

The West Virginia Capitol:



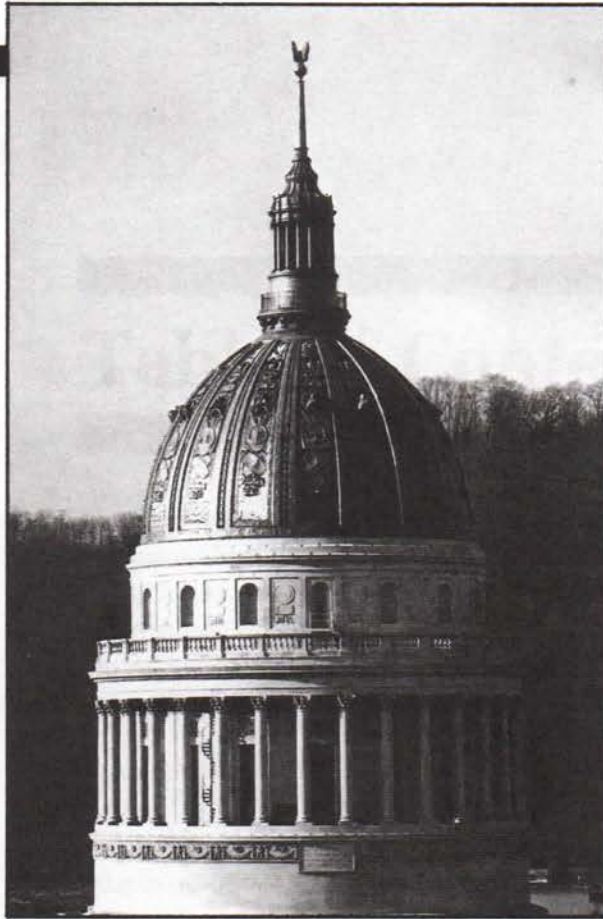
A Commemorative History

Published by the Legislature of West Virginia



Bronze tablet—located in the West Wing, main floor corridor

THE WEST VIRGINIA CAPITOL: A Commemorative History



Published by the Legislature of West Virginia

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Preface

The purpose of this booklet is to chronicle and salute the tremendous efforts of all those individuals involved in the planning, construction and maintenance of the West Virginia State Capitol. It is hoped that the ensuing narrative, facts and data, as well as archival pictures and recent photographic work, appropriately detail the construction progress and classic beauty of this monument to the State's citizenry.

Much that is published was drawn from materials at the archives search room in the Cultural Center at the Capitol. Advice and support of the West Virginia Division of Culture and History staff proved invaluable. Old editions of the West Virginia Blue Book provided historical perspectives, and bound editions of past Acts of the Legislature and Journals from both houses were important references. Recent publications by regional historians were also consulted freely. Credit for this document is extended to Robert A. Damron for research and writing and to Karl C. Lilly for editorial and printing guidance.

Table of Contents



The Early Capitol Locations	4
Planning the Capitol Complex	6
West Virginia Executive Mansion	8
Building the Capitol	9
The Architect's Description	21
Biographical Sketch of the Architect	22
Capitol Building Commission Members	24
The West Virginia Capitol: Project of Five Governors	26
Mythological Figures in the Carved Heads	28
Summary of Facts Concerning the Capitol	30
Glossary of Architectural Terms Used	32
Bibliography and Photographic Credits	33

The Early Capitol Locations

Upon viewing the Capitol Complex in Charleston, one is left with little doubt that the seat of government in West Virginia is securely moored along the north bank of the Kanawha River. Yet, the capitol's location literally floated between the northern and south-central regions of the Mountain State during its spirited one hundred nineteen-year history.

During the first twenty years of what could be considered a turbulent period of new statehood, West Virginia grew in population and watched her people gather and shift with the economic tides of industrialization. At the same time, power structures emerged in the developing cities, and the establishment of a permanent seat of government became the political chess piece of the era.

The temporary seat of government was located at Wheeling, where statehood was deliberated and finally determined on June 20, 1863. Washington Hall, the site of numerous meetings and assemblies concerning the proposed 35th state, is

now popularly known as "The Birthplace of West Virginia."

The first official Capitol Building, however, was the Linsly Institute building, erected in 1858. This site served as the capital of West Virginia for seven years, until the Legislature selected Charleston as the "permanent" seat. On March 28, 1870, state officials met at the levee in Wheeling to board *The Mountain Boy*, a steamer laden with state records and other properties, to make the journey down the Ohio River and up the Great Kanawha to the new capital city.

The first Charleston Capitol was built in 1869-70 by the State House Company, a corporation headed by Dr. John P. Hale, a prominent Charleston physician and historian. Located at Capitol and Lee Streets in downtown Charleston, it remained the State Capitol until the Legislature elected to return the seat of government to Wheeling in May of 1875. State officials again made the journey (May 21-May 23) on steamers: the *Emma Graham* to Parkersburg and from there to Wheeling on the

Chesapeake. The citizens of Charleston filed an injunction to prevent the removal of state archives and records, but failed to halt the transfer to Wheeling. The properties of the growing state required two barges and the steamer *Iron Valley* for transport in September of 1875.

While awaiting the completion of a new capitol building in Wheeling, the facility housing the boys school (established in 1814 by Wheeling lawyer Noah Linsly) was used a second time. The newly constructed facility was financed by the city of Wheeling, and when the seat of government was ultimately moved from there in 1885, the city found many uses for the stone structure both for municipal and county purposes. As the result of an election on a statewide basis, where the cities of Martinsburg, Clarksburg and Charleston received votes, in the fall of 1877 Governor Jacob issued a proclamation declaring that, after eight years, Charleston, having received the majority of the vote, was to be the permanent seat of government.

When the time for removal from

Below left: Artist's rendering of the first Charleston capitol.
Below right: Linsly Institute Building in Wheeling; the first state capitol.



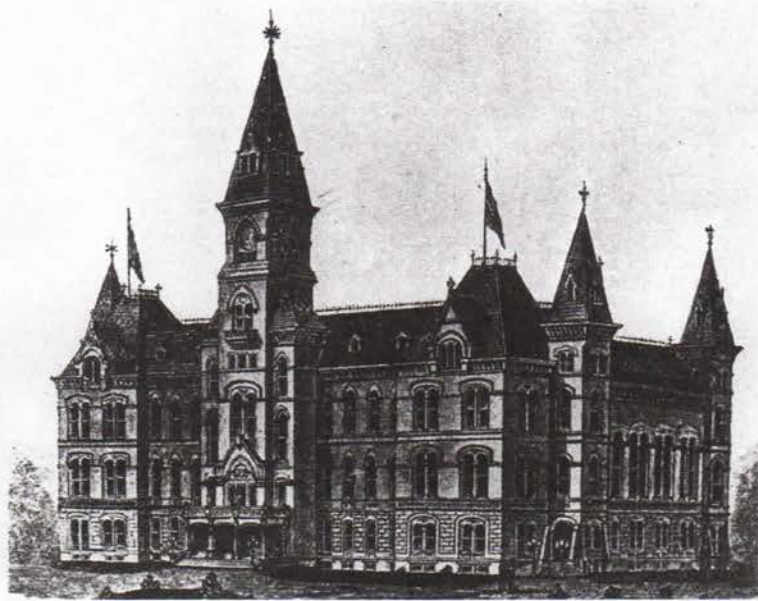
Wheeling came, May 1, 1885, the state personages and properties embarked once again on steamers, the Chesapeake and the Bell Prince with the barge Nick Crawley in tow. The second Charleston capitol, and the fourth building used as the official home of the government, was erected on the same downtown site at a total cost of \$389,923.58, including the cost of the building and grounds of the first Charleston capitol which had been transferred to the state by the State House Company. This building occupied a block in the city between Washington and Lee and Capitol and Dickinson Streets, was of brick and stone construction, and with the addition of the Capitol Annex several years later at the corner of Hale and Lee Streets, adequately served the needs and business of state government.

In the afternoon of January 3, 1921, plumes of smoke were seen rising from the top of the capitol and soon thousands of spectators, including Governor Cornwell who emerged from a side door, witnessed the complete destruction of the picturesque vine-clad building with a clock tower. Many important records were saved for posterity because the State Law Library, the State Historical Library, the Archives and the State Museum were all housed in the Capitol Annex. Spectators viewing the burning were also treated to a rare display of fireworks, as thousands of rounds of ammunition, confiscated as a result of recent unrest in the coalfields, exploded and fueled the raging flames. Almost immediately plans were being formulated to rebuild a new capitol, the likes of which few people would imagine.

A temporary office building was speedily erected in forty-two working days after January 14, 1921, at a cost of \$225,000, of wood and wall-board construction at the Daniel Boone Hotel site. That same year a State Capitol Commission was created during an extraordinary session of the Legislature when seven members were selected to choose an

architect and find a 'suitable location for a complex of buildings of impressive structure which would serve the needs of state government in a practical sense for a long time to come'. The "Pasteboard Capitol" and other Charleston buildings would serve as

temporary offices and houses for the state courts and Legislature for several years to come as the steps were carefully and decisively taken for the construction of a permanent and enduring monument to West Virginia's statehood.



Top: Artist's rendering of the second Charleston capitol.
Above: The second Wheeling capitol.

Planning the Capitol Complex



Burning of the picturesque downtown Charleston capitol, January 1921.

Governor Cornwell's message to the Legislature just nine days after the devastating fire, and only weeks prior to the expiration of his term of office, spoke to the need for 'erecting a building of modest size and of fitting design. . . to contain halls for two houses of the Legislature, a sufficient number of committee rooms, the governor's office and offices for the secretary of state and attorney general, and then constructing a modern office building nearby to house all the boards and departments'. The Senate, meeting temporarily at the Charleston Y.M.C.A., and the House of Delegates, convening at the city's Baptist Temple, on January 21, 1921, adopted Senate Joint Resolution Number Three to raise a commission composed of the board of public works, five members each from the Senate and House of Delegates, the Senate president and House speaker, and the governor, to procure plans and specifications for the erection of a capitol building. Ul-

timately, needs for space were assessed and plans generally drawn, and the governor was granted the power by the Legislature to appoint the Capitol Building Commission, with subsequent governors exercising the right to retain members and/or appoint new ones.

The original members of the commission were Governor Ephraim F. Morgan (Cornwell was officially succeeded after the March 1921 inauguration), President of the Senate Gohen C. Arnold, Speaker of the House of Delegates Edwin M. Keatley, William McKell, Herbert Fitzpatrick, Fred M. Staunton and N. Price Whitaker. Secretary of State Houston G. Young was named Secretary to the Commission, and stepped down in favor of a full-time paid secretary, Bonner Hill of Charleston, to coordinate the details of construction, in September of 1923. Hill had overseen the construction of Charleston's City Hall, serving as the general contractor by proxy and saving the

city thousands of dollars during the project; he was chosen by the commission for his expert knowledge of construction and administration, and became the primary link in communications between the commission, the governors, the architect and the contractors. The make-up of the commission changed even before the first unit (west wing) was completed as McKell resigned in March of 1922 to be replaced by Harry P. Camden; Whitaker died in 1922 and was replaced by Virgil L. Highland, who resigned the following year and was replaced by George A. Laughlin.

The Capitol Building Commission closely scrutinized the credentials and accomplishments of the country's leading architects and on July 23, 1921, selected Cass Gilbert, whose offices were in New York City, as architect of the complex. The commission found that Gilbert had more to his credit and that he came more highly recommended than any other member of his profession. His achievements were found in some of the most famous buildings in the country at the time, including the Woolworth Building in New York, which was pictured as the tallest structure in the world. To his credit were the capitol buildings of Minnesota and Arkansas, buildings of the Universities of Texas and Minnesota, the United States Treasury Annex and the United States Chamber of Commerce Building.

The task of selecting a suitable site for the complex was not so clear-cut, as several locations were considered and their merits weighed and actively debated. Many of Charleston's residents reasoned that the capitol should be rebuilt at the downtown site where the business of government had easy access to the business district of the city. Governor Morgan favored a capitol in the less con-

gested eastern end of the city where the proposed complex could have ample grounds and space for future expansion. He stated that he sometimes walked from his residence in the east end to his downtown offices twice daily, thereby discounting the criticisms that the new location would be too far from downtown.

