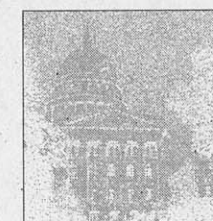


**Chapter Eight**



**ARTWORK**





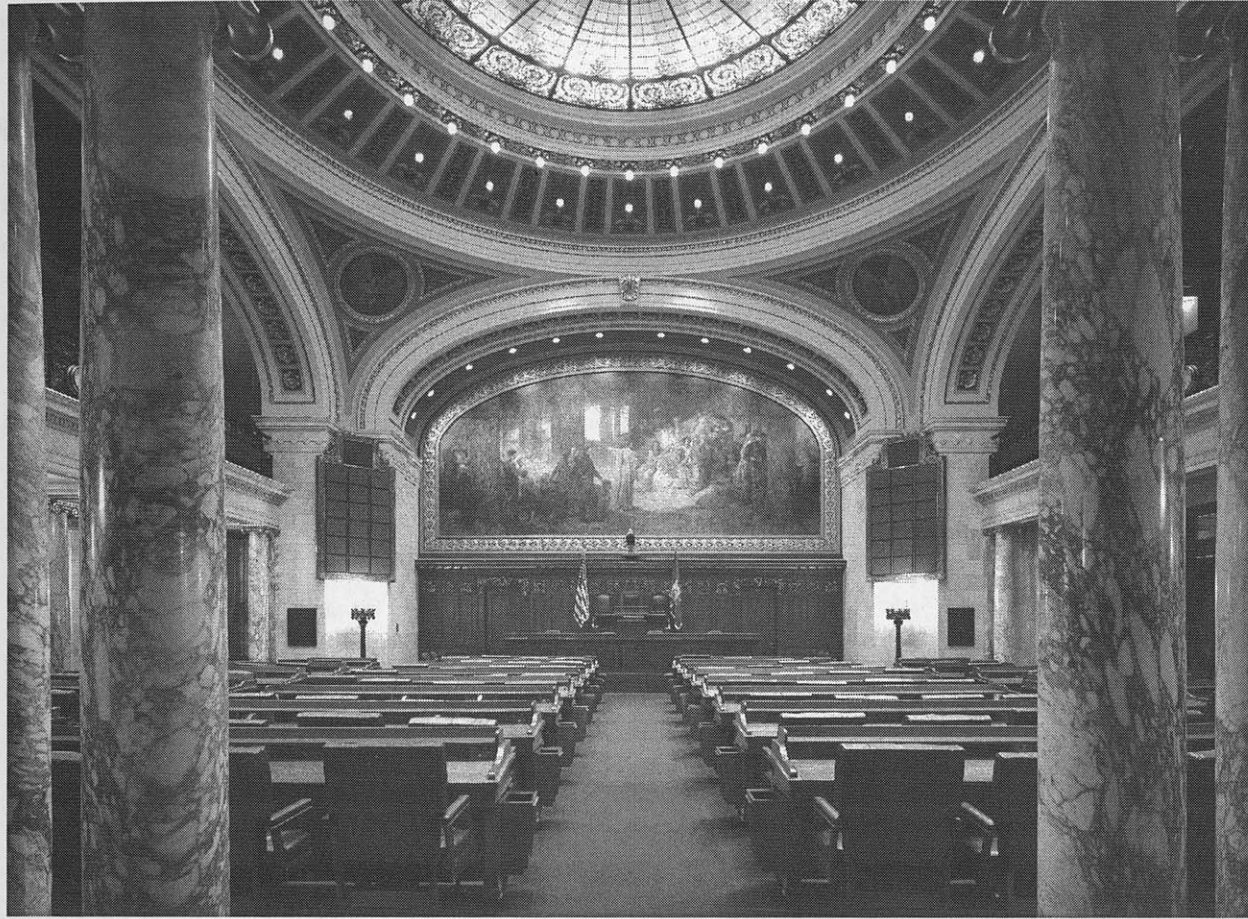


Photo courtesy Nels Akerlund Photography

### 8.1 Assembly Chamber, 2001

Edwin Howland Blashfield's large, 1908 mural above the assembly speaker's desk, Wisconsin: Past, Present and Future, was the first major work of either exterior or interior art installed in the Capitol, and it set a high standard for other works in the building. The public and critics admired it, especially for its juxtaposition of historical and allegorical elements, another trait other Capitol artists employed. The mural also was the first work restored (in 1988) during restoration of the Capitol.

## Chapter Eight ARTWORK

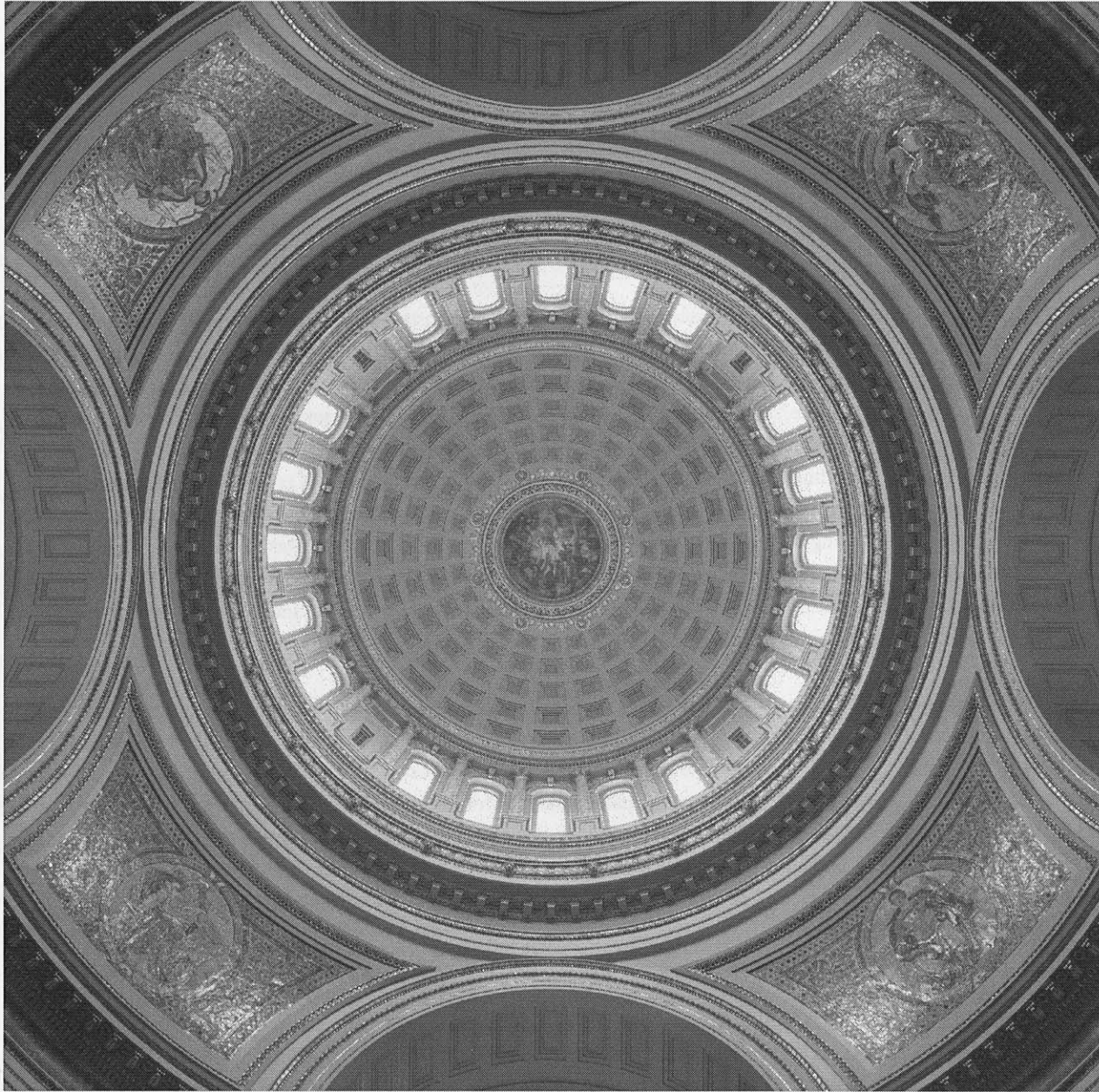
The artwork that completes the Wisconsin State Capitol demonstrates architect George B. Post's skills as a consummate designer. More than any other feature, the symbolism of the fine art in the Capitol established the principal themes that impart meaning to the building as a whole. Through its iconography, the Capitol embodies the ideal of civic pride, democratic duty and the functions of good government. Each of the many pieces of sculpture, the pendentive mosaics and the murals are complete as objects in themselves, but as building elements they are thoroughly integrated within their architectural context. The distinctive qualities of each, the circumstances of their creation and the level of care extended these objects over the years, or not, makes each unique. Since the preservation of the public spaces, including the exterior, was mandated as a part of the *Capitol Master Plan* (1987), the monumental artwork intrinsic to these areas of the building was slated for restoration. The conservation of the Capitol artwork took place as a part of the restoration and rehabilitation that occurred between 1988 and 2001, when each piece was evaluated individually and treated appropriately.

Throughout his work with the Capitol Commission, Post successfully advocated hiring artists of national significance to complete a rich and varied fine arts program. Within a collaborative atmosphere, Post established a process that allowed him to maintain a high level of control over the content and the execution of the work. Artistic themes and their presentation elicited a great deal of interest on the part of the Capitol Commission, and it was customary for each artist to provide sketches or photographs indicating intended thematic representation. Since it was through the artwork that the didactic themes of the building were expressed, the success of this component of the work indicates the positive interaction, directed by Post, among the parties involved. Concerning this relationship, commission secretary Lew Porter's wife Carolyn wrote in 1914:

Mr. Post was a man well advanced in years and the new Capitol furnished him with an opportunity for completing his life work with this, his greatest monumental building. The attitude of the Commission encouraged him in determination to make this his masterpiece in design, construction and decoration. With this in view, he provided spaces for mural painting and sculpture, and sought for the work artists with world wide reputation.<sup>1</sup>

The artists Post assembled for the work were mature and accomplished, essentially members of the East Coast establishment, who shared Post's familiarity with and taste for Beaux-Arts tradition. Several of the artists had worked with Post on similar civic-scaled projects and, most significantly, at the 1893 Chicago Columbian Exposition. Post recommended that the contracts for exterior sculpture and interior murals and mosaics be given to a network of artists and designers well known to him through professional and social ties. Contributing, with Post, to the architectural sumptuousness of the Columbian Exposition were Daniel Chester French, Kenyon Cox, Edwin Howland Blashfield and Karl Bitter. Of these, Blashfield and Bitter were connected socially with Post through membership in the Century Association of New York City, a men's club whose roster included U.S. presidents, other leading politicians and some of America's finest





## 8.2 Rotunda with oculus painting and pendentive mosaics, 2001

The Rotunda is the most opulent public space in the Capitol and includes five major works of art: an oil-on-canvas mural in the oculus by Edwin Howland Blashfield and four glass mosaics in the pendentives. Post personally selected artists who shared his vision that the building be a composition in which the whole was greater than the sum of its parts.

artists. Several others hired for work on the Capitol also were members of the Century Association including Charles Yardley Turner, Albert Herter, Adolph Weinman and Ernest Tyler, of the decorator firm, Mack, Jenney and Tyler.

In 1906, when the earliest plans were being developed for Wisconsin's Capitol, French, Blashfield and Cox had just finished work on the Minnesota State Capitol, which had been designed by architect Cass Gilbert, who was another contributor to the Columbian Exposition and a member of the Century Association.<sup>2</sup> It is likely that these social and professional ties were based upon camaraderie stemming from a shared appreciation for the symbiotic relationship between architecture and artwork. Within monumental Beaux-Arts buildings were placed monumental works of painting and sculpture. Like-minded artists of very high caliber worked gladly under the direction of Post, each willing to subsume individual elements to the integrity of the whole. Several of the artists who worked on the Capitol, particularly Kenyon Cox, had published writings that expressed their aesthetic predilections surrounding the monumental Renaissance-inspired imagery. Cox was adamant in advocating an ongoing cultural commitment to Beaux-Arts architecture and its related art forms and a rejection of modernism.

## Exterior Artwork

The exterior of the Wisconsin State Capitol was conceived in sculptural terms and realized in scholarly, classical form. In the building's reliance upon architectural principles that many architects of the period thought represented the height of western culture, it evokes the ideal of classicism in all its forms. While it serves as a symbol that ties Wisconsin's state government to ancient democratic tradition, the Capitol also is integral to its man-made landscape, an urban environment designed to take advantage of Madison's natural beauty. The building rises on its hill, preeminent within the city, and Post maximized the impact of the preestablished approaches when he set the Capitol upon the platform of its terrace. The white granite sculptural groups, one in the pediment of each of the four wings and another four at the base of the Dome, are visual extensions of the granite surface of the building; they do not compete with, but rather complement, the larger structure. The exterior established the precedent for a level of high quality in artistic finish that is consistent throughout. Largely because of the attention that Post paid to its artistic program, the Capitol's exterior is as exquisite as its interior; the themes are executed more abstractly on the exterior but with a clarity that evokes the great Gothic cathedrals of Europe, buildings that convey values in a symbolic language that is broadly understood. The sculptural groups in the pediments were intended to give symbolic expression in the loftiest possible terms to the activities that occurred inside the Capitol.

## Pediment Groups

### East Wing: *Liberty Supported by the Law* by Karl Bitter, 1910

Karl Bitter (1867-1915), a New York artist who had been trained in his native Vienna and emigrated from Austria in the late 1880s, designed and oversaw the carving and placement of the sculptural groups in the east and west pediments and the four freestanding groups at the base of the Dome. From the time he established himself in the United States, he was associated with the leading American Beaux-Arts architects, beginning with the most highly regarded of the period, Richard Morris Hunt. It was while working on Hunt's Administration Building for the Columbian Exposition that Bitter met George Post. Subsequently, Bitter and Post collaborated on a number of buildings including the Saint Paul Building in New York (1895) and the Cleveland Trust Company (1906). Karl Bitter died prematurely in 1915 after having been hit by a car as he left a theater in New York City. Like Post, he did not live to see the building completed. The groups were restored in 2000, the work carefully overseen and documented by Wiss, Janney Elstner Associates, Inc. of Chicago.<sup>3</sup>





Drawing from *Architecture*, vol. 14, no. 3, September 1906

### 8.3 Post Competition Drawing, Perspective of Capitol and Park, 1906

Post's vision for an exterior artwork program changed during design development. Acting on the advice of the competition judge, Daniel Burnham, Post eliminated the tourelles above the pavilions, substituting sculptural groups; he also eliminated figures placed in niches at the sides of the façades of the wings. After Post's death in 1913, it was decided as well to eliminate the sculpture at the bases of the pavilions' grand stairs as well.



Photo courtesy Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, PH 642

### 8.4 (above) Capitol from the southwest, circa 1940

Just as Post intended and as indicated in the 1906 perspective drawing, the sculpture atop the lantern, and the tympanum groups were integrated seamlessly into the whole. The deleterious effects of coal smoke on the building and the sculpture were apparent by this time.

### 8.5 (right) Karl Bitter, 1907

George Post arranged for internationally recognized American and European-American artists to create the integrated artwork for both the exterior and interior of the Capitol. Sculptor Karl Bitter created groups for the pediments of the West and East Wings as well as the four groups at the base of the dome. Like several of the Capitol artists, he had collaborated previously with George Post.



Photo courtesy Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, WHI(X)26491



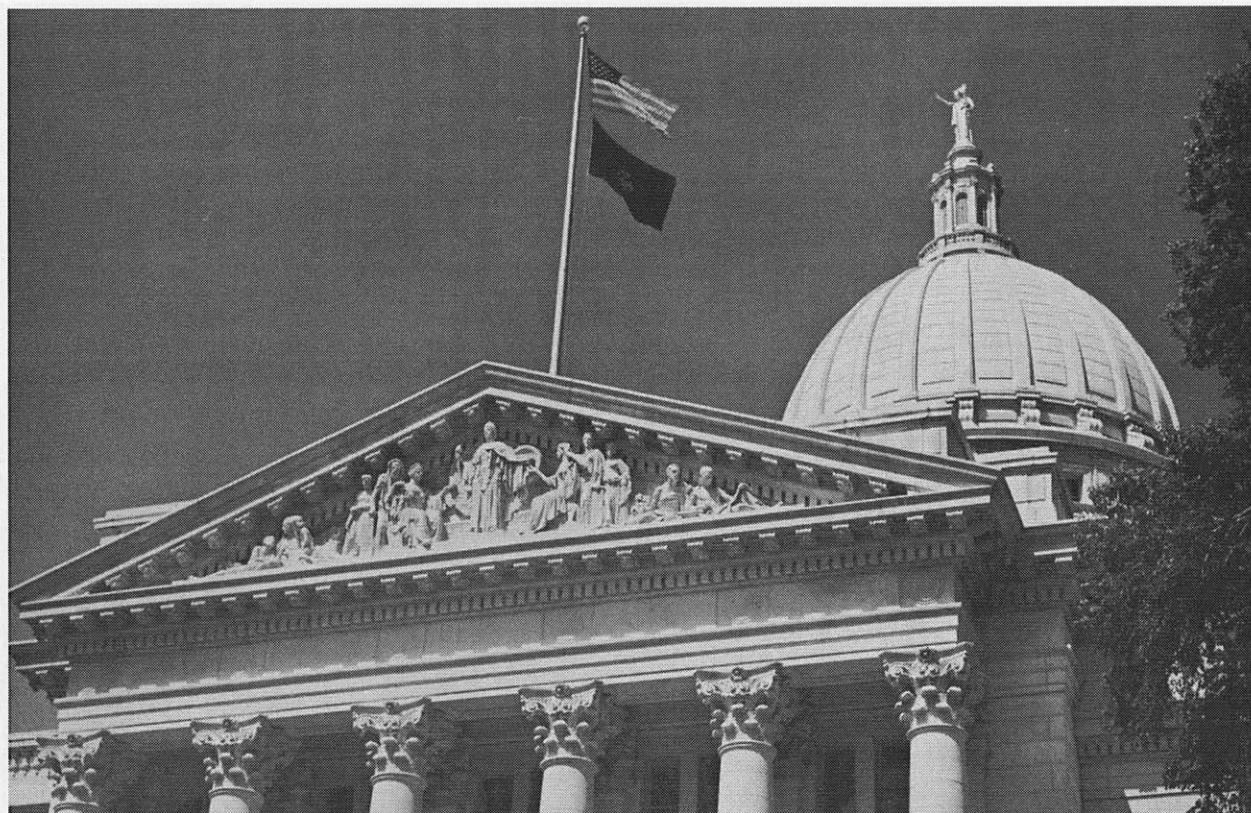


Photo from Capitol Archives

#### 8.6 Karl Bitter, *Liberty Supported by the Law*, East Wing pediment, circa 1960

Although the West Wing was the first constructed, the East Wing pediment was the first one carved because the West Wing terrace required a great deal of fill before scaffolding could be erected. The east group, *Liberty Supported by the Law*, was carved in place. Liberty at the center is flanked by Justice and Truth, all symbolizing the executive and judicial branches of government, which were housed in the wing.

On 10 August 1908 and on the recommendation of Post, the Capitol Commission contracted Karl Bitter to sculpt the group in the pediment of the East Wing. Bitter already had been hired for the West Wing pediment group in September 1907 when that wing was in its early stages of construction. However, as work on the West Wing was underway, it became clear that the excavation for the East Wing needed to proceed so fill could be transported to the west side of the building to build up the steep slope. Although the West Wing remained incomplete, heavy construction machinery was relocated to the east side of the Capitol Square and work began on the East Wing. Eventually, the construction of the East Wing advanced beyond that of the west, and the east pediment was ready for placement of the blocks for carving before the west. Although Bitter designed the west pediment group first, the completion of the east sculptural group occurred several months before the other.

Bitter had completed his model for the east pediment by early February 1909. The artist typically had assistants execute the preliminary carving, and then he finished the facial features and surface refinements. Once his design for the pediment group was completed and approved, the artist became frustrated that the Woodbury Granite Co., the granite contractor, had not installed the blocks so the carvers could begin their work. Woodbury Granite had missed delivery dates both in April and June. Finally on 30 June the stone was in place, a scaffold was built and work began. The effort continued into the winter months, creating difficult conditions for the craftsmen, many of whom were immigrant Italian artisans, unaccustomed to the cold of the Wisconsin winter. A stove was installed within the canvas shelter on the carvers' scaffold, and it provided a measure of comfort. While the carvers were at work several stories above the ground, complaints arose that they were careless in disposing of stone fragments, endangering passersby. Lew Porter complained to John Grignola, Bitter's subcontractor who provided the carvers, and extracted a promise that Grignola would urge the carvers to work with greater care.<sup>4</sup>

On 24 October 1909, while carving was underway on the East Wing, Woodbury Granite's crew was placing the stones to be carved in the pediment of the West Wing when one of the granite cornice stones became dislodged and fell from its position. The accident killed one of Woodbury Granite's workers and nearly all of the blocks that had been placed in the pediment for the sculptural group fell and were badly damaged or broken. This calamity delayed the completion of the group by nearly six months. Following the accident the commission insisted that the rest of the exterior statuary be carved in sheds on the ground. Accordingly, the west pediment was carved in a temporary shed on the northwest side of Capitol Park; the other pediments and the sculpture groups for the base of the Dome were carved in a shed at the West Washington Avenue rail yards.<sup>5</sup> Thus, the east pediment group was the only one carved in place. The decision to carve groups on the ground was made over objections by Woodbury Granite as the firm was concerned with the safety of the completed figures during installation. Woodbury Granite declined responsibility, so the sculptor and the architect assumed it.<sup>6</sup>

Bitter was on hand to provide the finishing touches to *Liberty Supported by the Law*, for which he received final payment in April 1910. Thematically appropriate to the wing housing both the State Supreme Court and the gubernatorial offices, "Liberty" stands centrally, a female figure holding a torch and shield. "Justice," seated to the right, is enlightened by the glow of the torch, and "Truth" to the left, is protected by the shield. The subordinate groupings consist of two figures. One carries the Magna Carta protectively and the other, a mother, instructs her family, indicating the importance of both written law and the ideal of moral character. Bitter described his symbolic intent, in a letter written to Porter.

To interpret this subject on lines distinctly American I placed a statue representing "Liberty" in the center, reasoning that without Liberty "there can be no justice." Liberty is represented in the act of bringing light to "Justice" and shielding and protecting "Truth." Both Justice and Truth are represented



by seated figures, the former holding aloft the scales, the latter the mirror, being long accepted and customary symbols of these allegorical figures.

