colonial style boutiques known as Georgetown Row. This grouping of eight shops has over-hanging Colonial roofs and small-paneled

windows, reflecting the Georgetown tradition.

Some of the shops are operated by Georgetown proprietors who are bringing their wares out to suburban Maryland.

Montgomery Mall is the culmination of a dream originally conceived by Dr. John H. Solomon, who saw the potential of the strategically located tract many years ago. The Bethesda surgeon and his associates got the planning started in 1963 and called it the Cabin John Shopping Center.

### Tract Changed Hands

It took more money than the Solomon group could raise and in 1965 the land was sold to an affiliate of the May Department Stores Co., parent firm of the Hecht Co., and Strouse, Greenberg & Co., Philadelphia real estate firm. The reported price was \$45 million.

Montgomery Mall will be the area's second largest shopping center. It is surpassed only by Wheaton Plaza, also in Maryland, which has 1,050,000 square feet of store space plus 200,000 square feet of office space.

However, Montgomery Mall will lose its second place ranking in July when Tyson's Corner Shopping Center in nearby Virginia opens with some one million square feet of space.

Three banks will have branches in the center, including a new name in the Washington area. The Savings Bank of Baltimore will open its tenth office in the Montgomery Mall. Maryland National Bank and American National Bank, two familiar area names, also will have branches in the new retail center.

Next to the department stores, the largest space user will be F. W. Woolworth Co. with 57,113 square feet.

Raleigh Haberdasher is next in line with 27,519 square feet, followed by Peoples Drug with 17,000 square feet.

Large establishments will also include Bond's, Lerner Shops, Franklin Simon, Hot Shoppes Cafeteria and Joseph R. Harris. These will occupy from 9000 to 11,000 square feet.

Other occupants of Montgomery Mall include:

Baker Shoes, Barracini Candies, Britches of Georgetown, Corset World, David's Village Shop, Democracy Inn, District Photo Inc., The Fabric Tree,

Also, Fannie May Candies, Farnsworth-Reed, Flagg Brothers, Grant, Hoff & Katz Optometrists, Haber & Co., Hahn Shoes, Hairfashions by Lore, Jarman Shoes, K & K Handbags, Kay Jewelry, Bethesda Kinney Shoe Corp.

Also, L. Frank Co., Lillie Rubin, Merle Norman Cosmetics, Miss Harper, Montgomery Mall Barber Shop, Montgomery Tobacco & Pipe, My Maternity Shop of Baltimore Nye Jewelers, O'Neills, Parklane Hosiery, Phillipsborn, Plaza Stride Rite Bootery.

Also, Rick's Flower & Candle Mart, Bethesda Thom McAn, Tip Top Ties, The Tweed Shops, Variety Records, Walden Book Co. and Wilson Men's Stores.

### Contractor's Listed

The general contractor for Montgomery Mall was the John A. Valpe Construction Co. of Washington. Subcontractors for the project in-

cluded: W. G. Cornell & Co., heating and air conditioning; General Automatic Sprinkler & Schweltzer Inc., roads and paving.

Architects, planners and engineers were John Graham of

New York and Seattle, with Ward & Hall of Springfield, Va.

Leasing agent for the center is Strouse, Greenberg & Co. of Philadelphia.