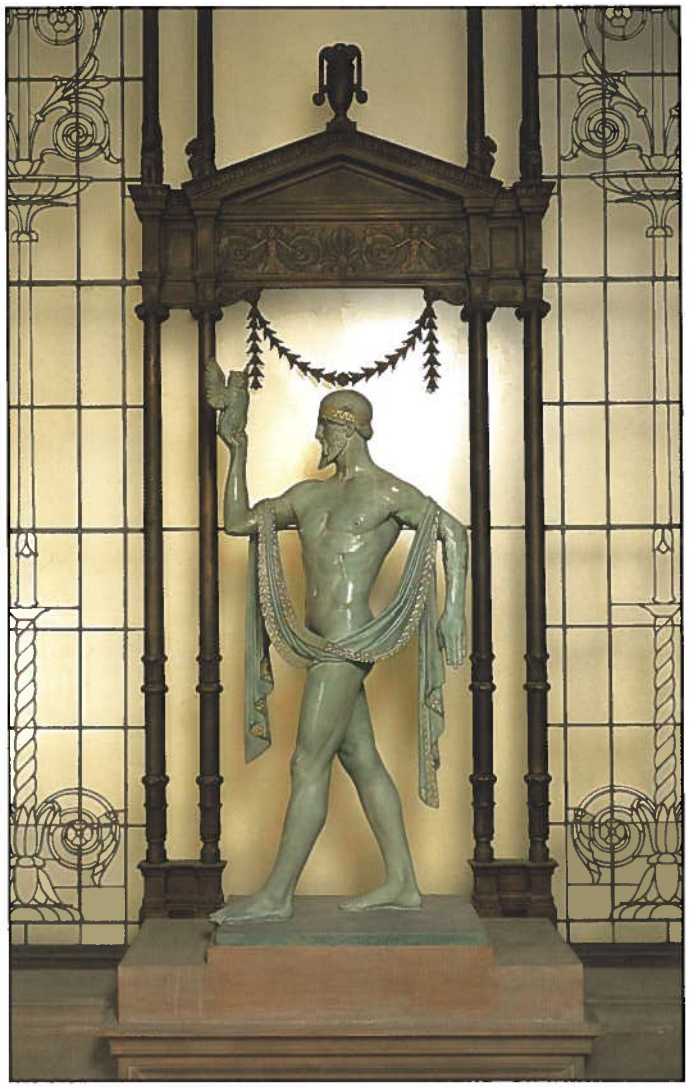
CALIFORNIA STATE LIBRARY FOUNDATION BULLETIN

NUMBER 69 FALL 2000/WINTER 2001

Sanford's graceful *Inspiration* in Circulation and Catalog Room in the Library and Courts Building.

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Issue Number 69 is the final number of a special three-part series designed to celebrate the sesquicentennial of the California State Library. This issue focuses on the locations of the Library since its founding and the magnificent Library and Courts Building on Capitol Mall in Sacramento. The Foundation expresses its appreciation to former State Librarian Gary E. Strong for his contribution of $1,000 toward the production costs of this issue. Mr. Strong started the* Bulletin *in 1982 and continues his generous support of the Foundation. In addition, the editors are grateful to architectural photographer Kathy Kelly for permission to reproduce her gorgeous views of the Library and Courts I and II Buildings.*



Sanford's *Wisdom* in the Circulation and Catalog Room in the Library and Courts Building.

California State Library Foundation

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CALIFORNIA STATE LIBRARY CHANGING AND EXPANDING SITES

By VICKIE J. LOCKHART

The California State Library—older than the state itself—began with several gifts of books and an appropriation for a bookshelf. On December 22, 1849, ten months before California was admitted to the Union, Colonel J. D. Stevenson presented books to the first Legislature in San Jose to establish a State Library. In his letter to the president of the Senate, Colonel Stevenson wrote, "Feeling an anxious desire for the promotion of education and the establishment of a State Library at the Capitol of the State . . . I respectfully beg leave by the presentation of these books to contribute my mite towards the accomplishment of so desirable an object."

His gift included a copy of the *Natural History of the State of New York* and copies of reports on the common schools and agriculture of New York. Two days later, State Senator Thomas Jefferson Green representing Sacramento donated additional titles. On December 28, 1849 the Senate appropriated funds to purchase a bookcase for these gifts to be placed in the Senate chambers, and designated the Secretary of State to act as ex officio State Librarian.

Less than a month later on January 19,

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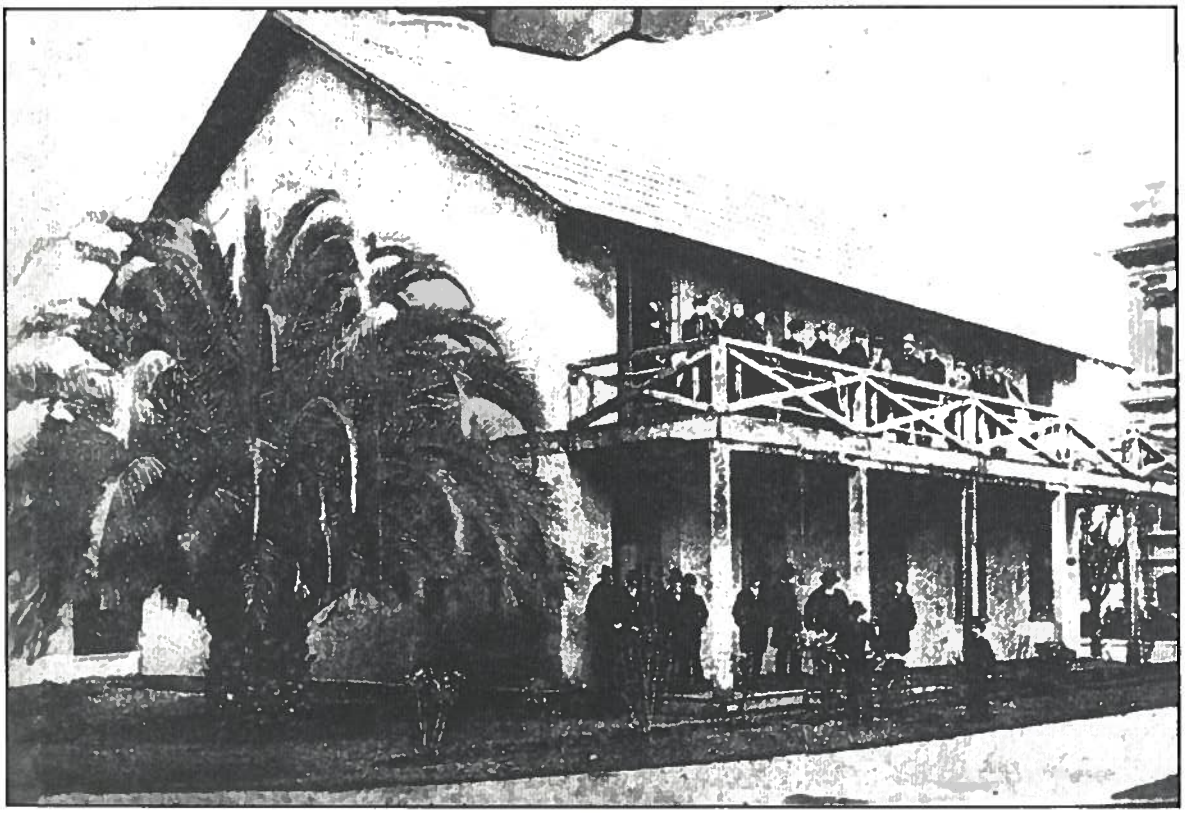


The first Legislature was convened in San Jose in this adobe building in 1850.

1850 John C. Frémont donated approximately one hundred volumes, mostly law books. Following these three donations, the Legislature, meeting at San Jose on January 24, 1850, formally established the California State Library. In April an act was passed defining the duties of the State Librarian and prescribing rules for the governing of the State Library. This included establishing that the collection should be kept in the office of the Secretary of State. The California State Library had a home.

Like the early history of the State Capitol—which was known in its early history as the "capitol on wheels"—the library moved from place to place. The first and second sessions of the Legislature, which were held in 1850 and 1851, convened at San Jose. The State House in which the Assembly met was a large adobe structure built by Sansevain and Rochon on the east side of Market Square. The building was 60 feet long, 40 feet wide, two stories high with a piazza front. The upper story contained only one room and was occupied by the Assembly. The Senate met in the house of Isaac Branham on the southwest corner of Market Plaza until the downstairs floor of the State House was ready for them. The first floor contained four rooms. The largest room (40 x 20 feet) was fitted for the Senate. The secretary of state and various committees used the other rooms.

In June 1851 Governor McDougal caused the governmental archives (and possibly the library) to be removed from San Jose to Vallejo. However, it was found that the State House and offices in Vallejo were not sufficiently completed to preserve the public records or to accommodate the public business. The governor ordered the records and archives moved back to San Jose, which was accordingly done.

The third session opened at Vallejo as planned in January 1852. On January 9 the Assembly adopted a joint resolution to remove the Legislature to Sacramento. It was agreed that the two houses would meet in Sacramento on the 16th of January. The steamer *Empire* left Vallejo for Sacramento with the Legislature at three o'clock on the afternoon of the 13th, and reached Sacramento the next day. The Sacramento courthouse was refitted to hold the Senate and the Assembly. It was a wooden, two-story building with four fluted columns and a cupola. A joint resolution was adopted on the 16th authorizing the governor to have the State archives removed from San Jose and moved to Sacramento. The library archives arrived in Sacramento on the 21st. In April 1852, however, an act was passed recognizing Vallejo as the permanent seat of government and directed the governor to move the archives and state offices from Sacramento to Vallejo.

The fourth session of the Legislature was set to open in Vallejo. However, General Vallejo was unable to fulfill the conditions of his proposition for moving the Legislature to Vallejo. Transportation, housing, and communications fell short of the needs of the Legislature and on February 4, 1853 the Legislature passed a bill ordering the seat of government to be moved instantly to Benicia. The Assembly adopted a resolution to adjourn to meet in Benicia on the 11th. The Senate concurred.

The fourth session reconvened on February 11, 1853 in Benicia and adjourned on May 19th. As early as October 1853, however, a movement was afoot to move the permanent seat of government from Benicia to Sacramento.

On January 2, 1854, the opening day of the fifth session in Benicia, there was again discomfort with the accommodations and the weather. On February 25, a bill naming Sacramento as the permanent seat of government was signed by Governor Bigler, and the Legislature boarded the steamer *Wilson G. Hunt* for the trip to Sacramento where the fifth session was reconvened, again in the county's first courthouse. Soon after this session, however, a disastrous fire razed the building on July 13, 1854. On September 27, 1854 the cornerstone for another courthouse was laid and the building was ready for occupancy in January 1855.

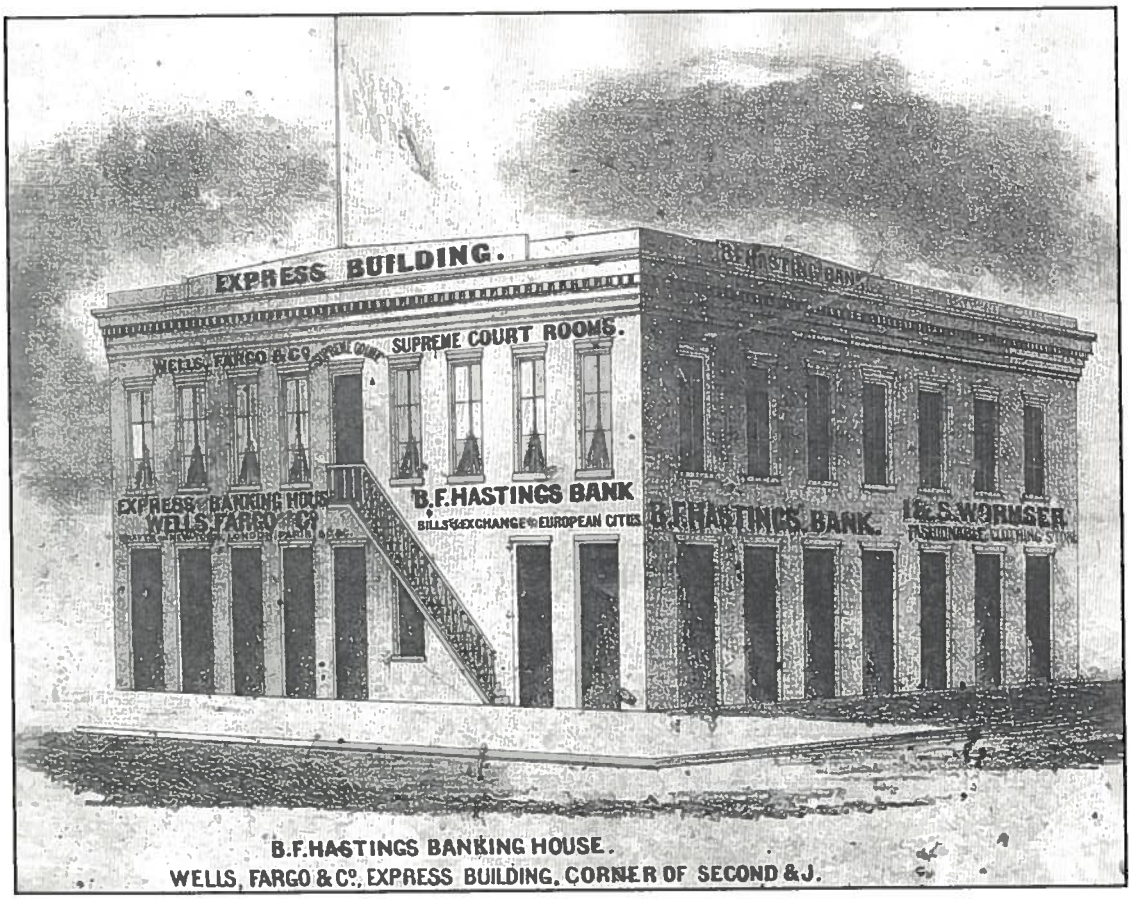
In 1854 the Library was still in the office

of the Secretary of State and was spared from the fire. J. W. Denver was secretary of state in 1854. His office was in the Read Building at 3rd and J Streets. This block was then known as the Overton Block. On May 15, 1854 Denver asked permission for the removal of the Library from his office. The secretary's report submitted on March 22, 1855 contained an analysis of the condition of the Library stating that it was situated in a building on the southwest corner of J and Third Streets. The *State Tribune* reported on November 13, 1855 that "Among the most interesting institutions at the seat of government is the State Library, located in the 2nd story of the Hastings' Block on the southwest corner of J & Third Streets." (This block is earlier referred to as the Overton Block.)