Grouped with Justice I show the figure of an aged man with the tablets containing the Ten Commandments, intended to point to the origin of our conceptions of the moral elements in law, while as a counter motive on the side of Truth I have a figure of an Anglo Saxon youth holding the Magna Charta [sic], thereby introducing the other principal sources whence sprang the laws by which our race is governed.

The composition is completed on the left by a group representing "Tradition," a mother imbuing her children with the first and primitive ideas of right and wrong, while the extreme right shows a group of men engaged in the study of practical law. By these groups I intend to point, on the one side at the hereditary and instinctive ideas of right, which are not the result of special training, but lived and do live for generations as characteristics of our race; while the other side leads to the intricate details which the practical application of these ideas necessarily brings about.<sup>7</sup>

#### **West Wing: *The Unveiling of the Resources of the State* by Karl Bitter, 1910**

Post approved Bitter's sketches for the west pediment, the first group designed, by August 1906 and the artist signed a formal contract with the Capitol Commission on 19 September 1907.<sup>8</sup> In addition to the delays resulting from the need to build up the west grade and the accident that occurred in the fall of 1909, work was subject to other postponements. In April 1909 Woodbury Granite claimed that problems related to insufficient electrical power and a ten-week strike at its quarries prevented it from finishing the columns needed for the east and west façades. The following month Porter expressed aggravation that little progress was being made on the setting of the stones.<sup>9</sup> The columns were finally in place in August 1909 and work on constructing the pediment began. Another mishap occurred at the railroad depot when a fifteen-ton stone intended for the pediment (a "kneeler") broke the derrick that was lifting it into a cart. The replacement stone did not arrive in Madison until early October, setting back construction another several weeks.<sup>10</sup> Since Bitter had planned to carve the figures in place, the delays in setting the pediment stones infuriated the artist, who had been ready to proceed for months.<sup>11</sup>

The late October tragedy, when three hundred tons of stone fell and killed Woodbury Granite foreman Daniel Logan, occurred as Logan and another setter were placing a four-ton stone. Six other workers escaped the accident unharmed. The financial loss to the state was estimated at between \$20,000 and \$25,000. Although it remained unclear what caused the accident, Porter believed the cornice stone fell because it was "overbalanced" by the large stones yet to be carved; informally, he blamed Woodbury Granite and its employees.<sup>12</sup> When the Maryland Casualty Company began investigating the accident, Post suggested that Porter had been rushing the work, and George H. Bickford of Woodbury Granite blamed Bitter for failing to rough-cut the stone before having it put in place. Maryland Casualty found blame with Woodbury Granite and sought a settlement of \$10,000, the statutory limit. Bickford balked at this amount and suggested that perhaps the fault lay with Logan himself.<sup>13</sup> It turned out that Logan's wife eventually received a \$2,000 settlement, indicating that Logan had not been determined responsible.<sup>14</sup> Much discussion ensued among the commissioners and with Bitter, Post and Bickford about how to complete the sculpture, and they decided to have the shed for the cutters constructed on the northwest side of the park. The new stones began to arrive in March 1910. The entire work was completed and installed by the end of the year.<sup>15</sup>

*The Unveiling of the Resources of the State* established a theme seen repeated throughout the Capitol; a central female figure, representing Wisconsin, is shown surrounded by the symbolic representation of the natural products of the state.

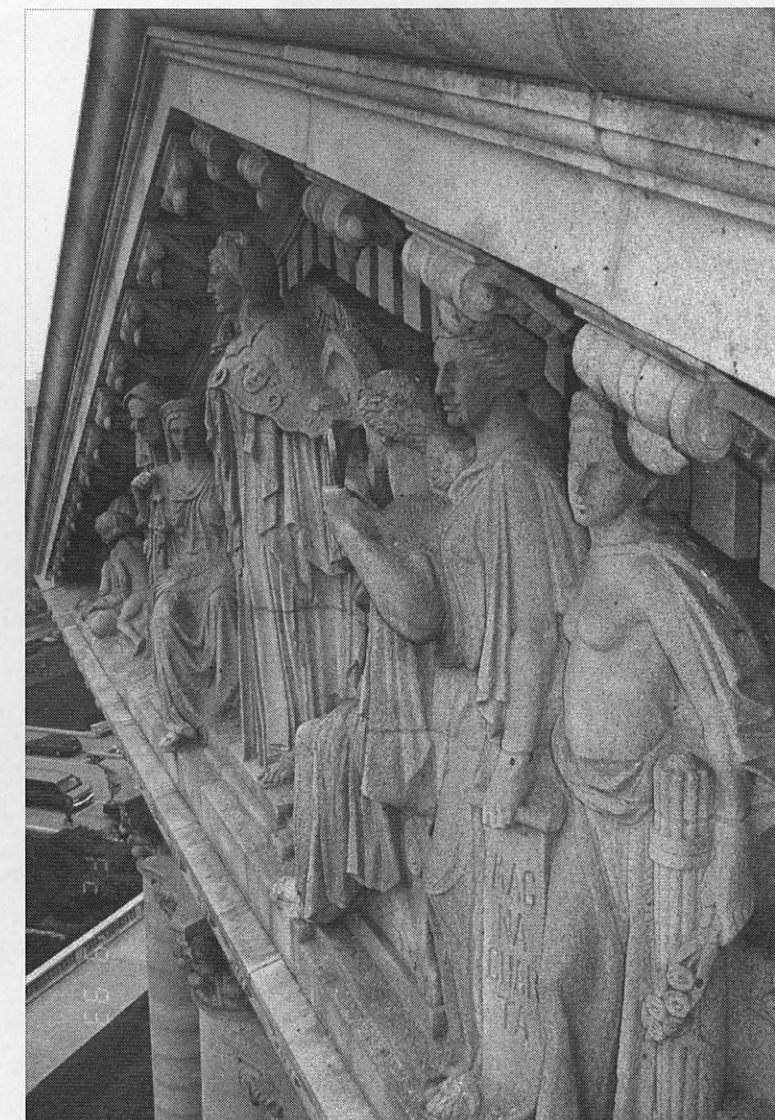


Photo from Capitol Archives

#### **8.7 Detail of East Wing pediment showing existing conditions, 1993**

When consultants Wiss, Janney Elstner Associates, Inc. of Chicago examined exterior masonry in 1993, it found grime, streaks, bird damage, chips, flaking and occasional breakage. The granite figures, with their many protruding and heavily worked elements, had been particularly vulnerable to weather and damage.



Photo from Capitol Archives

#### **8.8 Karl Bitter, *Unveiling the Resources of the State*, model, West Wing pediment, circa 1908**

The central figure symbolizes Wisconsin, only one of many symbolic, feminine depictions of the state in the Capitol artwork program. Wisconsin partially removes her veil to reveal agrarian resources, suggesting that the state had yet to explore all its potential. The figures were rough-carved in a shed on the Capitol lawn after a fatal disaster occurred while installing the stones for on-site carving.



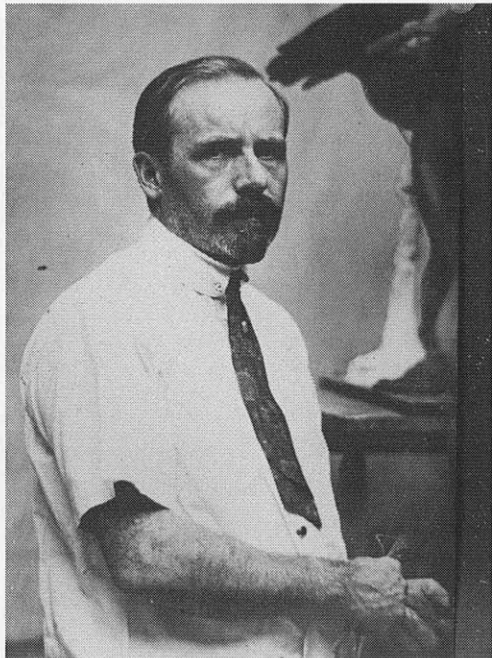


Photo courtesy Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, name file

**8.9 Adolph Weinman, circa 1920**  
*The South Wing pediment group was designed by Adolph Weinman who had completed similar work for state capitols in Kentucky and Missouri. Weinman also sculpted a seated statue of Abraham Lincoln for his birthplace in Hodgenville, Kentucky, a copy of which sits in front of Bascom Hall on the University of Wisconsin - Madison.*

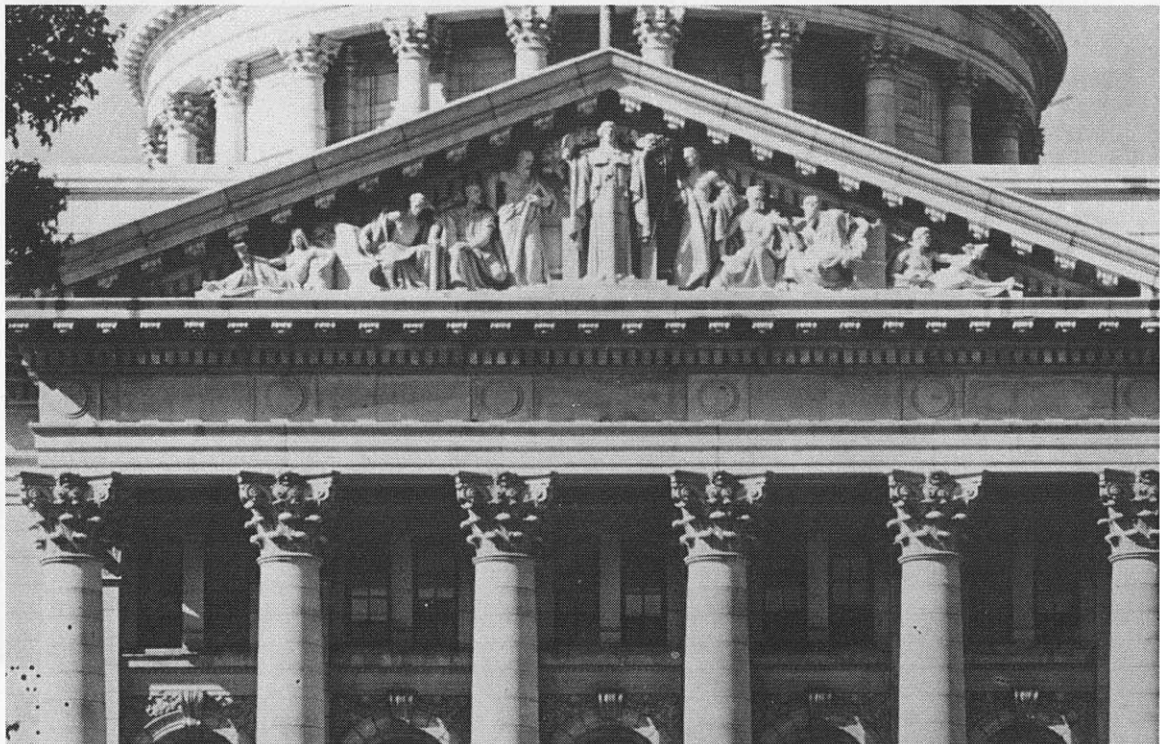


Photo courtesy Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, WHI(W/6/6/94

**8.10 Adolph Weinman, The Virtues and Traits of Character, South Wing Pediment, circa 1930**  
*Weinman selected virtues appropriate for the Wisconsin State Senate, the principal occupant of the South Wing, as subject matter for the group. The central figure holding a winged skull and a lamp signifies wisdom, while other figures represent thought and reflection. The group was rough-carved in a shed at the West Washington rail yards, as were all the remaining granite groups.*

The following description was presented in an early edition of *The Wisconsin Capitol Official Guide and History* (1921), edited by C. A. Holst. It was likely paraphrased from a description provided by the artist.

In the center is a female figure representing the state, and in throwing back her veil she proclaims that her resources are only partially developed. The horse, the ox, the sheep etc., represent the wonderful advantages Wisconsin offers for stock and dairy industries. Domesticated animals of the highest type, for which the state is admirably adapted and already famous, form a conspicuous part of the group. Agricultural interests are typified by the growing wheat, through which animals are being led, and by the corn harvested and evidently being saved for seed. No doubt it represents pure bred corn, which has already done much for Wisconsin. Forest products are seen in the lumber being carried by another figure, as well as by the walls forming part of the background of the scene. The wealth of the lakes and rivers is shown by two figures toward the left, handling fish nets and securing the haul. Hunting finds its symbolism in the Indian and his dog. The badger at the extreme left represents the emblem of the state.

**South Wing: *The Virtues and Traits of Character* by Adolph A. Weinman, 1912**

In 1909 Adolph Weinman (1870-1952) was a well-known German-American sculptor residing in New York when Post recommended that the Capitol Commission hire him to complete the south pediment. He had arrived in the United



Photo from Capitol Archives

**8.11 South Wing pediment conditions, 2000**  
*Roosting birds contributed heavily to erosion of heavily tooled surfaces of the sculpture. Exfoliation is particularly noticeable in the folds of the cloak at the bottom center of the photograph.*



States from Baden, Germany in the late 1880s, at nearly the same time as Karl Bitter. In the United States, he studied under Augustus Saint-Gaudens and assisted in the studio of Daniel Chester French. Two other of Weinman's works had close connections with Madison. In 1906 Weinman completed a statue of Abraham Lincoln for the former president's birthplace in Hodgenville, Kentucky. After it became known that a single replica of the statue was to be cast, Madison newspaper editor Richard Lloyd Jones, who was involved with the restoration of the Lincoln birthplace, secured a copy for the University of Wisconsin campus. Weinman's *Lincoln* was placed prominently in front of Main Hall (now Bascom Hall) in 1909. Also in 1912, along with the pediment group, Weinman was completing a portrait statue of former Capitol Commission member William F. Vilas. Vilas's widow had commissioned the freestanding figure for the Vicksburg battle site in Mississippi to commemorate her husband's involvement as a lieutenant colonel with the Twenty-third Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry.<sup>16</sup>

In September 1909 the commission signed a \$16,500 contract with Weinman for the South Wing pediment group, and by early 1910 the artist had completed his model. Post inspected the work in February; he then forwarded a photograph to the commission and urged it to approve the model immediately so that Woodbury Granite could begin cutting the necessary stones. The model arrived in Madison in June 1911 and craftsmen rough-carved the figures in the shed near the rail yards before the granite was transported to the Capitol to be installed and finished. Porter became frustrated that the work went slowly due to a lack of carvers at the site. In July Porter wrote Weinman that there were only four men at work (by comparison, nine had been engaged on the west pediment) and Porter was anxious to have the group placed as quickly as possible. Weinman came to Madison to inspect the work in November, when the stones were ready to be set in the pediment, where finishing would occur. By June 1912, Weinman completed the final carving and had the scaffolding removed.<sup>17</sup> Entitled *The Virtues and Traits of Character*, the group has "Wisdom" as its central figure, portrayed with the attributes of equity, righteousness, power, meditation and prudence. Depicted as a female figure in front of a mass of foliage, "Wisdom" holds a winged skull and mirror. Standing with her, one male figure holds an equilateral triangle and, another holds a square, representing equity and righteousness. Two groups of three seated figures each are positioned in the corners of the pediment; on the left, diplomacy, eloquence, and the clear vision of progress are represented, and on the right, power, meditation and prudence.

#### North Wing: *The Learning of the World* by Attilio Piccirilli, 1915

*The Learning of the World* by the New York artist Attilio Piccirilli was the last pediment group designed and installed; it was set into place in 1915. Piccirilli (1866-1945) was born in Massa, Italy and studied art at the Accademia San Luca in Rome. He moved to New York City in 1888 and established one of the most reputable stone carving studios in the country. It had worked recently with Post, carving the group for the pediment of Post's New York Stock Exchange (1901-03). Later, Piccirilli's studio carved the monumental marble statue of Abraham Lincoln designed by Daniel Chester French for the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC (1922).

On 23 August 1911, again on Post's recommendation, the commission decided to hire Piccirilli for the north pediment group. The following January, the commission signed a contract with Piccirilli for \$16,500, stipulating that the model would be completed by 1 October 1913 and the entire group be in place by 1 July 1914. On 23 April 1912, Piccirilli appeared before the commission to show photographs of his model and explain the significance of the design. The central female figure symbolized "enlightenment" and held a tablet inscribed *sapientia*, a Latin word meaning "wisdom." At this time Piccirilli had the impression that the large interior space on the second floor (to become the North Hearing Room) was to function as the legislative library as had been indicated on an earlier floor plan. The sculptural groups designed by Karl Bitter, for the east and west pediments, and Adolph Weinmann's group for the south, thematically reflected the function of the principal rooms of those wings. When Piccirilli wrote to Porter and made reference



#### 8.12 Attilio Piccirilli, circa 1910

Attilio Piccirilli was one of several Italian-American brothers operating a well-known stone-carving business in New York City. The brothers had completed the pediment group for George Post's New York Stock Exchange in 1903 and later carved the marble statue of Lincoln designed by Daniel Chester French for the Lincoln Memorial.

Photo courtesy Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, name file



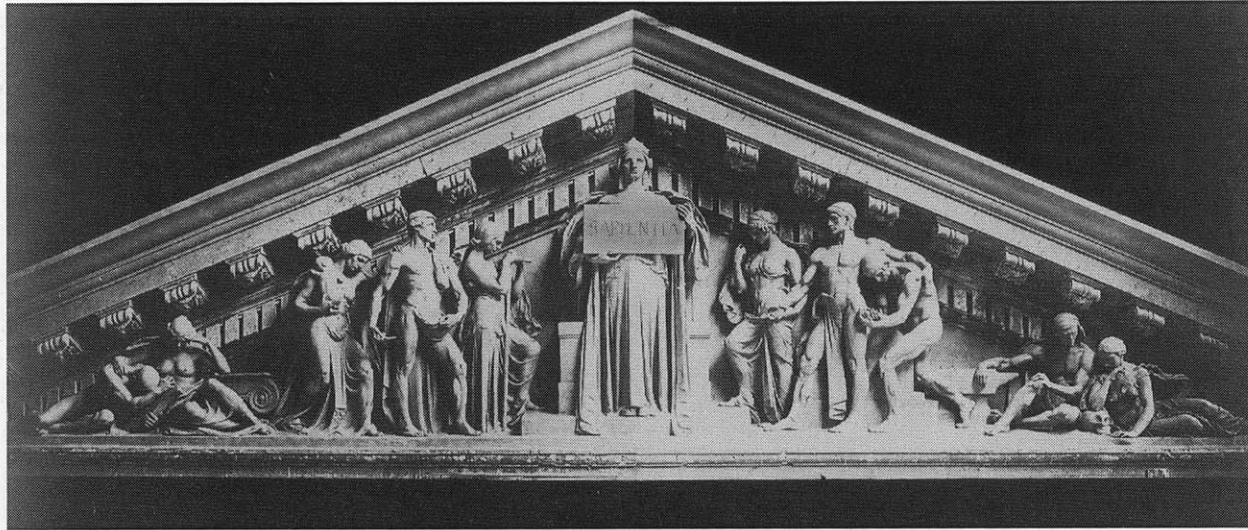


Photo from Capitol Archives



Photo from Capitol Archives

**8.13 (above) Attilio Piccirilli, *The Learning of the World*, North Wing pediment, model, 1914**  
*As the other sculptors had done, Piccirilli first sculpted a small model, then had it pointed up to full size. The central figure, "Sapientia" or "wisdom" in Latin, dominated a group intended to honor library-related themes, reflecting an earlier intended use of the large, formal space on the second floor, which before construction was transformed into the North Hearing Room for the use of the Railroad Commission.*

**8.14 (left) North Wing pediment conditions, 2000**  
*The North Wing group suffered less bird damage and more weathering than the other groups because of its location. Pitting resulting from exfoliation is particularly evident on the shoulders and heads of the figures.*

to his belief that his group would signal the entrance to "the library of the new State House," he was not aware of the changes in space allocation. Porter replied, requesting that the sculptor not send copies of his description of the pediment group to the commission because it was no longer consistent with the revised use of the wing. Piccirilli indicated dismay at not having been told of the change earlier and observed that he had read the description to the commission in April 1912 and not encountered criticism.<sup>18</sup>

The pediment group was modeled in half-size by Piccirilli, and then carved at full scale in Madison by F. A. Purdy, a Detroit stone carver, and his assistants. Rough carving began in the summer of 1914 in the shed at the rail yards. Once completed, the stones were transported to the Capitol and mounted in the tympanum; a scaffold was erected, and the carvers applied finishing touches. When the scaffold was removed in September 1915, the entire process had required slightly more than a year.<sup>19</sup> *The Learning of the World* represents human history from the earliest time to the present day and celebrates the collective knowledge of western culture. Enlightenment is portrayed by the central figure that holds the "sapientia" tablet. Agricultural activity and the family, representing the foundation of society, are shown in the secondary groups on either side of the central figure. The smaller figures in the corners are intended to personify the fine arts, philosophy, geometry, physics and the sciences.