Before the final site was chosen, the first preference was a tract of land on the south side of the Kanawha River in the South Ruffner district, approximately where the Charleston Memorial Hospital is presently located. Houston Young became interested in the sixty unoccupied acres at the offset, and the site was also recommended and approved by architect Gilbert, as well as the commission's engineer, M. W. Venable. However, Fred M. Staunton, a Charleston banker and member of the commission, offered an honorable argument to dissuade the others from deciding on the South Ruffner property. Staunton stated that he owned most of the land in Kanawha City and felt that if the capitol was built adjacent to his holdings he would be accused of engineering it and would never live it down in his lifetime. Another influencing factor in the decision on the site was the fact that Kanawha County had given a million dollars to the state for the new capitol, and the funds, earmarked for the construction of a bridge to South Ruffner, could be applied to the construction costs of the complex if the location remained on the north side of the Kanawha River. Thus, the commission selected the present site, what they considered to be the second best spot, to eliminate potential allegations of graft, and not a few engineering obstacles. By the end of December of 1921, close to a year from the time of the fire, the chosen site was announced and the architect began in earnest his master plans for the complex.

After many consultations and exchanges of ideas, Gilbert's plans were officially adopted. Before ground could be broken, it was

necessary to purchase sixty-five pieces of property between Duffy Street and California Avenue. Many of the lots contained valuable homes, among them the home of William G. Conley, who would be governor at the time of the capitol's dedication. Some of the residences were lifted from their foundations and moved (many were floated on barges across the river and relocated on land in South Ruffner), others were razed, and several remained intact to temporarily house state offices during the construction phases. On December 22, 1923, contracts were let for office building number one, the west wing of the capitol.

The general construction contract was awarded to the George A. Fuller Company; as a steam shovel was moved onto the site on January 7, 1924, the groundbreaking ceremony was held. Financing of the new capitol was quite involved, but before the levying of any specified taxes, money was obtained from the sale of the old capitol grounds, approximately one and one-half million dollars; about another half million from the sale of the Capitol Annex, and more than three hundred

fifty thousand dollars from the grounds of the temporary capitol and the old governor's mansion. The state received over five hundred thousand dollars in insurance on the old building and its contents, and managed to sell several houses at the new capitol site for more than one hundred thousand dollars. These funds were adequate to begin the construction, and the 1921 Legislature enacted a gross sales tax to raise additional revenue to ensure its completion.

Paralleling the initial plans for the complex were plans for a new governor's mansion, and perhaps foretelling the ultimate choice of sites for the capitol, the mansion location was decided first. Situate only a block from the capitol grounds, the governor's mansion was built between the years 1924 and 1925 under the supervision of aspiring Charleston architect Walter F. Martens, in close consultation with Cass Gilbert. Governor Morgan was the first to occupy the new mansion, moving into it one week before he went out of office on March 4, 1925. He was the only governor to occupy both mansions.

Artist's rendering of the Capitol Annex (became the Kanawha County Library); present site of the National Bank of Commerce.



Old West Virginia State Capitol Annex Building -- Now Kanawha County Public Library

West Virginia Executive Mansion

After much thought, study and conversation with Cass Gilbert, Charleston architect Walter F. Martens presented his sketches of a Georgian Colonial dwelling for the proposed new governor's mansion. To Marten's surprise his drawings were chosen and he supervised its construction from 1924 to 1925. The West Virginia Executive Mansion is of red Harvard colonial brick laid in Flemish bond with black headers, is fronted by a central, two-story portico with a bracketed pediment that is supported by four free standing and two engaged fluted Corinthian columns. The arched entranceway, painted white to complement the brickwork as is all trim, frames a delicate fanlight above the door.

On either side of the structure, and extending about one-third of the depth, are porches surrounded by a low balustrade and rows of columns which rise to support a flat roof onto which several second floor rooms open. These second floor balconies also have low balustrades with interesting designs in wood. The porch to the east is open, while that toward the west is enclosed. A single story entranceway at the rear balances the central, front portico.

A bracketed cornice circles the house above the second floor, and third floor dormers pleasingly jut from the indented, slate-shingled mansard roof. The third story was not included when the mansion was first built, but original plans called for it and it was added in 1946. Completing the grounds, the enclosed gardens and a garage over which are the servant quarters were added in 1926, and they each complement the mansion while functioning in their own right as distinct elements.

As one enters through the main portico, he is immediately struck by the checkered black Belgian and white Tennessee marble floor

which is flanked by well-proportioned, dual Georgian staircases, a design inspired by architectural studies of the White House. The main floor also houses the elegantly designed and furnished drawing room, ballroom, State dining room, a sitting room and the library. Eight bedrooms and four baths, including the Governor's private quarters and family room, are located on the second floor, and the third floor

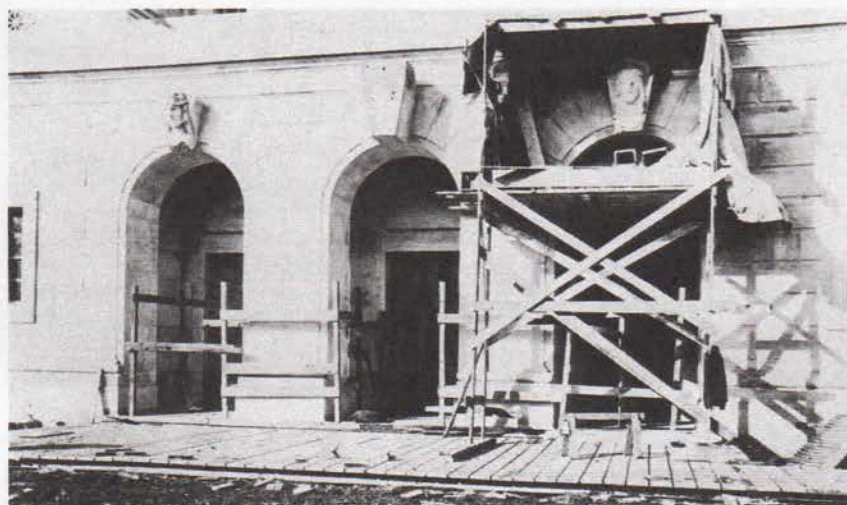
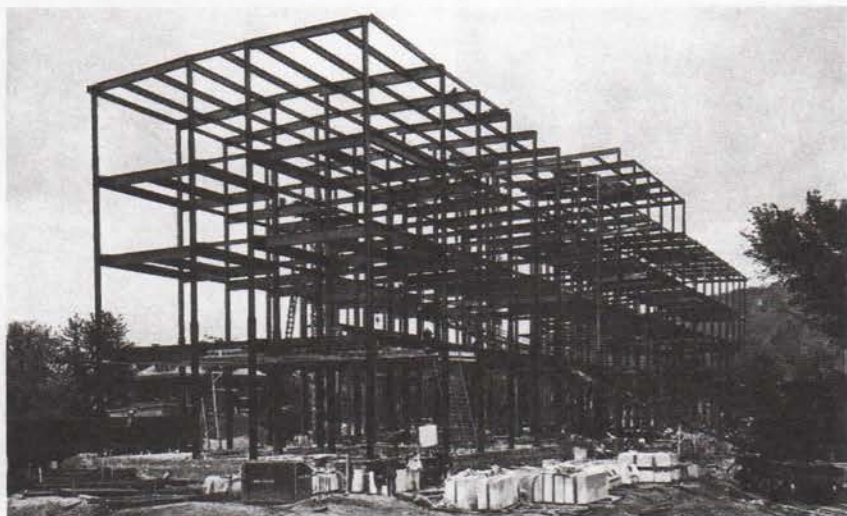
contains two additional bedrooms.

This new governor's home was the second owned by the state; the first had been purchased in 1893 and was located downtown close to the capitol building that burned in 1921. Before the administration of Governor MacCorkle from 1893 to 1897, West Virginia governors had to house themselves. Governor Morgan first occupied the new mansion only one week prior to the expiration of his term. It has since housed thirteen governors.

Top: West Virginia's first Executive Mansion.
Bottom: Front entrance to the present Executive Mansion.



Building the Capitol



The three units of the capitol complex were let as separate contracts, financed, built and inspected before beginning the next phase. A remarkable aspect of the project is that each unit was built for less than the legislative appropriation, a fact that the architect and the commission were proud of. The west wing was erected between January 1924 and March 1925 for a cost of \$1,218,171.32; the east wing from July 1926 to December 1927 at a cost of \$1,361,425.00; and the main unit from March 1930 to February 1932 for \$4,482,623.21. These figures represent all charges for materials, labor and fees, and coupled with the costs of land acquisition and beautification, West Virginia invested a gross sum of \$9,491,180.03 for one of the nation's most beautiful and functional capitol.

When excavations were begun near old Duffy Street, particular care was taken in using the earth removed for the basement of the west wing for filling the open basements left by the removal of structures on the site. Every tree on the plot that did not come down to make way for the complex was carefully boxed, marked and indicated on the contractor's maps, and every flowering bush and shrub was saved for the ultimate beautifying of the grounds. While the nearby residents in Charleston's east end would have to suffer the eyesores of muddy ditches, piles of debris and stacks of stone and steel for several years to come, they were afforded the rare opportunity of witnessing the erection of buildings unlike anything ever seen in this region of the country, and they were given the promise that the grounds of the capitol would someday rival the magnificence of any park in the state.

Top: West Wing superstructure, May 1924.

Middle: Laying of West Wing cornerstone, May 1924.

Bottom: Carvings above the West Wing entrance (the sculptor worked from the plaster model at the left of his scaffold measuring with calipers and his own skilled eye), January 1925.

Early in the year of 1924, immense cranes were moved on to the site and an army of steelworkers assembled the superstructure above the fifteen hundred yards of concrete poured for the foundation. A circular track of rails curving into the grounds from the New York Central Railroad at California Avenue had carried the cranes, other heavy equipment, and the structural steel, and was now busily hauling the carloads of limestone and marble from points around the country. The four-story plus basement, three hundred feet by sixty feet structure, was quickly rising to its full height of sixty-seven feet, and the traditional laying of the cornerstone for the wing was held on the first of May in 1924. Work proceeded on schedule for the remainder of the year as the building was under roof by the fall and the details of finishing the interior were well underway. By January of 1925, onlookers could witness some of the architectural artistry of the designer as the columns with their sculpted caps were set in place and the heads of mythological figures were carved in blocks of limestone above the entrances.

With the west wing completed, moving day came for many of the departments and offices of the state, as permanent quarters were assigned in the 84,000 square feet of new floor space. The original departments to occupy the first wing were: the Superintendent of Free Schools; the Board of Control; the Auditor; the Bank Commissioner and the Tax Commissioner; offices of the Game and Fish Commission; and the Departments of Mines, Health, and Workmen's Compensation. Temporary quarters were established for the State Prohibition Department, the Commissioner of Agriculture and the State Police in the old George Lawton home (left standing on the capitol grounds through the construction period).

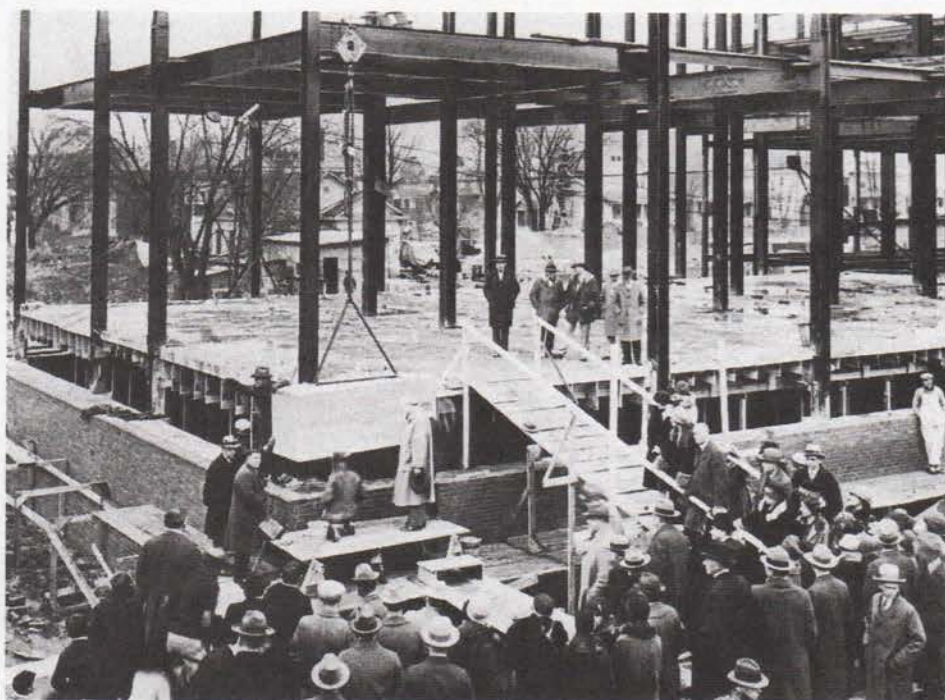
The office of the treasurer was to be located in the west wing, but Treasurer W. S. Johnson refused the offices, a highly publicized hitch in



Top left: The Pasteboard Capitol.