In 1856 the office of Secretary of State David F. Douglas was located in the Capitol Building at 7th and I Streets in the Sacramento County courthouse indicating that the secretary succeeded in separating the Library from his offices. The 1857 report of the secretary of state stated that the State Library & Supreme Court moved from its former location [3rd & J Streets] to the corner of J & 4th Streets. In the 1859 report of the secretary of state, it is noted once again that the Library moved, this time to 2nd and J Streets on the 1st and 2nd floors.

In the 1861-62 *Sacramento City Directory* the Library is listed as being at 28 J Street near Second Street [old numbering]. It also states that the Library contained 5,000 volumes and 6,000 miscellaneous works, excluding duplicates. The *Sacramento Union* reported on February 7, 1862 that a flood [January 10, 1862] had damaged 1,046 books located on the second floor [28 J Street].

Mining & Scientific Press on January 9, 1864 noted: "Library is situated in the rear of the Supreme Court Rooms, corner J & 2nd Streets. Entrance is by a flight of outside steps, or iron stairway from the top of which you pass along a contracted hall, and enter a narrow doorway, which is the only



One of the early Sacramento locations of the State Library.

means of ingress to a library which, in its selections is second to the libraries of but a few of the oldest states in the Union."

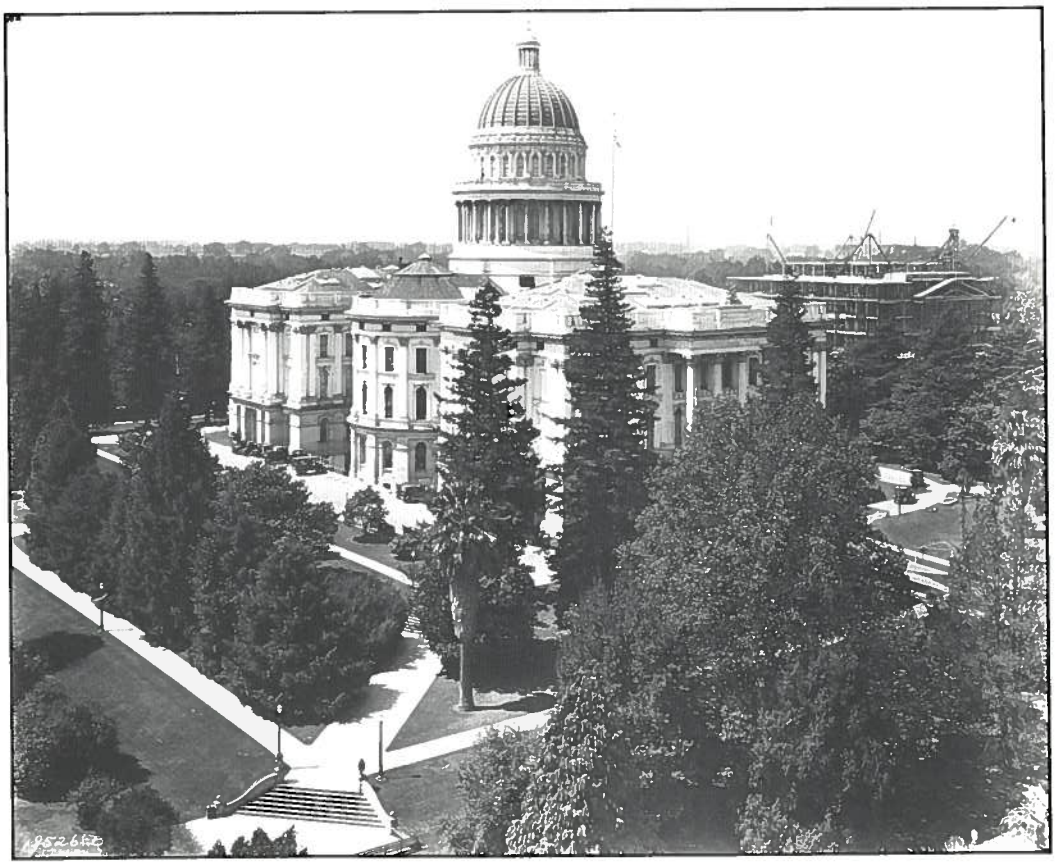
In September 1860 ground was broken for a new capitol building. (It was still located in the Sacramento County courthouse building.) Construction of the capitol covered a period of fourteen years. In November 1869, the State Library moved into the State Capitol building on Capitol Mall.

Until the Library was moved to its present location at 914 Capitol Mall, its books remained in the Capitol except when a remodeling project in 1906 to 1908 caused the staff and quarters to be moved to Maple Hall. Maple Hall was located within four blocks of the Capitol at the southwest corner of 6th and K Streets. Except for the law collection, which remained in the Capitol during the remodeling period, most of the books were held in various local warehouses.

Charles F. Curry reported in the *Concord Transcript* on March 10, 1910 that the "Library has a large dome-shaped room off the corridor on this [2nd] floor in the building and has been assigned rooms on every floor in the building and occupies about 20 percent of the floor space of the entire Capitol."

By 1917 the Library had grown to 175,000 volumes not including the 90,000 volumes of the Sutro Library in San Francisco. Attention was turned to constructing the Library and Courts Building across from the Capitol to satisfy the need for more space to house the collection and staff. The new Library and Courts Building at 914 Capitol Mall was completed in 1928. (See page 12 of this issue for a reprint of Dorothy Regnery's article about the Library's site at 914 Capitol Mall that describes the building in detail.)

Over the years sections of the California State Library have been located in various sites apart from the Library's main collections at 914 Capitol Mall. In 1917 the Sutro



The California State Capitol building looking south west. The Library was located in the apse or rounded portion of the Capitol. Note the steel frame of the Library and Courts Building under construction in the upper right. 1924.

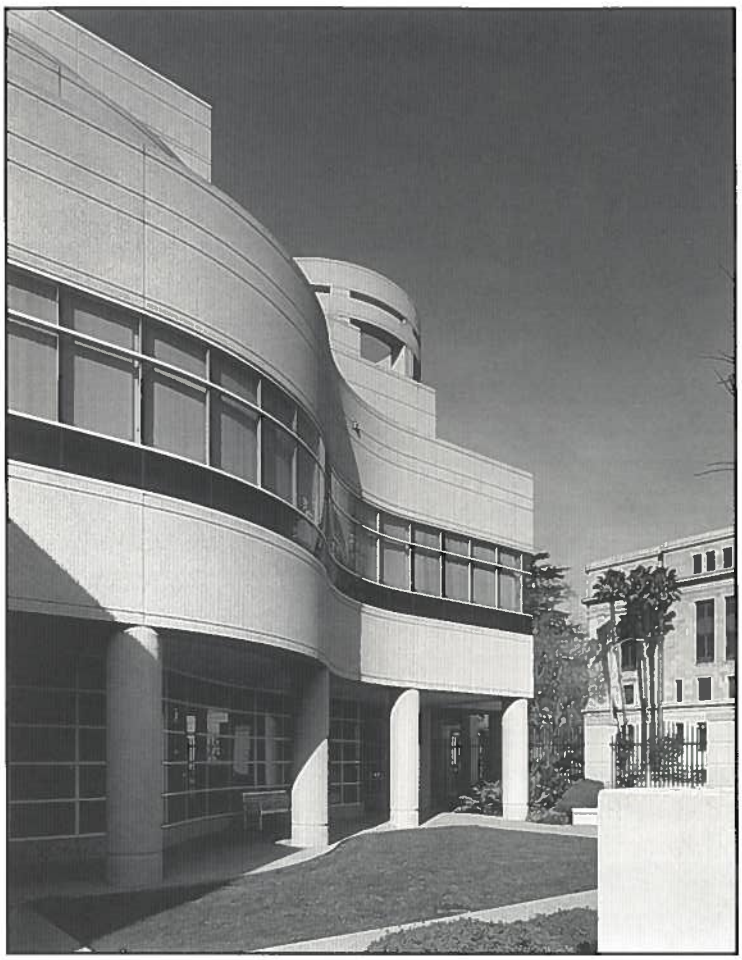
Library opened its doors at the Lane Medical Library in San Francisco. Adolph Sutro's daughter had presented his collection to the State Library in 1913 with the provision that it always remain within San Francisco city limits. In 1923 the Sutro Library moved to San Francisco Public Library in the Civic Center. It remained there until 1960 when it moved to the Gleeson Library at the University of San Francisco. In 1983 the Sutro Library moved to 480 Winston Drive on the North Campus of San Francisco State University where it remains today. However, the State Library and San Francisco State University are currently planning for a potential joint use facility for the Sutro Library and the J. Paul Leonard Library in San Francisco.

Just as the State Library had outgrown its space in the State Capitol, by the 1980s space in the Library and Courts building was at a premium. The Braille & Talking Book Library had moved from 914 Capitol Mall to 600 Broadway in 1974. Library Development Services Bureau moved from 914 Capitol Mall to leased office space in the Ramona building in downtown Sacramento in 1985. The California Research Bureau, established in 1991, was housed at 1029 J Street.

The Library & Courts II Building at 900 N Street was completed in 1994 to centralize the Library's Sacramento offices. The 140,000 square foot, five-story building with a full basement, was designed by The Architects Collaborative, San Francisco, in association with Bentley Engineering of San Francisco and Carissimi, Rohrer of Sacramento. A tunnel connects the Library and Courts Building and the new Library and Courts II Building. Patrons also enjoy a small fragrance garden, designed for its particular appeal to blind people, that separates the new Library building from its neighbor the Blue Anchor Building.

The California History Section, the Preservation office, and the Budgets office moved from quarters at 914 Capitol Mall to the

Library and Courts Building and fountain, ca. 1930.



Library and Courts II Building, 2001.

new building when it opened. The California History Section and Preservation Office occupy the second floor. The Braille and Talking Book Library moved back downtown and now occupies the first floor of the new building. Library Development Services moved from its leased offices to the newly completed Library & Courts II Building where it now occupies the fifth floor. And, the California Research Bureau joined the rest of the Library offices in its third floor suite at 900 N Street. The fourth floor is occupied by the Clerk of the Court of Appeal, Third District.

However, in 1997 the Library again faced site problems when it was determined that the Library and Courts Building at 914 Capitol Mall needed seismic work. Government Publications Section (GPS) and collections housed in the stack tower moved in 1997 to a site in the Natomas area while renovations on the interior stack section of the building were completed, upgrading the building's earthquake safety status. GPS staff and the collections for GPS, Reference, and the Witkin State Law Library remained at the Natomas site until their return to 914 Capitol Mall last year. The State Librarian's Office, Administrative offices, the Witkin State Law Library, and the State Information & Reference Center continue to be housed in Library & Courts Building at 914 Capitol Mall.

This year the Library has again outgrown its two quarters at 914 Capitol Mall and 900 N Street. The newly formed Office of Library Construction and the Budgets office, both former residents of 900 N Street, are now housed in leased quarters at 1029 J Street. However, as it has during the past 150 years—no matter where it is located—the California State Library continues to meet the needs of government agencies, researchers, genealogists, and patrons throughout the state who use its services.

STATE LIBRARY — 1911

By J. L. GILLIS

EDITOR'S NOTE: *The following article by James Louis Gillis was published in the* California Blue Book, 1911. *Gillis was appointed State Librarian on April 7, 1898 and served until his death on July 27, 1917. For additional biographical information on Gillis see* Bulletin *#68, Spring/Summer 2000, pp. 9-10.*

James L. Gillis.

Since the destruction by fire of the fine New York State Library at Albany in March, 1911, the California State Library takes first place as the largest of the state libraries. It now has an exceedingly valuable collection numbering about 160,000 volumes; its influence is being felt in every line of library activity in the State and those persons in charge of it are continually seeking means by which it may be made to render a greater service to the citizens of California.

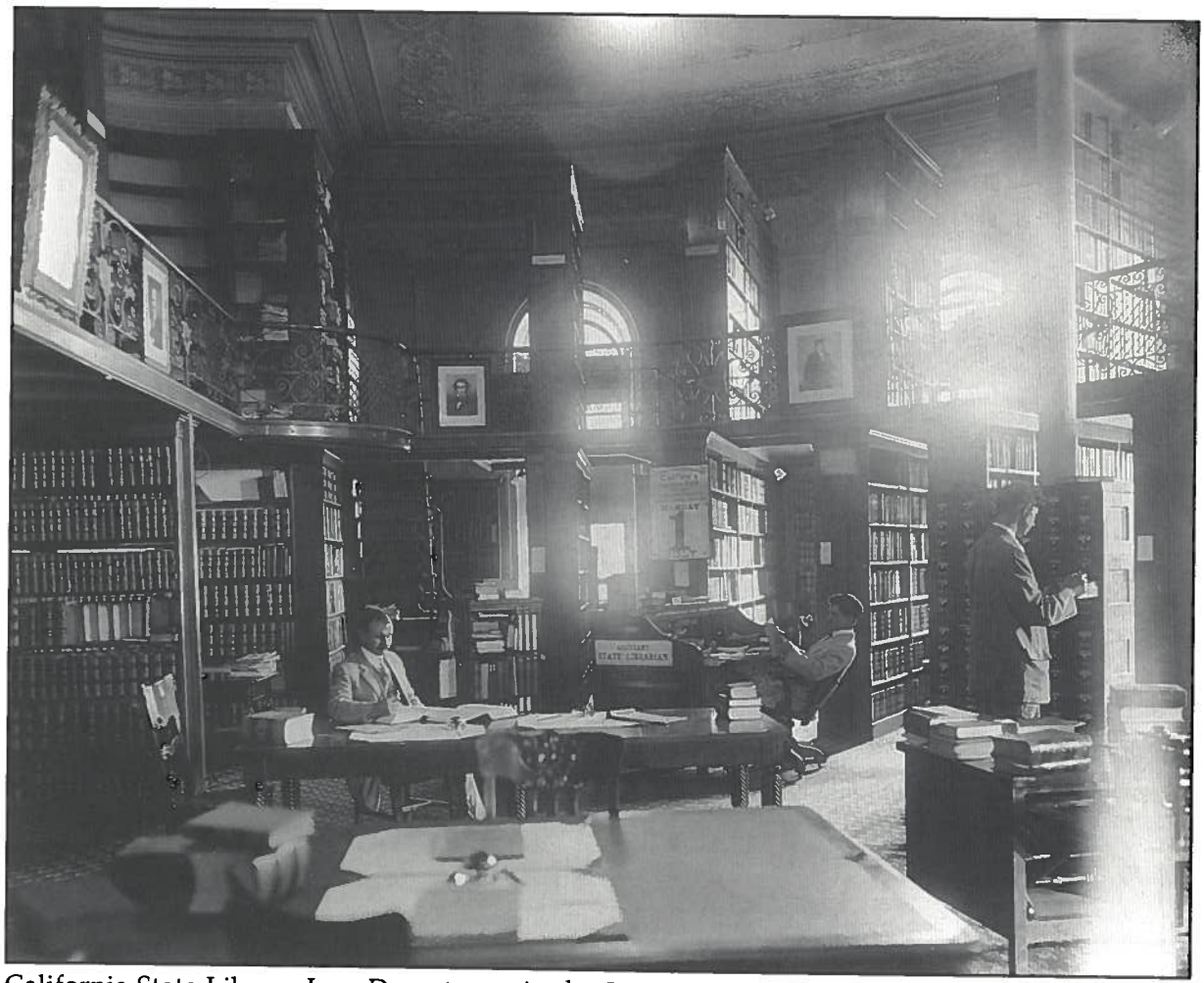
On January 24, 1850, the Legislature passed a law providing for the establishment of a state library, of which the Secretary of State was made ex officio librarian. On April 9th of the same session another act prescribed rules for the management of the library and defined the duties of the librarian. State officials alone were eligible to borrow books. During the first few years the library was, no doubt, composed mainly of the one hundred volumes given by John C. Frémont, for no funds had been voted for the purchase of books. The third session of the Legislature attempted to mend this defect by requiring each officer commissioned by the Governor to pay $5.00 to the Secretary of State for library purposes. From 1853 to 1901 all fees collected by the Secretary of State were paid into the state library fund. In the later year a definite sum of $2,500 per month was fixed upon; but since that time the amount was increased, by steps, to $5,000. During the 1911 session of the Legislature an unfortunate error resulted in a decrease of the state library fund to $3,500 per month.