#### **Cleaning and Repair of the Pediment Groups, 1993-2001**

In October of 1993, Wiss, Janney Elstner Associates, Inc. (WJE) of Chicago conducted a thorough inspection of the granite facing the West Wing and Northwest Pavilion. The firm's findings were presented in a report to Department of Facilities Development in March 1994. The study of the building exterior focused on the West Wing and the Northwest Pavilion with the goal that information pertinent to conditions across the Capitol's surface could be extrapolated from the more intense analysis in these locations. Although the granite generally was found to be in good condition, WJE observed extensive erosion on the freestanding statuary, consisting of roughened surface texture and loss of surface material. Laboratory analyses indicated that micro-fracturing of the granite caused by the carving process had made the surfaces of the pediment groups more vulnerable to erosion than other exterior granite elements. Another factor was that the statuary was exposed to weathering to a greater degree than most other stone elements. In addition to surface erosion, the WJE report documented dirt accumulation, including bird-related damage, and open and/or deteriorated joints on both the pediment and Dome groups. The firm recommended cleaning and repointing the statuary.<sup>20</sup>

WJE's 1994 recommendations were carried out when the pediment groups were conserved as a part of the repair and cleaning of the exterior in 2000 and 2001. For each of the pediment groups, every stone was inspected and documented using data sheets and digital photography. WJE made specific recommendations for each damaged stone. Common repairs included removing surface exfoliation, cleaning and blending spalls, grouting cracks and pinning loose stones, using either copper wire or helifix anchors. In some cases, most commonly on the east pediment, Dutchman repairs were executed to replace badly cracked carved elements, and heavily exfoliated stones were recarved to approximate their original appearance.<sup>21</sup> Great care was taken in cleaning the exterior statuary and the pediments were designated "special treatment areas," requiring additional treatment samples and approval by the architect before full-scale work was carried out. The exterior granite, including the statuary, was cleaned using the Sponge-Jet process, in which tiny bits of sponge impregnated with grit were applied with water at low-pressure. The specifications for the project required a nozzle pressure no greater than 85 psi with a flow rate of no greater than 15 pounds per minute. Early in the process, the subcontractor, JSL Pressure Washing, Inc., of Franklin Park, Illinois, determined with WJE and DFD, that a nozzle pressure of 80 psi applied from approximately 24 inches proved satisfactory in removing accumulated dirt.<sup>22</sup>



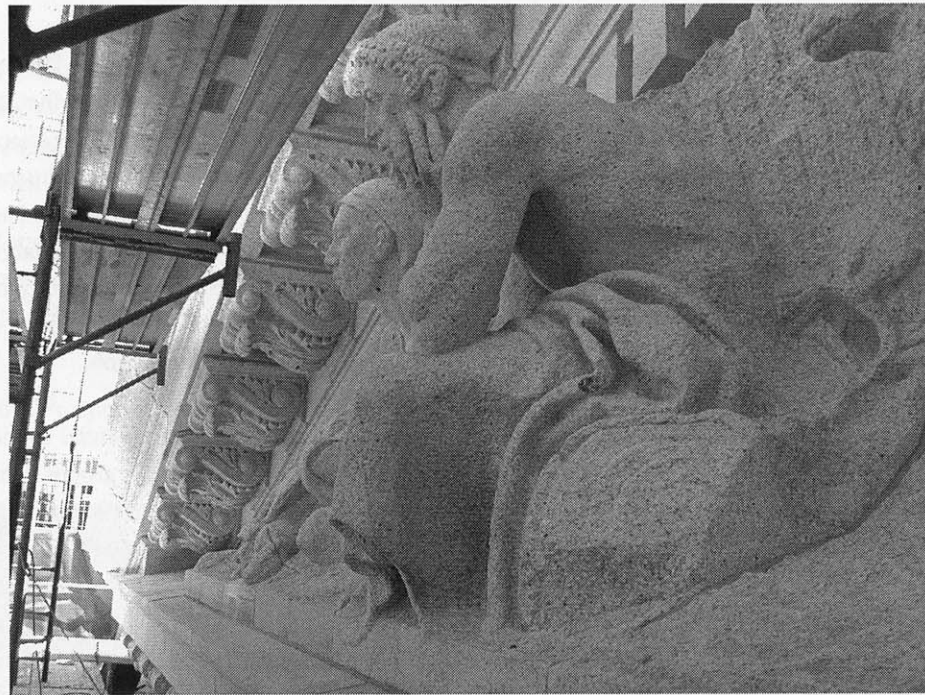


Photo from Capitol Archives

**8.15 West Wing pediment restoration, 2000**

*During the restoration highly detailed photographs were made to document conditions. In this instance, distressed areas were found in the folds of the garment worn by the figure on the right, especially near its foot and the sharp fold at its hip.*



Photo from Capitol Archives

**8.16 South Wing pediment restoration, 2000**

*After the winged skull was cleaned, WJE determined that a pin needed to be inserted to anchor the skull to the extended hand of wisdom.*



Photo from Capitol Archives

**8.17 East Wing pediment restoration, 2000**

*The central figure required two Dutchman repairs, meaning replacement of failed elements with new stone. The sides of the headpiece had separated from the rest of the sculpture and were recarved and pinned into place.*

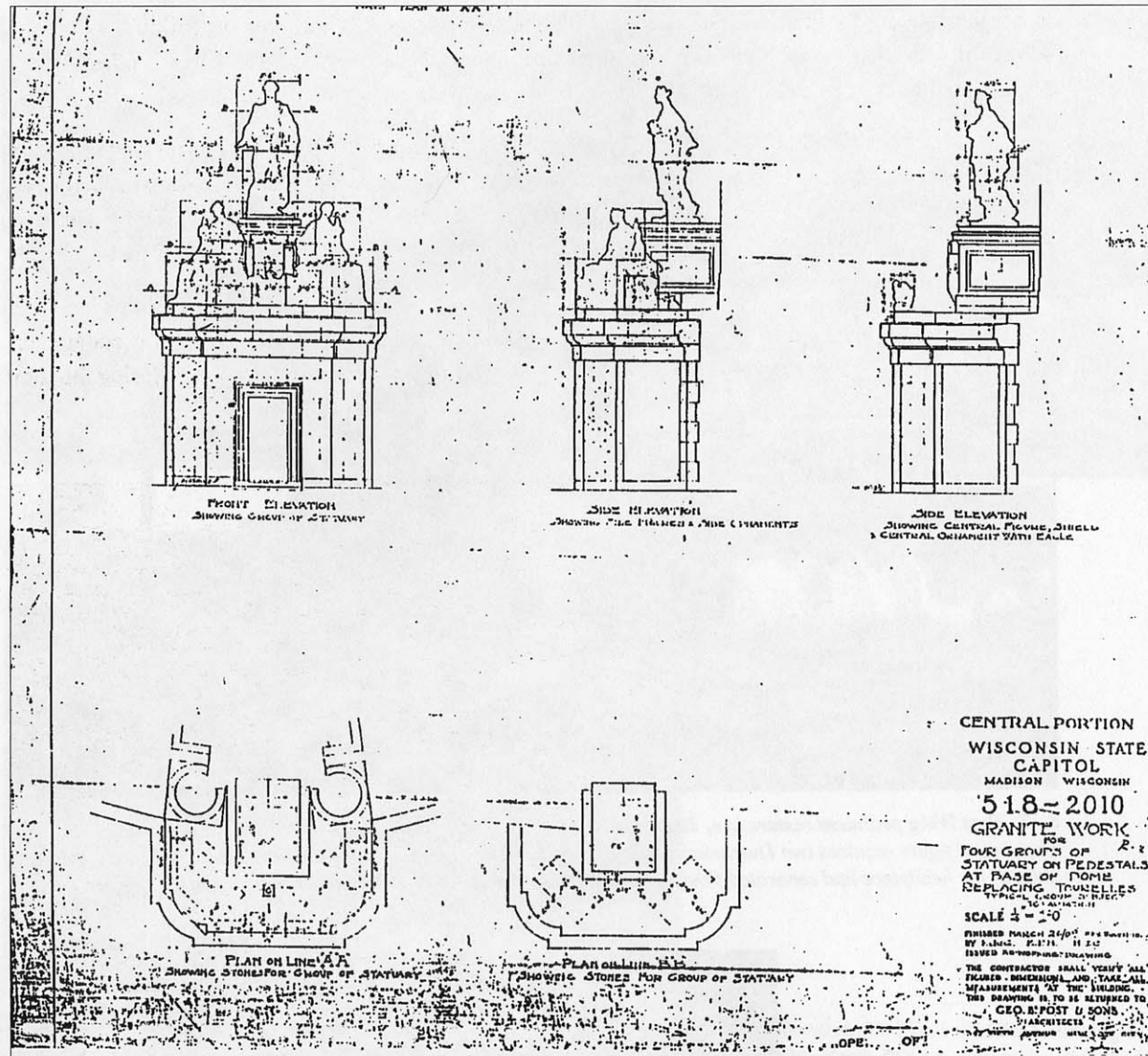


Photo from Capitol Archives

**8.18 North Wing pediment restoration, 2000**

*The nose on one of the figures was cracked, and it broke off during an attempt to pin it into place. The restoration masons then carved a replica and pinned it into place.*





**8.19 Post Drawing 518-2010, Granite Work for Four Groups of Statuary on Pedestal at Base of Dome (detail), revised 1910**  
 Post & Sons provided a drawing that indicated the placement and general composition of the statuary groups that would replace the tourelles above the pavilions at the base of the Drum. Sculptor Karl Bitter used the general plan for the four groups, all of them allegorical

## Dome Statuary Groups:

### *Strength, Wisdom, Faith and Abundance* by Karl Bitter, 1911-15

George B. Post & Sons' rendering for the Capitol competition in 1906 indicates that the architect envisioned a much grander sculptural program for the exterior than was put into place. In his earliest conception, Post had placed figures on the bases of the staircases leading to the pavilion entrances and lions on the balustrade of the ground-level terrace. Post also had called for small tower-like structures, tourelles, to be positioned at the base of the Dome; however, Chicago architect Daniel Burnham advised that the tourelles, which he considered too large, be eliminated and sculptural groups commissioned for this location.<sup>23</sup> On 29 October 1907, Post spoke to the Capitol Commission concerning his proposed change and on 16 July 1908 the architect wrote of his general intention with the sculptural groups.<sup>24</sup> Further, he advanced the idea that Karl Bitter would be the appropriate man for the job.

French and Bitter both agree with me in the opinion that it is essential to the artistic effect of the Capitol Building that one man should be employed on all four of the groups flanking the Dome, which take the place of the tourelles which originally flanked the Dome. It is essential that while the groups should be different in character and design they should have practically the same silhouette and absolutely the same scale. I am strongly of the opinion that it will be wise to fall back upon Bitter for these groups, for he has a better appreciation of the architectural effect of sculpture than any of his fellows, although he may not be a greater Sculptor, and the grand architectural effect of the building as a whole will be largely made or marred by these four groups of sculpture. We have an estimate from Bitter for these groups, to which he will adhere, and I do not believe we could get any other man of recognized ability (and for this work we certainly cannot afford to trust to luck with a youngster) for two or three times the price for which Bitter will do the work. . . . His price was \$10,500 [per group]. At this price the work complete costs less than the tourelles.<sup>25</sup>

Subsequently, Woodbury Granite contracted with Bitter for the work, for which he was to receive a total of \$42,000.<sup>26</sup> Bitter supplied Post with sketches that were incorporated in an architectural drawing of the Dome (sheet 518-2010) issued by Post & Sons in March 1909. In December 1910, Woodbury Granite requested Bitter to supply jointing plans so that it could cut and deliver the stones for on-site carving, which occurred during 1911 and 1912 in the shed at the rail yards. Much of the work was carried out by a crew of stonecutters under the direction of Bitter's longtime associate, John Grignola.<sup>27</sup> The groups were installed before Woodbury Granite had finished placing stone on the Dome, a situation that caused Bitter concern about the safety of the groups; despite Bitter's anxiety, no mishaps occurred.

Each sculptural group is composed triangularly with the base reinforced horizontally by an eagle with out-spread wings that connects the arms of the seated figures' chairs. There are two female statuary groups: *Faith* on the Dome's southeast side and *Abundance* on the northwest. Male figures comprise the two other figural groups: *Strength*, also referred to as *Force* by the artist, to the southeast; and *Wisdom* to the northeast. The four groups were installed between 1911 and 1915.<sup>28</sup> On 15 February 1911, Bitter wrote to Porter, offering his own "perhaps clumsy words" concerning his intent with the four groups. He wanted them to "illustrate certain fundamental qualities which must be logically possessed by the people of the State to make them great and powerful." He further described the symbolism this way.

By "Strength" I have in mind the virility and manhood and the physical force which is evident in the common industries of the state, the muscle and sinew which is the requirement, or at least one of the chief requirements, of a people that shall be called progressive. I also have in mind the fact that the State has taken part in the past in the great struggles of our country and has lent its powerful arm to



fight in its battles.

By “Wisdom” I shall refer to the prudent mind which guides the powerful arm, which must direct all labour and effort to make it right and advantageous. A wisdom that is based upon the experience of the past and is fostered by institutions of learning and which is part and parcel, and not the smallest one at that, of all human activity.

In choosing “Faith” for one of the groups I wish to point to the religious life of the community which has equal importance with, in the opinion of many perhaps more so, . . . any other phase of man’s aspirations and efforts. It is the broadest word I can find to cover the existence of a soul and its hopes and fears. . . .

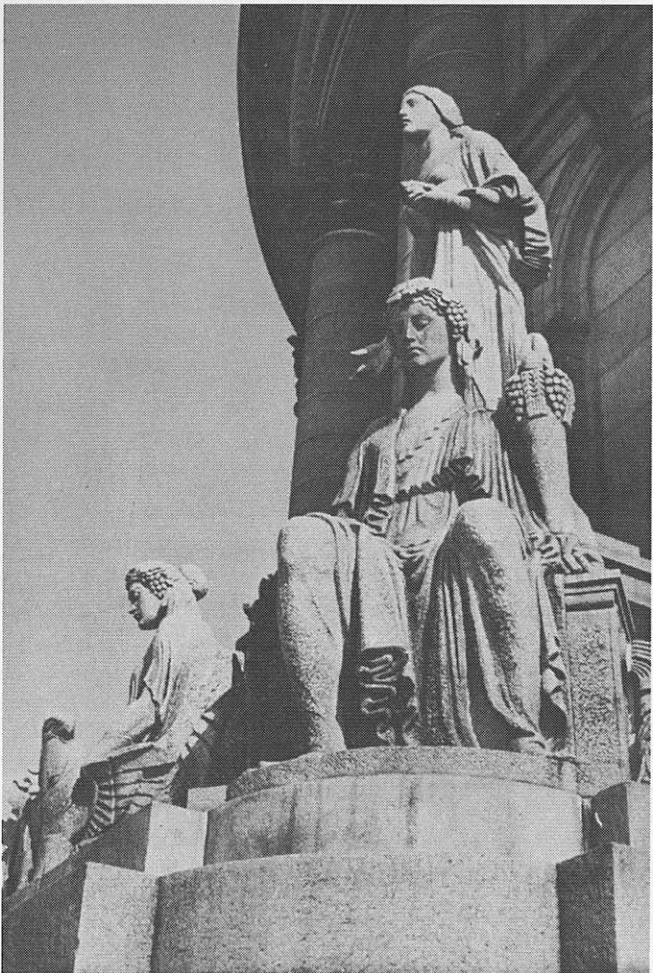
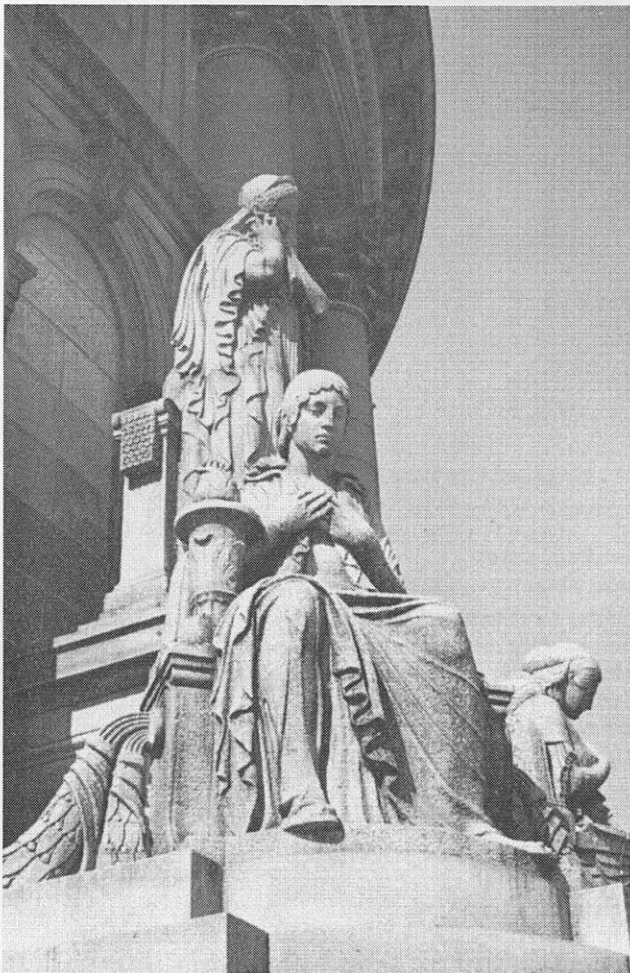
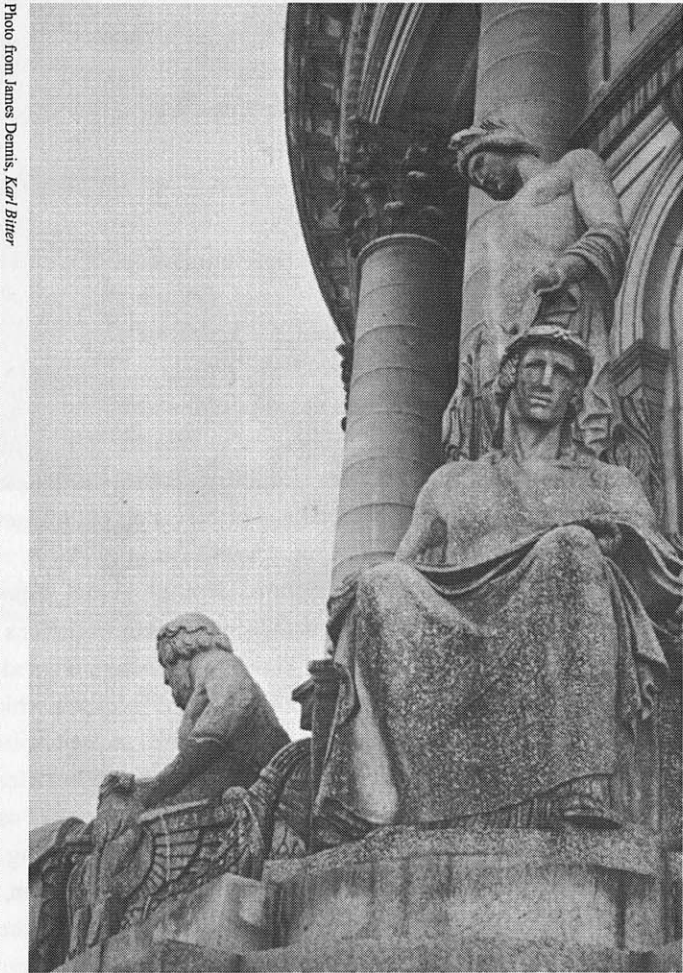
Lastly I will speak of “Prosperity and Abundance.” In this I mean to cover that hope of success

which is the stimulus for the wealth of a people and the basis of its earthly welfare. The fruitfulness of all effort and labour shall be shown and the abundance which comes as a result of the other qualifications I have mentioned.

Bitter indicated that his comments should not be taken too literally, that they were offered only to illustrate the ideas that guided him. He closed, “it will be impossible for most people to read off these precise sentiments, which I here explain, in the architectural granite statues and ornamentations which will be placed upon the building not as an assemblage of art objects but as organic parts of the structure.”<sup>29</sup>

**Cleaning and Repair of the Dome Statuary Groups, 1993-2001**

In its 1994 report, WJE cited general deterioration, including exfoliation, mottling, erosion and dirt accumulation. Shortly after this study, it was observed that the surfaces on which the groups were placed (roofs enclosing the short



**8.20 Karl Bitter, Strength, above the Southeast Pavilion, circa 1966**  
*Bitter created two groups of male figures, and two female. All featured a standing figure flanked by two seated figures. Bitter said this group reflected “the physical force which is evident in the common industries of the state.”*

**8.21 Karl Bitter, Wisdom, above the Northeast Pavilion, circa 1966**  
*The second of the male groups referred, in Bitter’s words, “to the prudent mind which guides the powerful arm, which must direct all labour and effort to make it right and advantageous.”*

**8.22 Karl Bitter, Faith, above the Southeast Pavilion, circa 1966**  
*This female group represented to Bitter “the religious life of the community which is equal [in] importance with . . . man’s aspirations and efforts. It is the broadest word I can find to cover the existence of a soul and its hopes and fears.”*

**8.23 Karl Bitter, Prosperity and Abundance, above the Northwest Pavilion, circa 1966**  
*This group is usually known only as Abundance, but Bitter called it Prosperity and Abundance. “In this,” he wrote, “I mean to cover that hope of success which is the stimulus for the wealth of a people and the basis of its earthly welfare.”*



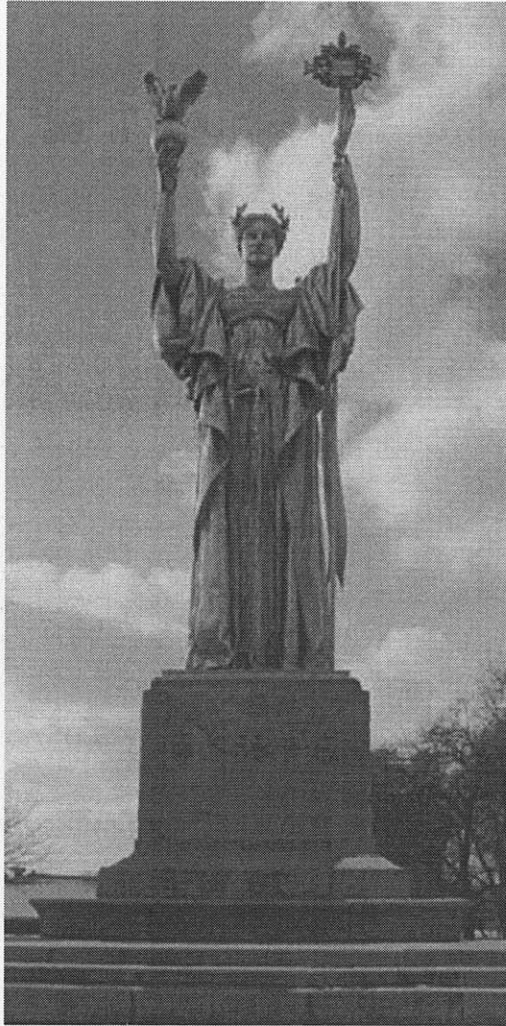


Photo courtesy Heidi Sperry

**8.24 Daniel Chester French, *The Republic* (replica), Chicago, 2002**

Daniel Chester French, the sculptor of *Wisconsin* atop the lantern of the Capitol, came to know George Post through his work at the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 in Chicago. French's *Republic* stood at the head of the principal lagoon, a setting that was considered to embody the Beaux-Arts splendor of the fair. The replica is in Grant Park.



Photo courtesy Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, name file

**8.25 Helen Mears, circa 1900**

An Oshkosh native, Helen Farnsworth Mears offered three different designs for the statue surmounting the Capitol Dome before the commission finally awarded the contract to Daniel Chester French. Shortly after her death in 1916 at the age of forty-three, a group of Wisconsin women purchased for the Capitol a marble version of Mears's *Genius of Wisconsin*, which had been displayed at the Columbian Exposition in a clay version as it had been sculpted originally by Mears.

hallways that provide access to the seventh level observation deck) were compromised and water was infiltrating the interior. Copper sheet roofing had been used originally and this material, which extended beneath the statues, had been covered later with a rubber membrane. Because of deterioration that had occurred to both elements, the installation of new roofs was recommended by Kahler Slater Architects, Inc. of Milwaukee and Madison. To accomplish this, it was necessary to remove the statuary groups. The project was undertaken in August 1996 by J. P. Cullen & Sons, Inc. of Janesville, the general contractor for restoration. The contractor rented a 25-story-tall, 500-ton crane to remove the groups, each of which consists of nine distinct granite pieces. The granite elements were crated and stored on the Capitol grounds for the three weeks required to complete the roof replacement. After the installation of the new terne-coated stainless steel roofing, each of the statuary groups was returned to its original location. Prior to the disassembly of the groups, the mortar joints were studied so they could be replicated. Shims were used in reassembling the groups to ensure the proper mortar width.<sup>30</sup>

The Bitter groups at the base of the drum were subject to the same type of cleaning and repair as the sculptural groups in the pediment during WJE's exterior conservation project of 2000-01. The most common repairs included removing surface exfoliation; cleaning and blending spalls; pinning loose stones, using either copper wire or helifix anchors; and grouting cracks. Dutchman repairs to replace badly weathered or damaged stones were used in a couple of instances. The SpongeJet cleaning method was used.