Middle left: Completed entrance to West Wing, April 1925.

Above: View from West Wing roof toward downtown Charleston, January 1925.



Top: West Wing at completion, April 1925.

Above: Laying of East Wing cornerstone, presided over by William A. MacCorkle (with light overcoat and goatee), November 1926.

the project's chronology. He doubted that the single large safe, in the middle of a room which could be entered quite easily after only a few minutes of digging with an ice pick, was enough security for the money and important fiscal records of the state. Johnson cited the recent rampage of bank robberies around the country that were well publicized during the "roaring twenties" and felt that modern vault facilities would be necessary to carry out his official duties. To their credit, the Capitol Building Commission and the architect respected Johnson's refusal of the space, and made provisions to alter plans for the east wing to provide adequately secure quarters for the state treasury.

The second legislative appropriation was made and work on the east wing or unit number two was begun by the James Baird Company in July of 1926. Excavation, foundation laying and erection of the structural steel proceeded as efficiently as with the west wing, and after only four months of construction the cornerstone was laid on November 30, 1926. The dimensions and exterior design of the wing were exactly the same as the first structure, their entrances mirroring across a common expanse that formed the inner grounds of the U-shaped complex. With the exception of subtle decorative differences, the two wings appeared identical, but the interior layout and proposed uses for the second unit evidenced marked departures in design and function. Both wings of the complex were generally designated as office buildings, but within the plans of the east wing were the specific designs for suitable chambers for the supreme court, and the revised layout for the bank-like facilities of the treasury.

Architect Gilbert took great care in planning the court chambers, personally designing its furnishings and decor. Above the chambers is a rectangular opening of stained glass, and bronze carvings depicting the "Scale and Balance" and the "Book of Law" adorn the sides of the

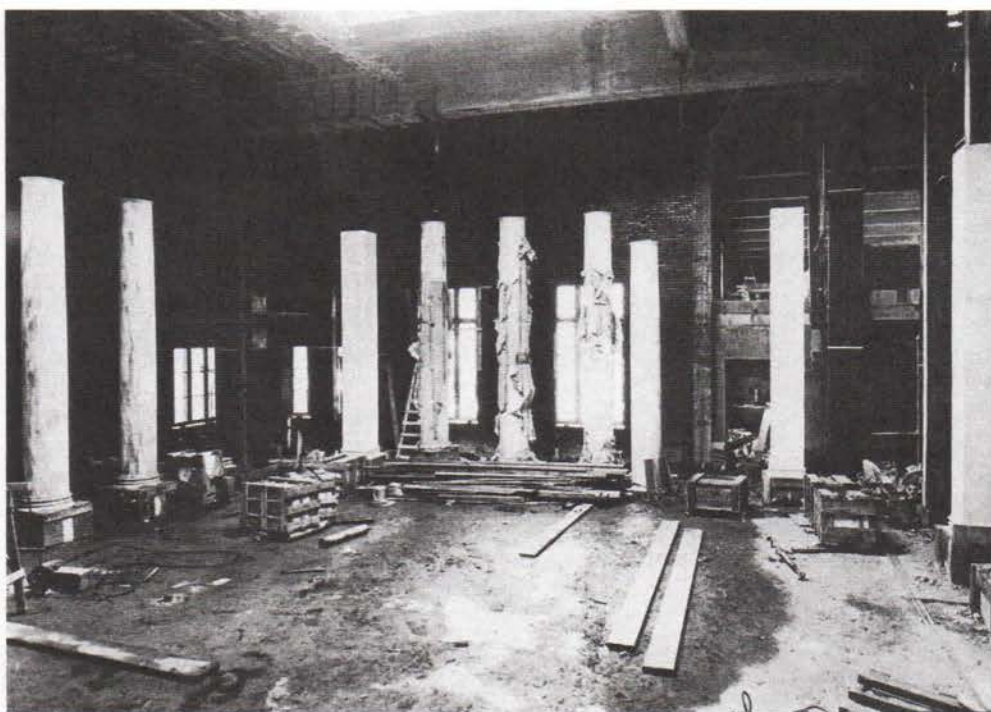
Top: Preliminary work on the Supreme Court Chamber, May 1927.

Middle: Supreme Court Chamber near completion, August 1927.

Bottom: View of the two completed wings, March 1930.

skylight. In the frieze along the top of the walls in the chamber are the quotes: "THE TRUE FOUNDATION OF REPUBLICAN GOVERNMENT IS THE EQUAL RIGHT OF EVERY CITIZEN IN HIS PERSON AND PROPERTY AND IN THEIR MANAGEMENT: THOMAS JEFFERSON; FIRMNESS IN THE RIGHT AS GOD GIVES US TO SEE THE RIGHT: LINCOLN". Columns of white Vermont marble with bases of black Belgian marble surround the room, and dark green (verd antique) marble, also from Vermont, make up the steps leading to the dais. Visitors to our U.S. supreme court chambers in Washington will notice a strong resemblance to the West Virginia court chambers, which is said by many to have been the model for the federal court facility designed by Gilbert several years later (the architect's final and crowning achievement prior to his death).

Gilbert had originally expressed some doubt as to whether Treasurer Johnson's requests could be carried out. The architect stated that it was impossible to construct a completely impregnable office, and that the structural reinforcements specified by the treasurer would make the ultimate cost of the wing prohibitive. Believing a common ground could be found, the commission solicited bids from contractors with bank construction experience, and found that the specialized work could be done for between thirty and forty thousand dollars. So the offices of the treasurer were built with security foremost in the design, and the entire room housing the vault, its



floors, walls and ceiling, was lined with three layers of half inch steel. The vault itself, twelve feet wide, seventeen feet long, and ten feet high, was completely surrounded with eighteen-inch walls reinforced with Wheeling crete steel. Forty separate safes were built within the vault, each with a double combination, and the access door was forged of solid steel, fifteen inches thick and weighing fifteen tons.

In March of 1927, the temporary or Pasteboard capitol, burned to the ground leaving many of the departments of state homeless once more. This event provided an impetus for completing the east wing, and in De-

cember of that year, the facility was ready for occupancy. The design differences of the new wing understandably added to its completion costs, and the commission accepted the building with the consent and pleasure of its new occupants in January of 1928. The first occupants of the new wing offices were employees and officials of the following departments: the Treasury and the State Road Commission on the first floor; the Department of Agriculture and the Public Service Commission on the second floor; and the State Supreme Court housed on the entire third floor. The design of the Supreme Court chambers al-

lowed for a two-story equivalent in height, with the skylight opening on the east wing's roof. Space was allocated for the Department of Archives and History on the fourth floor, but the area remained vacant until June of 1929, when the department moved its body of materials from the Capitol Annex Building (already called the Charleston Library Building).

Moving into the annex after the state archives were vacated were the offices of the State Bureau of Labor, the State Board of Children's Guardians, and the Adjutant General. When the capitol's main unit was completed the annex was completely



Left: Supreme Court Chamber today.
Top right and above: Vault and forty separate safes in the Treasurer's office.



given over to the city of Charleston for its public library, and this building served Charleston's citizens until the mid 1960s, as it was also destroyed by fire. The National Bank of Commerce now stands on the site of the venerable annex building, a facility that preserved many of the records the state possesses that document our early history.

More than two years passed before work was begun on the capitol's main unit, yet correspondence flowed frequently between the architect and the commission. By today's standards, the fiscal planning of the Legislature and the commission was conservative indeed. Appropriations were made separately for each unit, and the business of finalizing contracts, paying fees, and ultimately inspecting and approving each unit, was completed before steps were initiated for the next phase. The Legislature enacted a special levy on March 2, 1929, on all taxable property in the state, '... not to exceed in any one year the sum of five cents or so much thereof as may be necessary on the one hundred dollars valuation of said taxable property....' for the purposes of constructing the main unit. A "Capitol Building Fund" was created in the state treasury for the moneys raised by the levy, and the governor and building commission were directed to proceed with 'all reasonable dis-

patch to contract for the construction and erection of. . . said capitol building, under the supervision and direction of the architect, at a total cost not to exceed five million dollars.' While these legislative actions were expected, this step was necessarily taken before the architect could complete his plans and know the monetary limits that would dictate certain aspects of the design. Meetings between the commission and architect on the finalizing of the plans would also take time, as issues were debated regarding details from deciding which branch of the government would occupy the preferred areas of the building, to what materials would be used in constructing the dome. By January of 1930 the commission had given its approval of the architect's submitted plans, bids were let, and the George A. Fuller Company, builders of the first unit, began work on March 6, 1930.

During the interim between the completion of the east wing and the groundbreaking for the main unit, the inevitable criticisms of the project began to rebound about the state. Editorials from certain state newspapers declared the folly of the building commission for planning such a huge edifice with spaces that the state government would never fully utilize. Other editorials praised the foresight of the planners and the obvious genius of the architect. This

debate seems laughable when we see the present scope of the business that state government encompasses, and that of course, the space has been completely utilized and other buildings erected adjacent to the complex to house burgeoning state functions. However, in considering the day and age that the complex was planned, the Capitol Building Commission demonstrated a clear vision for the future. In understanding the critics' motivations, we must realize that the entire staff manning the statehouse in 1921 could be captured in a single photograph, the approximate time that the planners were launching their "grandiose scheme".

The task of completing the capitol's main unit fell during the midst of perhaps the worst economic depression of our nation's history. When ground was broken for the domed unit, the New York Stock Exchange had collapsed only months prior; a severe statewide drought added other financial difficulties, yet construction continued on schedule. On the fifth of November in 1930, a small ceremony was held just outside the section of the main unit that would house the governor's offices. Bonner Hill, the commission's secretary, placed a copper box containing state records and various documents and articles in the cornerstone just before it was set by the masons. In addition to the usual documents



such as the State Code, the state directory and Constitution, the birth certificate of one of thirty thousand babies born in West Virginia during the year was drawn at random by the director of the division of vital statistics, and placed in the cornerstone.

Other deposits in the cornerstone reflect the medical breakthroughs of the day. Among the items left for posterity were literature outlining the latest methods of preventive medicine, a copper seal used in marking safe drinking water along the public highways, a bottle of "neosalvarsan" used in treating venereal disease (accompanied by a statement listing the number of persons treated at the state's free clinics), a vial of typhoid vaccine, an ampule of silver nitrate (the Legislature of 1930 enacted a law requiring this substance to be placed in the eyes of newborns to prevent blindness from infection), a health bulletin dealing with drought, a directory of the doctors in the state, and a copy of the state licensing form for physicians.