When it was first established the library was simply under the care of the Secretary of State, as ex officio librarian. The first library board was provided for in 1852, and consisted of five members, all of whom were ex officio. The decision of the Legislature, made in 1861, that three members of the board should be elected on its joint ballot, threw the library periodically into the political arena. Since 1899 the board has been appointed by the Governor, and from this change may be said to date the library's period of greatest growth and importance. Plans consistent with the most approved principles of library economy and administration were adopted and have been carried out with the aim of giving the best possible service to all the people.

At present [1911] the work of the State Li-

brary is carried on through its several departments. Up to 1899 there had been but two, the law and the general. The special nature of the different lines of activity to be promoted made the necessity for new divisions evident. For many years the Law Department was of first importance, and the general and miscellaneous literature purely incidental. This was quite natural, considering that the library was established for the convenience of legislators and state officials. In 1855 the library acquired the William B. Olds collection of American, English, French, and Spanish legal literature, numbering about 3,500 volumes, at a cost of $17,250. Such an acquisition at once put the Law Department of the library in a commanding position among similar institutions in the west, a position which it holds to-day. The most valuable single set of books in the collection is the file of bound supreme court and court of appeals records in more than 4,000 large volumes. In order that these records may be more readily used by the legal fraternity, the library is preparing a comprehensive index, which will be printed and distributed. At the present time volumes of records are daily shipped out as loans to lawyers and judges in all parts of the State; as also are other books, reports, text-books, etc.

The books in the general collection of the library are sent out freely through the Reference Department to educational institutions, libraries, study clubs, and to individuals. The library is ready to give all possible assistance to the student of present day topics of general interest, to furnish reading lists, and to make selections of books for clubs, debaters, and others. Not only are the books themselves sent out, on which in all cases except to county libraries (about which see following) the borrower pays transportation charges, but by means of the cameragraph



California State Library Law Department in the State Capitol building, 1912.

the library is able to make photographic copies of matter not exceeding six or eight pages, and for which no charge is made.

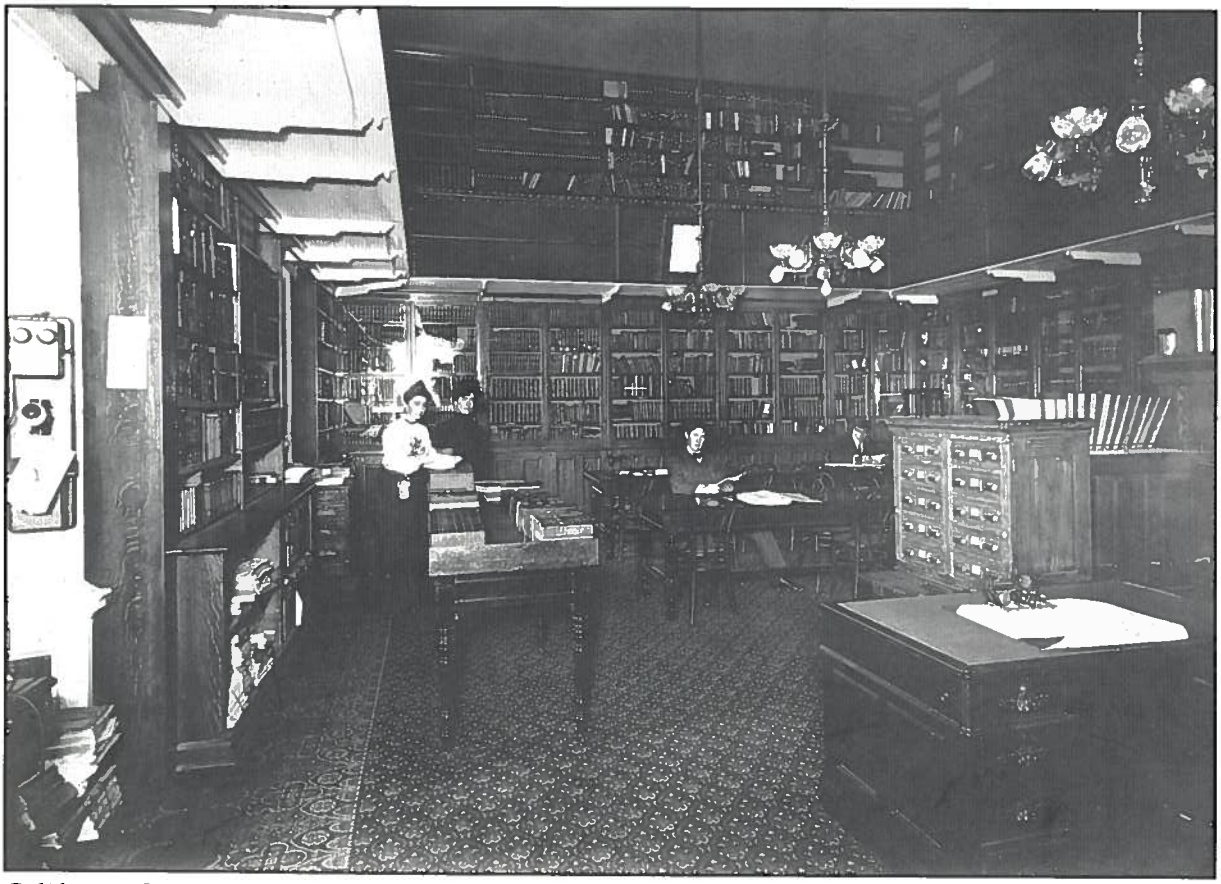
The library possesses in the California Department collection a vast amount of most valuable information concerning the history, resources, development and industrial, social and intellectual life of the State. Its files of newspapers, some of which in complete form are unique, number more than 5,000 volumes. A newspaper index beginning with 1846 is being made, so that the matter contained in these files will be readily accessible. The years covered so far are 1846-1889 and 1894 to 1905. Much very interesting information has been gathered on the subject of California pioneers and early settlers, and California authors, artists, and musicians. Whenever possible, photographs, autograph copies, manuscripts, and printed works are secured. The collection on of ephemera, that mass of material which is so intimate a part of its day and which once gone is so difficult to recover, is constantly being added to from unexpected quarters. Such things as early ballots, broadsides, programs, etc., give the student a definite idea of the every-day life of the past.

The Documents Department of the library, with which recently the Legislative Reference Department was merged, has a two-fold purpose. First, it gathers the reports, documents, etc., of our own State and of other states; distributes such publications as by law are put into the hands of the State Librarian for distribution. Second, through its legislative and municipal reference division it gathers information on current subjects of interest to legislator and city councilman, puts it into usable form, and assists all persons in its use.

The Catalog Department and the Order Department do not come into close contact with the library's public, but the result of their work efficiently done insures the user that he is getting advantage of all material

California State Library Newspaper Department in the State Capitol building, 1904.

California State Library Loan Desk in the State Capitol building, ca. 1904.



California State Library Reference and Reading Room in the State Capitol building, ca. 1904.

which the library may possess. This work in the State Library is being done according to approved methods by persons especially trained for it.

The Books for the Blind Department, as the name indicates, has charge of the work with blind readers, of whom about 425 are now being served. This work was begun in 1905, and the accessions number about 2,000 volumes in five different types.

Since 1905 library organizers have been kept in the field to assist in the establishment of libraries and in the finding of the plans and methods best suited to the needs of existing libraries. During the past two years special emphasis has been laid on what is known as the county library plan. This system is designed to give library service to the people of the county as a unit; and its success, so far, has in every way justified its existence. Thirteen counties have adopted the plan and have voted in its support sums varying up to $12,000 per year. There is every reason to believe that the plan in California at least will ultimately prove to be the most successful system yet tried. It has the great advantage of serving alike all the people of the county, irrespective of whether they live in the city or country. The first traveling libraries were sent out in 1903; but, owing to the decrease in the library fund, were discontinued in June 1911. At the time the libraries were discontinued, 510 communities were privileged to borrow the books, which were made up in collections of fifty volumes. Those counties adopting the new county system will of course receive better service than they had under the traveling libraries system.

THE CAPITOL EXTENSION GROUP

By DOROTHY REGNERY

EDITOR'S NOTE: *The following article by the late Dorothy F. Regnery originally appeared in the July 1984 issue of the* Bulletin. *Her article is referred to on a regular basis by Library staff and presents the best overall history of the majestic Library and Courts Building. Regnery, in addition to writing this study, also prepared the successful application to the National Register of Historic Places for both the Library and Courts and the Jesse M. Unruh buildings. On May 24, 1984, the two monumental structures at the west end of Capitol Park were named to the National Register.*

Dorothy Regnery was active in preservation circles and was credited with obtaining official historical status for forty-seven sites including the Filoli Estate in Woodside and the Stanford House in Sacramento. In addition to her work on historic preservation, she wrote a number of books and articles including An Enduring Heritage: Historic Buildings of the San Francisco Peninsula, The Battle of Santa Clara *and* The Stanford House in Sacramento: An American Treasure. *She passed away in April 1990. Fortunately, her estate left the Library her invaluable notes for the National Register project.*

By the turn of the century the congested conditions in the State Capitol were making

Capitol Extension Group: State Library (upper left), Jesse Unruh Building (upper right), State Capitol (center).

it more and more difficult for the library and other departments to function properly there. The California Supreme Court had been holding its sessions in San Francisco since 1878. By the 1910s there were eighteen state departments located in San Francisco—more than in Sacramento. Two departments in Sacramento were housed in rental units. Consequently, there was a strong movement afoot to designate San Francisco as the Capital City.

To counteract San Francisco's proposals, the people of Sacramento voted approval in 1913 of $700,000 in bonds with which to purchase two blocks west of Capitol Park to donate to the State for building expansion. As late as 1917, all the properties surrounding Capitol Park were privately owned, framed dwellings. Considered to be an important factor in the bond approval was the newly acquired woman's vote. Encouraging "wives, daughters, sisters, mothers, and sweethearts" to vote, they were assured "Out of deference to the women, the men officers will refrain from smoking in most of the polling places."

In 1914 a State Bond Act was passed appropriating funds to build two new buildings on the land in Sacramento. It was publicly acknowledged that "the life of the State Capitol in Sacramento" hung upon the outcome of the bond approval. The State Library was to occupy four floors and the Supreme Court and District Court of Appeal were to share the top floor of one building; all of the scattered state departments, most of which were in San Francisco, were to be efficiently consolidated in the second building. Both buildings would be conveniently adjacent to the Capitol.

The Sacramento State Buildings Commission was appointed consisting of the Governor, the presiding Chief Justice of the California Supreme Court, the chairman of the State Board of Control, the State Librarian, the State Architect and the superintendent of the Capitol Building. The latter two—architect George B. McDougall and superintendent George G. Radcliff—served throughout all the planning and construction stages. State Librarian James L. Gillis died of a heart attack in 1914, and his able successor was Milton J. Ferguson. It is indicative of the status quo that most of the meetings were held in San Francisco. Presently, it is inconceivable that the State Architect served as the general contractor for the buildings. But according to his own statement, by this arrangement about eight percent of the total building cost was cut.

Unfortunately, clear title to the land purchased by Sacramento in 1913 was not secured until 1917. Sacramento schools were dismissed on October 12, 1917 to celebrate. After a colorful parade, the town's children, each carrying a flag, surrounded the two square blocks for a formal deed presentation to the Governor. A distinctive feature of the occasion was that the event was recorded on motion pictures.

But meanwhile, the City & County of San Francisco had forged ahead, exchanging a block of its land at the Civic Center for state owned land. A state building in San Francisco was completed in 1916. As a consequence, the Supreme Court became more deeply entrenched in the City.

After the Sacramento land was secured, a nationwide architectural competition for design of two buildings was initiated. Competing with sixty-four entries, Weeks & Day of San Francisco won the award. Charles Peter Weeks, a master of classical architecture, is also noted for designing the Mark Hopkins Hotel and the Chronicle Building in San Francisco. (Weeks is often confused with William Henry Weeks, a contemporary identified principally with school architecture.)

Weeks' partner, William P. Day, was an engineer, who later became well known as the Director of Works for the 1939 World's Fair on Treasure Island. Two permanent buildings designed by Day and George W. Kelham still exist on Treasure Island. Day died in 1966.