**Figure surmounting the Dome: *Wisconsin* by Daniel Chester French, 1914**

By the time the Capitol was under construction, Daniel Chester French (1850-1931) had achieved recognition as one of the most accomplished American artists of the period. Born in Exeter, New Hampshire, he studied sculpture in New York and in Florence, Italy. His reputation was established with the *Minute Man* (1875), placed in Concord, Massachusetts to commemorate the American Revolution. Becoming increasingly well known for public memorials and monuments, French established a studio in New York City in 1887. In 1892, French was called to Chicago to execute two of the most prominent sculptural works at the Columbian Exposition, *The Republic* and (with Edward Clark Potter) *The Triumph of Columbus*. *The Republic* was prominently positioned above the waters of the Main Lagoon, along which the most significant buildings of the Fair were placed. It represents an important prototype to *Wisconsin*, which surmounts the Capitol Dome at an elevation of 269 feet.

French was not the first artist considered for this important work. Late in 1910, as Woodbury Granite began cutting stone for the Dome, the commission began negotiations with Helen Farnsworth Mears.<sup>31</sup> Although a Wisconsin native, Mears was residing in New York and had been a favored pupil of the highly regarded sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens. In 1893, she completed *The Genius of Wisconsin*, which was exhibited in the Wisconsin Pavilion at the Columbian Exposition. The piece had been relocated to the Capitol and placed in the Rotunda following the fair, giving Mears local presence and recognition. In December 1910 Mears supplied the commission with a photograph of a model she prepared as the figure to be placed atop the Dome. Post supported Mears in this effort, both for her association with Saint-Gaudens and for the time she had spent preparing the model, a female figure crowned in wheat raising both arms in blessing. The design did not impress the commission, however, and even Post came to express his doubts. Assuming she still had Post's support and with the belief she had the contract, Mears responded to the commission's criticisms with a revised model that she presented personally in Madison in January 1911. Mears's second model, somewhat resembling the figure *Freedom* by Thomas Crawford on the dome of the National Capitol, showed a female figure with one hand resting on a shield and the other upraised with a scepter; she wore a helmet adorned with a badger. Mears offered to complete the figure and ship it to Madison for \$16,500. Again, the commission was not enthusiastic, requested changes and Mears revised the design.<sup>32</sup> By May, Post told the commission that Mears could not possibly have an acceptable





Photo courtesy Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, WH(X3)15382

**8.26 Helen Mears, proposed model for Wisconsin, 1911**  
Mears modeled a finely detailed figure in clay for the lantern. The figure drew upon Thomas Crawford's Freedom on the dome of the U.S. Capitol, which has an upraised arm and the other resting on a shield. Mears employed Wisconsin motifs, such as the state's coat of arms, on the figure.

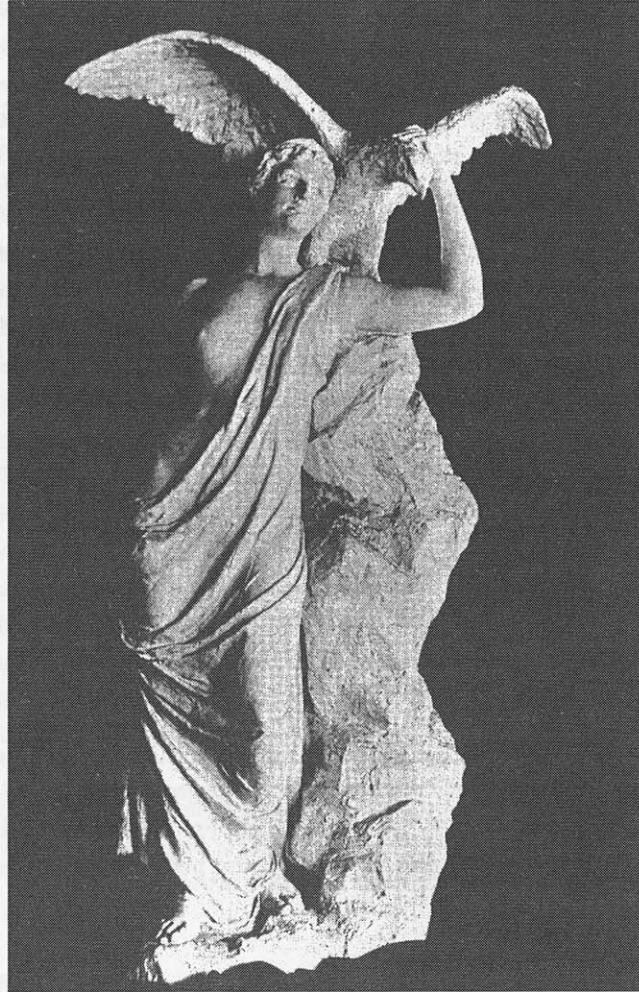


Photo courtesy Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, PH 314 (3)

**8.27 Helen Mears, Genius of Wisconsin, 1893**  
Mears's nine-foot figure, carved in marble by the Piccirilli brothers of New York, now stands in the center of the first floor of the Southeast Pavilion.

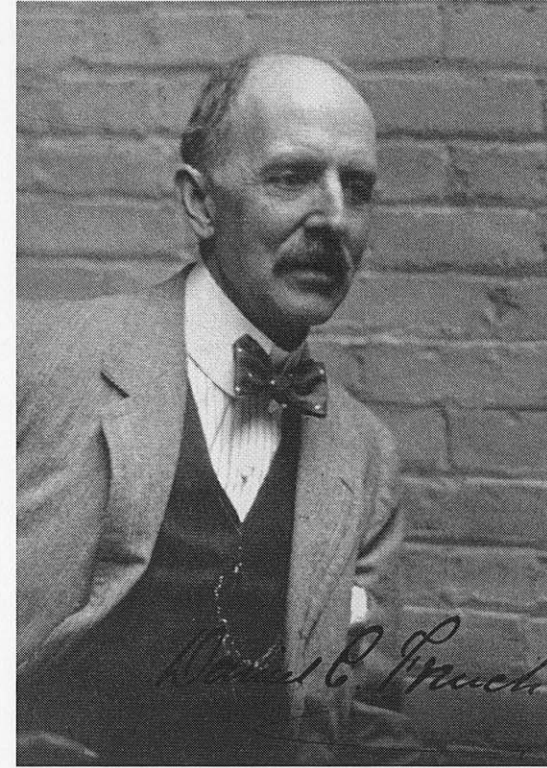


Photo courtesy Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, name file

**8.28 Daniel Chester French, circa 1915**  
French was one of America's most influential sculptors of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He and architect George Post had encountered one another at the Columbian Exposition where French's statue The Republic was displayed prominently. This earlier work by French provided a prototype for Wisconsin, a statue that Post wanted to be a "colossal figure which forms a finial for the entire design at the top of the Dome."



Photo courtesy New York Historical Society

**8.29 French's Wisconsin being hoisted from the roof to the Dome, 1914**  
French's Wisconsin was shipped to Madison in February 1914 and stood in its crate on the roof of a wing until July. Hoisting occurred on 20 July and attracted significant public attention.



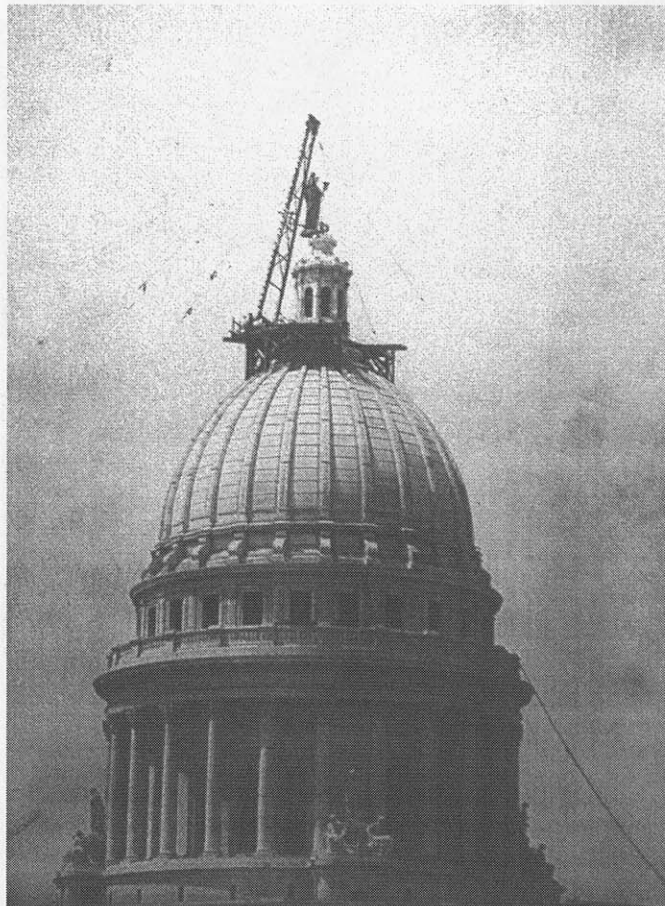


Photo courtesy Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, WHI(X3)29042

**8.30 Wisconsin being lowered into place, 1914**  
George Post had indicated his preference before his death in 1913 that Wisconsin be placed to face south-east (180 degrees from her position in this photograph) toward Lake Monona, marking the Southeast Pavilion as the Capitol's principal, ceremonial entrance. The statue was gilded with antique-looking gold leaf to give the immediate appearance of age.



Photo from Capitol Archives

**8.31 Regilding of Wisconsin, 1993**  
Scaffolding with a plastic enclosure was erected around Wisconsin in 1993 during a complex restoration process. All coatings of gold leaf, paints and other substances were removed, the statue was repaired, and new surfaces were applied.

have her design ready within the required time frame but he urged the group to compensate Mears for her work on the model. Mears developed yet a third model, but the commission never saw it. In August the commission decided to employ Daniel Chester French to create a statue for the Dome and paid Mears \$1,500 for her preliminary work.<sup>33</sup>

Post had consulted with French early in the process concerning the appropriate sculptural treatment for the exterior and potential artists for the work. In 1908 Post wrote to William Vilas, a commissioner, that French had tentatively proposed “the colossal figure which forms a finial for the entire design at the top of the Dome.” He continued, “it will tax the ability of even as great an Artist as French to produce a figure which will be entirely satisfactory.”<sup>34</sup> Although French’s contract for the piece was not formally established until 12 September 1912, he was selected as its sculptor at the commission’s 23 August 1911 meeting, at which George Post and his son James Otis were present. French already had begun work on the model and, on 13 May 1912, submitted a contract to the commission that was prepared by Post’s firm. In that document French did not assume responsibility for placing the statue, an oversight for which Porter later admonished Post. In August, French indicated that he was willing to sign a contract that stipulated he would be responsible to place the statue. He also wrote that he had completed his half-size model and that his work was progressing at such a rate that the bronze statue would be ready to be installed the following spring. The contract that was finally established between French and the commission included the clause that “the sculptor shall transport the casting to Madison, Wisconsin, cart it to the Capitol and set it in place.” For his services, French was to be paid \$20,000 in four installments: \$2,000 upon completion of the sketch, \$8,000 upon completion of the models, \$8,000 upon delivery of the castings, and \$2,000 after completion and acceptance of the entire work.<sup>35</sup>

In late August 1912, Post and his son William inspected the work at French’s studios near Stockbridge, Massachusetts. Post approved the model and recommended French be paid half his fee immediately. The Roman Bronze Works of Green Point, New York, pointed-up French’s figure to full size by late March 1913, and the bronze casting was completed by the following May. At this point, however, French apparently was not pleased with the finish and began

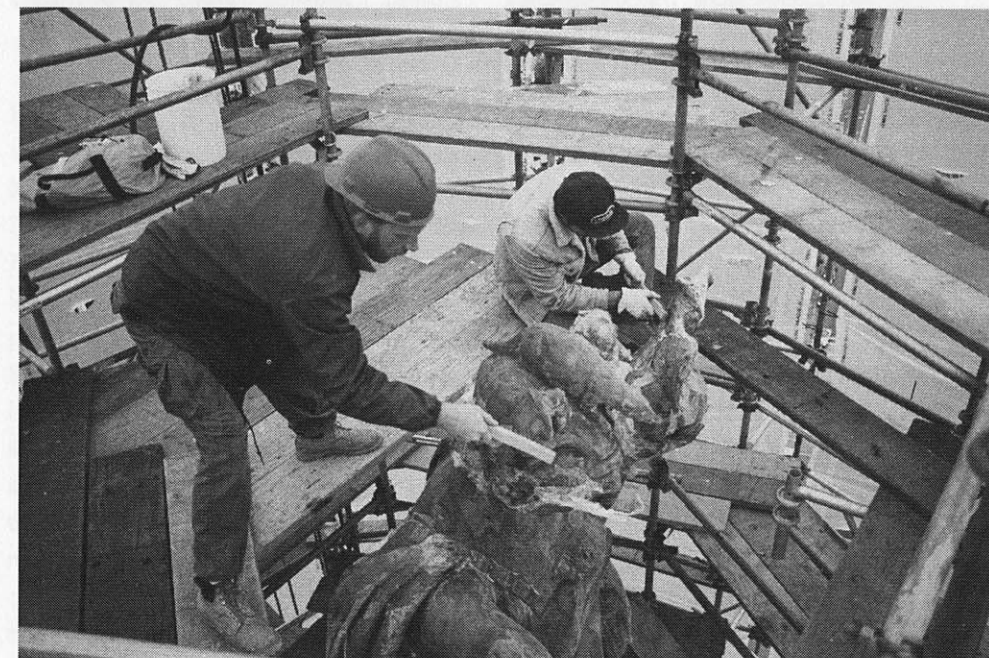


Photo from Capitol Archives

**8.32 Cleaning Wisconsin’s headdress and arm, 1993**  
Conservators used wire brushes to clean the statue before making repairs and applying undercoatings in preparation for the gold leaf. The enclosure reduced the winds that routinely buffet the Dome and provided a reasonably weather-controlled environment for the work, which took place during the inclement month of November.



looking into having the bronze statue gilded. He obtained an estimate of \$325 from L. Marcotte and Company of New York and wrote Post about his interest in having *Wisconsin* gilded. Post agreed and urged the commission to approve the expenditure. Post assured Porter that “after the gold is applied to the bronze it is toned down by glazing and varnish until its excessive brilliancy is destroyed—or at least reduced to a tone which the gilding would assume after quite a number of years['] exposure to the action of the elements.” In August, Porter approved the extra cost.<sup>36</sup>

By the end of May 1914, the construction of the Dome was at last completed; all the granite was in place and ready to be cleaned. In what was seen as an important culminating event, *Wisconsin* was hoisted to the top of the lantern on 20 July 1914. The statue had been shipped from New York in February, and in March the Woodbury Granite crew used its derricks to lift the statue, still in its crate, to the roof of one of the wings until it could be placed on the Dome. As *Wisconsin* awaited installation, Porter became concerned with her proper orientation since the Capitol was without an obvious front entrance. Accordingly, he solicited French’s opinion. French recommended facing *Wisconsin* either west (toward the university) or east (looking toward the main passenger railroad depot). Porter extended the same inquiry to Post & Sons (George Post had died the previous November) and in response the firm telegraphed Porter on 23 June, “We strongly advise facing the statue to the southeast according to father’s desire.”<sup>37</sup> James Otis Post expressed his father’s wish more fully in a letter:

Father recommended the facing of the statue to the southeast. . . . [H]e and I discussed this matter several times in Madison and he always felt that the principal front of the building was towards the Lake to the southeast, and referred to the parkway leading to the Lake as being in front of the Capitol. There is no question in our minds but that the statue should fact the southeast. . . .<sup>38</sup>

On 20 July as thousands of spectators watched, the three-ton statue was carefully set into place on top of the lantern. Some minor repair was needed to the gilding, and the four anchor bolts had to be replaced with longer ones. Shortly after the repairs were complete, Porter wrote to French that “the statue looks very well and I think the majority of people are very well pleased with it.”<sup>39</sup>

The great gilded figure stands at a height of 15 feet, 5 inches and holds her right arm outstretched with an open hand gesturing toward Lake Monona; in her left hand, she holds an orb on which an eagle, dwarfed by her scale, is perched. She wears a classical chiton or robe that is covered with a cape and fastened in front with an ornamental breastplate that bears an elaborate *W* motif. Her headdress incorporates symbolic iconography that refers to the attributes of the state. Abundance and agriculture are represented by a pair of cornucopias, ears of corn and decorative flowers; a badger, the state animal, peers over her forehead from the crown of her headpiece. Cast in six sections, the hollow bronze statue is positioned on a convex base inscribed with the words “D.C. French, Sc. 1912” and “Cast by Roman Bronze Foundry, N.Y.”

#### Cleaning and Repair of *Wisconsin*, 1932-1998

Partly due to its inaccessibility, *Wisconsin* has had comparatively little conservation over the years. In 1932 the A. E. Olson Steeplejack Co. of Janesville regilded the statue, along with the Capitol flagpoles, for \$444. In 1957 Wallace JaKa of Milwaukee spent two weeks cleaning and regilding the bronze, applying 9,500 sheets of gold leaf. JaKa first washed *Wisconsin* in an acid bath and scrubbed the surface to prepare it for a coat of plastic aluminum, which was followed by a size of zinc chromate. JaKa also repaired a hole through the thumb and right finger with a silver solder. Twenty-three-karat gold leaf was applied and the surface burnished with cotton.<sup>40</sup> By the late 1980s, it was observed that much of the gilding had worn away, leaving surfaces degraded by metal corrosion and paint failure, conditions present across the surface of the figure. Also, previous efforts at regilding had resulted in surface unevenness that obscured some of the details. In May 1990 the State Capitol and Executive Residence Board (SCERB) voted in favor



Photo from Capitol Archives



Photo courtesy of Zane Williams

#### 8.33 (above) *Wisconsin* with re-gilded headdress, 1993

A badger, two cornucopia and two ears of corn comprise the headdress and were among the first sections to receive new gold leaf. Here, the face of the statue has received the undercoatings in preparation for regilding.

#### 8.34 (right) *Wisconsin* restored and regilded, 1993

Fully restored and regilded with a bright gold leaf, the statue gleamed more brightly than it ever had because of the nature of the gold leaf applied during restoration.



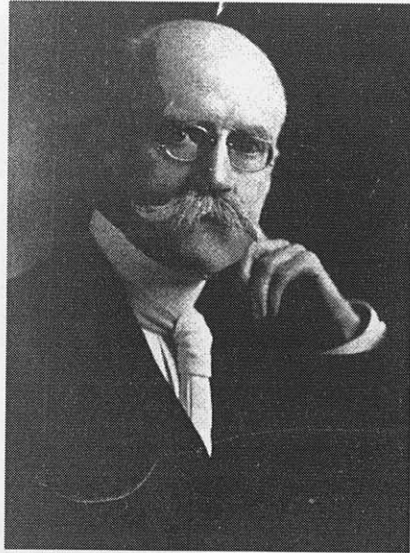


Photo courtesy Wisconsin Historical Society Archives, name file

**8.35 (left) Edwin Blashfield, circa 1900**  
The Capitol Commission had hired Edwin Blashfield in 1908 to create the Assembly Chamber mural, then hired him again in 1912 to complete the prominently situated mural for the oculus at the top of the Rotunda. Blashfield, from New York, was then at the height of his career, having recently completed murals for the Minnesota and Iowa capitol. He later painted a mural for the Library of Congress.

**8.36 (below) Edwin Blashfield, Resources of Wisconsin, oculus of the Dome, circa 1908**

Blashfield's oil-on-canvas mural was attached to a concave surface suspended above the oculus and is oriented to the southeast, like Wisconsin atop the Dome. The central figure holds a Wisconsin coat of arms and a sheaf of wheat while her attendants unfurl a U.S. flag and display other resources



Photo courtesy Eric Oxendorf

of conserving and regilding the statue as proposed by the Division of State Facilities Development (DSFM), and the Wisconsin Building Commission approved funding for the project in June 1990.<sup>41</sup>

On 4 September 1990 the contract for the work was offered formally to a joint venture comprised of Christine Roussel, Inc. of New York City and Venus Bronze Works, Inc. of Detroit, Michigan.<sup>42</sup> Anton Rajer of Madison and Sheboygan, who had been involved in some preliminary planning, was employed as an art conservation consultant to the state and assumed responsibility for documenting the condition and treatment of the statue throughout the project. As a part of the contracted work, the consultant team was to provide information to the state that would lead to an informed decision concerning the most appropriate gold leaf to use. Christine Roussel had contacted Peter Sepp of Sepp Leaf Products, Inc., in New York to learn of the availability of "SEPP 23.5 kts. XX Deep, DBL. 21.75 grams 1000," which the consultants recommended preliminarily. Instead, possibly on the advice of Rajer, the state acquired the gold leaf directly from the manufacturer. On 10 September 1990 Art McClure, the Capital Architect for the Department of Administration, wrote to Christine Roussel, Inc. "We have selected the SEPP SL23.5 DA Antique Double 23 1/2K gold leaf. . . . Please have us billed directly by SEPP." On 24 September the first change order was issued by the state for its purchase of gold leaf, which had been itemized as \$9,500 in the consultants' proposal. With scaffolding erected by Joe Daniels Construction Co., Inc. of Madison fully in place, work began the same day.<sup>43</sup>

The conservation and regilding of *Wisconsin* began with a prewash using a nonionic detergent that loosened dirt and debris; the statue was then hand-cleaned with bronze and bristle brushes. In order to obtain a clean surface without the use of solvents that could leave residue on the metal or potentially stain the granite Dome, a high-pressure water wash was used to complete the removal of remaining paints, size, gold leaf and other residue. The bronze was repaired as needed and the statue was given a "neutralizing wash" of a nonionic detergent followed by a water rinse. A final wash with benzotriazole, a corrosion inhibitor used in the protection of copper and copper alloys, completed the cleaning. At this point, the scaffolding was enclosed with insulated thermal sheeting to create a tent-like work space where temperature control was established and a wind-free environment was created for the successful application of the gilding. The next steps involved the application of primer coatings. Two coats of CheckRust Fabrication primer MP-9095, a zinc chromate, completely covered the statue. Light sanding occurred between applications. This was followed by the application of "teinte dure," a coating that seals the metal and prepares the surface to receive the size and result in a highly reflective surface. The size recommended was a LeFranc & Bourgeois product, which was to be applied in the late afternoon to guarantee a twelve-hour dry time before the gold leaf was placed. The size and leaf were applied in sections in which the gilding of the area could be accomplished over the course of a work day. The leaf was applied with brushes with tips made of badger and rabbit hair. Even with the protective barrier enclosing the scaffolding and team from the elements, by October the weather had turned inclement, creating conditions unsuitable to the application of gold leaf.<sup>44</sup> The regilding project was completed successfully in November. In 1998, additional work was undertaken to repair and regild the projecting hand, which had been damaged by peregrine falcons landing on the statue. The birds had been encouraged to nest at the building in the 1990s, when nesting boxes were set up on the Capitol, but they later were removed.