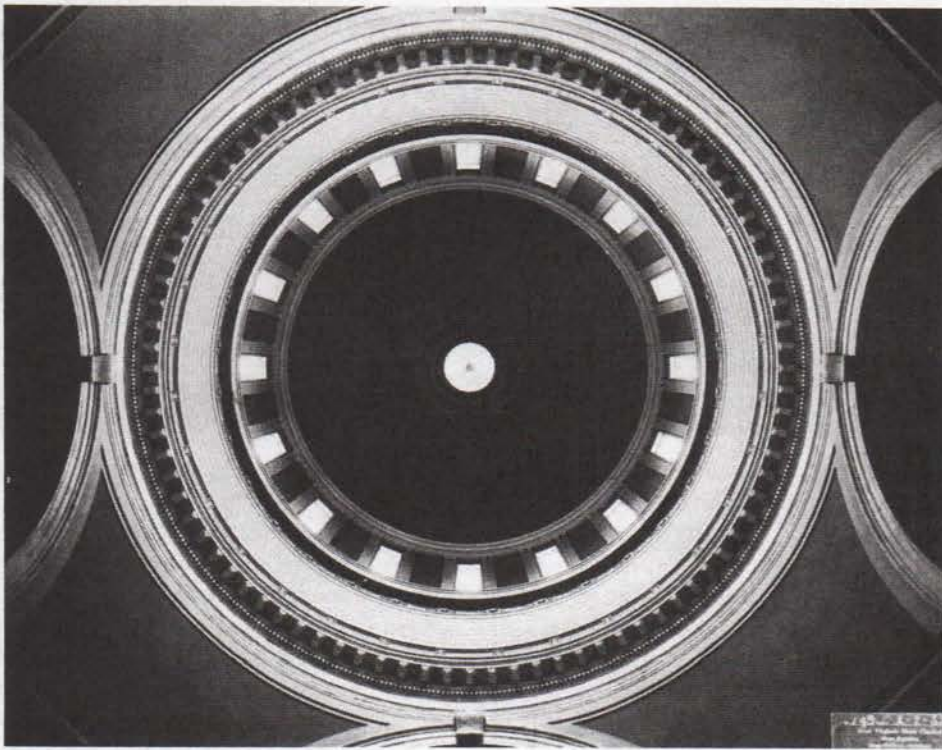
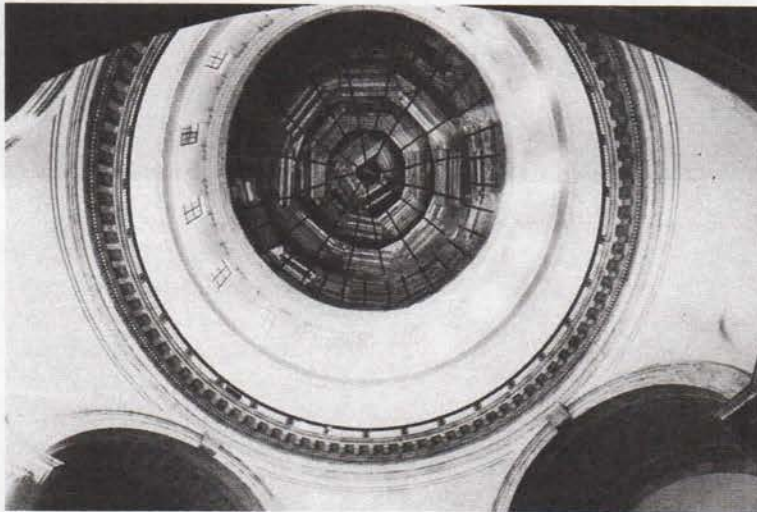
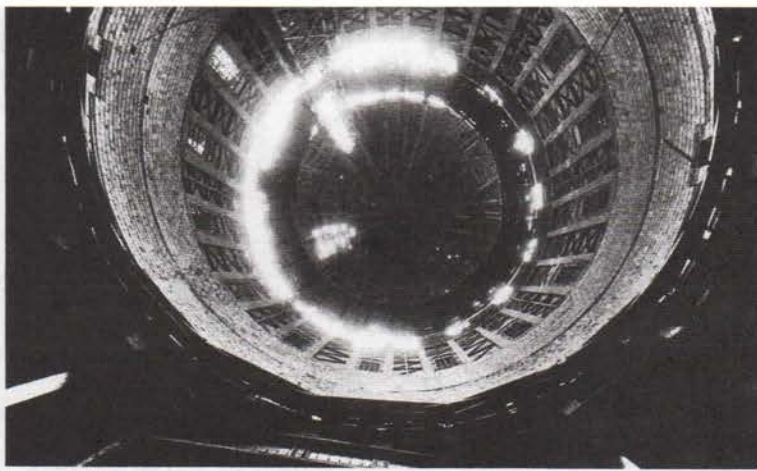
Despite the national depression, work on the main unit progressed as the more than forty separate subcontractors performed their specialized tasks. Three Wheeling companies were responsible for general excavation, erecting the structural steel and painting the structural steel, respectively, and a Huntington firm pro-



*Opposite left: Main Building excavation site, July 1930.
Center, both pages: Superstructure and preliminary stonework, November 1930.
Top right: Southwestern corner of Main Building, January 1931.
Above: View of complex from north, March 1931.*

vided the reinforcing bars. Cement and concrete piles for different areas of the structure were supplied by companies from Kanawha County as well as from the States of Maryland,

Alabama and New York. Waterproofing and fireproofing work was performed by firms from Pennsylvania, New York and New Jersey; the Indiana Limestone Company cut the



Top: Interior framing and brickwork of dome, April 1931.

Middle: Dome interior near completion, October 1931.

Above: Completed dome with chandelier, February 1932.

exterior stone that was set in place by the D. A. Daly Company of Philadelphia; the Vermont Marble Company was responsible for both cutting and setting the interior stone. Many other local businesses and companies from around the country supplied the materials and work necessary to finish the project, as contracts were fulfilled for steel doors, mill and cabinet work, tile and terrazzo floors, mail chutes and boxes, metal furring and lathing, plastering, bronzework, painting, brickwork, ornamental terra cotta, roofing and sheet metal. During the legislative session of 1931, Governor Conley formally invited both houses to tour the site and inspect the progress being made. Most of the structural work was well underway, and provisions were just being made for the purchase of suitable furnishings from the George P. Reinhard Company of New York. Funds raised by the levy were coming in at a promising rate, and the commission was able to borrow approximately two million dollars to ensure the speedy completion and furnishing of the crowning unit of the complex. This loan to the state was paid in full and the Capitol Building Fund was dissolved at the end of the fiscal year of 1934.

Since the original planning of the complex there was agreement that the capitol would feature a dome and rotunda. Some of the state's officials became alarmed, however, when it was realized that the architect planned to have the dome covered with gold leaf. Gilbert asserted that the gilding was more appropriate to the building and would cost less in construction and maintenance than if stone were used. "If we had built the dome of stone, as in the Arkansas Capitol," he said, "or of marble, as in the Minnesota Capitol or the Rhode Island Capitol, it would have cost five or ten times as much money. In other words, the bell of the dome of this dimension in marble might easily have cost \$500,000, whereas the comparatively modest expense for covering it with newly developed

material of lead coated with copper and using gilding, has reduced the cost to a minimum. . . if the bell of the dome were of limestone it would be, in this climate, susceptible to expansion and contraction and the joints would have to be constantly repaired in order to preserve it." Gilbert prevailed and he noted that several public buildings in the country, the Library of Congress at Washington and the state capitols at Boston, Massachusetts, and Trenton, New Jersey, were surmounted by gilded domes.

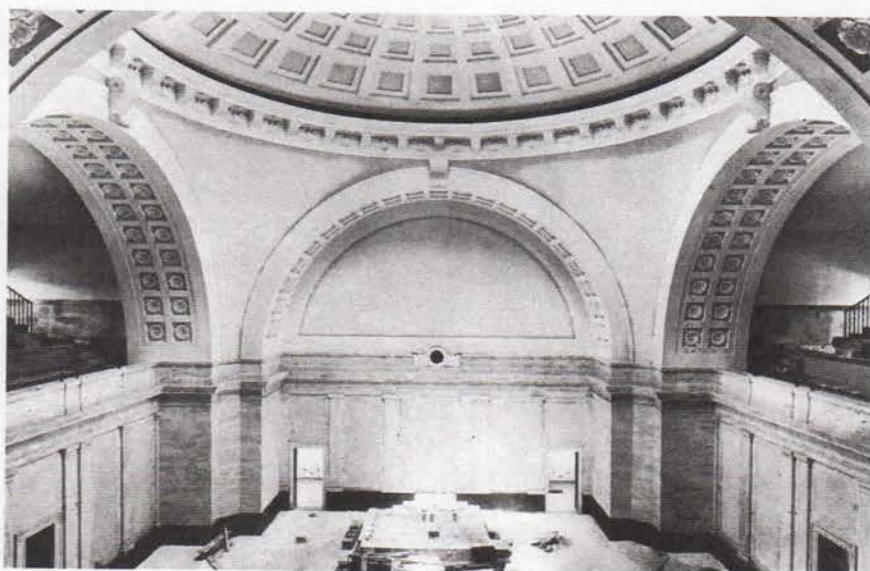
The dome of our capitol was originally gilded in 1931 by the Mack, Jenney and Tyler Company for a sum of twenty-three thousand seven hundred dollars. Atop the crowning lantern of the dome is a bronze staff upon which is poised a golden eagle. In comparison with the dome that crowns our nation's capitol, West Virginia's stands most impressively. At two hundred and ninety-two feet, our dome is approximately four and one-half feet taller; however, the more compact-looking dome at Washington features a rotunda that is eighty-eight feet in diameter while West Virginia's is seventy-five feet. The top of our dome is one hundred and eighty feet from the ground floor, and hanging from a gold chain fifty-four feet in length, is a four thousand pound chandelier composed almost entirely of beveled crystal. Directly below on the ground floor is a circular slab of marble that is the exact circumference of the chandelier.

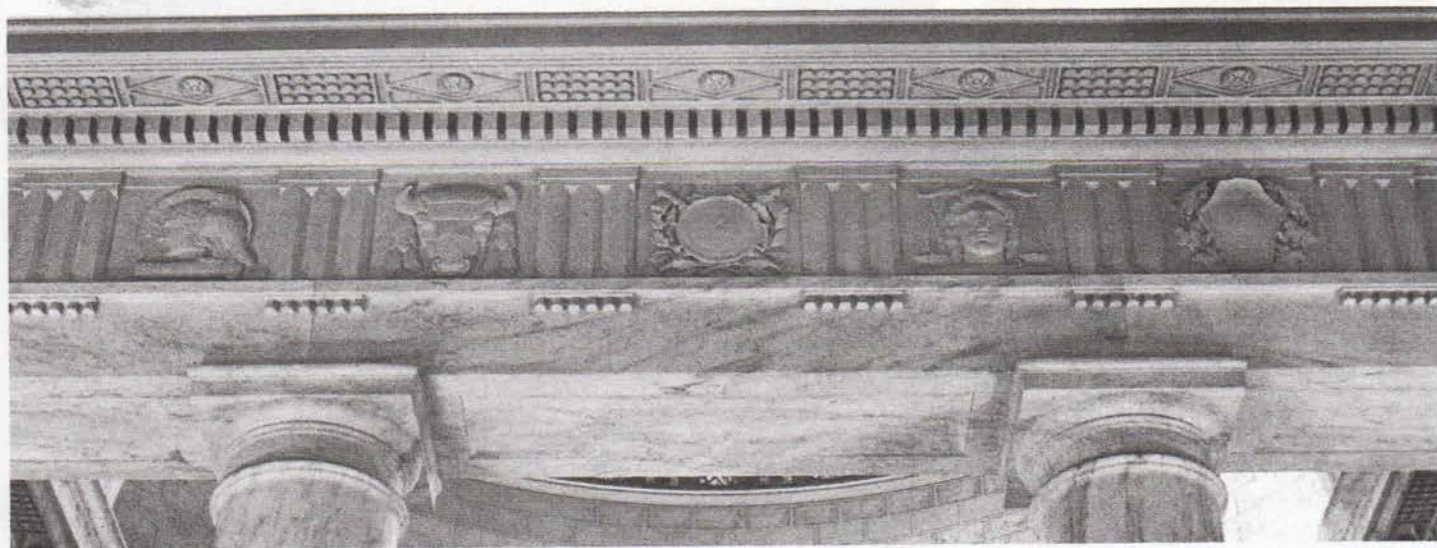
The main unit was connected to the east and west wings by one-story sections with basements, each measuring ninety-five feet in length by fifty-six feet in width. These sections, plus the central unit, more than doubled the existing space in the two wings, but despite the immense task of finishing the interior of the central unit as well as constructing the dome and rotunda, this facet of the complex was completed in less than two years.

Top: Senate Chamber near completion, June 1931.

Middle: Senate Chamber 1991.

Bottom: House of Delegates Chamber 1991.