Weeks & Day signed their contract for two buildings on November 30, 1918, three weeks after the Armistice of World War I. The prime issue to be thrashed out during

the following six months was which direction the buildings should face. According to Weeks, they should face towards the Capitol. The State Librarian wanted them to face each other to secure north light for the Reference Room, now Gillis Hall. It was finally agreed that the best monumental group would be formed if the buildings faced a main axis line passing through the center of the Capitol. Thus, emphasis of the present Capitol Mall was initiated.

Under normal economic conditions construction would probably have begun within a year. But there was postwar inflation and rising costs to contend with. Labor unions began to strongly assert themselves. It became very difficult to sell four percent bonds. The square footage of the buildings was reduced. Features such as an elaborate vaulted ceiling in the Catalogue Room were abandoned. Setting aside consideration of furnishing costs helped to momentarily push forward construction possibility.

Facing the buildings entirely with granite, as the plans specified, put the total cost at $3,800,000. By substituting terra cotta with a "granitex" surface on the upper four levels above the belt course, the cost could be reduced by $400,000. The Commissioners had to publicly defend their decision to minimize the use of granite. Today, almost everyone considers that the buildings are faced with granite. But only the first floors, the columns, and the chiseled pediments are of ashlar granite from the McGilvray quarry at Raymond in Madera County. The upper floors, the decorative capitals atop the granite columns, the decorations over the windows, the decorative moldings, cornices, the antefixes on the roofs, even the "carved" inscriptions are terra cotta. This excellent facsimile was created by the pioneer firm of Gladding, McBean & Company at Lincoln, California.

Because the bonds were not marketable, the completed working drawings, dated February 25, 1920, were locked in the State Treasurer's vault. For a $400,000 incentive the Bank of Italy, now the Bank of America, purchased the bonds on August 21, 1921. Their purchase was due primarily to encouragement by George W. Peltier, a Vice President of the bank, who in 1910 as President of the Sacramento Chamber of Commerce had been a leader in persuading the people of Sacramento to purchase the land for the state.

Within three hours of the bonds' sale the State Department of Public Works was ordered to set up bidding on excavation, piling and concrete work, structural steel, brick work, granite, and terra cotta. The bids were opened in February 1922. Ground breaking was in March 1922, but construction was impeded due to K. E. Parker Co., "a poor outfit," which did the pile driving. The Office Building No. 1 cornerstone was laid in October 1923, and the State Library & Courts Building in March 1924. Each construction stage followed in a similar lockstep pattern. The next series of bids were opened in October 1922. Still omitted were essentials, such as interior partitions, heating, plumbing, and elevators. By 1925 instead of the anticipated completed buildings, two beautiful, empty shells stood in the midst of raw surroundings, and all available funds had been spent.

Regardless of the numerous design alterations and shuffling of the budget, the commissioners authorized a $40,000 contract in October 1922 for the execution of models for two pediments, four statues, and twenty "panels." Weeks chose his friend, Edward Field Sanford, Jr., who was comparatively unknown in the West and had just returned from Paris. The sketches of the pediments were displayed in New York three months later, but it took another fifteen months to create the one-third size models in his New York studio.

Before McGilvary-Raymond Granite Co. could secure the bid to carve the pediment figures, a sample of their work—an interpretation of the head of the central figure—had to be approved by Sanford. Their crew of skilled stone chiselers was under the supervision of Rissieri Boni. Sanford gained so much respect for Boni's ability and fidelity

of interpretation that he asked Boni to return East with him.

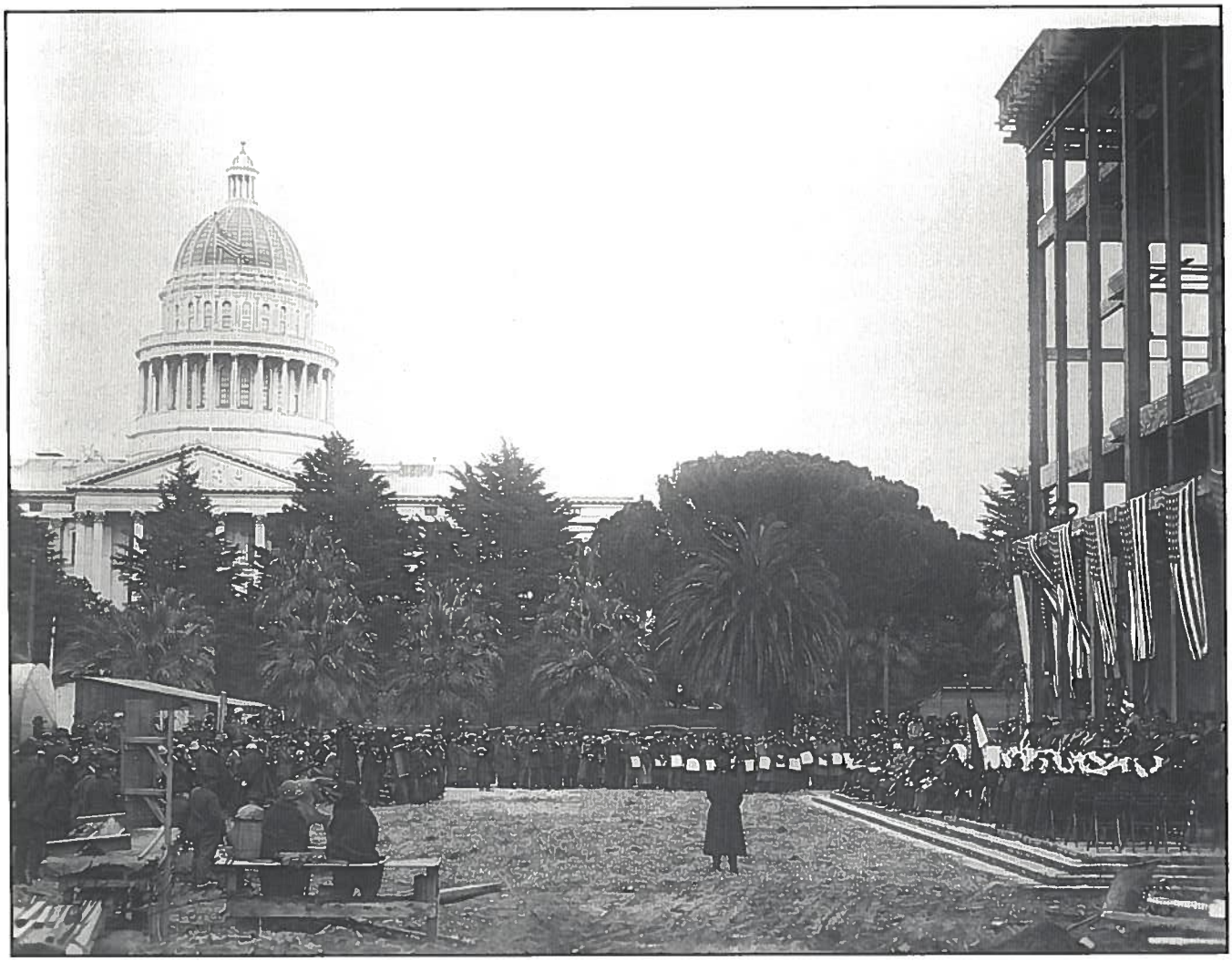
To the streetside supervisors, probably the most interesting phase of work was the development of the figures in the pediments as they virtually came to life. Sanford considered the pediments to be his most important work. His reasoning for his choice of design used in the Library & Courts Building's pediment was that its northern exposure necessitated "sharper shadows." Although he considered it to be the "more elegant" of the two pediments, he felt a deep "impression of virility of Americanism in the '49 pediment" which was placed on the Office Building. The immense, sculptured pediments received much praise and are classified among the most important modern interpretations. Charles Henry Door exclaimed:

> The pediments might well be called The Colossus of the West, for they are by far the largest and most important pieces of sculptural work now under way in this country, and also the most massive decorations designed, so far as known, for any public edifice on the Pacific Coast.

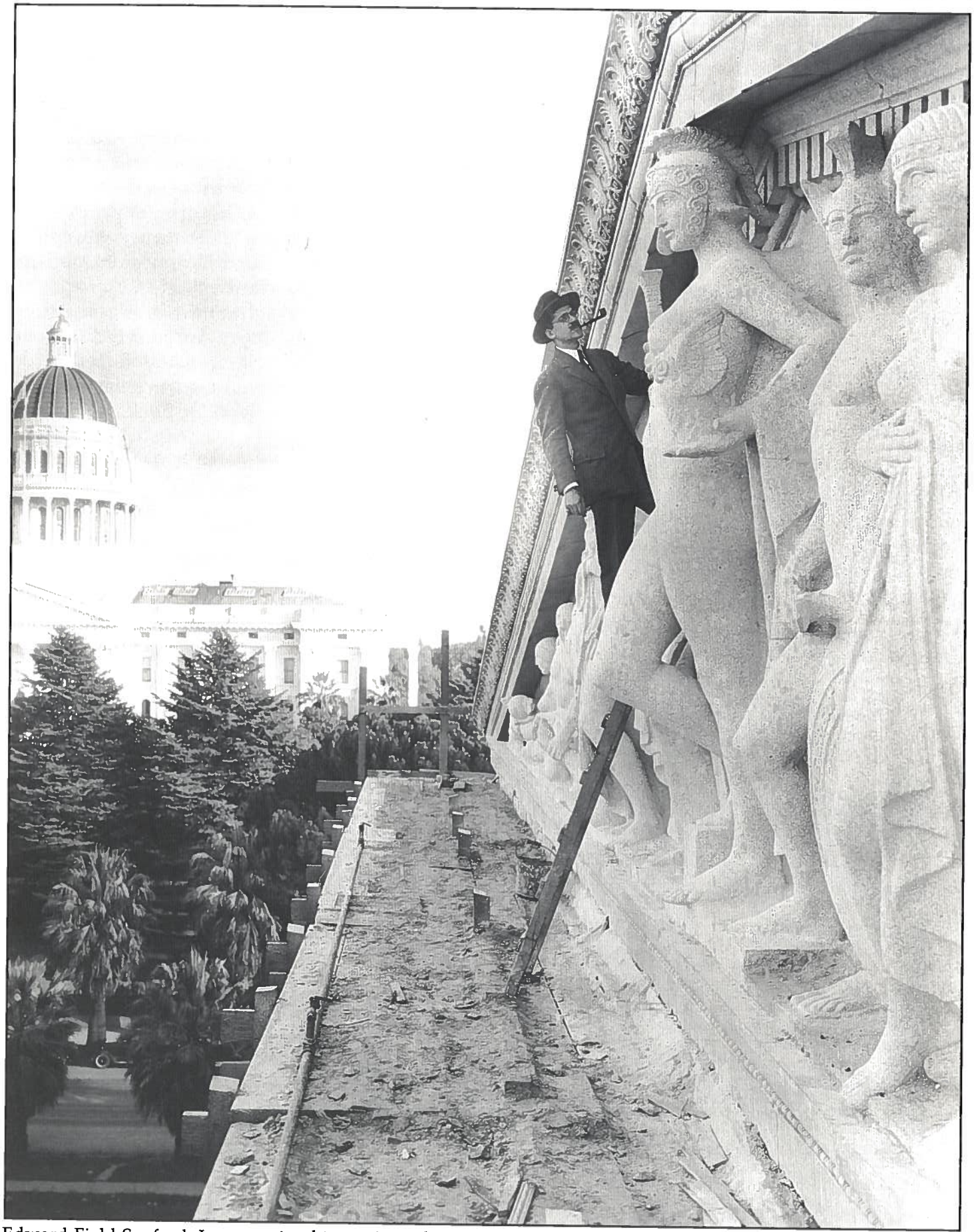
Irving F. Morrow likewise applauded them:

> The pediments are two of the largest, ablest, most impressive compositions of architectural sculpture executed on the Pacific Coast.

Contrary to some contemporary public complaints, the choice of inscriptions has proven time-worthy. Sam Walter Foss' "BRING ME MEN TO MATCH MY MOUNTAINS" used on the Office Building was



Cornerstone laying ceremony at the California State Library, March 1924.



Edward Field Sanford, Jr. surveying his work on the pediment on the Library and Courts Building.

further immortalized in Irving Stone's popular title for his 1956 historic tome. State Librarian Ferguson chose the inscription "INTO THE HIGHLANDS OF THE MIND LET ME GO" for the Library & Courts Building from an anonymous poem. He did not learn until 1929 that it had been composed by William Watson.

The commissioners were dissatisfied with the execution of the four massive statues near the front entries carved in the classic Grecian traditional style from Georgian marble. McGilvray paid Sanford an additional $1,300 to complete the statues to everyone's satisfaction. His signature appears on three of the statues.

Sanford did not carve the requisite twenty plaques. But he did create the intriguing studies placed at each side of the entries. In contrast, they were treated in a light hearted manner; Weeks referred to them as "symbols." The plaques in the outer vestibules appear to be Sanford's. But, plaques placed elsewhere, although having the appearance of being chiseled, are cast of imitation stone.

Even before the first story granite facing was in place, the total cost of the buildings had risen to $4 million. In order to have the unfinished wood surfaces treated, $5,000 had to be secured from a state emergency fund. In 1925, the Governor approved the Legislature's $300,000 funding appropriation, but immediately a controversy arose between W. F. McClure, Director of Public Works, and Ray L. Reilly, State Controller. The latter refused to pay the bills contending that the body of the Act referred only to the Capitol. The question was referred to the California Supreme Court. Their decision, handed down in 1926, declared that the two buildings being constructed were an integral part of the Capitol as much as if they were actually connected.

The appropriation was for three items: heating, some electrical work, and grounds improvement. Landscaping proposals had been prohibited as a part of the architec-

Library and Courts Building, 1925.

tural competition. Without consulting Weeks, State Gardner William Vortriede did the landscaping. Its feature was a simple, concrete fountain, costing $5,000, whose water action was to be the principal "artistic effect." The total cost of "improving the ground" was $53,000. Large fan palms were transplanted to harmonize with the curb borders of the established Capitol Park. Many old trees existing from the former residences were removed. Vortriede would be appalled at how the uncontrolled growth of the shrubs and trees he planted have now nearly obliterated the architectural beauty of the buildings they were intended to compliment. By the fall of 1925, the buildings, unfinished and untenable, stood in a compatible landscape.