## Interior Artwork

The monumental spaces of the interior were given their artistic finishes with the close involvement of Post. Artwork and other decorative features were conceived intrinsically, and the architect determined the placement and configuration of the murals and mosaics installed in most of the public spaces. The themes established in the sculpture of the exterior were repeated and amplified in the interior art program. The opportunity to depict allegorical and historic scenes could be accomplished to a much more literal degree than with the exterior figural groups. In most cases the



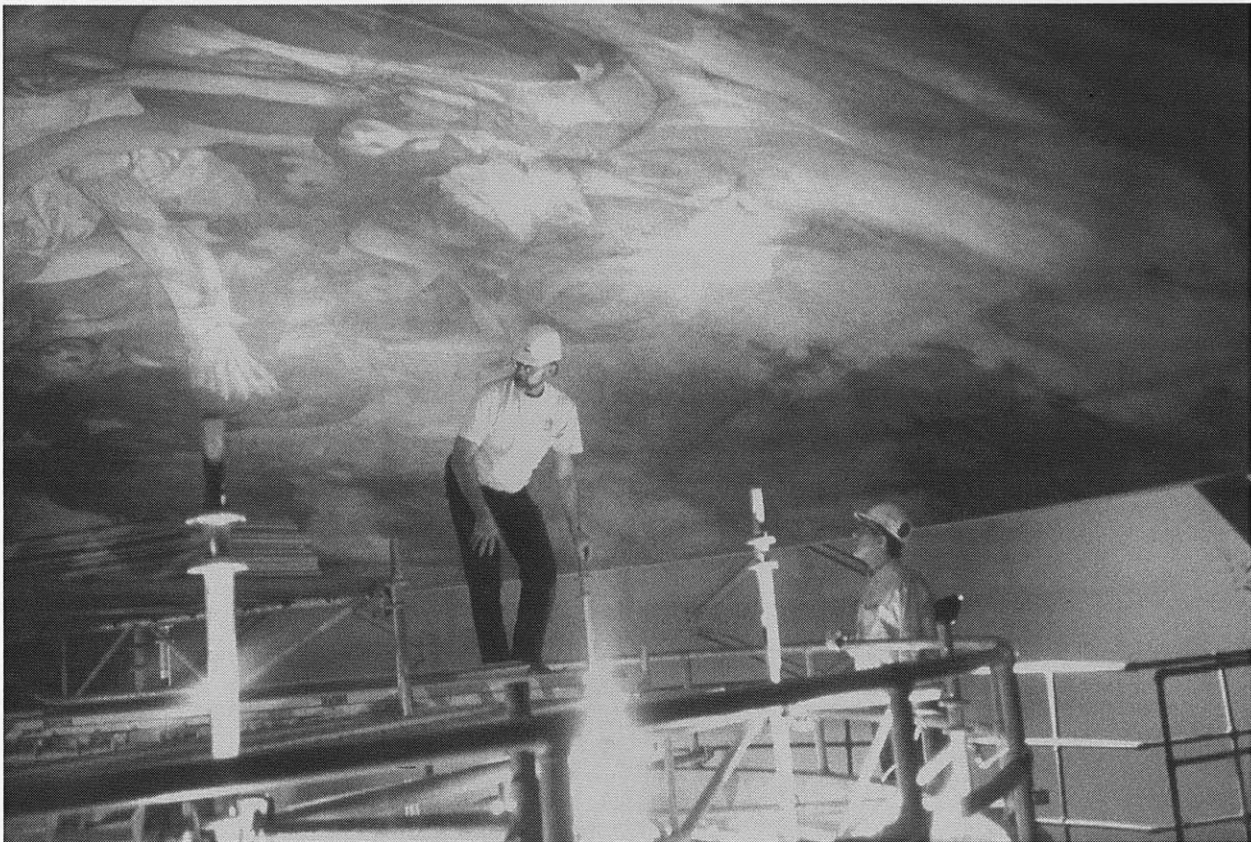
content of the art was established through tight collaboration between the artist and the Capitol Commission with communication facilitated by Post, or after his death by his son James Otis Post. Because of the representational quality of the work, frequently animated discussion ensued in response to the sketches and statements the artists provided concerning thematic intent. The murals and mosaics of the Wisconsin State Capitol represent the work of a number of the most significant American artists working in monumental public art at the time, a trend fueled by the popularity of American Beaux-Arts architecture following the Columbian Exposition.

The most elaborate works were installed in the Rotunda, the most significant public space in the Capitol. Not only the center of the building, the Rotunda also is the center of the city and symbolically the center of the state. The mural in the central circular opening at the top, 200 feet above the ground floor, reiterates the theme of Wisconsin's natural bounty and the rich glass mosaics in the pendentives are intended to evoke Byzantium splendor. The principal public spaces in each of the wings also were provided with large and elaborately conceived murals. The Assembly Chamber mural in the West Wing was the first monumental piece of art completed in the Capitol, and it was received with enthusiasm. In the East Wing, murals were installed in the Executive Chamber and the Supreme Court Hearing Room; in both instances difficulties emerged among the parties involved and perseverance was required. The Senate Chamber murals in the South Wing completed in 1915 show the recent opening of the Panama Canal and by 1916, the North Hearing Room murals were in place, depicting the evolution of transportation.

**Central Portion: *The Resources of Wisconsin* by Edwin Howland Blashfield, 1914**

Just as an allegorical figure representing the state crowned the Dome, “Wisconsin” played a similarly prominent role in the interior, being represented in several ways, but most especially in a mural in the oculus at the top of the Rotunda. Edwin H. Blashfield (1848-1936) had only recently completed a large mural for the Assembly Chamber, *Wisconsin, Past, Present and Future*, when the discussion concerning the commission for the mural in the “eye of the dome” was initiated by Post. In October 1911, Post reminded Porter that the oculus mural was yet to be commissioned, and would need to be soon if it were to be finished on time. Post recommended Blashfield, based partly on the enthusiastic reception his assembly murals had received. Also, the two men had an existing relationship through their work together on several of Post’s other buildings including the Manufactures and Liberal Arts Building for the Columbian Exposition (1893), the Bank of Pittsburgh (1895) and the Great Hall of the College of the City of New York (1903-07). By 1911, Blashfield was one of America’s foremost painters of historical scenes; he was known for the careful attention he extended to costume and furnishings and for the integration of allegorical figures. On 5 January 1912, Blashfield signed a contract with the commission; he was charged with completing and installing the circular mural, which would become the centerpiece of the Capitol Rotunda. Blashfield’s \$8,000 contract stipulated that the painting be in place by 31 December 1913, and his payment was to be divided into three installments: 20 percent upon the completion of his sketches, 40 percent when the architect deemed the painting 50 percent complete, and the balance when the work was entirely in place.<sup>45</sup>

Blashfield worked on the mural throughout 1912 and 1913. Post approved the artist’s sketches in August 1912, and Blashfield immediately began painting in a rented studio in the Vanderbilt Gallery of the Fine Arts Building in New York. Throughout the summer, Blashfield worked with two assistants, A. E. Foringer and Vincent Aderente. Although Blashfield's contract stipulated that the painting be installed by 31 December 1913, delays in finishing the interior prevented it from being placed until the following fall.<sup>46</sup> In August of 1914, Porter wrote the artist requesting that he proceed with the installation quickly because the scaffolding required represented a fire hazard and its presence generally impeded work in the Rotunda. The circular painting (a tondo) was composed of five canvases that were put into place in September, but Porter later wrote to Post & Sons that additional work was required to retouch them where



**8.37 Conservation of *The Resources of Wisconsin*, 1998**  
*Conservators cleaned and repaired the oculus mural as part of the Central Portion restoration in 1998. Nearly 200 feet of scaffolding was erected to provide a platform from which to evaluate the mural's condition and complete its conservation. Inaccessibility over the years prevented the kinds of damage to the painting that others in the building had suffered.*

Photo from Capitol Archives





Photo from Capitol Archives

### 8.38 Retouching Resources of Wisconsin, 1998

The mural was found to be in generally good condition, although a layer of varnish from the 1960s had become opaque, and discolored seams were visible where the segments of canvas had been “stitched together” by Blashfield on-site. Graffiti disfigured edges of the canvas within reach of the railing around the oculus. Conservators inpainted where necessary and saturated the varnish to make it transparent.

“white streaks” had appeared. The following December, Blashfield and an assistant traveled to Madison to correct the problem and complete other minor repairs. The commission paid Blashfield \$122 for the extra work.<sup>47</sup> Shortly following its installation, the mural was described enthusiastically by Carolyn Porter:

The picture itself is the apotheosis of Wisconsin, wrapped in an American flag, surrounded by figures who hold specimens of the State’s principal productions. The bright red and blue of our flag are softened as if by time and resemble the coloring of a stained battle flag blending into the general coloring of the picture. The painting was completed over a year ago and sent to the Commission in five sections with the paint fresh upon it. It was opened and allowed to dry and then encased in heavy sacks, re-crated, and placed in the corridors. They have recently been placed in the Dome.<sup>48</sup>

In Blashfield’s composition, “Wisconsin,” a robust blond female, dominates the design centrally; she is dressed in a white gown adorned with a metallic breastplate attached to a red hood. In one hand she holds an escutcheon depicting the state coat of arms and, in the other, a sheaf of wheat. An adolescent girl huddles up against her back, and with a companion drapes the American flag over ten female figures. With outstretched hands, the secondary figures offer “Wisconsin” the resources of the state, including lead, copper, tobacco, fruit and a fresh water pearl. Blashfield utilized a formula in designing his tondo that was inspired by such preeminent High Renaissance muralists as Botticelli (1445-1510) and Raphael (1483-1520). In a book published in 1914 by Blashfield’s long-time associate, Kenyon Cox, *Artist and Public and Other Essays on Art Subjects*, Cox asserted that using the dominant figure in a circular ceiling mural to mark the central axis of a room, especially ambiguous in the case of the Capitol Rotunda, was seen frequently in the paintings of these Italian masters. *The Resources of Wisconsin* assumes an orientation that establishes an axis with the southeast that is consistent with the orientation of French’s *Wisconsin*. The painting again signaled Post’s intention that the Monona Avenue (now Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.) façade be the building’s primary entrance since Post and Blashfield obviously had discussed the orientation privately before Post’s death. But Post had had no similar discussion with Lew Porter, or else there would not have been a question about installing French’s *Wisconsin* on the lantern. In his essay, Cox quoted Blashfield, “When a modern painter has a medallion to fill . . . he inevitably realizes that it is Raphael who has found the best ordering that could be found. . . . The greater the practice of the artist the more complete becomes his realization of Raphael’s comprehension of essentials in composition.”<sup>49</sup>

### Modification and Restoration of *The Resources of Wisconsin*, 1968-1999

As with French’s *Wisconsin* at the top of the Dome, the mural placed in the uppermost area of the Rotunda, *Resources of Wisconsin*, has undergone few modifications because of its relatively inaccessible location. Research undertaken in 1998 by Preservar, Inc. of New York as part of the Central Portion restoration revealed only occasional and fairly nonintrusive interventions prior to 1968. The first occurred almost immediately after its installation and was undertaken by Blashfield at the request of the commission. The joints of the multiple, irregularly shaped canvases were poorly aligned and, in 1915, Blashfield overpainted these sections. Unfortunately, over time the paint used for the repairs darkened and resulted in a “network of ‘suture’ lines” observed by Preservar. A thin layer of grime beneath two coats of natural resin varnish suggested to Preservar that the painting was not varnished when completed although the relatively slight accumulation of dust and dirt suggests that the first coat of varnish was applied shortly thereafter. Unrestricted public access between 1915 and 1931 resulted in a significant amount of graffiti on the outer edges of the mural that could be reached from the landing around the oculus. In 1968, *The Resources of Wisconsin* was cleaned, retouched, and revarnished with an oil-resin varnish (and possibly a light coat of shellac) as part of a general cleaning of the Dome that also resulted in the overpainting of decorative stencils at the trumpeters’ course and the repainting and recoloration of the coffered inner dome.<sup>50</sup>



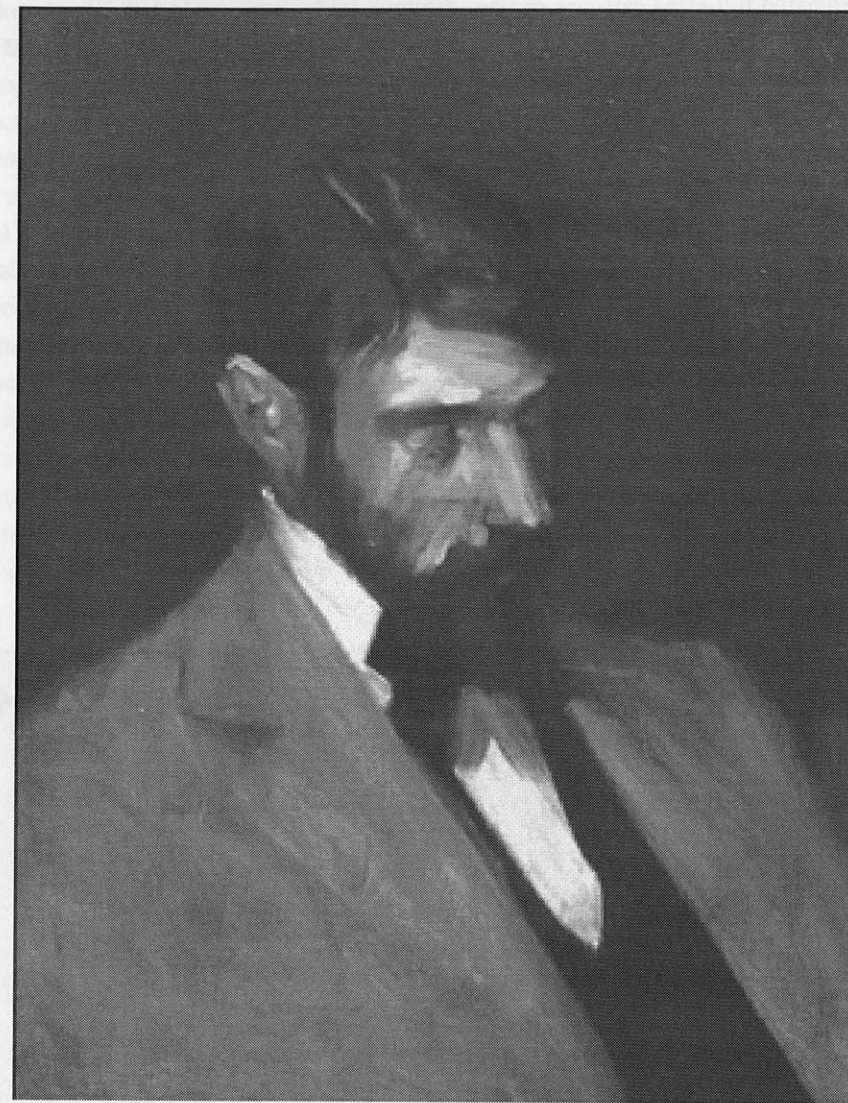
In 1998, *The Resources of Wisconsin* was cleaned and conserved by Preservar. Its earlier study had revealed that the canvas was well adhered to the plaster and the paint was in stable condition. The amount of surface grime that had accumulated since 1968 was less than expected, probably because of continuous air circulation around the mural. However, the mural presented two major challenges to the conservators. First, the varnish applied in 1968 had yellowed and become opaque. Second, overpainting done to mask graffiti was poorly executed and had darkened with age. Tests to determine the feasibility of varnish removal, performed by Richard Wolbers and Constance Silver, indicated that removal potentially could result in surface unevenness and possibly damage some of the thinly painted flesh tones. Based on these results, varnish removal was not attempted. To correct the opacity, conservators resaturated the varnish by applying an 8 percent solution of Soluvar, a stable varnish reversible with mild solvent, diluted 50 percent in xylene and 50 percent in mineral spirits. The treatment resulted in a dramatically clearer finish. To compensate for the discoloration, blue-green filters were installed in the lights at the base of the oculus. Surface grime was removed with water.

More challenging was “reintegrating the visually disturbing joints between pieces of canvas by inpainting with stable and reversible paint.” Conservators used Polyfilla to fill gaps between the joints of the canvas. The filled gaps were then inpainted with Goldens MSA colors, pigments ground in reversible and stable acrylic resin, a product made specifically for fine art conservation. The existing discolored overpaint could not be removed and was toned with Goldens MS colors. The repairs to the main field of the canvas were so dramatic that the decision was made to treat the lower register (not visible from the Rotunda) as well. The process of correcting the overpaint proved difficult because the original work was characterized by texture and translucency; the heavy overpaint eradicated both qualities by obliterating the canvas weave and creating a “dead-opaque substrate.” The corrections created a close approximation of the original “by layering multiple coats of Goldens MS Colors over the overpaint, each layer separated by BEVA isolating varnish. In this way, it was possible to create a semblance of the original glazed and translucent quality of the original.” Graffiti could not be removed; most were masked in the course of toning the overpainted areas on the lower register. Conservators completed their work in the fall of 1998, but some of the overpaint remained visible, becoming evident only after the scaffold was removed and new lighting installed. Preservar recommended toning those areas in a similar manner at a future time when access to the mural can be provided.<sup>51</sup>

### Central Portion: Pendentive Mosaics by Kenyon Cox, 1914

On 23 August 1911, the commission directed George Post to begin a search for an artist to complete the painted murals intended for the Rotunda pendentives, stipulating that they cost no more than \$16,000. Post first contacted Henry Siddons Mowbray, another New York artist, who declined the work. On 28 October, the architect wrote Porter that Kenyon Cox would be willing to create glass mosaics to fill these spaces for \$20,000; the architect assured Porter that this represented a “moderate cost” for work in this medium. On 23 January 1912, the commission signed a contract with Cox to provide four glass mosaics for the offered price, \$20,000. Cox was another nationally known artist who brought with him a wealth of experience; he trained at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in the 1870s, following which he worked primarily as a book illustrator, teaching drawing at the Art Students League in New York. His first large-scale mural project was for George Post’s Manufactures and Liberal Arts Building at the 1893 Columbian Exposition, for which he created *Ceramic Painting*. His reputation greatly increased after working at the exposition, and he installed a number of murals in public buildings, including the recently completed Minnesota and Iowa capitols. Cox was also a scholar and published several works on art history and theory. Like Post, he was traditional in his approach to art and architecture and decried contemporaneous trends toward modernism and abstraction.<sup>52</sup>

Cox dedicated himself to the mosaics and by November 1912, he had completed sketches for all four mosaics and



**8.39 George Of, Portrait of Kenyon Cox, 1897**

*Kenyon Cox, an Ohioan, was one of the foremost American artists at the turn of the twentieth century and was also a widely published scholar and critic who decried trends toward modernism and abstraction. He designed the four mosaics in the Rotunda to reflect classical Byzantine art.*



prepared full-sized cartoons of two. He took pride in the project and once spoke to a friend of the “designs for the great mosaics, which I am rather prouder of than anything I have done.”<sup>53</sup> In the spring of 1913, Post & Sons decided to enlarge the size of the pendentives, requiring that the artist modify his general design. The changes required an additional 25 feet of glass tesserae for each panel; the commission eventually compensated Cox \$750 for the extra material and work.<sup>54</sup> Cox supervised the assembly of the mosaics, which was carried out in New York by the Decorative Stained Glass Co. The first panel was completed and shipped to Madison in June 1913; the others followed in the summer and fall. Because the Rotunda was not ready for the installation of the mosaics, they remained in storage until well into the next year.<sup>55</sup> On 14 May 1914 Cox began supervising their installation, which was carried out by Decorative Stained Glass. After they were completed, Porter wrote Cox that he thought the mosaics were not only beautiful but the best artwork in the building. “They are head and shoulders above everything we have in the Capitol, or will have, and everyone is much pleased with them.”<sup>56</sup> The four pendentives each contained a seated colossal figure (two male, two female) in a circular fasces frame bordered by oak foliage. The figures were entitled (and represented) *Legislation, Justice, Government and Liberty*.

The four mosaics were described eloquently by the artist/author:



**8.41 Kenyon Cox, Justice, circa 1914**

Justice, Cox wrote, “is represented in the purely judicial function of weighing the one cause against the other, the sword of punishment being left to the executive arm of the government. The “attitude of the figure” was “taken freely from a fresco by Giotto in the Arena Chapel in Padua.”

The ornamental parts of the scheme are alike in all four pendentives. Each pendentive has a colossal seated figure on a gold background, surrounded by a circular border based on the fasces with its reeds and crossed ribbons. On either side this central circle is in a panel of oak foliage, and the whole panel is surrounded with a simple guilloche border in gold and purple. The four figures symbolize the three divisions of the powers of the state—the legislative, the executive and the judicial—and liberty, the foundation of all power in a free country.

Legislation is represented as a powerful old man with a long beard, reminiscent of the accepted type of Moses, the first lawgiver. He has a yellow gown and a blue mantle, his left hand rests upon the table of law, his right hand holds the stylus with which he has been writing. His seat is supported by a sphinx symbol of wisdom.

Government, the executive power, is a man in the vigor of his age armed and holding a leading staff in his right hand. His left hand rests upon a great sword, sheathed and bound, only to be drawn in cases of necessity. He wears a buff leather cuirass, ornamented in gold, a scarlet tunic, and a crimson cloak with a broad collar.



**8.40 Kenyon Cox, Legislation, circa 1914**

Cox wrote descriptions of each of the large mosaics, which were made of glass by the Decorative Stained Glass Co. of New York and installed in 1914. “Each . . . has a colossal seated figure on a gold background” with borders of “fasces with . . . reeds and crossed ribbons.” Legislation is “reminiscent of the accepted type of Moses, the first lawgiver.”



Justice is represented in the purely judicial function of weighing the one cause against the other, the sword of punishment being left to the executive arm of the government. Seated upon a lion throne, she looks forward in an abstracted mood, while with either hand she tests the weights in the scales of the balance which is let down from heaven. She is robed in scarlet and reddish purple. While the attitude chosen for the figure is unusual, it is not without precedent, the hint for it having been taken from a fresco by Giotto in the Arena Chapel in Padua.