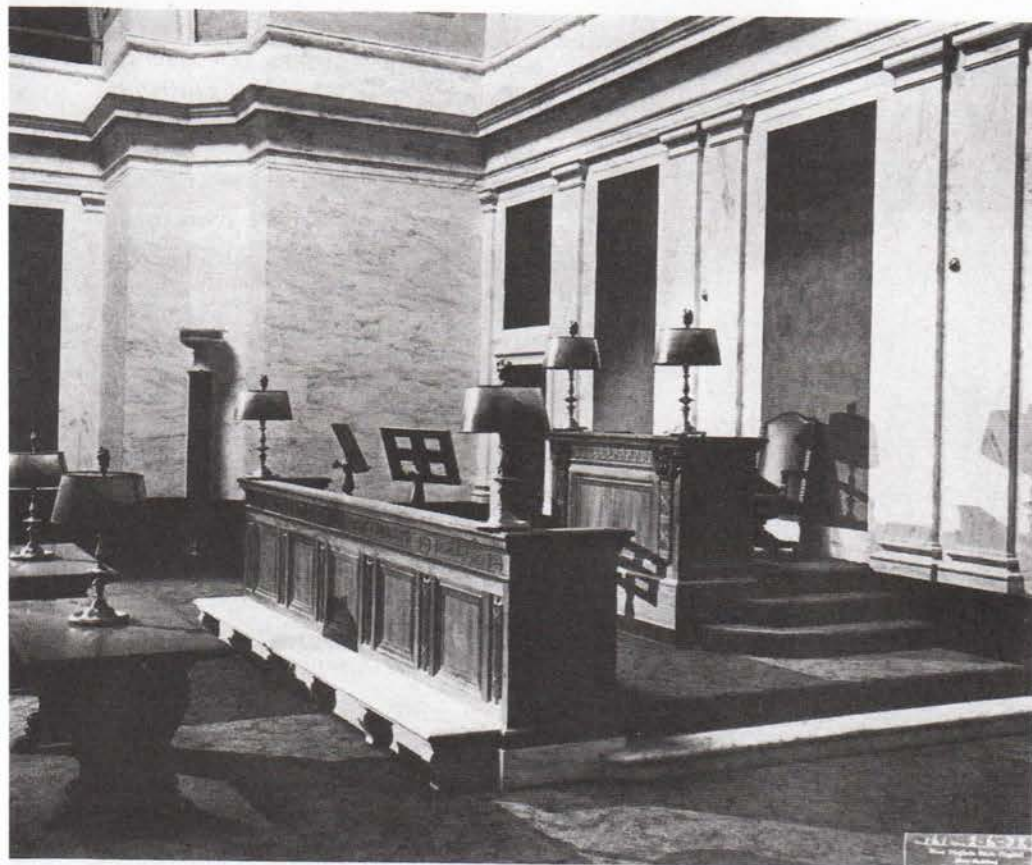
Top left and right: Contrasting cupola of the Senate Chamber and rectangular skylight of the House Chamber.

Above: Carved symbols in frieze, legislative foyers and rotunda (representing agriculture, art, education, engineering, Indian lore, justice, mining, patriotism, peace and religion).

As he did in designing the supreme court chambers, the architect took particular care in shaping the spaces to be used by the two houses of the Legislature. Liberally using various marbles in a classical motif and on a much grander scale than in the court spaces, the legislative foyers and chambers with the

rotunda well in their middle, are the showcases of the complex. Occupying the main unit's most preferred spaces, the Senate is approached through an archway to the west of the rotunda, and the House of Delegates through the eastern archway. Matching foyers preview the actual chamber locations which are entered

through massive marble columns. Each foyer ceiling is embellished with square coffered panels containing bronze-colored, plaster leaf arrangements that represent West Virginia hardwoods. The foyer walls consist of white Vermont marble topped with a series of carved symbols that represent aspects of the



Left: Senate dais, February 1932.

Above: Aerial view of dome as originally gilded, spring 1932.

heritage of West Virginians. Pedestals of black and gold Belgian marble support translucent bowls of Italian alabaster that light the perimeters of the foyers and the rotunda. Offices for the legislative staffs and committee rooms are located off of the halls on both sides of the foyers and chambers, and also on the floor directly above. Stairways to the public galleries rise from the left and right of the chamber entrances, and in the chambers, the galleries are framed by massive arches that open on three sides of the room, with a fourth arch that serves as background for a dais. The walls are divided by panels of acoustic plaster, and the native leaf clusters figure in the decor within the contours of the arches.

Identical chandeliers comprised of ten thousand pieces of rock crystal each, hang from the skylights in the center of the chambers. The lawmakers' desks and the speaker's and president's daises were built of West Virginia black walnut. The elaborately carved daises are trimmed with classical fretwork and feature

fasces (Roman symbol of power) with eagles. The fretwork design can be seen throughout the capitol in the woodwork, bronzework, metal railings, and also as the border in the ceiling murals and some of the carved marble. Bronze light fixtures in the chambers are also based on the Roman fasces, and appear to be torches.

Alabaster bowls are also used to light the chambers but differ from the ones in the foyers and rotunda in that their pedestals are of different types of marble. The pedestals and plinths in the Senate chambers are of a brownish Italian marble while those in the House of Delegates chambers are of a pink Georgian marble. The verd antique marble used in the design of the supreme court chambers is also used to form the wainscoting for the walls in the legislative chambers, and also in the steps leading to the daises. The most striking difference in the legislative chambers other than the number of desks and the alternating paint schemes, is the design of each

skylight. The Senate's is a domical ceiling, topped with a small cupola of stained glass; the skylight in the House of Delegates is flat and rectangular, also consisting of glass panels.

The primary entrance to the capitol is the one from the south, or the Kanawha River side, it is protected by a monumental Corinthian portico and balanced on the north side by a similar entrance, both of which are approached by broad flights of steps. Under the south steps is a private entrance or porte cochere; the driveway is designated for the governor's use. The main entrances open into the rotunda on the principal floor (the first floor or the story above the ground level) to a circular arched hall directly below the dome. A balustrade of white marble encircles the rotunda well through which can be seen a colonnaded hall on the floor below. The floors of the main unit are inlaid with Italian travertine marble and the white Vermont marble used in the walls and columns of the in-



Above: Rotunda well, February 1932.

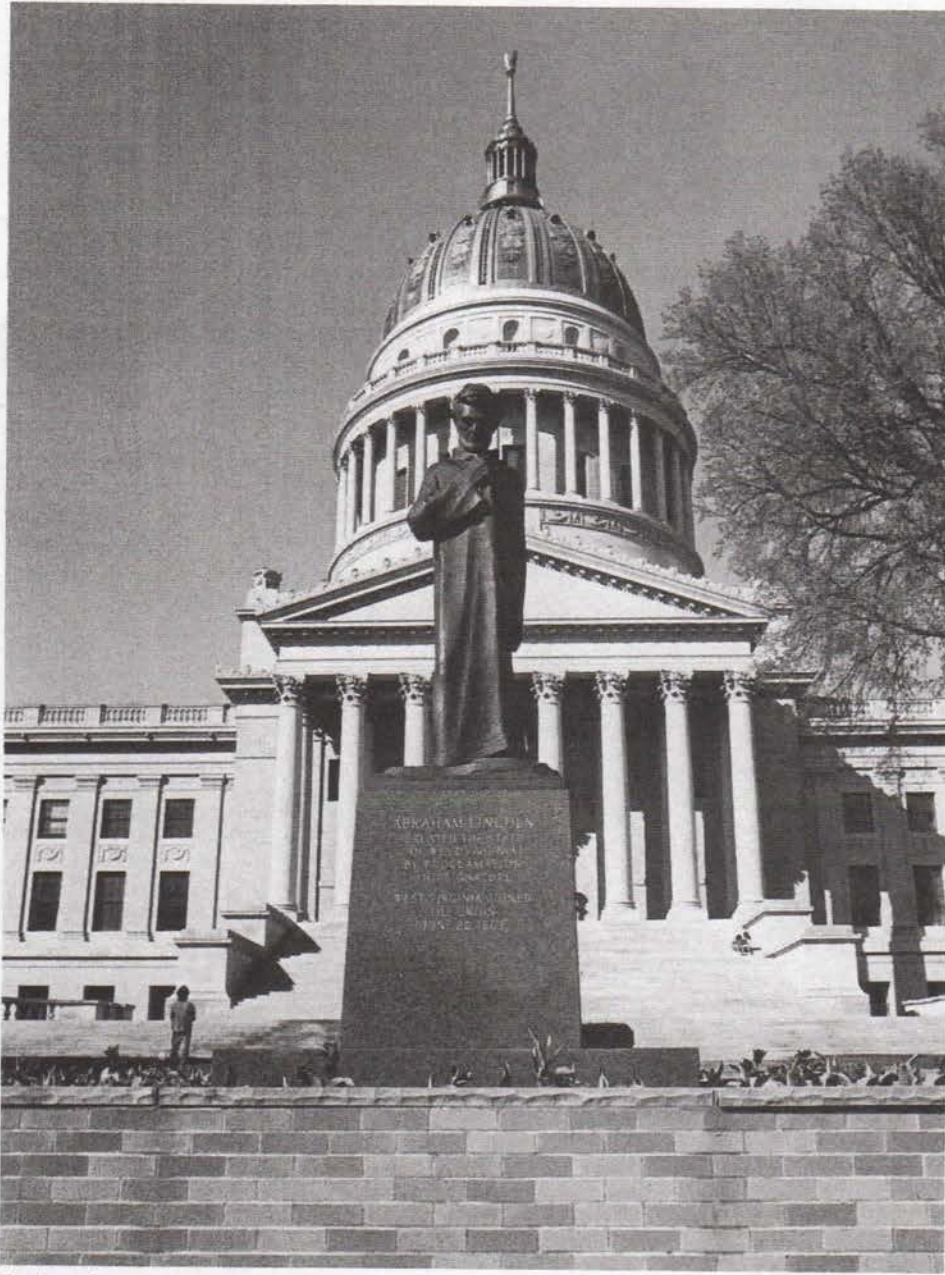
Below: Senate Foyer (leaf clusters seen in ceiling represent sugar maple, red oak and magnolia).



terior. The previously mentioned east and west arches open to the legislative foyers and the north and south are openings to the porticoes; the arches extend to the base of the dome and are adorned with panels of deep-blue plaster. These areas in and between the arches form pendentive brackets and in many public buildings of similar design these areas are decorated with murals. Above this space is more carved marble that forms a frieze at the dome's base, and further up is a wrought iron railing adorned with a bronze guilloche and bronze fasces that encircle the dome interior. Gold leaf bands also encircle the drum and ceiling of the dome, and a row of slender windows covered with gold-leaf grilles gird the dome at the base of the bell.

The outer walls of the main unit, like those of the wings constructed of Indiana select buff limestone, are adorned with pairs of Doric pilasters, two stories in height, which rise in support of the main cornice. On either side of the dome are flat roofs enclosed by a balustraded parapet that are broken by the porticoed central section. The pediments above the main entrances are not graced with sculpture but are rimmed with ornamental terra cotta, and the high crowning dome continues the tradition of the lines of the United States Capitol. Gilbert visited the site in November of 1931 expressing pleasure with the progress of construction and noting the spirit of cooperation and accomplishment that had brought the project near completion. The 558 feet long and 120 feet wide central unit was ready for occupancy in the early part of 1932, and Gilbert returned to the site in January of that year and was photographed with the governor and building commission on the grounds outside the governor's offices during that visit. Unfortunately, the architect was not given enough prior notice for the day of dedication, and because of other commitments could not attend the ceremony held on West Virginia's sixty-ninth birthday.

The Architect's Description



Southern face of capitol today.

Prior to the official dedication of the capitol on West Virginia Day in 1932, the editor of the Charleston Daily Mail, Walter E. Clark, solicited comments from architect Cass Gilbert to satisfy many of the curiosities and anticipations voiced by him and other state residents anxious to explore and understand the new

statehouse. The editor and architect had met during the construction of the complex, and a personal letter dated April 8, 1932, and marked "not for publication" followed the solicitation. Excerpts from the letter and from a separate mailing sent to Clark in May of that year offer insights regarding the architect's

philosophy in designing public buildings.