The high cost of a heating system arose from the concept of extensive, large tunnels through which to carry steam from the boiler room in the Office Building to also heat the other two buildings: the Capitol and Library & Courts Building.

Another state bond passed in 1926 allotted $1,250,000 "to complete and equip . . . the Capitol Extension Buildings." But that money was not available until mid-1927 when the bonds were sold. At this interval, it was decided to increase the library stacks from eleven to thirteen levels. Meanwhile, costs continued to creep upward. Although the buildings were occupied in mid-1928, they were not truly finished until 1929. In the intervening sixteen years the total cost had doubled.

In the initial stage, Office Building No. 1 was often referred to as the State Agriculture Building because this was the largest of the numerous departments anticipating tenancy. Over the intervening years, state bureaucracy expanded and new departments were created. Twenty departments were housed in the Office Building, but spaces had to be rented in Sacramento for the overflow, and some departments remained in San Francisco. Temporarily, in 1928, the overcrowding of the Capitol was relieved.

A most startling climax was the last moment refusal of the California Supreme Court to occupy its assigned quarters on the fifth floor of the Library & Courts Building. Over the years, cost analysis repeatedly had emphasized the fifth floor extravaganza. Four successive Supreme Court Justices—W. H. Beatty, Frank M. Angellotti, Lucien Shaw, and William H. Waste—served on the Sacramento State Buildings Commission. They attended meetings, voted amiably, and made few contributions until Judge Waste attended his first meeting on June 11, 1926. A decision of tremendous impact was recorded at the meeting:

> It was the consensus of opinion that since the Supreme Court will in all probability continue its present practice in holding court in San Francisco it will not need the full suite of offices prepared for it in the Sacramento State Library and Courts Building. It was further agreed, therefore, that the Chief Justice's chambers and one additional office adjoining should be retained for the exclusive use of the court on its visits to Sacramento.

Thus, the California Supreme Court defied the Constitutional Mandate (Chapter VII, Article 2, Section 852, Political Code) which specified that State officers and offices be in the capitol. The released space in the State Library & Courts Building was assigned to the State Attorney General's Office.

But the decision did not alter arrangements for a courtroom and offices on the fifth floor. In the following November, the Commissioners concluded that the judges' bench in the courtroom should be placed on a curve. And in May 1917, a decision was made to hang purple drapes "back of the judges same as in the San Francisco Supreme Court Room."

Then on December 12, 1927, when the fifth floor court was almost ready for use, Day and McDougall hurriedly met to consider a dramatic ultimatum from Judge Waste. His opinionated declarations came down very heavily. He brusquely declared

that the justices preceding him had "paid scant attention to the quarters for the court." Since Waste considered the fifth floor to be the "attic," he vehemently refused the regal splendors of the fifth floor.

On January 17, 1928, the Commissioners ordered Weeks "to devise suitable treatment for the former Assembly Room . . . for use as a courtroom." The Assembly Room had been "intended for public usage and for special library meetings." The simple room was functional and purposefully plain in contrast to other rooms in both buildings. The solution to the Commissioners' edit was absolute duplication, even down to converting the square room to an octagonal shape. Weeks' design appears to be very worthwhile when one hears the praise of present day judges regarding its excellence of arrangement, size, etc. Acoustical problems which had been noted in the room were corrected before applying the panels and redecorating the ceiling by placing acoustic felt beneath their surfaces. Obviously, drapes also helped to solve the problem.

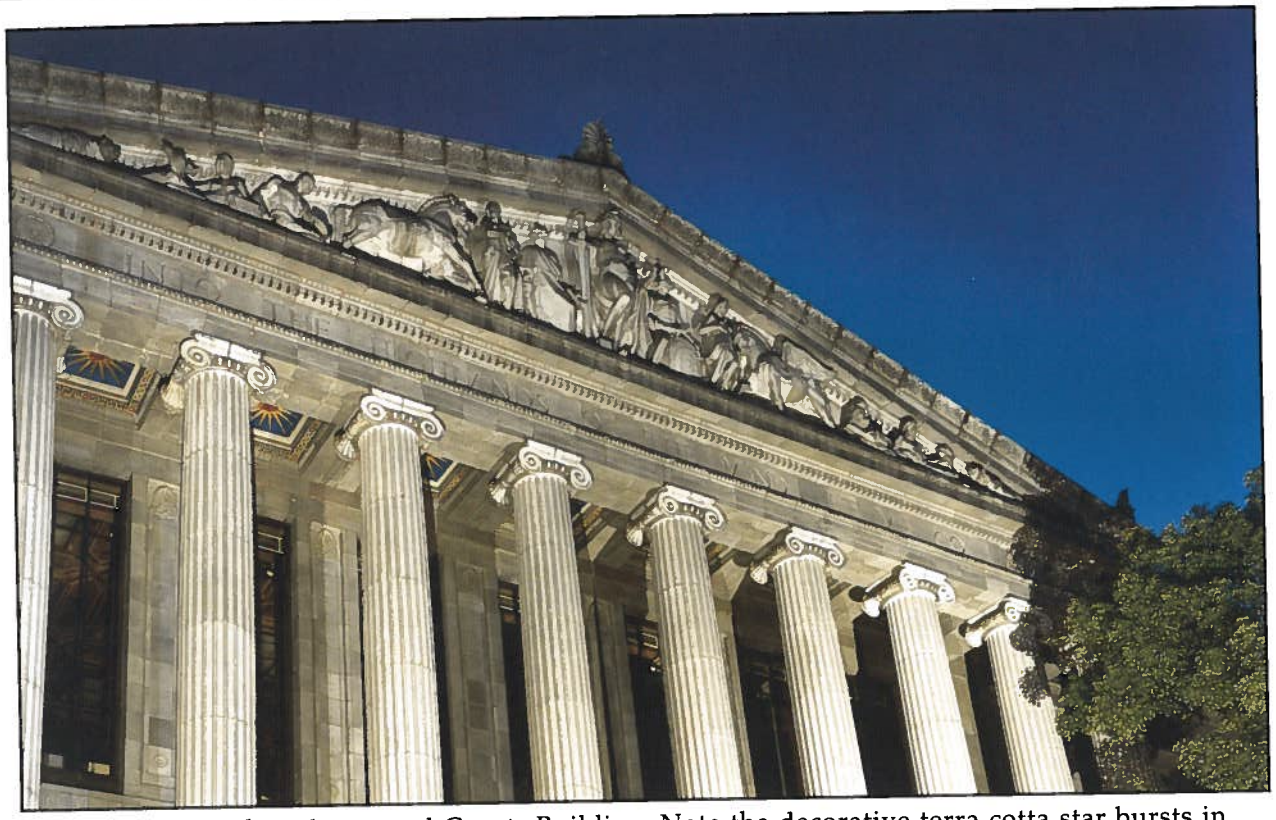
The costs involved in creating the facsimile courtroom and the numerous plush offices around the perimeter of the first floor were exorbitant. But expense seemed to become secondary to a question of how the judges could gain private access to the new courtroom from their offices. Librarian Ferguson refused to allow anyone other than library employees access through the book stacks. Smarting, the Chief Justice responded that he did not consider the judges' usage as "public access." To circumvent the personal impasse, Weeks created corridors across the bases of the light wells on the ground level. The fifth floor courtroom was repeated in each precise detail, except for its domed ceiling.

It was several weeks before the newspaper reporters caught a hint of the revolution, the frictions, and cost involved in this

Courtroom on the first floor of the Library and Courts Building.

Lamp in the Memorial Vestibule.

Decorative urn in the Memorial Vestibule.



Exterior view of the Library and Courts Building. Note the decorative terra cotta star bursts in the portico ceiling.

Left side of the Dixon mural in Gillis Hall.

State Librarian's office, 2001.

Right side of the Dixon mural in Gillis Hall.

Memorial Vestibule in the Library and Courts Building with Van Sloun's mural along the upper edge.

A view of the newly acquired Dixon mural installed on the second floor of the Library and Courts Building last year.

ridiculous folly. They exposed the "itinerant" Supreme Court, telling how it would only "visit" the expensive quarters six days each year.

To divert "heat" from Supreme Court Justice Waste, the State Director of Finance Alexander R. Heron shouldered the responsibility for the change, claiming it had been protested by Waste. One can still plainly see today that Heron's statement was erroneous: "The woodwork and other expensive installations upon the fifth floor will be used practically in their entirety in the first floor courtroom." The only items removed from the fifth floor in 1928 were the judges' bench, the chairs, the drapes behind the bench, the railings separating the public from the attorney's arena, and the public seating. Extant photographs confirm the elegance and the finished detail of the fifth floor courtroom after its purpose had been altered. One can readily compare the rooms today. The structural feature which was difficult to reproduce was the decorative dome ceiling of the fifth floor room. Even in its beauty, the first floor flat ceiling is hardly comparable. The replicas of the bronze chandelier, the numerous bronze wall lights, and the standing floor lamps are in use yet in the courtroom. Those in the fifth floor were removed in 1957. Now only the wall brackets remain. No one knows who acquired them, or where they may be hanging toady.

Also in 1957 the dome ceiling in the fifth floor courtroom, by then designated as the State Education Department Board, was modified with a flat ceiling of acoustic tile and fluorescent lighting units in an aluminum grid suspended by wire. (A similar device was utilized to lower the ceiling when converting the art gallery on the fifth floor into multiple offices. In this situation an attractive clerestory, which provided north and south light, was closed off.) Only minor damage was caused to the existing dome

The original courtroom on the fifth floor, used by the Department of Education 1930-1950s.

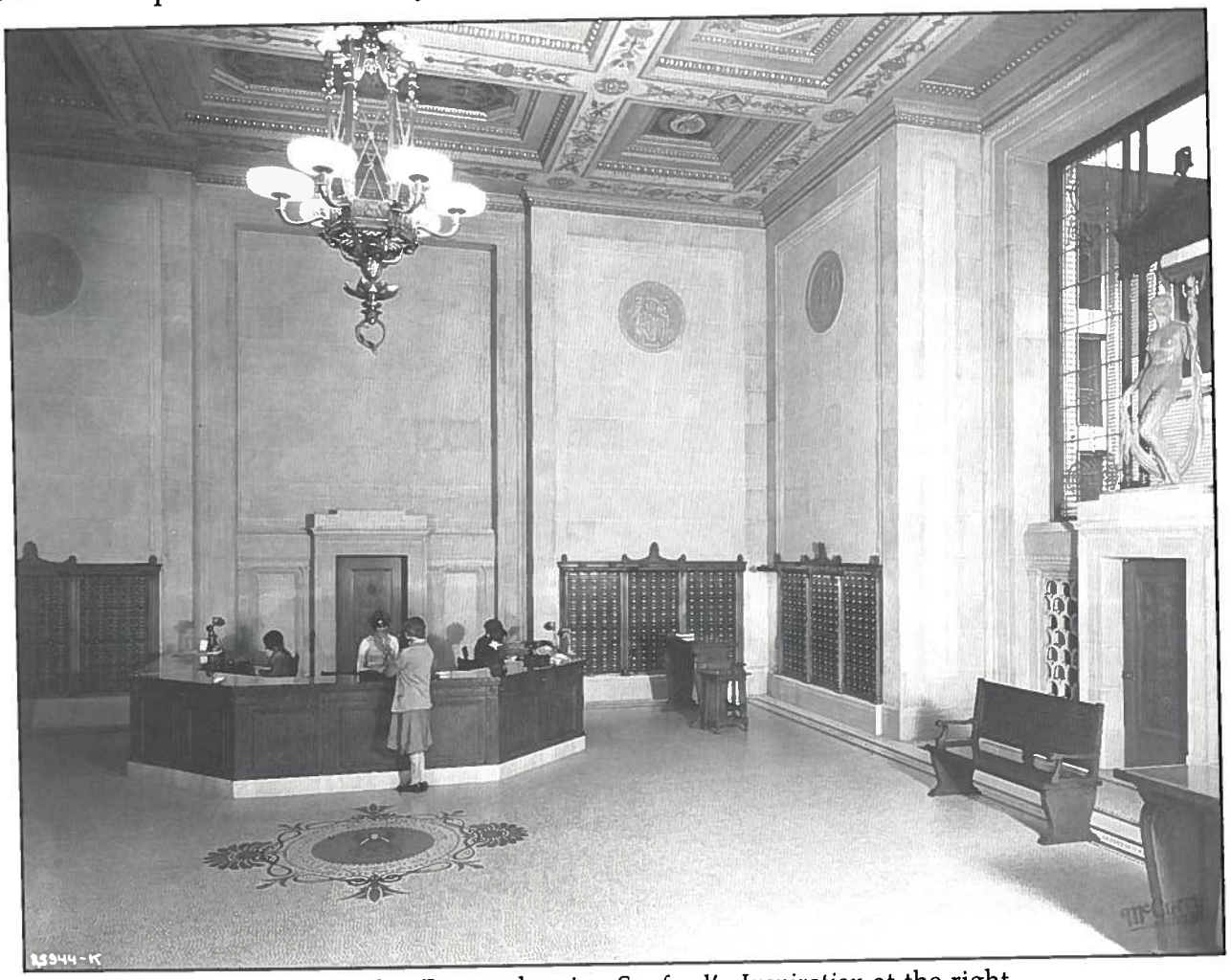
ceiling. At the top there still exists a huge, colorful seal of the State of California with highlight accents in gold leaf. Only a few of the cast rosettes were removed to permit the intrusion of electrical cables.

Also intact are four portraits of California pioneers in each corner of the octagonal-shaped, lower flat portion of the ceiling. The colors are fresh and bright. Ferguson's secretary is thought to have been responsible for the representative choice of Hubert Howe Bancroft, William Keith, Captain John Sutter, and Bret Harte. One assumes the artist was one of the employees of the Heinsbergen Decorating Company of Los Angeles, who bid $48,000 to paint and decorate the exterior and interior of both buildings. Since the contract was dated April 1928, the portraits were done after the decision to move the court to the first floor.

There were several significant side effects from the court upheaval. Obviously, the change vacated a series of beautifully paneled offices on the fifth floor with far more privacy and pleasing vistas than could be had on the first floor. To make room for offices, the museum on the east side of the first floor was abandoned, and it was combined with the art gallery on the fifth floor. To secure offices along the west side of the first floor, the blind readers' facilities were moved to the second floor into rooms which were less accessible for its patrons.