Liberty wears the traditional Phrygian cap of red, but is otherwise dressed in two shades of green, color of youth and hope. With her left hand she guards the ballot box, while with her right she points upward as if to say that 'Under a republican form of government, the voice of the people is the voice of God.'<sup>57</sup>

By February 1915 the gold background in the mosaics had begun to discolor. In order to achieve the desired luminosity, Cox had placed aluminum foil behind amber-colored glass tiles; when the aluminum came into contact with the plaster, it began to darken and lose its reflective quality. Porter wrote James Otis Post about the problem, and Post

recommended not taking any action at that time. He was concerned that if Cox knew about the problem, he might delay his work on his murals for the Senate Chamber. Post recommended temporary measures including applying gold to the glass on one corner of a panel to determine the effect. The commission agreed to take no immediate action.<sup>58</sup> Porter finally explained the situation to Cox on 15 October 1915, after the murals for the Senate Chamber had been completed. By this time, the commission had even begun considering having the mosaics dismantled and reinstalled. Cox investigated the conditions when he was in Madison in late October to install the Senate Chamber murals. The problem with the amber-colored tiles never was resolved and, in years to come, would contribute to the delamination and near structural failure of the pendentive mosaics.<sup>59</sup>

#### Cleaning and Repair of the Pendentive Mosaics, 1998

In addition to issues with the aluminum-backed tiles, another aspect of the installation process compromised the aesthetic quality of the mosaics. During installation, the cement-based grout was not fully cleaned from the surface of the mosaics, imparting a slightly frosted appearance to the glass. To counteract this problem, an oil-based material was applied, saturating and clarifying the thin layer of grout. Some years later, this coating also became opaque and discolored, and another layer of oil-based material was applied. By the 1960s, structural problems had become evident as tesserae delaminated from the mortar and began to bulge and displace. Epoxy was applied to the grouted joints



8.42 Kenyon Cox, *Government*, circa 1998

*Government*, "the executive power, is a man in the vigor of his age armed and holding a leading staff in his right hand," Cox wrote. "His left hand rests upon a great sword, sheathed and bound, only to be drawn in cases of necessity."



8.43 Kenyon Cox, *Liberty*, circa 1998

Except for a red cap, Liberty is "dressed in two shades of green, color of youth and hope." She "guards the ballot box" and points upward, Cox said, "as if to say that . . . 'the voice of the people is the voice of God.'"



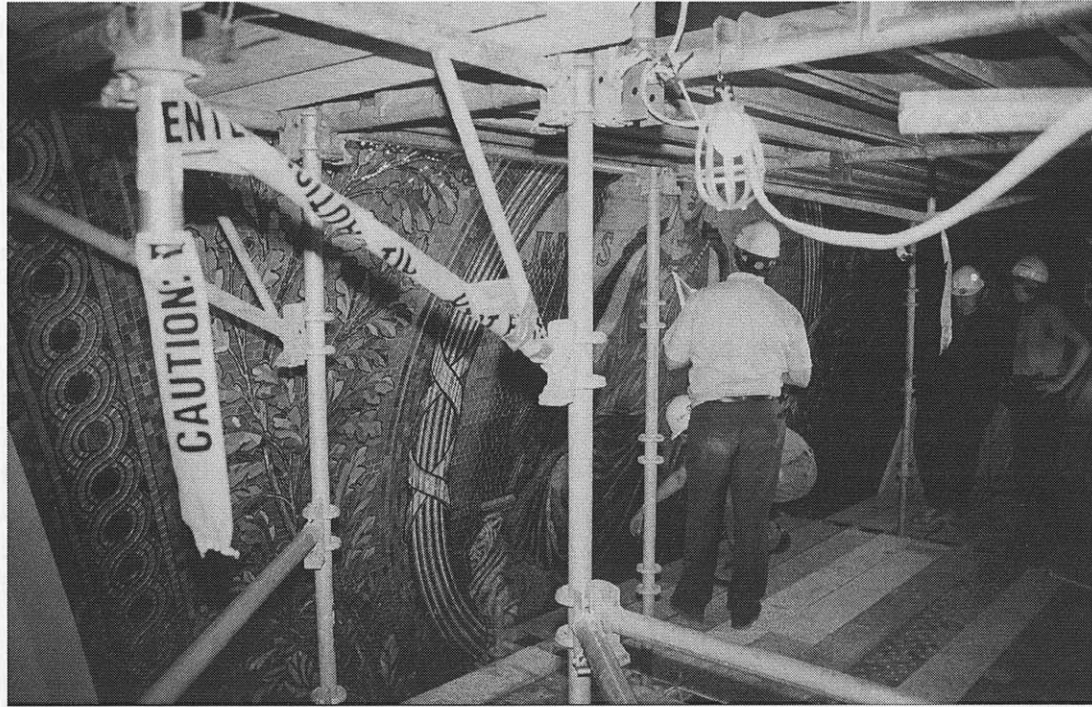


Photo courtesy Department of Administration

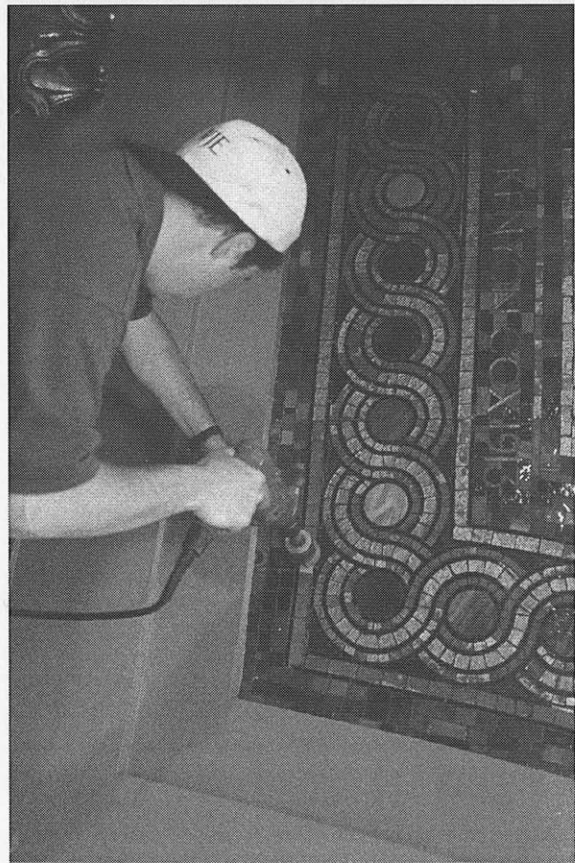


Photo courtesy Department of Administration

#### 8.44 (above) Conservation of Justice, 1998

All four pendentive mosaics were suffering from structural problems by the 1960s. Epoxy repairs were made, which created more problems. In 1998, experts determined inferior bedding grout had caused the problems initially. Conservators cleaned the surfaces of grime, epoxy and a stubborn varnish.

#### 8.45 (left) Taking a core sample from Government, 1998

By 1998 Government was nearly 50 percent delaminated. Core samples were taken to determine how to reattach the tesserae in it and the other mosaics to their grouting beds. Eventually it was decided to engage an expert from Munich, Germany to inject epoxy resin into the spaces between the tesserae and the mortar.

to hold the tesserae in place. As a result of this repair, however, epoxy was smeared over the surface of the mosaics, gluing to the surface the accumulation of grime and the earlier coats of the oil-based material. Around the same time, a coat of polyurethane was applied to the mosaics. Another attempt to stabilize them occurred some time after they were coated with varnish, when repointing with a cement-like grout was carried out. This treatment left visible grout lines and cement residue smeared over the surface, obscuring the glass in places.<sup>60</sup>

The stability of the mosaics was further questioned when a tessera was jarred loose while scaffolding was being erected in preparation for the restoration of the Central Portion. When Preservar began cleaning and examining the mosaics in early 1998, conservators discovered several areas in each that were “out of plane” and sounded hollow when tapped. A thorough examination was undertaken in March 1998 by Jerry Podany, an art conservator from Los Angeles. Inspection of three of the mosaics revealed extensive delamination of the tesserae, with *Government* in the worst condition and up to 50 percent delaminated. Conservators attributed the delamination to the poor quality of the bedding grout and the failure of the grout to bond with the glass and foil-backed tesserae. Warned of “catastrophic collapse,” the state was presented with several options to stabilize the mosaics immediately.<sup>61</sup>

As the Division of Facilities Development (DFD) wrestled with determining the best approach to offset further delamination, cleaning continued through the fall of 1998. The surfaces first were cleaned lightly with ammoniated water to remove accumulated grime, and then rinsed with distilled water. The polyurethane and oil-based varnishes were removed with a 50-50 mixture of xylene and alcohol, and the epoxy was removed with methylene chloride paint strippers. The oil-based varnish that had been placed directly on the glass tesserae proved resistant to other treatments and was removed with dimethylformamide. The whitened surface substance was treated with mild acidic solutions and scraped with stencil brushes, but conservators were unable to remove it completely in all places. Grouted joints were cut back and inpainted with Goldens reversible and stable MSA colors in acrylic resin. The final step was cleaning the tesserae with distilled water applied with a cotton swab.<sup>62</sup> During the summer of 1998, three firms undertook extensive testing to determine the best method of stabilizing the mosaics. Core samples revealed extensive failure of the mortar bed, which had adhered badly to the plaster of the false wall behind the pendentives. Conservators installed a protective plastic barrier over the surface of the mosaics to hold the tesserae in place, attached to the substrate by screws and washers. Additional core samples were taken from *Government* and full-scale mockups created to test different adhesion methods. After the tests, DFD hired a team of art conservators from Franz Mayer of Munich, Inc. to inject epoxy resin into the hollow spaces between the layer of glass tesserae and the bedding mortar.<sup>63</sup>

#### West Wing: *Wisconsin: Past, Present and Future* by Edwin Howland Blashfield, 1908

Prior to securing the contract for *The Resources of Wisconsin*, Blashfield had been employed by the Capitol Commission to create a mural for the Assembly Chamber, which he called *Wisconsin: Past Present and Future*. As the first monumental mural for the Capitol, it established a high standard for the later work implemented by artists throughout the building. Post’s design for the Assembly Chamber called for a large mural positioned behind the speaker’s desk; early in February 1908, the architect showed the commission sketches for an oil-on-canvas mural prepared by Blashfield. The commission immediately authorized Post to execute a contract with the artist, which was signed on 16 February 1908. Payment to Blashfield was to be in the amount \$15,000 if the work was installed by 31 December 1908, with the fee reduced by \$100 for each day installation was not completed.<sup>64</sup>

Blashfield was concerned with authenticity in his treatment of historical subject matter. He wrote to Commissioner William F. Vilas requesting information concerning René Ménard, Jacques Marquette, Jean Nicolet and Pierre Radisson, all individuals important in the early exploration of the Wisconsin region; he asked about the clothing they might



have worn and also asked about the garments typically worn by Wisconsin farmers, miners, lumbermen and Civil War soldiers. Vilas passed along Blashfield's request to the superintendent of the State Historical Society, Reuben Gold Thwaites, who recommended that Blashfield additionally include other early figures, Claude Allouez, Nicolas Perrot, Pierre Le Sueur and Charles de Langlade, in his mural. Thwaites described the clothing each figure likely wore, including Nicolet's "grand robe of China damask," and provided photographs of drawings to Blashfield.<sup>65</sup> Working in his New York studio, Blashfield had completed enough of the work by the middle of July to have George Post inspect it. Post pronounced it "by far the best thing that Blashfield has ever done." At that time, Blashfield expected to have the mural's component eight canvases installed around 1 November 1908, and Post requested that Blashfield receive a \$5,000 payment for his work by early August.<sup>66</sup> One month prior to its installation in the Capitol, the painting was exhibited in Blashfield's studio at the Fine Arts Building in New York and was the subject of a complimentary letter written to the *New York Herald* by the prominent American muralist, John LaFarge. He wrote:

The painting is meant for the Assembly Room of the new State Capitol of Wisconsin at Madison. In decorative form we see the ideal of the State in its past, present and future. The imaginary scene is set among great pine trees, and here the artist has become for us a landscape painter. The suggestion of height and size and distance in this grove of ancient trees is in itself a triumph. Therein is set the noble figure of Wisconsin, seated with the attendant allegories of the great two lakes and the Mississippi. About them again the early explorers and a symbolical Jesuit missionary of these who first directed the dread Indians into the paths of peace. They, too, are in the picture, blinking before the new light of our manners. There are soldiers of the Civil War, another most successful group. To all of these of the past a figure steps forward, messenger and explainer of the present and possible future.

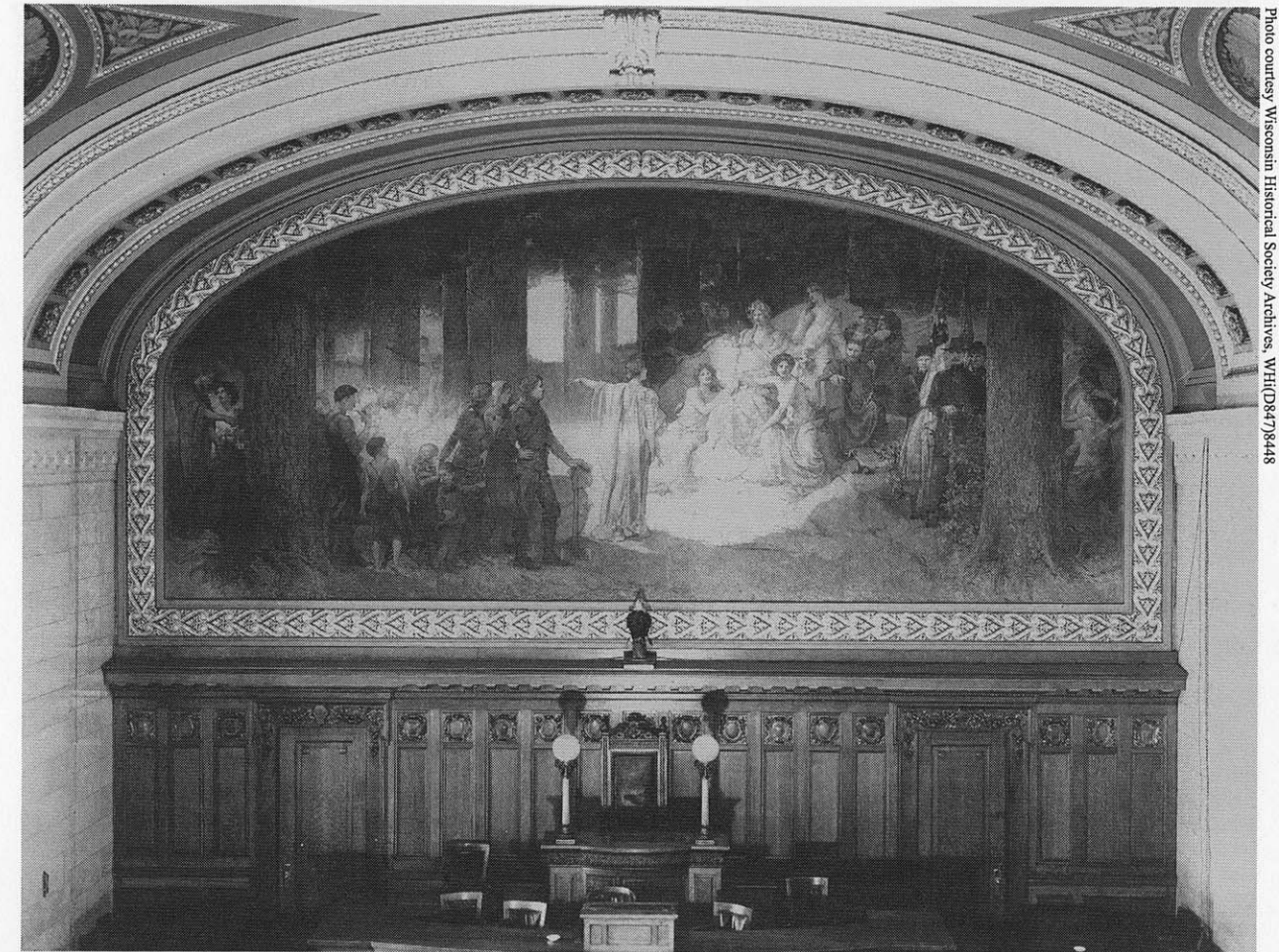
Her cortege is that of lumbermen, farmers and miners—the present and future of the State. And these very realistic figures, as well suggested as if they had stepped out to us before the camera, help the more ideal and hence unreal images. Even the tin can carried by a little child helps the idealism of the picture.

As I write, I see sufficient and capable notice in one of the newspapers, so that I know that apart from mine there may be a sufficient tribute of acknowledgement. But it is pleasant for a brother artist to salute another in his fortunate career. For Mr. Blashfield has, I think, gone one step or several further.<sup>67</sup>

There was great interest in Madison surrounding Blashfield's work and the artist sent photographs of the completed mural, taken in New York, to the commission. He told them that he planned to have the mural in place before the group met again on 18 December. But before Blashfield had the opportunity to ship the canvases, Post suggested that he incorporate a badger in the composition to increase interest in the picture. Blashfield thought this an "excellent" idea, and, characteristically, had Post send him photographs of badgers and went to the New York City zoo to sketch them from life. The photographs of the mural Blashfield sent to Madison generated much excitement, and Lew Porter requested a written description of the work to send to members of the commission and to use for general publicity.<sup>68</sup> A few days later, on 3 December 1908, Blashfield sent his description along with the eight canvases. (They were stored in an empty room on the third floor of the West Wing where they awaited installation as a single unit.) Blashfield wrote:

The decoration is entitled "Wisconsin." The setting is a pine forest with an effect of late afternoon sunlight (the westering sun).

A female figure symbolizing Wisconsin is seated on a rock in the midst of figures which are intended



**8.46 Edwin H. Blashfield, Wisconsin: Past, Present and Future, circa 1934**

In Blashfield's Assembly Chamber mural, a figure representing Wisconsin, arrayed in white, presides over a gathering of Native Americans, European explorers, Civil War soldiers, all representing the past, and lumberjacks, farmers, and miners, representing the present and future.



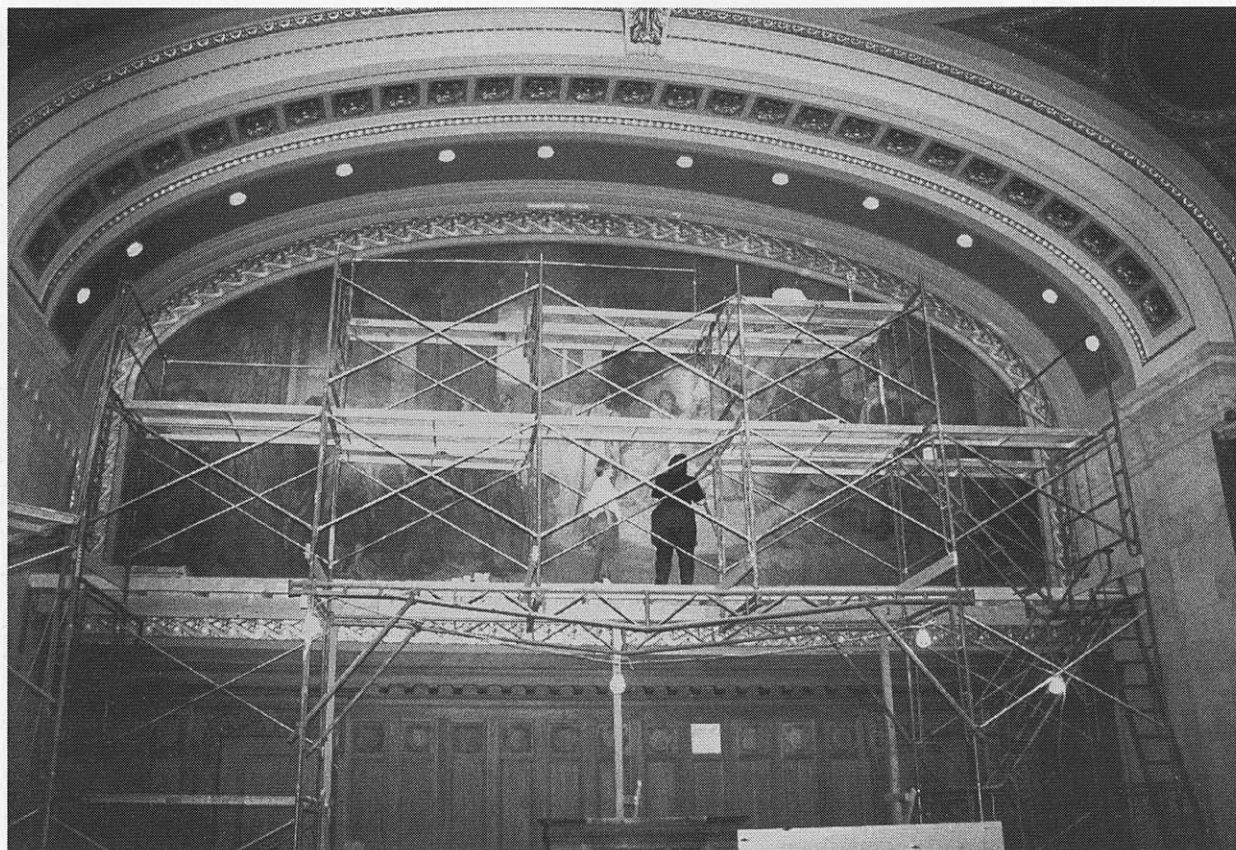


Photo from Capitol Archives

to suggest her past. About her (with aquatic plants twined about their heads or bodies) are women standing and seated symbolizing Lake Superior, Lake Michigan, and the Mississippi River, the bodies of water in the lap of which Wisconsin lies geographically.

Beside the figure of the latter is seated Father Claude Allouez and behind her are Nicolet, Radisson, De Groseillers, Le Sieur [sic], and De Langlade. Further to the right is a color guard from one of the Wisconsin regiments of "61." Opposite Wisconsin a female figure "Today" points through the woods towards the Capitol which is dimly seen in the distance. Behind her is the "Present" typified by figures of lumbermen, miners, and farmers with their families.