Public buildings, and especially the State Capitol, constitute the best evidences of the character of material, success and solidity, culture and civilization of a state. . . this is not an argument for extravagance; it is an argument for something totally different. . . namely, for economy in the preservation of the things the State had paid for, and it is not based upon the illusion of glory or magnificence. Lavish expenditure and extravagance are to be deplored and avoided; they should have no part in such structures. The expenditure of a people's money is a public trust, and unwise expenditure is just the reverse of the impression that should be conveyed.

People of modest means cannot afford to embellish their homes with works of art and a reasonable function of the State in the direction of culture and education, and in the development of civilization, is to provide in the State Capitol, which is owned and used by all of the people, suitable decorations of idealistic character, and the expenditure necessary for doing it is justified.

The interior as well as the exterior had been designed to give it a noble and distinguished simplicity; to keep it closely within the lines of the great tradition and precedent which were characteristic of the early

Bronze doors, entrance from south portico, February 1932.





Ornamental terra cotta trimming the south pediment, and distinctive stone carvings below columns at base of dome.

public buildings of America, lines which were largely influenced by Washington, Jefferson and their associates, and by architects like Thornton, Bullfinch, and Mills, who were leaders in their profession in the early days of the Republic. Simplicity and good proportion, which are finer characteristics than ornamentation, have been carried out in the rotunda and the principal corridors, and in the rooms of the House and Senate especially, an air of simplicity, amplitude and dignity has been achieved. While not extravagant or elaborate in detail or material, nevertheless it can properly take its place as among the best buildings in the United States.

In exercising what now would be considered an extremely conservative fiscal policy, the wings of the complex and then the central domed

Biographical Sketch of the Architect

Cass Gilbert was born at Zanesville, Ohio, November 24, 1859, the son of Samuel Augustus and Elizabeth Fulton (Wheeler) Gilbert, and the grandson of Charles Champion Gilbert, the first mayor of Zanesville. Cass Gilbert's father was a decorated officer of the U. S. Coast Survey, and attained the rank of brigadier-general of the 44th Ohio volunteer infantry during the Civil War. The son received his early education in St. Paul, Minnesota, and later studied architecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he received the prize of the Boston Society of Architects in 1879. After a period of advanced study in Europe his professional career began in the employ of McKim, Mead & White, architects of New York City. He later established an office in St. Paul in partnership with James Knox Taylor; after winning the competition for the U.S. Custom House in New York City, he opened a branch office there and after 1899 made that city his headquarters.

Gilbert did not confine himself to any one type of architecture but adapted in an individual manner whatever style seemed most appropriate to the subject at hand. The distinctive feature of all his work was its peculiarly American character and his own logical

adaptations of principles of design. Among other things he was a pioneer of the modern skyscraper. When he designed the sixty-story Woolworth building in New York City (1912), it was a venture into the unknown, and the building that rose 792 feet was widely acclaimed as both a successful financial operation and as the prime example of Gothic beauty for early twentieth-century America.

Among his other notable works were the state capitols of Minnesota, Arkansas and West Virginia; the U. S. Army Supply Base; U. S. Treasury Annex; building of the U. S. Chamber of Commerce at Washington, D. C.; New York Life Insurance Building at New York City; public libraries in St. Louis, Detroit and New Haven; one of the Prudential Life Insurance buildings in Newark; Essex County Court House in Newark; the St. Louis Art Museum; Suffolk Savings Bank in Boston; City Hall in Waterbury, Connecticut; Union Central Life Insurance Building in Cincinnati; Federal Reserve Bank in Minneapolis; Scott Memorial Fountain in Detroit; Seaside Hospital in Waterford, Connecticut; United States Legation in Ottawa; the U. S. Court House in New York; and the U. S. Supreme Court Building, which he considered

his outstanding achievement. He also made the general plans for the buildings of the Universities of Minnesota and Texas, made planning commission reports for the future layout of the city of New Haven and was consulting architect of the George Washington and the Kill Van Kull bridges for the Port of New York Authority.

Gilbert's work is noted for its simplicity, just proportions, beauty and refinement. Much that he did was built to endure—monuments that will carry the evidence of his genius as an architect for generations to come. A man of scrupulous honesty, he was actuated, in his public building designs, to prove that public funds could be spent honestly. He was a member of many national committees, lectured frequently and was the recipient of various honorary degrees and awards. President Theodore Roosevelt appointed him chairman of the Council of Fine Arts in 1909; he designed the festival hall and art building at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis in 1904; and he was awarded the following decorations: grand gold medal for architecture at the Paris exhibition in 1900, gold medal of the city of Leipzig in 1913, medal of King Albert of Belgium in 1920, chevalier of the Legion of Honor of France in 1924, and the gold medals of the Society of Arts and

unit were each contracted for separately and the books cleared before beginning the next phase. For a total outlay of less than nine and one half million dollars, state citizens certainly got their money's worth.

The three buildings have been constructed for considerably less cost than the total of the appropriations authorized by the successive Legislatures. This is a record of which the Capitol Building Commission and the architect are extremely proud, as it is doubtful that any public building or group of buildings have ever been erected in this country or elsewhere, the financial record of which can compare with this record.

In describing the capitol it seems the architect took great care to offer

this complete outline so that the general public could understand his purpose and his art:

The present State Capitol of West Virginia is a group of buildings, consisting of the Main Building and the two buildings forming the East and West Wings, all physically connected so that the business of the Legislative, Executive and Judicial Departments is conducted under, substantially, one roof.

There are two fronts to the group, one toward Washington Street and the other on Kanawha Street (presently Kanawha Boulevard), running parallel with the Kanawha River. Located between the hills of West Virginia and flanked on the one front with the Kanawha River, the site is unique in this respect, and the natural beauty thereof provides an unusually fine setting for this group of buildings.

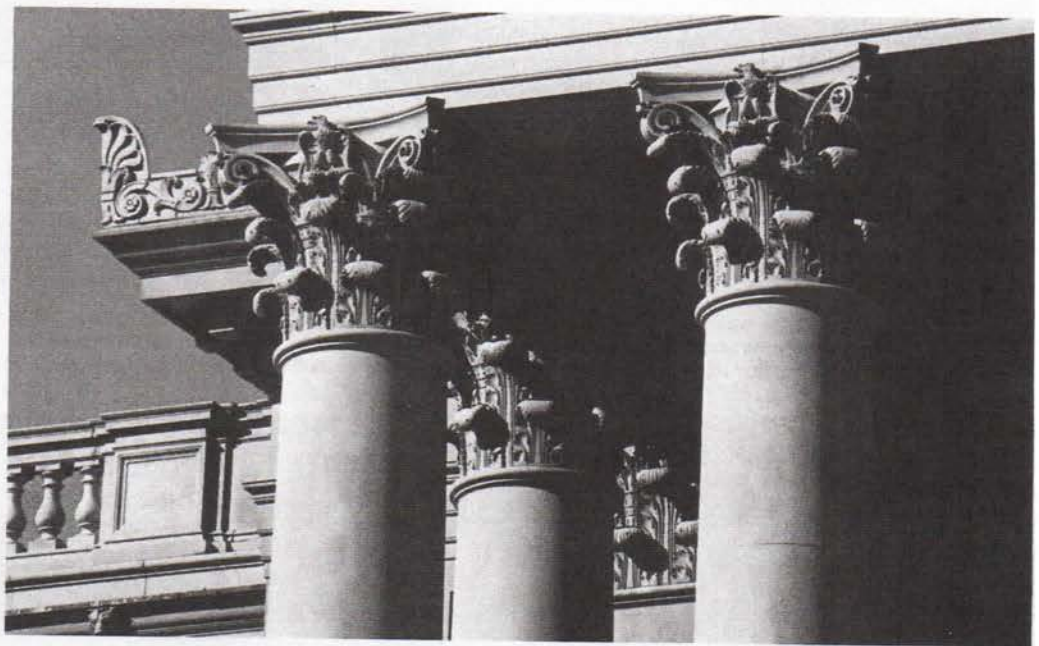
The exterior of the buildings is of Indiana Limestone and is classic in style; in fact, it might more correctly be termed Renaissance. The architectural forms are Roman, with the single exception of the Doric vestibule at the ground floor of the Main Building on the river side. The porticoes and the colonnades of the exterior are distinctly Roman, the two main porticoes being of the Roman Corinthian order, which was, of course, indirectly derived from the Greek precedent, and the other porticoes or colonnades are of a modified Roman Doric type.

The Main Building is crowned by a dome of majestic proportion, rising to a considerable height, and is a conspicuous and notable feature of the landscape from every point of view. . . the exterior of the dome closely follows the Roman precedent, although, perhaps, there is no dome as high in proportion among Roman examples. The

Sciences, Architectural League of New York and American Institute of Arts and Letters in 1931.

In person Gilbert was tall, strongly built, and of attractive personality and genial disposition. He had the energy that is requisite for great undertakings, and it was said of him that he would have been great in any business or profession. He liked to help others, and many prominent architects began their practice in his office. His ambition in life was to make the world a little more beautiful and those with whom he came in contact a little more happy for his having lived. He was fond of outdoor life, especially golf and fishing, and took two months away from work each year to travel the world studying architectural forms and ancient ruins. He firmly believed that he could accomplish more in ten months of the year than he could by working continuously for twelve months, and advocated that this interim away from his labors was necessary for the regeneration of his mental prowess. Although deeply religious, he was not affiliated with any church.

He was married November 29, 1887, to Julia Tappen, daughter of a Milwaukee lawyer, and they had four children: Emily Finch, Elizabeth Wheeler (who died young), Julia Swift and Cass Gilbert, Jr. His death occurred in Brockenhurst, England, May 17, 1934.



Above: Corinthian column caps, south portico.

Below: Bronze sculpture framed in classical fretwork, ground floor south entrance.



dome has become by habit and use as much a feature of the American State Capitol as the steeple is a feature of the American village church, or the tower a feature of an English parliament building. The gilding on the dome brings out that graceful upward soaring quality, which gives it a large measure of its charm and beauty.

On the ground floor in the Main Building are located the main Executive Departments of the State. . . entrances to the ground floor are located at the east and west from California and Duffy Streets, respectively, (and) from the porte cochere (the private driveway) under the south portico from Kanawha Street and side entrances on each side of the north portico from Washington Street. The main entrance and the ground floor may be properly considered from Kanawha Street entering the building through the Doric Hall, passing by two flanking stairways providing access to the Legislative floor above, thereafter entering the door, corridor and rotunda from which the longitudinal corridor extends easterly and westerly. The longitudinal corridor is intersected by the connecting corridors from the East and West Wings through the connecting wings.

On the main, or first, and second floors are located the Legislative Departments of the State—i. e., the Senate and House chambers, all the necessary committee rooms, general rooms, toilet rooms, retiring rooms, and private offices of the clerks of the respective chambers, of the President of the Senate, of the Speaker of the House, etc.

The exterior entrances to this main or first floor are from the north and south by as-



Doric vestibule, ground floor south entrance.

cending the spacious steps through the north and south porticoes into the main dome rotunda. The rotunda is flanked east and west by spacious so-called House and Senate foyers, at the ends of which are located the House and Senate, respectively. Special attention is called to the impressive appearance of this floor with its spacious rotunda erected beneath the dome, from

which radiate these foyers of impressive proportions.