And, it had a role in the sudden death of Weeks in San Francisco on March 25, 1928. This occurred on the heels of the Supreme Court fiasco. He died just as the Capitol Extension Buildings were finally to be completed after years of his ingenuity, patience, and cooperation with state bureaucracy.

In addition to the structural design, Weeks also was the designer of the exquisite lighting fixtures, such as the hanging "oil lamps" in the vestibule, the torch light stan-



Loan desk in the Public Catalog Room, showing Sanford's *Inspiration* at the right.

dards in the Memorial Vestibule, and the intricate, huge chandelier with its charming, observant snake acting as host over the loan desk. The bronze directories in both buildings were Weeks' design. He was also responsible for the appropriate, sturdy furniture which repeated the building's architectural motifs.

In May 1927, Weeks was directed to secure "two or three statuettes" to decorate the Catalogue Room. He immediately contacted his friend Sanford, who enthusiastically responded. The decision to use only two figures, one in each window, was reached primarily because of the limitation of cost. Sanford was paid $15,000 and an additional $650 to supervise the placement of the bronzes.

Since the light wells have been closed, few are as sensitive to the beauty of the bronze framed, leaded windows behind each statue. Nor does one realize the doors beneath them led unto balconies in the light wells. With all the windows of the halls of the upper floors blocked in, one can no longer see the backs of the statues or view them from different angles. Framed by the ornate windows, the natural light more effectively silhouetted the statues than does the present, artificial lighting.

Sanford's *Inspiration* and *Wisdom* drew little local comment until a New York sensationalist newspaper attacked a replica of the undraped female figure. Even then, only a few Californians contributed some puritanical protests. But the estimated attendance to the Catalogue Room suddenly quadrupled. One observer concluded that many had never been inside the library before and only came to get a "peep." Another wondered why "*Wisdom*—a whiskered gentleman wearing nothing at all, but decently holding his bath towel, while trotting along as if in a rapid getaway—did not receive some censure too."

The question of sufficient funding suspended any decisions about the interior finishing until the last moment. Specifications for bids for murals in the Library & Courts Building were not released until November

Bronze gate entrance to the Public Catalog Room and loan desk, 1929.

1927. For the mural in Gillis Hall, there were only two bids. Maynard Dixon asked $9,500 and Albert Herter wanted $35,000. The award was announced in February 1928. Dixon's is a masterpiece showing an array of converging peoples who created California's distinctive culture. He frankly admitted to slight historical inaccuracies. It was concluded that the painting should be applied directly on the wall, and an additional $1,500 was paid to cover the "cost of execution in place." Now-famous Western artist Dixon did not start to execute the 70 x 14 foot mural until July after the library was functioning, but he found it an interesting experience. He felt as though he was one of the construction workers and liked the feeling of craftsmanship involved.

> Then, people were constantly coming and going, looking, and commenting—carpenters, plasterers, visitors. They asked questions and

> as I worked I answered them. First thing I knew I was giving lectures on mural art, something I had never done before. Out of it all I got a new feeling for my job, something very healthy.

Three artists bid for the murals in the Memorial Vestibule. Frank Van Sloun's bid of $8,000 was the lowest. In contrast to Dixon, Van Sloun executed twelve panels depicting martial scenes in his San Francisco studio. So little notice was given him in April 1929 when he hung the six-foot high frieze in the building that he was most annoyed.

The library staff found it difficult to keep the public out of the Catalogue Room after closing hours, so graceful bronze gates, reminiscent of those in the Peacock Court of the Mark Hopkins Hotel, were installed.

Originally, it was planned that the stacks were to be heated. But Ferguson demanded that no artificial heat should be used in the stacks, and all the radiators were removed. It was then so cold that the librarians found it too difficult to work there, so the radiators were replaced. This is only one of many changes which caused expensive over-runs.

At least twelve different kinds of marble were used extensively throughout both buildings. The most distinctive is the black and gold marble for the sixteen columns in the Memorial Vestibule. The marble was quarried on the Isle of Tino, Italy, in the Bay of Spezia. The $85,000 order was the single largest order for this kind of marble imported to the U.S.A., and it stimulated the reopening of the quarry which had been closed for years.

There are excellent terrazo, mosaic, and aggregate marble floors throughout the buildings, beautiful white marble stairs, colored marble molding and baseboards. An act of modernization in 1954 almost totally covered a large artistic mosaic designed by Weeks for the center of the Catalogue Room. The loan desk was moved forward and now only a small portion of the four-color mosaic is visible.

A striking change was produced when th light wells in the Library & Court Building were usurped for other functions. In addition to lessening the presentation of the bronzes in the Catalogue Room, natural light was eliminated in the halls and stairwell. The remaining blank windows are poorly disguised behind blinds. No substitution was made for the loss of light on the stairs and the decorative light fixtures have been pillaged, leaving only bare light bulbs

The excellent condition of the artwork and the quality of the original paint colors in the fifth floor courtroom ceiling places a question upon an episode which occurred i 1967. The state painters claimed the décor of the halls and rooms throughout the building has been "ruined by age." They washed the surfaces with tri-sodium phosphate solution, causing most of the original colors to disappear. Six months were spent in replacing distinctive borders and patterns. The architect's 1928 elaborate colored pattern codes for all the borders and patterned ceilings throughout the buildings are in the possession of the State Library. They are so well executed that each pattern board is a work of art. Did the state painters utilize them to reproduce with true accuracy in 1967? One cannot help but question the crew's sensitivity since they covered the much praised simulated bronze balustrades of the dramatic, curving marble stairway with brilliantly cheap copper-colored gilt. Despite the eccentricities in the development and alterations, the two buildings are outstanding in design and contain glorious art in various forms. Unfortunately, for too few are aware of these art treasures.

HISTORY ON WALLS: THE MAYNARD DIXON AND FRANK VAN SLOUN MURALS IN THE CALIFORNIA STATE LIBRARY

By DONALD J. HAGERTY

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Donald J. Hagerty is an expert on California and Western art and has written extensively on the career of Maynard Dixon. Mr. Hagerty is the author of* Desert Dreams: The Art and Life of Maynard Dixon *(Peregrine Smith Books, 1998) and* Holding Ground: The Art of Gary Ernest Smith *(Northland Publications, 1999). He has also served as the curator for major exhibitions on Dixon. In addition, he made possible the acquisition of the Dixon Anoakia Murals for the Library in 1997.*

Maynard Dixon working on his mural in Gillis Hall.

In the prosperous 1920s, a mural movement surfaced in America transforming the architecture of movie theatres, hotels, schools, libraries, and department stores into messengers of history through the pictures painted on their walls. These murals embraced specific subject matter, usually historical, with readable, clearly understood messages drawn from the American experience. Mural painters probed the country's past to validate historical events and themes like sacrifice, labor and hard work, and moral encouragement. Among those interested in mural decoration was the California State Library in Sacramento, posed for occupancy in the imposing new Library and Courts Building across from the State Capitol when construction finished in late 1928.

Charles P. Weeks, the building's architect, and State Librarian Milton Ferguson determined to grace the classically designed edifice with art, specifically mural art. They believed murals would enhance the main reading room on the third floor and a vestibule inside the structure's main entrance. After Governor Hiram Johnson signed a bill authorizing funds for inclusion of murals in the Library, California artists were invited to submit bids. Early in 1928, two San Francisco painters, Maynard Dixon (1875-1946) and Frank Van Sloun (1879-1938) received commissions, Dixon for the reading room and Van Sloun for the vestibule.

By the 1920s, Maynard Dixon, a native Californian born in Fresno had accumulated considerable acclaim as a painter of the West's landscapes and people. Frederic Remington, then the God of western illustration, encouraged Dixon to pursue art after the sixteen-year old sent him two sketchbooks in 1891. Two years later Dixon's first work as an illustrator appeared in the *Overland Monthly*. Dixon quickly assumed fame as one of the West's leading contributors of drawings for regional and national books, newspapers, and magazines.

After the 1906 San Francisco earthquake and fire not only demolished his studio but also prospects for commission opportunities, Dixon migrated to New York in 1907. Once there, he staked out a claim as one of

the foremost American illustrators of that era. Dismayed by the rise of a sensationalized western fiction, Dixon eventually retreated to San Francisco in 1912, determined to move beyond illustration toward fulfillment as an easel painter and muralist. He wondered what the future might hold.

That future arrived in the same year when Anita Baldwin McClaughry offered him a commission to paint four large murals in the Indian Hall of her new home in Arcadia, California. (In 1997, the California State Library obtained the murals. They now reside on the second floor of the Library and Courts Building). These murals, Dixon believed, dated the start of his true creative life. Numerous murals followed in later years. One mural, the Room of the Dons for the Mark Hopkins Hotel in San Francisco, came about when Charles Weeks hired Dixon and Van Sloun in 1926 to synthesize and execute a design for the hotel's ballroom.

In 1928, when Dixon began work on his commission for the State Library, he selected California's historical progress and pioneering ambition for his mural in the reading room. The somber, yet dramatic design, *A Pageant of Tradition*, spreads across the south wall above the room's entrance, measuring fourteen feet high by sixty-nine feet in length. Murals, he always insisted, required a center focus, with the sides in equal proportions to achieve a unified aesthetic. In this case, the center became even more important, since Dixon was forced to crop the mural to fit over the room's arched doorway.

Gillis Hall, 1929.

Responsive to the library's mission, Dixon pursued a theme of learning for the mural's center. Above the room's entrance he created the three books of knowledge—Philosophy, Science, and Art—encircled with gold halos. Two immense figures are positioned on either side. On the left, the heroic female figure of *Beauty* emerges from clouds and smoke, symbolic of arts and culture throughout California's history. At her feet he painted a cornstalk and other plants as a eulogy of sorts for California's fertility. To the right, lower and partially obscured by the whirring wheels of machinery, the male figure of *Power* reflects the forces of modern technology and industry.

Groups of dramatic figures on either side, flanked by three horsemen stride toward the mural's center. They are intended to depict phases of history and development in California's past. Dixon resurrected participants in the state's Spanish and Mexican legacy for the mural's left side. For example, a Spanish explorer, Jesuit and Franciscan priests, and proud Californios, suggestive of the mission period, are included in the array of figures indicative of an earlier, pre-industrial California. The right design represents a primarily Anglo-American impact on America and California. Among the parade of figures are an early explorer, Revolutionary War officer, war-bonneted Native American, a frontiersman, a forty-niner, and a 1920s laborer and his family. Several of the figures, later arrivals in California's history, press toward the center on both sides of the mural, their hands raised as if in supplication.

All of the figures, left and right, are evenly distributed in a shallow plane, their strong profiles clear-cut against the empty space of the wall. Overall, Dixon created the concept of civilization's forward march toward the mural's center, although no strict chronological order is followed. Images of cornstalks on the mural's two sides reinforce the symbolism of California's fertile ground. Dixon painted the design directly on the wall, ensuring the major elements do not break the wall's surface integrity. The wall's flatness makes the mural coherent and ensures none of the figures moves out into space or back into illusionistic depth.

Guided by drawings he developed in his San Francisco studio, Dixon painted the mural in midst of a frenetic rush to finish construction on the building. Dixon worked on the mural from a scaffold, in his mind, like one of the workmen on the project. " I almost became a union man," he remembered. People constantly entered the reading room—carpenters, plasterers, even groups of school children. Often they stopped to question him about the mural, to which Dixon eagerly responded. Sometimes he interrupted painting to offer impromptu lectures from the scaffold on art to visitors in the room below. For three and a half months, Dixon labored daily in the reading room, finally completing the mural in November 1928.

The other muralist, Frank Van Sloun, was born in St. Paul, Minnesota. In 1900 he moved to New York where he studied under Robert Henri and William Merritt Chase, labored as a commercial illustrator, and exhibited his work in several prestigious East Coast museums. Van Sloun excelled in portrayals of the human figure, often executed in red chalk, a skill he carried to mural painting.

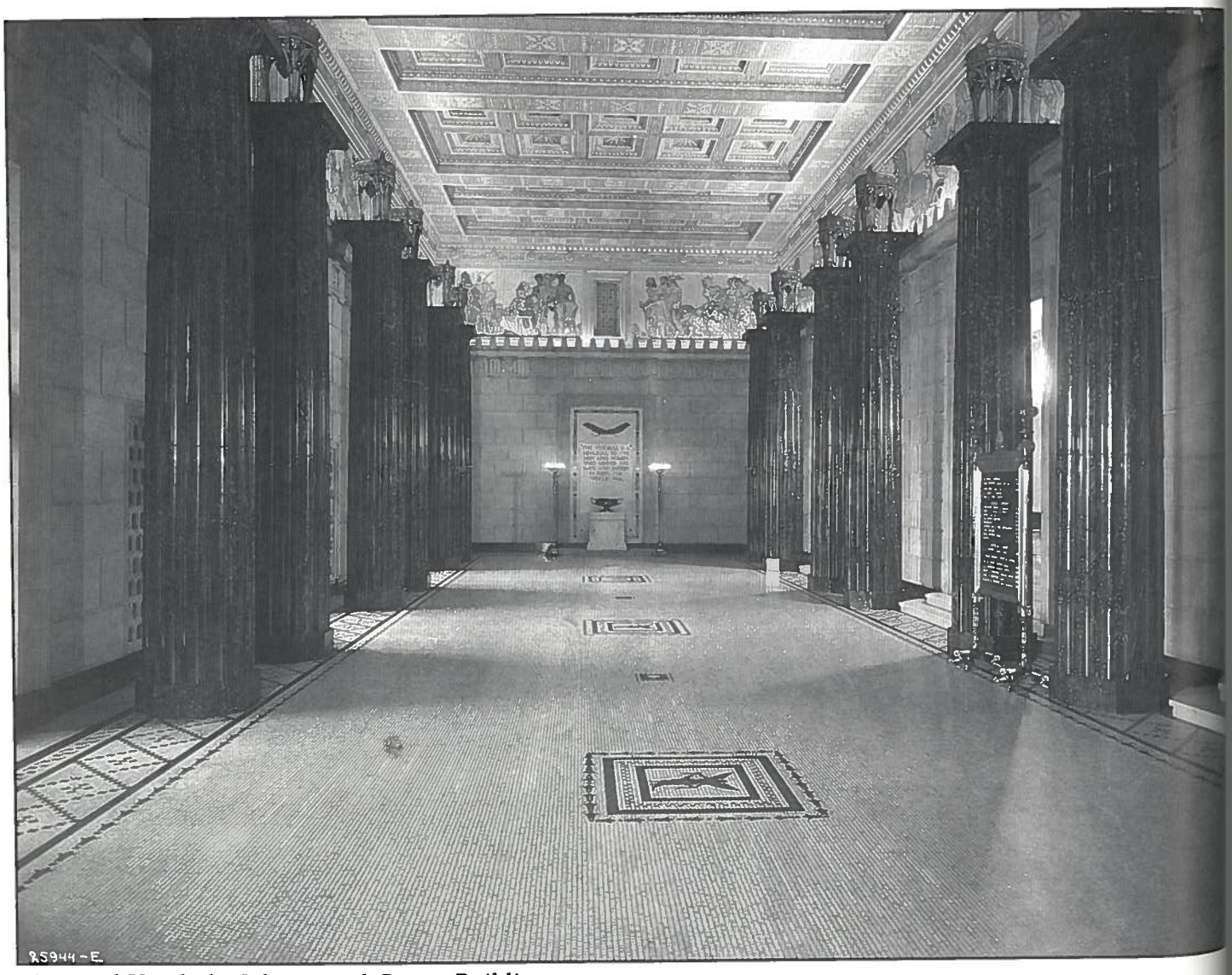
A sojourn in California for six months during 1907-1908 prompted him to return in 1911 to settle in San Francisco. Although quiet and introspective, Van Sloun rapidly captured a place among the leading figures in San Francisco's artist community. He received a bronze medal at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in 1915 and taught briefly at the California School of Fine Arts on Nob Hill. In 1918, he opened the Van Sloun School of Art, which attracted many of the city's younger progressive artists, including Selden Gile, later an important member of the Society of Six. Eventually Van Sloun joined the art department at the University of California, Berkeley in 1926.