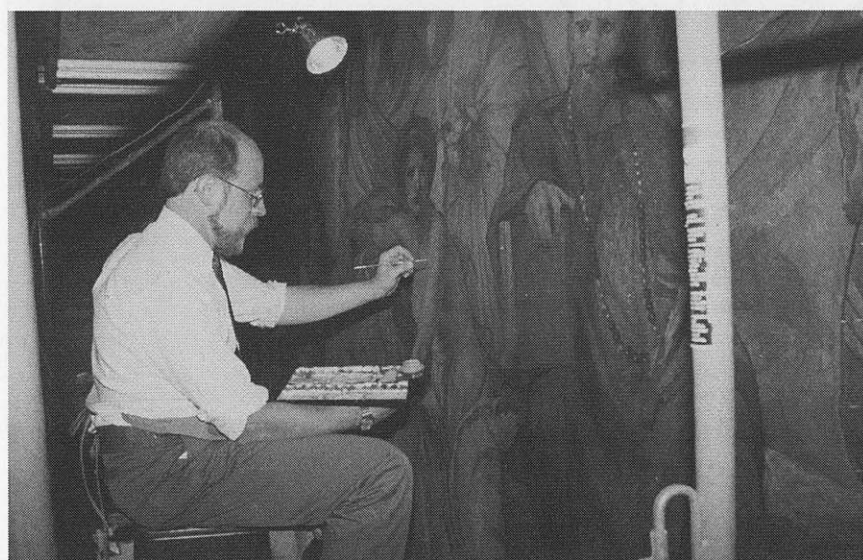
At the extreme right of the picture is . . . an Indian who, shading his eyes from the light, suggests the order of things which has entirely passed away and at the extreme left a figure symbolizing "the Future" shelters her little "Lamp of Progress" with her hand and listens to a figure of the "Conservation of Force [sic]" who tells her to take care of her trees.<sup>69</sup>

At a lecture delivered on 23 December 1908 Blashfield told his audience that he had spent about a year on the work and enjoyed the effort very much. The public was encouraged not only to attend the lecture but to come to the building and see the painting, thus setting the precedent that the Capitol artwork be highly accessible and intended to educate and uplift rather than simply provide ornament.<sup>70</sup>

#### Cleaning and Restoration of *Wisconsin: Past, Present and Future*, 1988 and 1995

Analysis that occurred as a part of the Assembly Chamber restoration and relighting project revealed that prior to 1988, Blashfield's mural had been cleaned and repaired at least twice. A report prepared for the state in 1988 by Anton Rajer of Fine Art Conservation Services (FACS) indicated that the mural had been cleaned in 1966 when a synthetic varnish was applied to its surface. It was cleaned again as part of another conservation effort in 1971, when the painting was coated with a layer of alkyd resin that gradually yellowed and darkened.<sup>71</sup> Later examination in 1995, as the West Wing restoration and rehabilitation neared completion, was performed by EverGreene Painting Studios of New York. The conservators used ultraviolet light, which revealed minimal inpainting located primarily along the seams of the canvases, likely carried out when the mural was first installed. Inpainting also was revealed along two repaired cracks running vertically through the center-right section of the mural. Additionally some repair had occurred in the center-left section of the painting prior to 1988, but the inpainting was limited to areas that were abraded during cleaning.<sup>72</sup>

FACS cleaned and restored *Wisconsin: Past, Present and Future* in 1988 as part of the Assembly Chamber Restoration and Relighting. The most formidable challenge was removing the alkyd resin applied in 1971, since it had bonded with the original pigments. After initial tests using conventional solvents failed to dissolve the resin, conservators sent samples of the resin to the Winterthur Museum for analysis. Eventually an enzyme was obtained that removed the resin without damaging the underlying paint layer. Conservators applied the enzyme solution in viscous gel form, allowed the gel to remain on the surface of the mural for one to two minutes and swabbed the resin away with water. The inpainting of damaged areas was carried out using LeFranc & Bourgeois restoration colors, after which a thin layer of Soluvar vanish was applied. The entire effort took approximately two months.<sup>73</sup> In 1995, conservators from EverGreene found that the mural remained in good structural condition but needed cleaning following the construction



8.47 (above) Assessing conditions of the Assembly Chamber mural, 1988

The Assembly Chamber mural was the first major artwork restoration project undertaken during the series of art conservation projects in the Capitol through the late 1980s and 1990s. Scaffolding enabled close examination, which revealed evidence that the painting already had been cleaned and repaired at least twice, and had been coated with a resin that darkened the overall surface.

Photo from Capitol Archives

#### 8.48 Inpainting the Assembly Chamber mural, 1989

The alkyd resin coating on the mural proved a challenge to remove, but eventually an enzyme solution was found to work. Then damaged areas were inpainted to approximate original colors and the mural received a varnish coat. Dust from selective removal and construction soon dirtied the painting, and conservators cleaned it again in 1995.



that had occurred in the wing. Initial examination from the Assembly Chamber floor suggested an uneven varnish finish, but closer inspection revealed the intermittent matte/gloss finish was the result of the range of impasto used by Blashfield in the original application of paint. The varnish was evenly applied and well integrated. Conservators cleaned the mural in August 1995.<sup>74</sup>

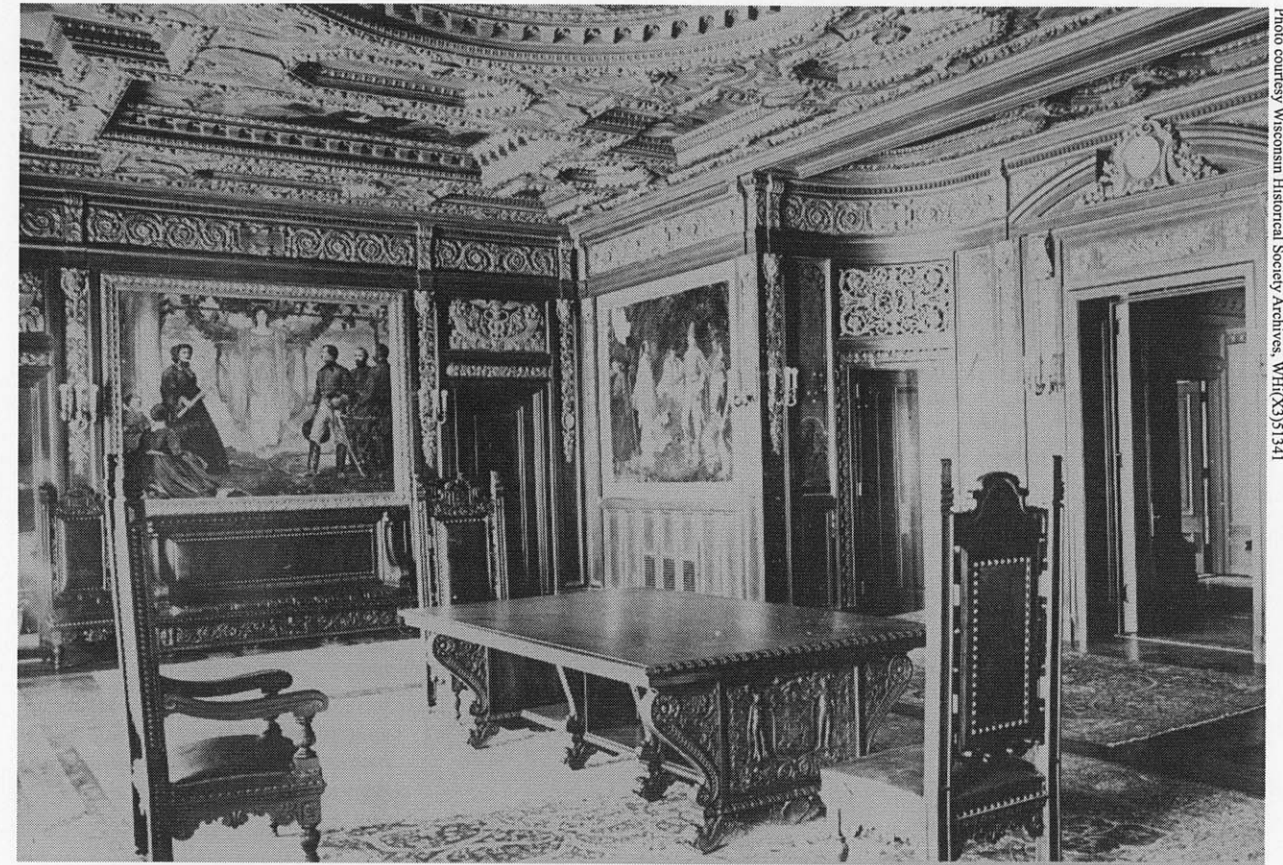
### East Wing: Executive Chamber Murals by Hugo Ballin, 1913

The construction of the East Wing had been underway for only three months when in 1908 the Capitol Commission began to plan the murals for the Executive Chamber; on 10 June it instructed the architect to begin the process of hiring a suitable artist. A year later, on 21 July 1909, the painter Francis Millet appeared in Madison to address the commission on the possibility that he complete paintings for both the Executive Chamber and Supreme Court Hearing Room. However, two years transpired before the commission settled on an artist for either room. In August 1911, the committee selected Millet to complete the murals for the Supreme Court Hearing Room, and chose Hugo Ballin for the Executive Chamber. Hugo Ballin, of Saugatuck, Connecticut, was contracted for twenty-seven oil paintings on canvas for a sum of \$25,000, although the room actually contained twenty-nine spaces for oils, including two small lunettes and five panels of lettering. He signed his contract on 3 January 1912 and promised completion by 31 December 1913.<sup>75</sup>

Ballin appeared to have been an excellent choice, although eventually his work would become the subject of dispute. At the time he was hired, Ballin's recent qualifications included a number of prizes: the Shaw Prize in 1906, the Thomas B. Clark Prize in 1907 and the Hallgarten Prize in 1907. He also had won three medals from the Architectural League of New York. Shortly after completing his work in the Capitol in 1917, Ballin relocated to Hollywood, California, where he became a movie director, production designer, writer, producer and actor. He worked on more than one hundred silent films and in 1921 directed both *Jane Eyre* and *East Lynne*. With the advent of voice in film, he returned to painting murals and decorated, among other spaces, the Carew Memorial Chapel in San Francisco and, in Los Angeles, the Griffith Observatory, the Warner family mausoleum and B'Nai Brith Temple. At the time of his death at the age of 77 he was working on murals for a Catholic church in Hermosa Beach.<sup>76</sup>

After signing his contract in early 1912, Ballin asked Lew Porter to have the walls and ceiling of the Executive Chamber photographed and the artist also began research into appropriate themes. Ballin's contacts included the daughter of Increase Lapham, one of the historical Wisconsin figures depicted. Presaging complaints to come, following the commission's review of Ballin's overall concept for the ceiling panels, some of its members questioned "the wisdom of having descriptive lettering on some of the paintings." Post and his son James, French, Piccirilli and Cox all supported the lettering, calling it "customary, desirable, and artistic." The commission also established some historical Wisconsin themes for the wall paintings, including Nicolet's 1634 visit to Wisconsin, a suggestion William Vilas had presented in 1908, the surrender of Red Bird in 1827 and a Civil War theme.<sup>77</sup> By early January 1913, all the paintings were in place, a full year ahead of schedule. Even before they were finished, they were featured in the September 1912 issue of *Art and Progress*, reviewed by Louis Untermeyer, a distinguished critic.<sup>78</sup>

Ballin was proud of his work and immediately prepared a booklet about the murals that was printed in New York in 1913. The publication described the work in detail. "The ceiling is purely symbolical, depicting the State and its attributes; the side walls illustrate instances in the history of Wisconsin." The circular central panel of the ceiling "represents Wisconsin surrounded by her attributes." The four T-shaped paintings provide allegorical representations of Pioneering, Charity, Invention and Justice. The rectangular paintings to the north and south of the central panel represent "the seeker of knowledge at the shrine of wisdom" and "Labor, attended by the spirits of rain and sunshine." Two L-shaped paintings address religious tolerance and art; two semilunettes depict war and peace. The paintings on the walls illustrate



#### 8.49 Hugo Ballin murals in the Executive Chamber, 1917

The most controversial works of art both during initial construction and subsequent restoration were the twenty-nine canvases by Hugo Ballin of New York for the Executive Chamber; they were installed in 1913. Capitol Commission members demanded changes to some of the murals, charging historical inaccuracy and lack of artistic merit. Ballin complied in part.





Photo from Hugo Ballin, *Mural Painting*

**8.50 Hugo Ballin, Wisconsin Surrounded by Her Attributes, 1913**  
Ballin painted allegorical themes on the ceiling and historical subject matter on the walls. The central ceiling painting was circular, with Wisconsin holding an open book that lists such attributes as justice, charity, invention, wisdom and art. The ceiling paintings were well-received by the commission in contrast to wall murals, which prompted arguments concerning the representation of historical scenes.



Photo from Hugo Ballin, *Mural Painting*

**8.51 Hugo Ballin, Charity, 1913**  
T- and L-shaped paintings were made for the ceiling, the complex design of which was derived from a ceiling in the ducal palace of Venice, an important Italian Renaissance building. In addition to “charity,” Ballin’s themes for the paintings included religious tolerance, art, and war and peace.

“important events in the development of Wisconsin.” On the west wall, Nicolet is shown meeting Wisconsin Indians in 1634 and Major Whistler accepts a peace calumet from Red Bird after an 1827 incident in southwest Wisconsin. The large canvas on the south wall addresses Civil War themes, with the central figure representing Unity, “the spirit of the Civil War.” It also depicts heroes of the Wisconsin effort in the war, including Cordelia A. P. Harvey, who convinced President Lincoln to support her in opening a veteran hospital in Wisconsin. On the east wall, two tall, narrow paintings illustrate two of the three previous Wisconsin capitols and two rectangular canvases portray Increase Allen Lapham, an important scientist and naturalist, and Colonel Joseph Bailey, who saved a fleet of Union ships during the Civil War. On the north wall, two tall feminine figures signify Madison—the Lake of the Morning (Monona) and the Lake of the Evening (Mendota), as suggested in a poem about the city by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. Finally, on the west wall, under the clock, four narrow canvases depict the seasons and the signs of the zodiac. The signs of the zodiac decorate the clock face in the council chamber of the Doge’s Palace in Venice, a source acknowledged by Post & Sons in designing the Executive Chamber.<sup>79</sup>

On 15 January 1913, immediately after the panels were installed, the commission’s executive committee examined them and apparently made “certain criticisms,” deciding to ask for “possible alterations.” That same day Ballin requested payment.<sup>80</sup> At the first full commission meeting in April 1913 the daughter of General Starkweather “appeared at her request . . . and made some criticisms of the picture and likeness of her father.” If changes were to be made in the picture, the commission agreed that Ballin should consult her.<sup>81</sup> The incorrect rendering of historic details was partly the result of information provided by General Charles King of Milwaukee, a Civil War veteran and prolific writer of military history and novels. By 18 January 1913, Lew Porter learned that King’s statements strayed from fact, and members of the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) organization in Madison provided solid information to refute them. Porter wrote, “I found that with reference to General Starkweather, the facts were very different from what we had been led to suppose.”<sup>82</sup> Remaining disappointed, the commission withheld final payment in June 1913 “because the paintings of Mr. Hugo Ballin are not entirely satisfactory,” and requested that Post & Sons ask Ballin and Elmer Garnsey, the interior decorator, to come to Madison “at the same time and finish the room together.” Post made some specific suggestions to Ballin about improving the murals and Ballin tried to schedule a visit immediately, but Garnsey was ill and could not make the trip. Meanwhile, some of the canvases loosened from the wall and developed bubbles, requiring releading and reattachment, tasks that an employee of Ballin completed.

Ballin waited several months before attempting to reschedule his visit with Garnsey, but in the interest of finishing the job by the 31 December 1913 deadline, Ballin traveled to Madison alone that November and made a number of changes to the paintings. He reworked all of the Red Bird painting and partly remounted it. For the large Civil War painting, he reduced the central female figure “in value,” put the cannon into perspective and modified Mrs. Harvey and the small boy. He “toned” the paintings of both previous Capitol buildings. On the Bailey painting, he made the figure in the background “much lighter in character and somewhat darker in tone.” He altered the background in the Lapham painting and “considerably worked” the Mendota painting, especially the background. And in the painting of Nicolet, he “reduced and softened” the drapery of Nicolet’s costume and retouched “other parts of the work.”<sup>83</sup> Ballin completed these modifications in early November and Porter responded by telling him “it will give me great pleasure to bring the matter of your final payment to the attention of the Commission or its Executive Committee at the very earliest opportunity.”<sup>84</sup>

Porter suggested to the commission at its meeting on 19 December 1913 that it authorize Ballin’s final payment of \$1,800. The commission declined and suggested that James Otis Post tell Ballin “that it was the opinion of the Commission that he could improve the Nicolet painting.” It is possible that the commission took this action because earlier



Ballin had written to the governor stating “it is absolutely impossible for me to improve the Nicolet [*sic*] picture,” the panel that had become the source of the greatest dispute. Ballin cited the opinion of an Indian expert, DeCost Smith, that the Nicolet painting was “most convincing.” The commission obviously did not concur. J. A. Van Cleve, a commission member from Marinette, stated outright, “Personally I have not been very favorably impressed with all of Mr. Ballin’s work,” but noted that the commission had no provision for a referee and therefore should pay him.<sup>85</sup> After the December meeting, Ballin wrote to Porter in early 1914 saying that he had told Governor Francis McGovern that he “would do anything he might suggest concerning the Nicolet picture.” McGovern did not reply. This time the commission awarded payment, but the matter dragged on.<sup>86</sup>

At that point, other events intervened. Emanuel Philipp took office as the new governor, the war in Europe was underway and the Capitol Commission had become less active. These developments did not facilitate resolution. In a letter to Porter in March 1915, Ballin complained that the governor had not responded to his letter of a year earlier and he repeated his promise to repaint Nicolet, but now claimed injustice in the expectation that he complete the work without additional payment. He believed the new painting would take three months and said, “as my picture was approved, accepted and paid for, I cannot see under what code you make this demand of me.” He went on:

After it is all done, will your commission give me any sincerer appreciation than it has, and will it approve of my new effort? How are we to determine what Nicolet was like when he went into the then back-country, to show two pistols to a group of Indians who were not half as surprised with Nicolet as was Nicolet with them. Any explorer confronted with a colossal miscalculation and receiving the impression of his fallacy through oriental needlework, would hardly care to meet a Winnebago face to face. I have gone into this very carefully and feel that my interpretation is commendable, but if you desire to have Nicolet jumping out of a canoe, firing his two guns, which most likely did not explode the first time he tried, with a group of astonished Indians taking flight, it can be done. I do not believe it happened in this fashion. Each version is correct. Dramatically you are more so.

Despite his annoyance with the situation, Ballin succumbed to a complaint made by Blashfield. Ballin had been told that Blashfield questioned “the significance of this painting.” Blashfield’s reaction, Ballin wrote, “clearly illustrates that the subject needs an explanation.” Ballin concluded his letter by requesting a response from the commission.<sup>87</sup> The following month, Porter wrote to Ballin “unofficially” and indicated the ongoing discontent of the commission:

The universal opinion among those who have expressed themselves is that your work on the ceiling is unsurpassed, that your paintings on either side of the mantel [Monona and Mendota] are most beautiful and that the pictures of the Surrender of Redbird and Lapham are all that they should be.

The rest are regarded as unfortunate. Whether or not this is because of the choice of subject, in the execution, or in the conception of what the pictures should portray, I am not able to state. I trust, Mr. Ballin, you will pardon my writing you frankly. . . . [A]ny general criticism pains me as much as it possibly could the artist. This [is] because of the fact that I am with it every day and because of my intense desire to have the Capitol all that it should be in every line.<sup>88</sup>

Another year went by and, presumably, Ballin had heard nothing. In February 1916 he wrote again to Porter and the commission to report that he had made a sketch for a newly revised Nicolet painting that was “a more dramatic and improbable representation.” He indicated already having shown it to the architect, even though the prospect of making

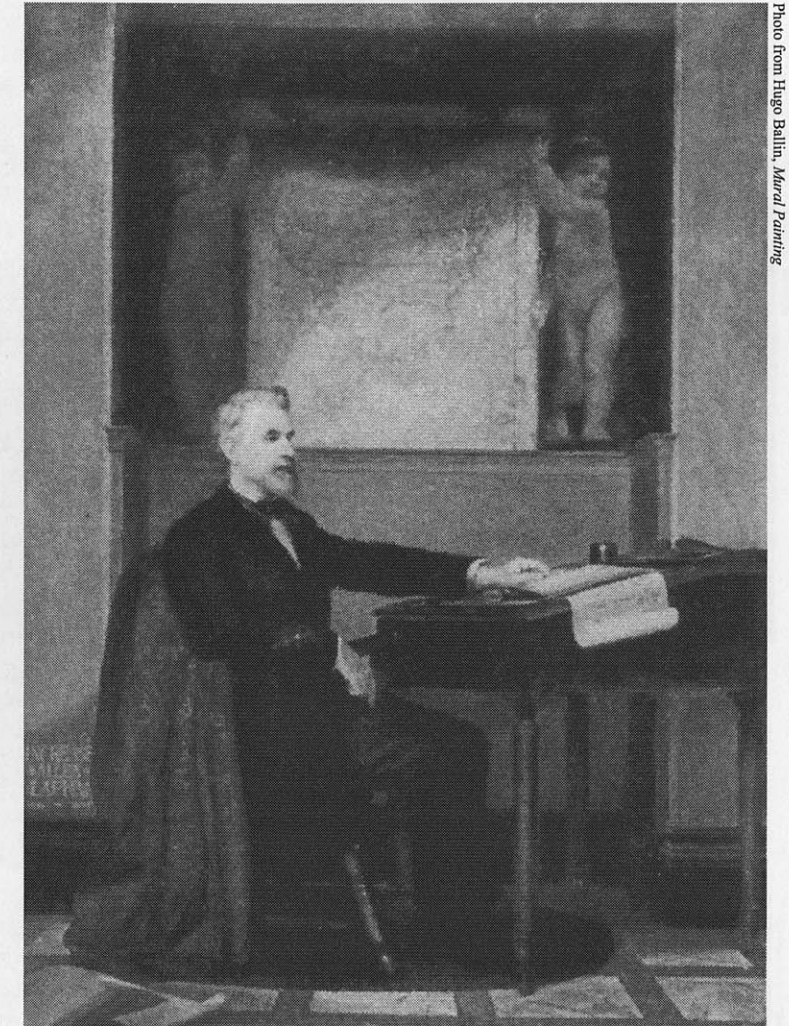


Photo from Hugo Ballin, *Mural Painting*

#### 8.52 Hugo Ballin, Increase Lapham, 1913

*In preparation for painting a portrait of Increase Lapham, an important Wisconsin naturalist, Ballin consulted Lapham’s daughter. Criticisms conveyed to him by the Capitol Commission, however, prompted him to alter the background. Ballin revised a number of the wall paintings in an effort to please the commission.*