The marble work in this building and the connecting wings is Imperial Danby from Vermont. The floors are a combination of White Vermont marble and imported Italian Travertine marble. Marble was used after careful consideration by the Commission, in order to save up-keep. It has been proved

Capitol Building Commission Members

Original commissioners (1921-1925)

Governor Ephraim F. Morgan
Gohen C. Arnold (President of the Senate 1921-1923) from Buckhannon
Edwin M. Keatley (Speaker of the House of Delegates 1921-1922) from Charleston
William McKell from Glen Jean
Herbert Fitzpatrick from Huntington
Fred M. Staunton from Charleston
N. Price Whitaker from Wheeling
Houston G. Young (Secretary of State 1921-1925) from Charleston

(McKell resigned in 1922 and was replaced by Harry P. Camden from Parkersburg; Whitaker died in 1922 and was replaced by Virgil L. Highland from Clarksburg; Highland resigned in 1923 and was replaced by George A. Laughlin from Wheeling; Young resigned position of secretary to the commission in 1923 and Bonner Hill of Charleston was appointed)

Commission under the Gore administration (1925-1929)

Governor Howard M. Gore

Retained:	Arnold	Staunton
	Camden	Keatley
	Fitzpatrick	Laughlin

(Camden died in 1925 and was replaced by former governor William A. MacCorkle from Charleston; Staunton died in 1926 and was replaced by Mrs. J. T. (Daisy M.) Peadro from Parkersburg)

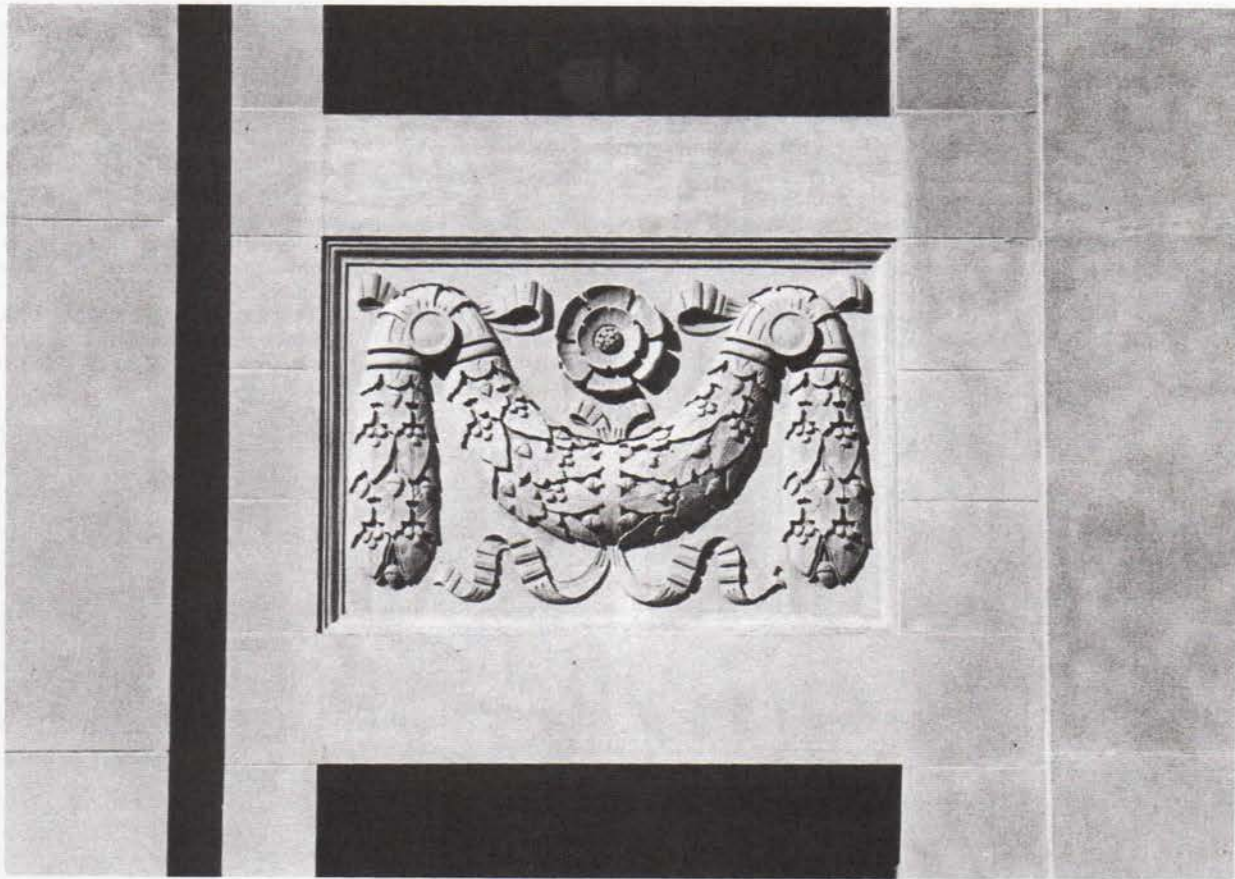
Commission under the Conley administration (1929-1932)

Governor William G. Conley

Retained:	Arnold	Peadro
	MacCorkle	Keatley
	Fitzpatrick	Laughlin

Added: M. Z. White (President of the Senate 1925-1933) from Williamson
J. William Cummins (Speaker of the House of Delegates 1929-1932) from Wheeling
Boyd Jarrell from Huntington
C. W. Dillon from Fayetteville

(MacCorkle died in 1930 and was replaced by Charles K. Payne from Charleston)



Carved classical garland between floors in the exterior wall, Main Building.



Capitol Building Commission with Governor Conley (fourth from right) and architect Cass Gilbert (sixth from right), January 1932.

that marble is cheaper in the long run, as the saving in up-keep of painting and cleaning over a not long period of time will pay for the extra cost of marble over plaster. The finish in offices throughout the building, consisting of doors, trim, etc., is of quartered oak. Access doors and elevator doors are metal. Floors of offices are finished with cement.

The interior of the Governor's reception room, forming part of the Governor's suite, is of so-called Colonial or Georgian type of architecture, furnished with appropriate carpets, draperies, and furniture. The Governor's private office consists of American walnut paneled walls with walnut furniture and harmonizing carpet and draperies. An

ornamental plaster ceiling completes in a satisfactory manner the furnishings of these two rooms.

The House and Senate chambers are designed in careful classic proportions. The plaster surfaces in these chambers have been decorated in color to harmonize with the general architectural design. The furniture and all woodwork in the House and Senate chambers are of American walnut (from West Virginia forests) of special design.

The general plan of the wings provides for thoroughly practical business offices. Passing through the main entrance one enters through the entrance hall into a longitudinal corridor, extending the full length

of the building, on both sides of which are located the offices, subdivided in accordance with the requirements of the departments which occupy these buildings. A transverse corridor connected with the longitudinal corridor leads to a minor rear entrance. Two passenger elevators and two main stairways flanking the entrance halls provide access to the upper floors and basement of the buildings. A similar longitudinal corridor exists in the upper stories, giving access to the offices located there.

The entrance hall and corridors in the ground floor, consisting of walls, piers, arches, pilasters, etc., are lined with Pink Tennessee marble. The floors in the hall



Office of the Senate President (left) and House Speaker (right), 1990.

The West Virginia Capitol: Project of Five Governors

John Jacob Cornwell

Term of office 1917-1921; governor when downtown capitol burned in January of 1921; called Legislature into extraordinary session to commence plans for new facilities

Ephraim Franklin Morgan

Term of office 1921-1925; appointed original building commission; west wing and

governor's mansion completed at end of his term; only governor to occupy both mansions

Howard Mason Gore

Term of office 1925-1929; east wing completed during his term; governor when "Pasteboard Capitol" burned in March of 1927

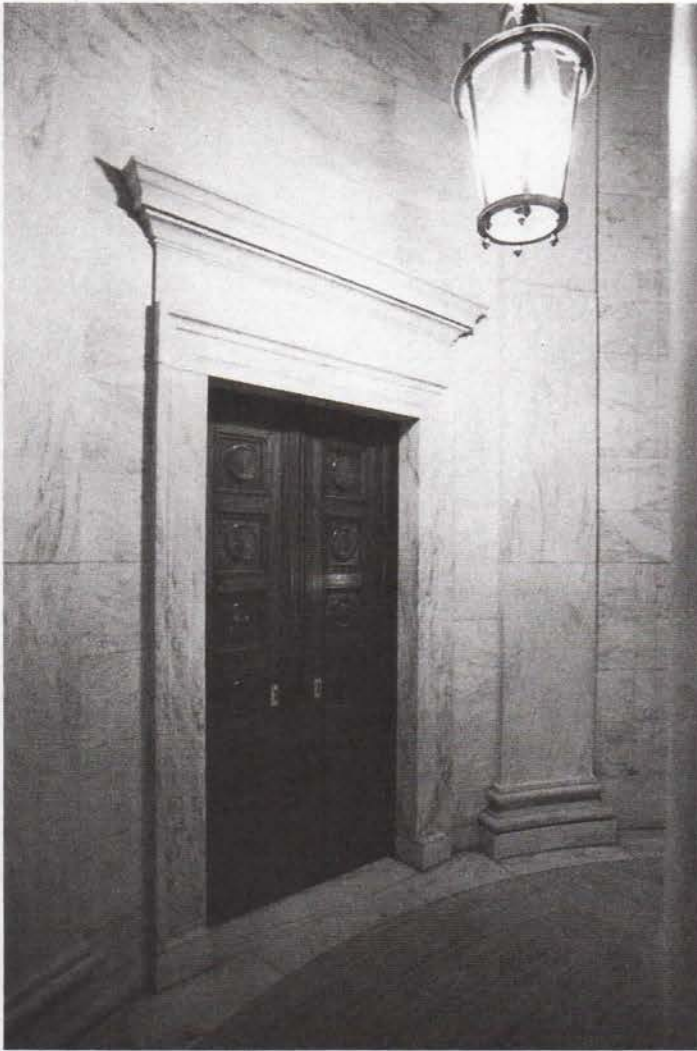
William Gustavus Conley

Term of office 1929-1933;

main unit completed during his term; governor at time of dedication on June 20, 1932

William Alexander MacCorkle

Term of office 1893-1897; served on building commission from 1925 until his death in 1930; longtime civic leader in Charleston; presided over cornerstone ceremony for east wing in November of 1926



Left: Doors to Senate Chambers, made of quartered oak.
Right: Desks in Senate Chamber, carved from black walnut.



and corridors are of similar marble, laid out in simple design. The corridors in the upper floors are finished with terrazzo and the walls lined for a distance of three and one half feet in height with Pink Tennessee marble. All trim around doors facing the corridors are of a similar marble. The ornamental plaster ceiling of the entrance hall and the ceilings of the corridors in the first floor have been decorated in color and ornament of design to harmonize with the architecture of the building.

On the second floor in the East Wing is located the Supreme Court chamber, including a suite of rooms for each of the justices, consultation room, library, office for the clerks, office of the Clerk of the Court, lawyer's consultation room, and other minor offices. The Supreme Court chamber is of impressive proportions, the walls and columns of White Vermont marble, the base of black Belgian marble, the floor of compressed cork, and the bench and all furniture of American Walnut.

The buildings are fireproof throughout. The exterior walls being self-supporting, all the floors are supported on steel columns, girders and beams; columns being placed

both in the exterior walls and the interior. The three buildings are heated by separate plants, consisting of boilers supplying low pressure steam for direct heating. The Supreme Court and House and Senate chambers and all toilet rooms in the buildings are ventilated mechanically to provide proper change of air. . . in some of the special rooms specially designed fixtures have been provided. The electric light fixture in the dome rotunda consists of a graduated imported crystal forming a ball eight feet in diameter, suspended on an appropriate specially designed chain. Crystal fixtures of the same character have also been installed in the House and Senate chambers and in the Governor's reception room. The electric light candelabra in the House and Senate chambers and in the foyers consist of polished imported marble columns, crowned with ornamented Italian alabaster bowls.

Cass Gilbert's vision extended well beyond the scope of merely designing buildings; his master plans included drawings of sculptures,

specific furnishings and other appointments, as well as landscaping the grounds and recommendations for acquiring adjacent properties for future expansion. Most of his recommendations have been carried out, as the present capitol site will attest. He wrote:

The buildings as they now stand should not be considered as complete. The present grounds should be properly developed as soon as funds permit, with terraces immediately next to the buildings, landscape work, steps, paths, roadways, lighting, planting, etc., as they are essential features of the design, and without them the group of buildings would be like a picture without a frame.