By the last decade of his life, Van Sloun found wide fame throughout California as a

painter and educator, among the first teachers to bring Henri's message of realism to the Bay area. A strong adherent of Henri's ideas, Van Sloun's expressive, self-confident brushwork in paintings, along with monotypes, drawings, and etchings celebrated the drama of everyday American life. Like Dixon, he considered mural decoration an integral part of his artistic efforts. Some examples of Van Sloun's murals reside in the Oakland City Hall, the Bohemian Club in San Francisco, and, of course, the Mark Hopkins Hotel.

Van Sloun's mural for the State Library, *A History of War*, was intended as a memorial to Americans who sacrificed their lives in World War I, particularly Californians. In his proposal Van Sloun envisioned twelve large panels installed eighteen feet above the floor and two feet from the ceiling, each six feet high and of varying length. After intensive research on the history of military arms and dress, Van Sloun started the mural process in May 1928. Initially, he created numerous preliminary sketches to work out overall concepts, enlarged them, then added detail before painting the final panels. The panels, oil on canvas mounted on wood, were completed at his California Street studio in San Francisco.

Beginning at the vestibule's east end, the mural starts in the Neolithic period, then progresses through an historical sequence of pictures running along the north and south sides of the room. Egyptian and Greek soldiers, Roman charioteers, Goths, Vandals,



Memorial Vestibule, Library and Courts Building.

Huns, Mongols, Gauls, and other participants in early warfare are depicted in the first several panels. Then comes the Crusades and the Middle Ages, on through the Napoleonic Wars and ending with the involvement of America and a number of European nations in World War I.

Van Sloun's mural concludes in two panels at the vestibule's west end with the wars of America. On the right are America's early conflicts—the French and Indian War, Revolutionary War, War of 1812, and the frontier wars. The left panel reflects more recent American confrontations—Mexican War, Civil War, Spanish-American War—finishing with the nation's role in World War I. Over each panel hovers the Spirit of Liberty. In one frame her sword is unsheathed, ready for war, while in the other the weapon is sheathed with laurel, emblematic of peace.

The handsome mural design and execution echo with the overall architectural scheme, particularly in the use of a warm red sandstone color used as background for the figures. In addition, Van Sloun employed heavy black and white outlines to emphasize the severe and dignified forms of the figures, the effect similar to bas-relief. Since he arranged the twelve panels in parallel pairs around the vestibule, those historical changes in military costumes and implements of warfare in the parade of figures that pour forth across the panels creates the impression of a triumphal military procession.

In spring 1929, Van Sloun finished the murals, brought them to Sacramento, and supervised their installation above the Library and Courts Building vestibule. Unlike Dixon, whose visitors peppered him with questions while he worked, the more reclusive Van Sloun avoided interaction with passers-by who offered their critical, but in his mind, uninformed comments.

The Maynard Dixon and Frank Van Sloun murals in the California State Library are preeminent examples of an early period in twentieth-century American mural art. Both artists possessed a deep reverence for the role of symbolism and history. Their designs are naturalistic and decorative, allowing them to integrate mural art with the architectural integrity of the locations in which they are placed. Dixon and Van Sloun's thoroughly researched scenes, carefully arranged compositions, high technical proficiency, and mastery of large-scale painting rules resulted in images that express each mural's lofty ideals.

CLOTHED IN BURNT EARTH: GLADDING, MCBEAN AND THE LIBRARY AND COURTS BUILDING AND JESSE UNRUH BUILDING

By GARY F. KURUTZ

EDITOR'S NOTE: *The job order files in the Library's Gladding, McBean and Company Archive in the Library's California History Section and* The Architectural Terra Cotta *of* Gladding, McBean *by Gary F. Kurutz and Mary Swisher provided the basis for this article. For the overall history of Library and Courts building, please refer to Dorothy Regnery's article in this issue of the* Bulletin.

A casual viewer looking at the majestic Library and Courts Building and its neighboring Jesse M. Unruh Building will be impressed by their massive and stately granite facades. Looks, however, can be deceptive. In reality, only the first floors of both buildings are made of the hard granite quarried from the Sierra Nevada. The remaining four stories of both office buildings consist of terra cotta made to mimic the more expensive stone. The terra cotta, which translated from the Italian means burnt earth, was manufactured by the well known architectural terra cotta works of Gladding, McBean and Company. The pottery, as Gladding, McBean was called, clothed the exteriors in 1,420 tons of an innovative clay masonry product they named "granitex."

State Architect George McDougall and the contracted project architects, Weeks and Day, selected terra cotta as the major building material for the facades for several reasons. Much cheaper and lighter than carved stone, it would significantly reduce the cost of the buildings. Further, terra cotta could be shaped into just about any decorative form from granite-like ashlar (large flat blocks) to complex gargoyles, and in the case of large office projects, these hollow blocks could easily and quickly be hung on the steel girders of a building. Glazes developed by the terra cotta companies could imitate the look and texture of just about any common building stone such as marble or limestone. As Gladding, McBean boasted, "we saw an opportunity to outstone stone." Consequently, in the late teens and 1920s, architects and building contractors throughout the country turned to flexible and versatile terra cotta to replace or complement carved stone.

By the time the State of California embarked on its Capitol Extension project, Gladding, McBean reigned supreme in the manufacture of architectural terra cotta. Founded in 1875 following the discovery of a rich source of kaolin clay near the town of Lincoln in Placer County, the company had spread far and wide with plants dotting the West Coast and clients stretching from Tokyo to New York City. In the 1920s, seemingly every major building was clothed in blocks of Gladding, McBean terra cotta. Prestigious California jobs included the Spreckles Building in San Diego, Biltmore Hotel in Los Angeles, Standard Oil Building in San Francisco, and the Memorial Auditorium in Sacramento.

Gladding, McBean employed hundreds of workers including highly skilled artists and craftsmen. For business purposes, the company located it headquarters in San Francisco, and Atholl McBean, a direct descendant of one of the founders, ran the operation as president. The Lincoln plant, twenty-five miles north of Sacramento, served as the principal locale for the manufacture of architectural terra cotta under the

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efficient direction of Joseph DeGolyer. On hand was Italian-born artist Pio Tognelli who executed in clay the ornaments designed by the architects. In addition, the pottery did a bustling business in producing roofing tile and sewer pipe.

What gave Gladding, McBean an edge in competing for the Capitol Extension Group was the development of its granitex glaze in the early 1920s. Architects Weeks and Day had been particularly impressed by the company's use of the glaze as a means of matching the color and texture of the granite base for the towering Standard Oil Building. To achieve the black speckled effect of granite, workers applied the glaze by means of "sputterers," a special spraying apparatus. Hailed as a great advance in terra cotta technology, architects later employed the speckled gray glaze for the facades of the Matson and Pacific Gas and Electric buildings in San Francisco, and in the 1930s, the twenty-eight story Los Angeles City Hall.

On March 18, 1922, Gladding, McBean entered into a contract with the State of California to provide an estimated 746 tons of terra cotta for the Library and Courts Building. The pottery assigned it Job Order Number 1521. This contract coincided with the production of 674 tons of terra cotta for Job Order 1520, the twin Office Building now known as the Jesse M. Unruh Building. For both buildings, the pottery would receive $220,000. Use of terra cotta instead of granite saved the State of California about $400,000. In many respects, the Capitol Extension Group was typical of the many jobs undertaken by the company in the 1920s. The Lincoln plant kept a careful record of the project including a file of memos from its San Francisco headquarters. (The files

Gladding, McBean plant in Lincoln, California.

are part of the Library's Gladding, McBean Archive.) The work order for the Library and Courts Building specified that it would provide the facings above the second story belt course and "for the roof and ceiling of pediments and for register faces in the public catalog room [third floor] and memorial vestibule." The job order further stated that it would use granitex (glaze number 10882) "same as Standard Oil Building." This prestigious contract challenged the pottery by calling for massive fields of terra cotta. Unlike some of their other buildings, both 1520 and 1521 stood alone without close neighbors and each five-story building would be clad on all four sides with its granitex ashlar. (In densely built cities, only two or three sides were usually fully exposed.)

While Weeks and Day featured granite and marble for most of the decorative elements, the pottery did have the opportunity to provide more than just granitex blocks. The architects designed the buildings to have a large second story portico underneath massive pediments. The porticos included ceilings with a series of polychrome terra cotta star bursts. (These beautiful blue and gold star bursts, unfortunately, because of their height and ceiling position cannot be easily seen and often go unnoticed.) Gladding, McBean's artists also created the graceful Ionic capitals for the portico pillars and pilasters on the east and west sides, the egg and dart and lamb's tongue ornaments for the belt courses and cornices, and the acroterion over the four second-story corner windows of the Library and Courts Building. One of the other uses of terra cotta was for the giant letters used for the inscriptions on both buildings: "Into the Highlands of the Mind Let Me Go" (for the Library and Courts Building) and "Give Me Men to Match My Mountains" (for the Unruh Building).

Once the company received the drawings from the architects, the plant swung into production. First, draftsmen redrew the drawings according to "terra cotta construction." This took into account that after firing in a kiln, terra cotta would shrink. As well, the draftsmen specified how each block would be anchored to the building frame. Each piece received a unique identifying letter and number designation to indicate its exact location in the building. Following these new drawings, an artist, in this case Pio Tognelli, would then create clay models of ornamental sections. Fre-

Model of the acroterion for second-story corner windows.

quently, architects supplied only a rough drawing and Tognelli would translate it into a detailed clay model. The finished model was photographed and sent to the architect for approval or suggested changes. Once approved, plaster molds were made and modelers would press terra cotta clay into the molds. Thereafter, workers removed the molds, let the clay dry, and then applied the appropriate glaze. With the glaze applied and dry, the pieces were sent for firing in a beehive kiln to be "burnt" at 2300 degrees and then slowly cooled for several days. Following the cooling process, each section was laid out, fitted together, inspected, and minor imperfections corrected. Finally, workers carefully loaded the precious glazed masonry packed in tule straw into train cars or trucks that transported the blocks to the building site.

Upon arrival, building contractors unpacked and inspected the terra cotta looking for breakage or imperfections. On occasion, whole car loads were rejected. If accepted, the blocks were hoisted onto scaffolding and set in place according to the designated letter and number. Each block came with an iron strap to attach it to the building frame. Mortar and cement further held the blocks in place. It was important that the straps be completely covered as any water leakage would eventually cause the strap to rust and potentially fall away from the building (a real hazard during an earthquake).

The Capitol Extension Group proved that building undertakings of this scale were fraught with challenges, unexpected problems, and delays. The potential for errors, misunderstandings, and disagreements between client, architect, and contractor was

Drafting room, Gladding, McBean & Co., Lincoln, California, ca. 1915.

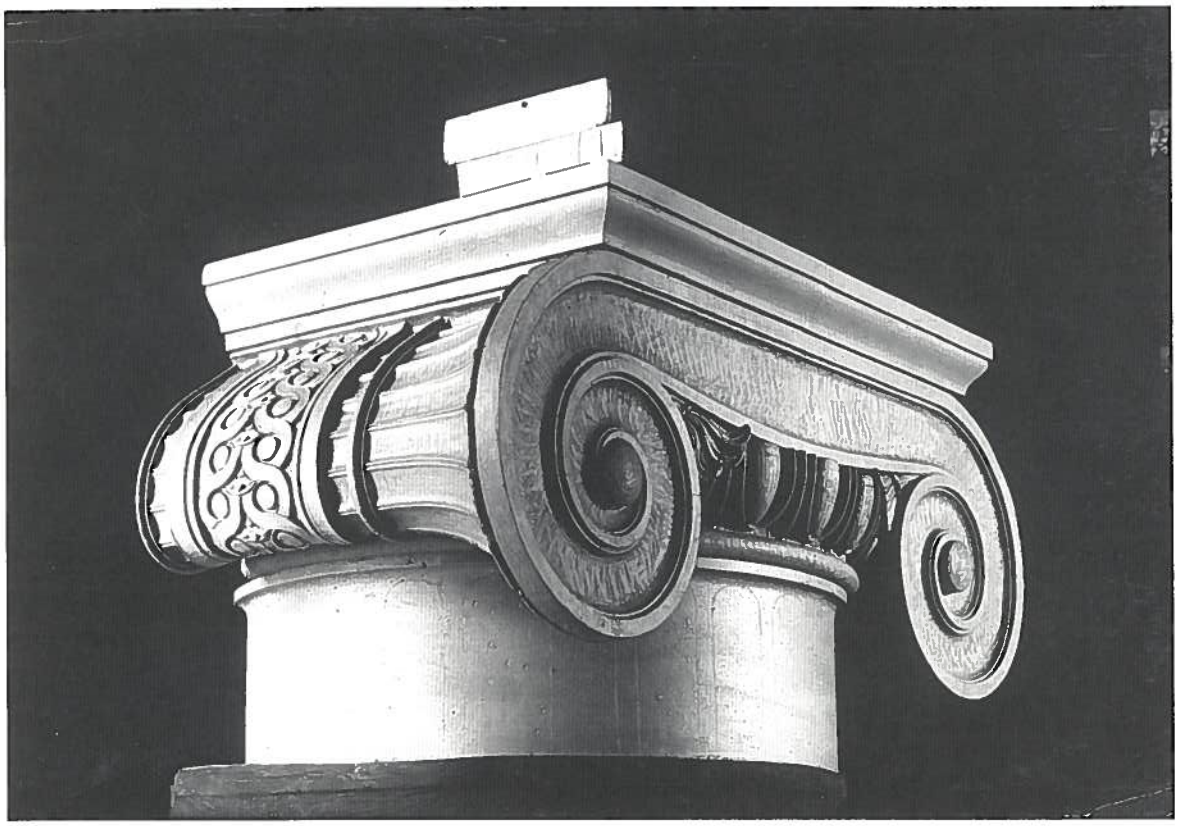
Worker spraying glaze on terra cotta at the Lincoln plant.

an ever present reality. The first problem arose in coordinating the setting of the terra cotta with the installation of the granite by the McGilvray-Raymond Granite Company of Madera County. Delays in producing the granite caused problems in Lincoln. By April 1923, the majority of the granitex has been produced, but the contractors at the site were months away from being ready to receive the terra cotta. Delays required the pottery to store the finished pieces at their Lincoln yard. To further complicate the job, one of McGilvray-Raymond's derricks fell on the roof of the Unruh Building during the installation of the granite for the pediments and chipped or broke several pieces of terra cotta. In the course of construction workers damaged several other pieces causing Gladding, McBean to either provide replacements or patching material as late as April 1926, even though the job had been completed in 1924.