In order to complete these structures in all their parts, there are certain things which should be done. The sculpture in the pediments over the two main porticoes of the Main Building are essential to the completion of the exterior design. Mural decorations of an adequate character should embellish the rotunda and the House and Senate, and in the

Mythological Figures in the Carved Heads

(Roman names in bold type—Greek in italics)



Entrance to East Wing from the Circle

Hera (*Juno*)

Wife and sister of Jupiter; queen of the gods; goddess of marriage and children; the calends (firsts) of the months were sacred to her as were the ides sacred to Jupiter

(*Prometheus*)

Titan who taught mankind the use of fire against the will of Zeus; punished by being chained to a rock where a vulture ate away at his liver; symbol of suffering and strength resisting wrong

(*Perseus*)

Son of Zeus and slayer of Medusa; married Andromeda after rescuing her from a sea monster; they are joined for eternity in the constellation Cassiopeia



Located at the East Entrance to the Main Building

Mercury (Hermes)

Messenger of Jupiter; god of commerce; gymnastics; endeavors requiring skill and dexterity; inventor of the lyre

Vulcan (Hephaestus)

The celestial artist; son of Jupiter and Juno; husband of Venus; forger of thunderbolts; architect; smith; armorer; chariot-builder

Minerva (Pallas Athene)

Goddess of wisdom; daughter of Jupiter; the divinity associated with the useful and ornamental arts



Entrance to West Wing from the Circle

Fortuna

The goddess of fortune or chance; holder of a double rudder that steered the courses of man's destiny

Jupiter (Zeus)

Ancient god of the heavens; most prominent of the Olympic deities; king of gods and men; bearer of the magic shield Aegis; eagles bore his thunderbolts

Hercules

Son of Jupiter and the mortal Alcoma; persecuted by his father's jealous queen (Hera); completed twelve labors to escape her wrath and was considered the champion of the earth



West Entrance of the Main Building

Vesta (Hestia)

Goddess of the hearth; guardian of family life; her temple's fires were kindled by rays of the sun and maintained by Vestal Virgins

Neptune (Poseidon)

Reigning god of the oceans and rivers; bearer of the trident; creator of horses and patron of horse races

Ceres (Demeter)

Goddess of agriculture; daughter of Saturn and Rhea; bestower of grains and knowledge of agriculture upon mankind; mother of Proserpine; most revered of all goddesses

reception rooms and corridors surrounding the House and Senate chambers there should be reasonably modest but adequate decorative treatment.

In light of these comments by the architect, in certain respects the capitol has stood partially unfinished for fifty years. Ceiling murals can be seen in the first floor cor-

ridors of the wings; and the carved heads of mythological figures guard the east and west entrances of the main building, as well as the principal entrances to the wings. The unfinished decorative touches the architect wrote about do not seem to detract from the overall beauty of the

building but would undoubtedly enhance the appearance if the meticulous work could be done by artists with a thorough knowledge of and a developed sensitivity for the architect's work. Cass Gilbert died just two years after the completion of the capitol, and therein may lie the

Summary of Facts Concerning the Capitol

Chronology of early capitol locations

Wheeling—1863-1870 (Linsly Institute Building)

Charleston—1870-1875 (first downtown capitol)

Wheeling—1875-1885 (Linsly Institute May 1875 to December 1876; structure built by city of Wheeling December 1876 to May 1885)

Charleston—1885-present (second downtown capitol May 1885 to January 1921; Pastebord Capitol March 1921 to March 1927)

Chronology of present capitol complex

West wing—groundbreaking January 1924
laying of cornerstone May 1924
completion March 1925

East wing—groundbreaking July 1926
laying of cornerstone November 1926
completion December 1927

Main unit—groundbreaking March 1930
laying of cornerstone November 1930
completion February 1932
dedication June 20, 1932

Costs per unit

West wing—\$1,218,171.32 (71¢ per cubic foot)

East wing—\$1,361,425.00 (77¢ per cubic foot)

Main unit—\$4,482,623.21 (65¢ per cubic foot)

Total outlay including land acquisition and beautification—\$9,491,180.03

Dimensions

West wing—300 feet by 60 feet
(four stories and basement)

East wing—300 feet by 60 feet
(four stories and basement)

Main unit—558 feet by 120 feet
(three stories and basement)

Connecting wings—95 feet by 56 feet
(one story and basement)

Dome—292 feet high
75 feet in diameter
180 feet from ground floor to interior ceiling

Materials

Exterior walls (wings and main unit)—Indiana select buff limestone

Dome—lead coated with copper, covered with gold leaf

Interior floors and walls (wings)—Tennessee marble

Interior walls (main unit)—Imperial Danby Vermont marble

Interior floors (main unit)—Italian travertine inlaid with Imperial Danby

Exterior columns and carvings—Indiana select buff limestone

Interior columns and carvings—Imperial Danby

Lighting pedestals (rotunda and foyers)—Belgian black and gold marble

Lighting pedestals (Senate chambers)—Italian brown marble

Lighting pedestals (House chambers)—Pink Georgian marble from France

Light bowls—Italian alabaster

Chambers' wainscotting, and steps to daises—verd antique marble

Legislative desks and daises—black walnut

Supreme Court bench and all furnishings—American walnut

Interior doors and woodwork—quartered oak

Significa

Ground occupied—sixteen acres

Floor space—535,000 square feet

Outside walls—314,000 cubic feet; 700 carloads

Steel construction—4,640 tons; 160 carloads

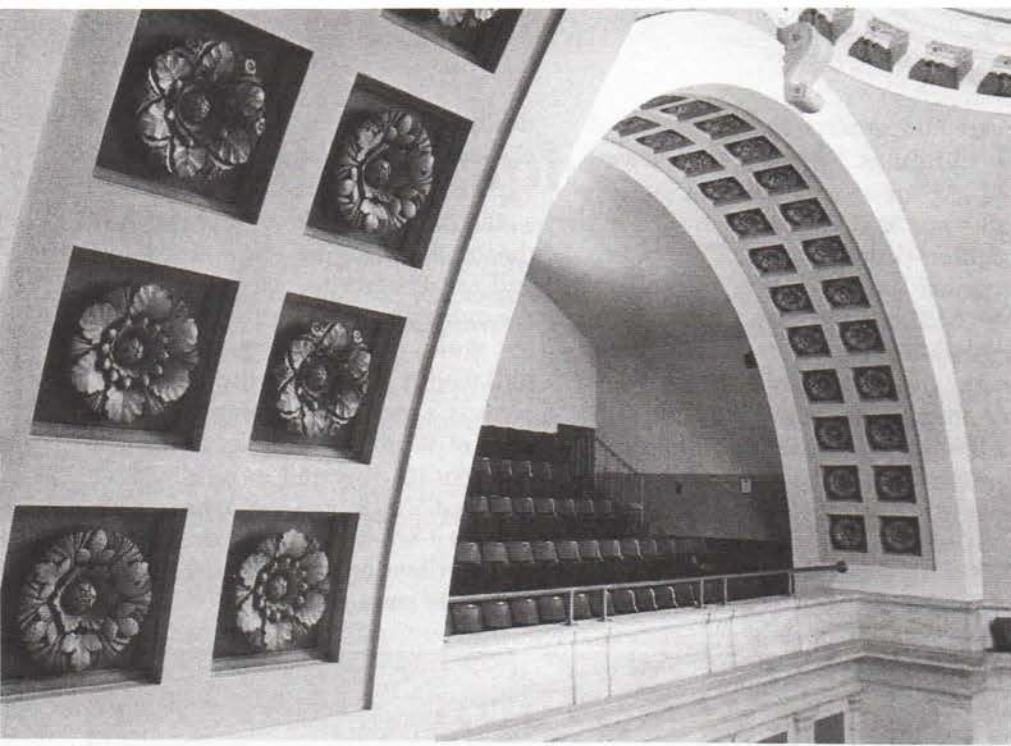
Chandelier in dome—weighs 4,000 pounds; 15,000 candle power

Chandeliers in legislative chambers—10,000 pieces of rock crystal each

Columns in porticoes—limestone; 86 tons each

Columns in foyers—solid marble; 34 tons each

Bronze doors on porticoes—2,800 pounds each



reason for the decorative touches remaining unfinished.

The sculpture and mural decorations should be done under proper guidance and direction and by artists of established reputation and experience and of real ability. There is nothing so valueless as poor art and nothing so ephemeral as passing fashion in art; therefore what is to be done should be done by competent and serious artists of proved ability and in accordance with the highest standards of good taste. The architect who develops the design is the best qualified to select the artists and experts who would carry it out sympathetically. It is the only way in which a consistent result can be obtained. Without this there will be intrusion of incidental sculpture and decorations in questionable taste.

It is also obvious that the property should be enlarged to prevent the too close intrusion of higher buildings and to provide more ample grounds for the State Capitol. Sooner or later the surrounding location will be in demand for higher buildings than at the present time, and the probability is that the State Capitol will be dominated by private structures which would obviously be undesirable if the property is not controlled by the State.

The line and grade on Kanawha Street should be corrected and the streets widened



Above left: Arches in Senate Chamber (leaf clusters within the arches contain white pine cones with pine needles and gooseberry leaves, white oak leaves with acorns, and cucumber magnolia leaves and blossoms; the three arrangements are repeated).

Left: Office of the Governor, 1990.

Above: Governor's reception room.

opposite the Capitol grounds. The river bank adjacent to Kanawha Street for the full width of the Capitol grounds should be properly cared for and developed, and possibly a substantial boat landing with permanent stairways connecting to the street level be provided. It would be well also if the opposite bank of the river could be preserved from the intrusion of objectionable features.

Today the capitol complex with its adjacent buildings and parklike grounds is a great source of beauty and inspiration for West Virginians. Gilbert's recommendations, for the most part, were carried out, properties were acquired by the state for future expansion and upon them

erected impressive and utilitarian office buildings. Streets were widened and improved and the boat landing and steps that appeared in Gilbert's original sketches grace the capitol grounds; the location of the University of Charleston directly across the Kanawha River insures against the feared objectionable intrusions and enhances the view and overall aesthetics of the setting. The newest addition to the capitol complex in Charleston's east end is the state cultural center. Its location on the west side of the grounds complements the main buildings but is understated in

design so as not to detract from the classic lines of the capitol. The many varied festivals and exhibits as well as the museum, library, archives and theater are bringing West Virginians and out-of-state tourists not only to the cultural center but to the capitol as well. In keeping with the philosophy of one of the twentieth century's most gifted architects, the state of West Virginia has continued to honor its duty and its public trust; all West Virginians are urged to experience what is their own culture and civilization as embodied in their exquisite state capitol.

Glossary of Architectural Terms Used

arch—curved structure used as a support over an open space

architrave—beam resting directly on the tops of columns; the bottom section of the entablature

baluster—any of the singular posts of a railing

balustrade—row of columns supporting a railing

coffer—decorative sunken panel in a ceiling or dome

colonnade—series of columns set at regular intervals

column—cylindrical support consisting of base, shaft and capital (cap)

Corinthian—the most elaborate of the three orders of Greek architecture, distinguished by a bell-shaped capital with a design of acanthus leaves

cornice—the top section of the entablature; a horizontal molding projecting along the top of a building or wall

cupola—a small dome or similar structure on a roof

dais—raised platform at the end of a room or chamber

dome—roof formed by a series of rounded arches or vaults on a round or many-sided base

Doric—the oldest architectural style of ancient Greece; characterized by simplicity of form; fluted, heavy columns and simple capitals

entablature—a horizontal superstructure supported by columns and composed of architrave, frieze and cornice

fascies—bundle of rods bound about an ax; sculpted or carved depiction of same; Roman symbol of power and authority

frieze—the horizontal band forming the middle section of the entablature; usually decorated with sculpture

guilloche—ornamental trim formed by intertwining bands

Ionic—Greek style of architecture characterized by ornamental scrolls on the capitals

lantern—open structure on a roof or in a tower or dome that admits light and air

mansard roof—a roof with two slopes on each of the four sides, the lower steeper than the upper

parapet—a low wall or railing on a balcony or bridge

pediment—a low-pitched gable or decorative triangular piece on the front of a building above a doorway or portico

pendentive bracket—vaulting area that serves to connect an angle of a square area enclosed by four arches with a dome resting upon the arches

pilaster—a rectangular support projecting slightly from a wall, treated architecturally as a column

plinth—the square block at the base of a column, pedestal or statue

porte cochere—driveway under or through a portion of a building

portico—a porch or covered walk consisting of a roof supported by columns

rotunda—the round hall or room surmounted by a dome

terra cotta—a hard, brown-red earthenware, usually unglazed, used for ornamental facing

tympanum—recessed space enclosed by slanting cornices of a pediment

vault—an arched chamber

vestibule—small entrance hall of a building

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