While these problems may have been irritating, a real bombshell exploded in the

Decorative devices for the Library and Courts Building.

Portrait of artisans at Gladding, McBean & Co.



Graceful Ionic capitol.

spring of 1925. Completion of the exterior of Capitol Extension Group naturally drew attention from architectural circles, and the twin buildings received considerable praise from the press and critics for effectively framing the Capitol. However, Gladding, McBean came under fire from State Architect George McDougall and Weeks and Day for not matching the color of the granite, and consequently, ruining the proportions of both buildings. As early as December 1923, Atholl McBean worried about this in a memo to his staff in Lincoln. "I am very nervous over these buildings and am afraid the terra cotta is not going to receive favorable comment," he wrote. How right he was. While the terra cotta company promoted the ability of their glazes to simulate granite, this project seemed to prove the difficulty of creating a perfect match. McBean, in another communique to Lincoln on June 4, 1925, reproduced a letter he had received from the architects:

> On March 20th, 1924, we wrote you complaining of the color of the terra cotta . . . . There is [only] a small percentage of terra cotta that matches the granite. The great field of terra cotta is very much darker and there are some pieces as dark as slate. One would have thought after the experience you had with the American National Bank and the Standard Oil Building you would not have repeated your mistake in this building. The building Committee, State Architect and ourselves were assured that you could match terra cotta. On that assurance on your part we based our recommendation that terra cotta be used in place of imitation stone. If we had known the results would be as disastrous as they are, terra cotta would have been used without our consent.
>
> The unfortunate result is that due to the dark color of the terra cotta the entire proportions of the building are changed. The dark frieze and attick [sic] become entirely too heavy to be supported

by the delicate light columns, pilasters, etc., due entirely to the difference in color.

The attempt to change the color with acid has been a failure. Some pieces have been lightened it is true but they have taken on the appearance of galvanized iron and will doubtless grow worse with time.

This is about the most serious problem we have had to contend with.

One can only imagine the reaction of the staff in Lincoln. McBean wrote Charles Weeks the following day that the darkness of the terra cotta had been caused by storing it face up in the Lincoln yard for over a year while it collected dirt and dust. Blaming it on dust and dirt was not the real answer. In truth, many of the ashlar blocks turned out to carry too dark a glaze. That summer the chemists in Lincoln worked feverishly to rectify the color problem. Various remedies such as giving the blocks an acid bath, bleaching the darkest pieces, and applying ordinary oil paint did not work. Instead, the pottery experimented with spreading Atlas white wet cement with a paint brush to dampened blocks. "The question in our minds," wrote Atholl, "is will this cement come off in a few years." Unfortunately, the pottery did not document its final solution (if any), but judging by present day appearances, a trained eye will spot a number of darker terra cotta units that do not blend in with other terra cotta blocks or the granite of the first story. As well, the pilasters are a much lighter color. In any event, the weathering of the buildings, passage of time, and the growth of trees appear to have sufficiently masked any obvious differences between the Sierra white granite of Madera County and the granitex terra cotta of Placer County. It should be noted here that the terra cotta has displayed one other problem: spalling. Over the years some of the blocks near the parapets are beginning to show evidence of deterioration whereby moisture has worked its way behind the granitex glaze. This spalling process, if unchecked, will cause the iron straps that hold the blocks in place to rust, which in turn, could cause the terra cotta to fall.

Despite these problems, those who look admiringly at these graceful buildings never fail to express surprise when learning that they are not constructed entirely of stone. Ernest Hopkins, a *San Francisco Examiner* reporter, remarked when writing about Gladding, McBean in July 1928, "From a hole in the ground, here in the lower end of Placer County, the modern city of San Francisco has come." It may also be said that out of this same hole in the ground rose two of the most beautiful governmental buildings in the United States.

Continued from page 41

dicious use of connections and perseverance, we hope to bring this project to fruition. The proposed mural will add to the attractiveness of downtown Sacramento and elevate the visibility of the Library. Ms. Taylor has created murals for the California State Railroad Museum, Crocker Art Museum, Hyatt Regency in Sacramento, Hilton Hotel in Sacramento, and Disney World in Orlando, Florida.

An important function of the Foundation is to support special events and projects of the Library. Most recently, the Foundation cosponsored special receptions for the Library's Mexican War Exhibit and the publication of *The Literature of California* edited by Jack Hicks, James D. Houston, Maxine Hong Kingston, and Al Young. The latter event, celebrating this University of California Press book, was held on the second floor of the rotunda inn the State Capitol Building. In conjunction with the Sacramento Book Collectors Club, the Foundation sponsored a dinner program with Andrew Hoyem of the prestigious Arion Press. The Library just acquired the deluxe illuminated edition of the Arion Press's great Bible.

Finally, the Foundation continues to support and assist a multitude of worthy projects including the Governor's Book Fund, programs of the California Research Bureau, and the distribution to school districts throughout the state of Huell Howser's award-winning *California's Gold* series.

Gary F. Kurutz,
Executive Director

FOUNDATION NOTES

At the Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors, George Bayse was elected to a second term as president. Mr. Bayse provided wise and generous guidance the previous year. He brings to the Foundation valued experience in the operation of nonprofit organizations, having served as president of the California Historical Society and Crocker Art Museum. Also continuing as offers are Sue T. Noack, vice-president; Barbara Campbell, secretary, and Kenneth B. Noack, Jr., treasurer. Marilyn Snider was elected to another term as a director. Allan Forbes served as chairman of the Nominations Committee.

The year 2001 promises to be event-filled for the Foundation. To start off the Library's sixteenth decade of service, the Foundation Board of Directors presented to the Library a beautiful copy of William Morris's *The Kelmscott Chaucer.* Published in 1896, the *Chaucer* is one of the most celebrated books of all time and will; be featured in a future issue of the *Bulletin.* As part of its program to enhance the collections of the Library's California History Section, the Foundation purchased a copy of artist and illustrator Tom Killion's lavish folio volume *The High Sierra of California.* It was purchased in memory of Bertha Hellum.

This spring, the Foundation will host two receptions: the dedication of the Michael M. O'Shaughnessy Rotunda in the Library and Courts II Building and the unveiling of a Gregory Kondos painting in the Reading Room of the Braille and Talking Book Library. The O'Shaughnessy family has made a substantial donation to the Foundation in memory of the famed City Engineer of San Francisco. Mr. Kondos, one of California's best-known artists, has been commissioned to create an oil-on-canvas painting of a Sacramento River scene. Notice of these two ceremonies will be sent to Foundation members when final arrangements have been made.

Last year proved to be most rewarding in the way of gifts to the collections. Mrs. Robert D. Baker of Fair Oaks donated a detailed manuscript map of Folsom drawn by pioneer railroad engineer Theodore Judah in 1855. One of the foremost Californiana collectors in the Sacramento area, Dr. Robert Alexander, through his family, presented to the Library the rarest and most valuable items from his collection, including Sutter and Bidwell letters, a spectacular copy of Riley Root's overland guide from 1850, and the extraordinarily rare second edition of Felix Wierzbicki's *California as It Is and as It May Be* (1849). Sacramento historian Dr. Robert LaPerriere arranged for the gift. Through the good offices of Donald J. Hagerty, the Library received the gift of a magnificent Maynard Dixon painting called *Allegory.* It is considered one of his finest. R. and Marsha Williams of San Francisco donated the painting. Mr. and Mrs. John Serrao, formerly of Sacramento and now residing in Rancho Mirage, gave to the Foundation an important selection of rare books from their formidable library, including the very rare *The Mammoth Tree Grove, Calaveras County, California* (1862) by Edward Vischer; a first edition of Samuel Johnson's two-volume *A Dictionary of the English Language* (1755); and a first edition of William Bligh's *A Voyage to the South Seas in His Majesty's Ship the Bounty* (1792). Stephen Anaya of Santa Monica gave to the Library his extraordinary collection of three half-plate daguerreotype views of Benicia. Also included in this extraordinary gift were fifteen cased images of the Gulick brothers of Benicia along with other family members. Elaine Coons of Palm Desert donated an important grouping of mining and oil maps, prospectuses, reports, stock certificates, trade catalogs, and photographs from the Randsburgh, southern San Joaquin Valley, and Los Angeles County areas. These wonderful gifts will be described in greater detail in the next issue of the *Bulletin.*

The Foundation continues to work with Sacramento artist Stephanie Taylor to create a mural for the large blank wall that faces the entrance to the Library and Courts II Building. Ms. Taylor, through a grant from the Foundation, has developed a striking and attractive concept for the wall that would feature California history books framing the Sacramento Valley. Because the massive blank wall is part of a State of California owned building that is older than fifty years, the Foundation will have to obtain approval from several control agencies. Through ju-

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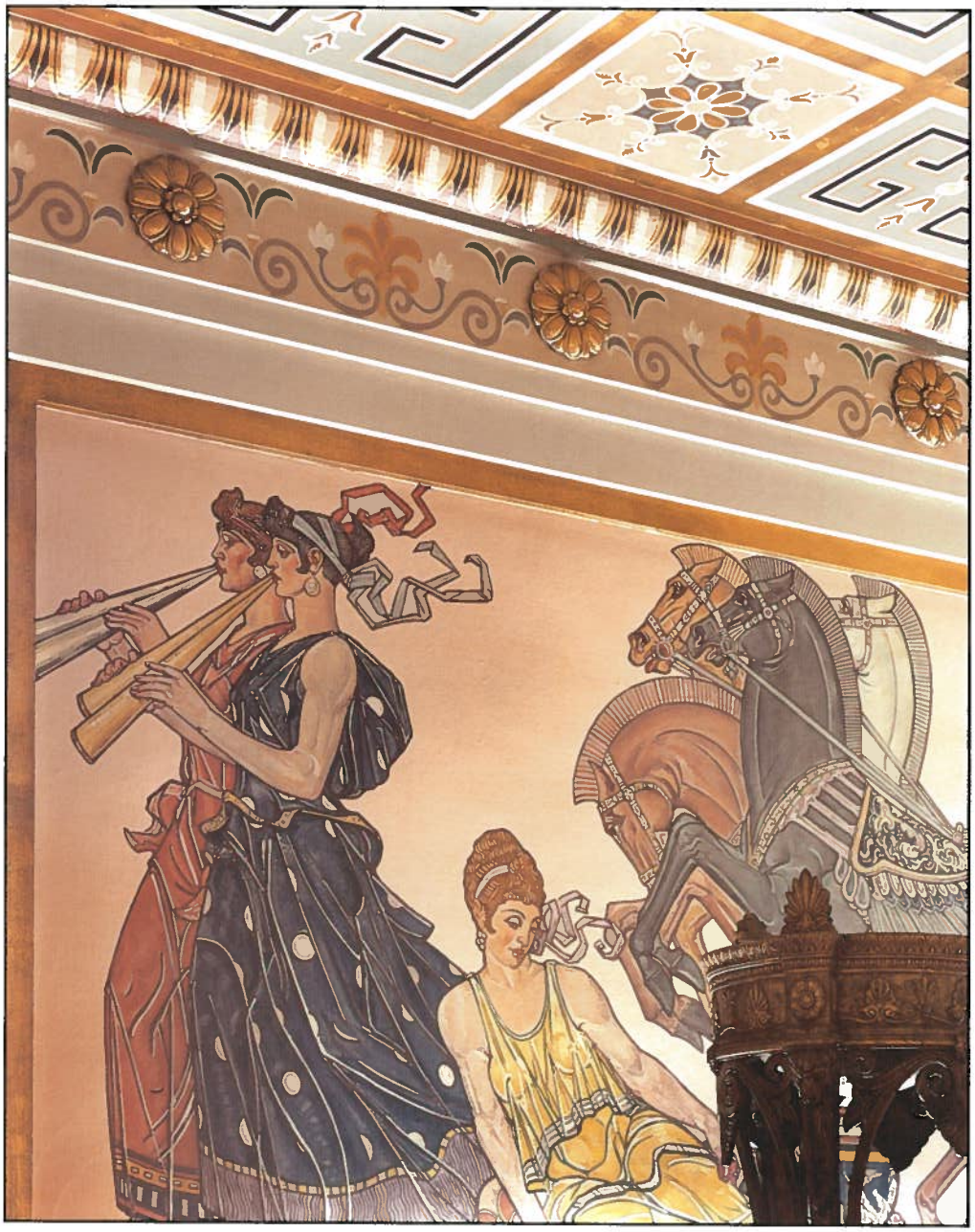

Detail of the Van Sloun mural in Memorial Vestibule of the Library and Courts Building.