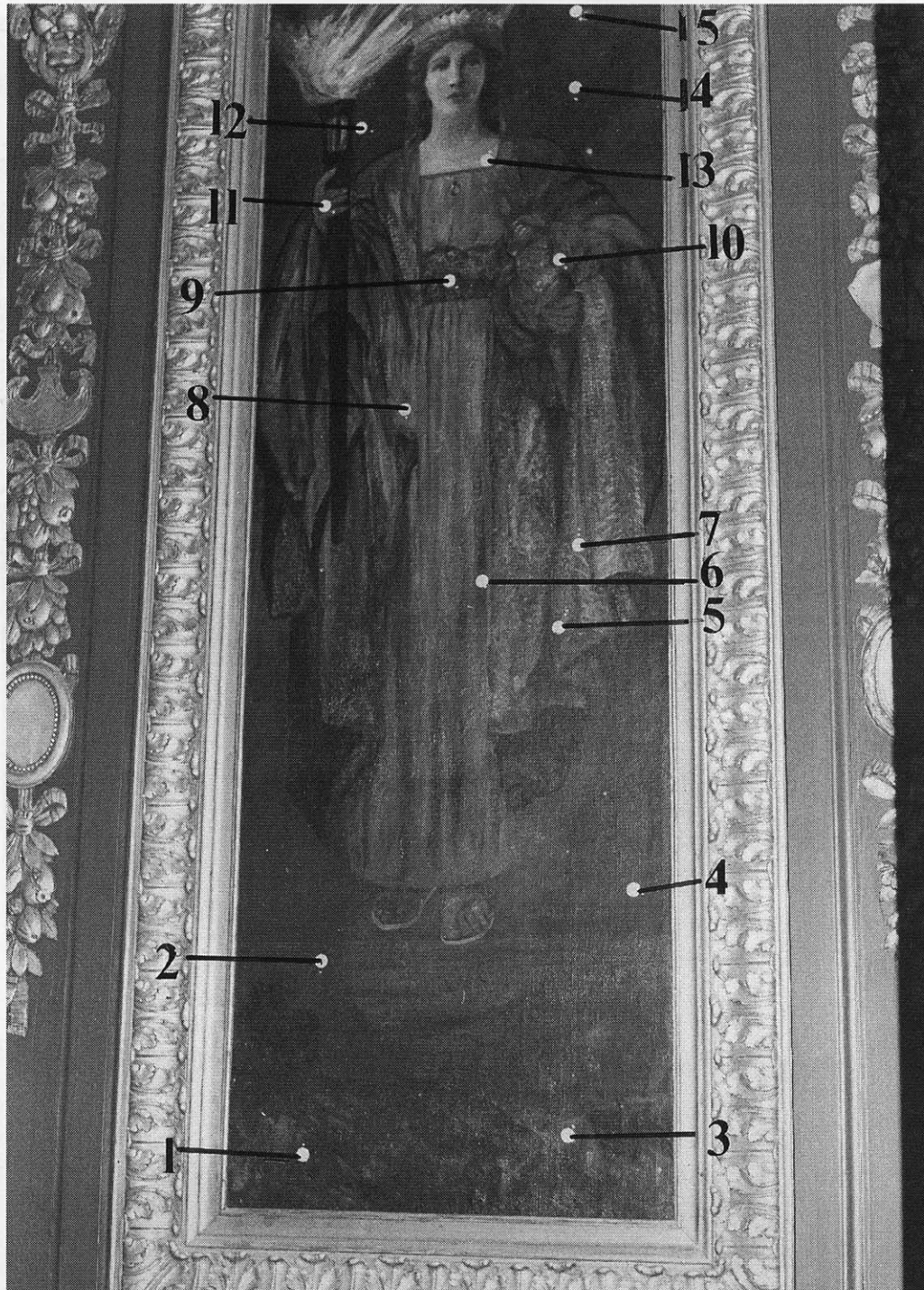


Photo courtesy Department of Administration

#### 8.53 Investigation Datasheet on Lake Mendota, 2000

Paint probes of Ballin's murals were conducted during the restoration of the East Wing. The probes revealed that many of the murals had been overpainted in both oil paints (the type Ballin used) and synthetic paints (developed after Ballin's time). After testing, the small areas where probes had been made were inpainted with reversible restoration paints to mask them.

a new painting continued to bother him. He also revealed to Porter that he did not want to replace the "flying figure" behind Bailey. "That change would completely ruin the composition. . . . I beg of you to remember that the original sketch was approved." He reminded the commission that the figure represented "Forward," the state's motto and "the great spirit back of the modest man, the thing that lies within and that is hidden and shrouded under a noncommittal expression." He concluded, "[M]y heart is not at ease over this matter." The commission did not respond; the construction of the Capitol and the commission's charge respective to the work drew to a close and the new governor, Emanuel Philipp, did not assume the same level of interest in the Capitol as a succession of earlier governors had. Nicolet still is presented in the less dramatic fashion that Ballin desired (and the commission regretted) and "Forward" hovers still behind Colonel Bailey.<sup>89</sup>

#### Cleaning and Partial Restoration of the Executive Chamber Murals, 1998-2001

In 1988, Anton Rajer, then working on the conservation of paintings in the Assembly Chamber, evaluated the Executive Chamber murals and determined that they were in "relatively good condition," exhibiting only "minor wear and tear." The fact that there was less dirt on these paintings than others in the building suggested recent cleanings, and Rajer noted that two interventions had occurred in the previous thirty years. According to Rajer, the paintings were cleaned in 1966 by an East Coast conservator named Hiram Hoelzer and in the mid-1970s by Capitol painters, whom he claimed had applied a layer of starch as a surface protectant. He proposed a modest conservation treatment consisting mainly of cleaning the paintings, reattaching any loose canvas and applying a new coat of reversible varnish.<sup>90</sup>

As part of the East Wing restoration and rehabilitation, a second examination confirmed some of Rajer's findings but led to the recommendation that a higher level of conservation occur. In 1998, Constance Silver of Preservar, Inc. found the paintings to be "quite dark and muddy" and found overpainting in at least one painting. Preservar's conclusion was that some paintings were in good condition and needed only to be cleaned and revarnished but that some others needed to have overpaint removed and still others needed to be reconstructed.<sup>91</sup> In 1999, a third examination by another conservator challenged Preservar's assertion that some murals had been overpainted and needed to be restored through the removal of nonoriginal layers. Conservators from Cunningham-Adams Fine Arts Painting Conservation of Sandy Hook, Connecticut reported that the paintings had been cleaned in the past, as indicated by some areas of minor paint loss and a relatively small amount of accumulated dirt. Additionally, the paintings had been covered with "a homogeneous coating of polyurethane or similar varnish" which had yellowed with age. Cunningham-Adams, too, referred to "Hiram Holtzer" but dated his intervention to 1975. Unlike Rajer's conclusions, Cunningham-Adams' report did find that the murals had been repainted by another hand after installation, but attributed the overpainting solely to the artist himself. Research provided by the East Wing project team revealed the extent to which Ballin had been requested to rework the murals in order to make them satisfactory to the Capitol Commission. According to Cunningham-Adams, all paint layers were original and "no other non-original modifications in the paintings examined were identified."<sup>92</sup>

Shortly after the examination by Cunningham-Adams, conservators for Preservar returned to the Governor's Conference Room to install protection for the ceiling murals, which the firm had not investigated. In contrast to previous findings, the conservators discovered that the ceiling murals had undergone major repainting and that this had not been in Ballin's hand. Preservar based its conclusions on the poor condition of the paintings, citing extensive paint abrasions and a perceived shift in artistic style. Following these observations, Preservar and Richard Wolbers conducted additional tests on the wall murals. Laboratory analysis revealed that some of the paintings had been overpainted in modern synthetic paint developed after Ballin concluded his work, thus making it impossible for Ballin to have been responsible for all changes, as the Cunningham-Adams report had asserted. Preservar concluded that the original surfaces had been damaged during cleaning at some point in the past and that extensive overpainting had occurred to



hide the damage.<sup>93</sup> Preservar found that the wall murals were in “quite poor condition,” and although the canvases and paint were generally stable, the original surfaces had been badly abraded and overpainted on at least two different occasions in oil and modern acrylic paints. Being less accessible, the ceiling murals were in somewhat better condition. Tests conducted in 2000 indicated that the ceiling murals had been abraded and selectively overpainted in oils; all were covered in discolored varnish, some with polyurethane.<sup>94</sup>

The murals of the Executive Chamber were cleaned and treated during the 1998-2001 restoration of the East Wing by conservators from Cunningham-Adams. Since tests indicated that removal of the polyurethane varnish would endanger the underlying paint layer, the firm left the existing layer of varnish in place; to compensate for its discoloration, they applied a reversible, stable synthetic varnish on top of the existing layer. Recent damage that had been caused by cleaning tests in two panels was retouched and glazed to blend it. Areas of detachment were repaired by injecting conservation consolidant.<sup>95</sup> Because of the conflicting conservation reports generated between 1998 and 2001, a “pilot” conservation treatment was undertaken on three murals to test the possibility of more complex conservation work in the future. The work included removal of overpaint followed by inpainting with reversible and color-stable paints; accretions were removed with a solvent, and cleaned areas were varnished with conservation varnish. This process was first undertaken on a portion of *Unity* on the south wall of the room. Results were satisfactory, and the decision was made to move ahead with the conservation of an entire painting. Conservators first selected *Spring*, one of the murals near the main door illustrating the zodiac, but found that too much of the original paint had been denuded. Instead, a ceiling panel, *The Spirit of the Arts*, was selected for a complete conservation treatment. Conservators removed discolored polyurethane and overpaint, revealing the original blue and green hues. Inpainting was done using Golden's MS restoration paints. After cleaning, the mural was varnished with conservation varnish. Satisfied with the appearance of the restored *The Spirit of the Arts*, conservators recommended the remaining murals receive similar treatment. No other murals, however, were restored as part of this effort, although surface grime was removed from all the murals, which were varnished with a combination of gloss and matte finish conservation varnish.<sup>96</sup>

### East Wing: Supreme Court Hearing Room Murals by Albert Herter, 1915

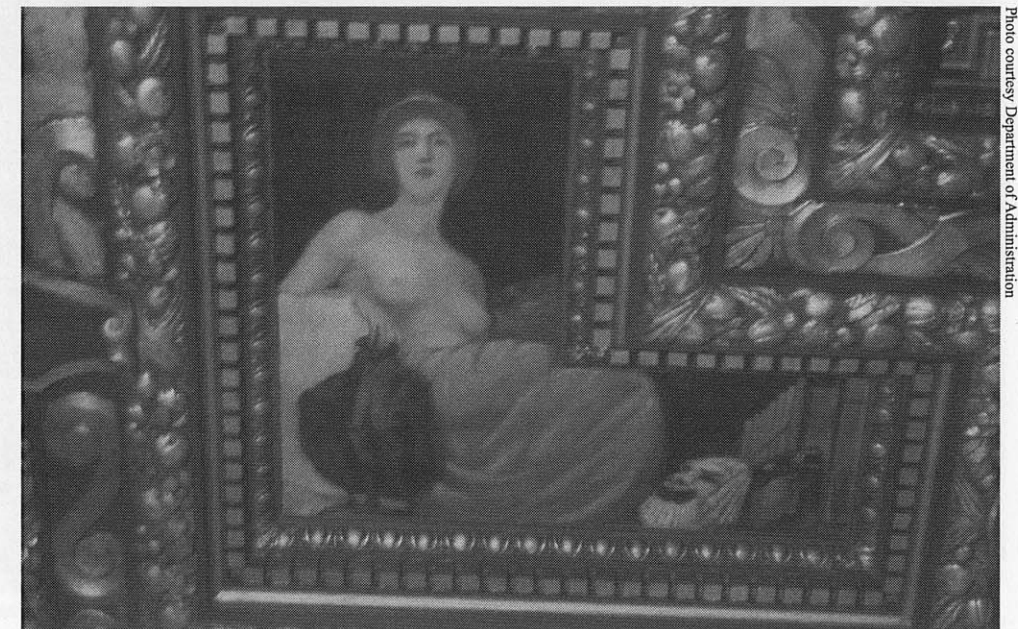
The complicated and protracted story of the Wisconsin Supreme Court murals involved three different artists (one of whom perished on the *Titanic*), justices who needed to be convinced of the desirability of murals in their hearing room and an architect who was determined to implement his scheme for the space. The justices, accustomed to portraits of former justices on the walls in the hearing room of the previous capitol, wanted to hang the portraits in the new hearing room, while Post made earnest attempts to advance his artistic program and have a series of four murals created for the room, one for each wall. Both the portraits and murals eventually were placed within the spaces designated for the supreme court and the hearing room was completed much as George B. Post and commission member William Vilas had envisioned it in the spring of 1908.

Following a meeting with Justice Roujet Marshall in April 1910 Post wrote a lengthy letter in which he attempted to convince Marshall and the other justices to abandon their insistence upon hanging portraits in the courtroom or its lobby. Post expressed regret that he had not been told at the outset that the justices “considered this matter of hanging the portraits . . . of fundamental importance.” Had that been the case, Post offered, “We might have attempted to study the Supreme Court Room in such a way that the portraits could be hung with effect in it. Unfortunately we had no such information until the room had been entirely designed and its construction almost entirely completed.” Post then attempted to sway Justice Marshall with both social and artistic arguments. He pointed out that the room was actually for the citizens of state, “who certainly have some right in the matter,” and that for them the room should “be interesting, imposing and highly architectural, and that from this point of view a better result can be obtained with



**8.54 The Spirit of the Arts before restoration, 2000**

*During the East Wing phase of the Capitol restoration and rehabilitation, most of the murals in the Executive Chamber (renamed the Governor's Conference Room) were cleaned but not restored. However, conservation techniques were tested on one of the ceiling panels, The Spirit of the Arts. Analysis revealed that the background had been overpainted in black and red and that shades of brown and gray had replaced the original palette of green, blue and purple.*



**8.55 The Spirit of the Arts after restoration, 2000**

*Conservators removed discolored polyurethane varnish from the panel and reconstructed what they determined to be original colors and textures. The overpainted background was restored and the subtle shadows original to the cloth draping the figure were re-created.*



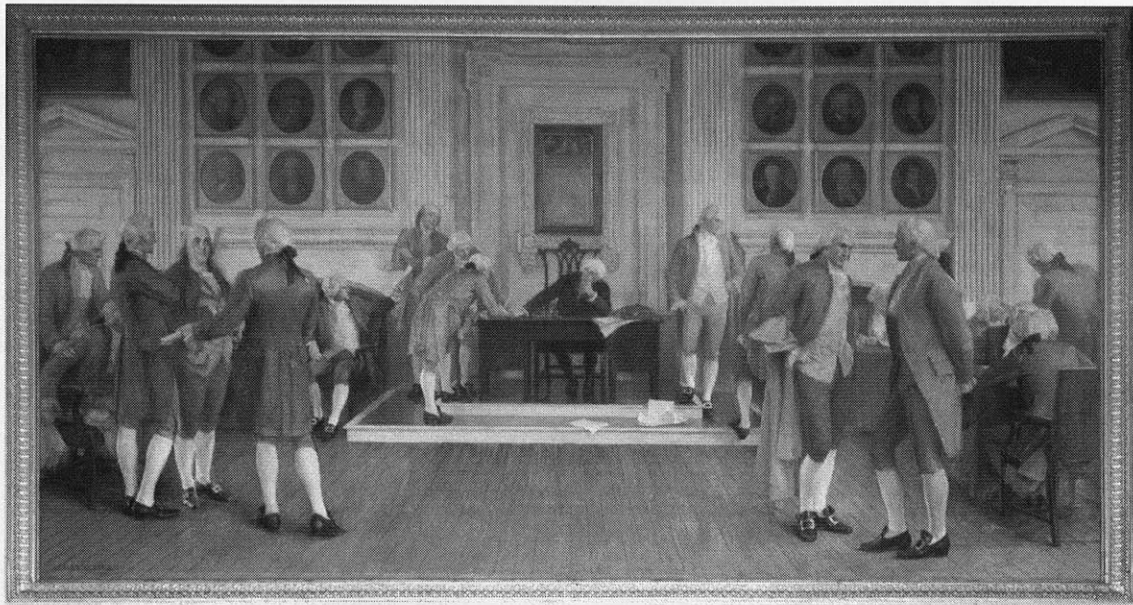


Photo courtesy James T. Potter, AIA

#### 8.56 Albert Herter, *The Signing of the American Constitution, 1987*

George Post's and the commission's first choice as artist for the murals in the Supreme Court Hearing Room was Francis Millet, who was a victim of the Titanic's sinking in 1912. The commission then engaged Albert Herter of New York to paint four canvases for the room that depict a broad sweep of legal history. The principal mural over the bench shows the signing of the Constitution in Philadelphia in 1787 and portrays Washington, Madison, Hamilton and Franklin as well as Jefferson, who was in Paris at the time.

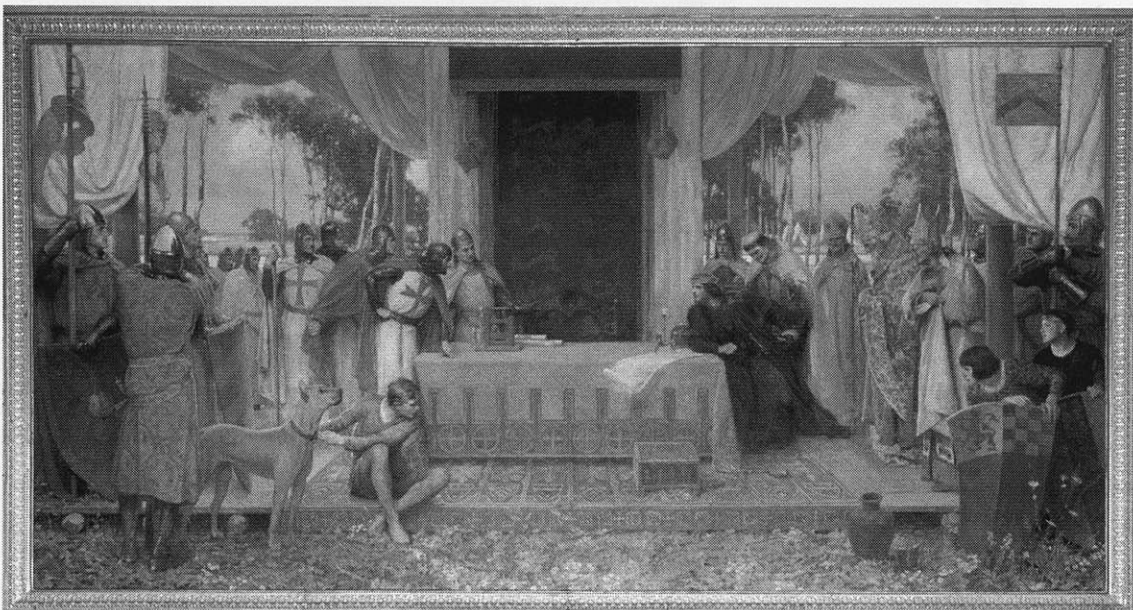


Photo courtesy James T. Potter, AIA

#### 8.57 Albert Herter, *The Signing of the Magna Carta, 1987*

The mural on the north wall gives the artist's impression of what might have occurred in 1215 at Runnymede, England. King John faced his angry barons while Cardinal Stephen Langton presented the charter to the king. Consistent with the involvement the justices exercised in the appointment of their spaces, they contributed thematic criticisms, which Herter adopted.

proper decorative paintings than with a display of portraits of the Judges." On the artistic side, Post argued that "with the room completed as it is . . . the portraits hung in the high panels would be evidently improperly placed, and the effect from an artistic point of view would be far from satisfactory." He went on to say that he doubted if it was possible to have designed a courtroom that "could properly serve as a picture gallery." He suggested the third floor corridor at the west end of the library as an alternative space, indicating he believed that "it would be one of the show rooms of the Capitol." He appealed to the justices' vanity with respect to European precedent: "It would be following the general idea . . . of the greatest portrait gallery in the world; that connecting the Pitti and Uffizzi Palaces in Florence which runs across the Arno." The justices did not budge, objecting to the loss of room and shelving space. They had convinced Post, at least temporarily, as he wrote Porter a few days later, "that it is idle for us to attempt to avoid having the portraits hung in the Supreme Court Room."<sup>97</sup>

Post and Porter agreed that it would be advantageous to delay a decision for as long as possible on hanging the portraits in the hearing room. Then in June 1910, Post proposed that Porter have the room painted "with a creamy white priming" and thus "let the Judges [*sic*] do what they please about hanging their pictures until such time as we are permitted to do the real decorative work, when pictures would necessarily be removed." After the justices had moved into their quarters, Post met personally with Chief Justice John B. Winslow in late summer 1911. They discussed hanging the portraits in the hearing room lobby. Post did not act immediately on the suggestion, and in the interim reported that he had "exhausted" his "ingenuity" in finding a way to hang the portraits in the courtroom without "destroying" the effect of the room's design. On 28 December, he yielded to Winslow's suggestion that the portraits be hung in the lobby and submitted some sketches proposing such a scheme and also wrote a long letter. On 20 January, Winslow replied on behalf of all the justices that reframing the portraits, putting new nameplates on them and hanging them in the lobby would be "entirely satisfactory." He cautioned that the justices wanted to review the subject matter for the murals during planning. Post moved quickly to "clinch the matter by getting estimates for the necessary frames . . . and having the pictures hung in conformity with the sketches."<sup>98</sup>

Once it was determined to proceed with the murals, an agreement with an artist and subject matter needed to be established. The commission already had selected Francis D. Millet on 23 August 1911, but he had not been engaged formally in the work until the struggle over the portraits concluded. On 15 February 1912, Millet wrote Chief Justice Winslow and suggested that "the themes should be wider in interest than any incidents of local history and should be selected in order to show how law is based on accumulated experience on record and in tradition." He went on to propose that the four murals depict the evolution of law. About two weeks later he suggested as subject matter: "Hortensius the Advocate" from the *Iliad*, as an episode from the Roman courts; "King St. Louis in the XIII century holding court under a tree" as an example of European legal history; the trials of Anne Hutchinson and Peter Zenger together with the Dred Scott decision as episodes in U.S. history. He sought assistance determining a Wisconsin subject.<sup>99</sup>

Again demonstrating a difficult nature collectively, the justices reacted without enthusiasm to Millet's suggestions. Justice William H. Timlin said Millet's ideas were "strained, farfetched, fantastic and small." He held out for "the trial of Christ before Pilate" over "St. Louis holding court under a tree." He liked the Roman trial, mistakenly rejected Anne Hutchinson as the defendant in a witchcraft trial and decried Dred Scott's trial as one that "showed the impotency and lack of foresight of courts." Justice Timlin made two separate recommendations for the series. The first included depictions of the trial of Christ, the trial of Charles I, the landing of Columbus and the signing of the Declaration of Independence. His second alternative included the judgment of Solomon, a court in the Roman Forum, the signing of the Magna Carta and the signing of the Wisconsin constitution. These suggestions impressed Post favorably and two of the subjects were eventually incorporated into the final murals.<sup>100</sup>

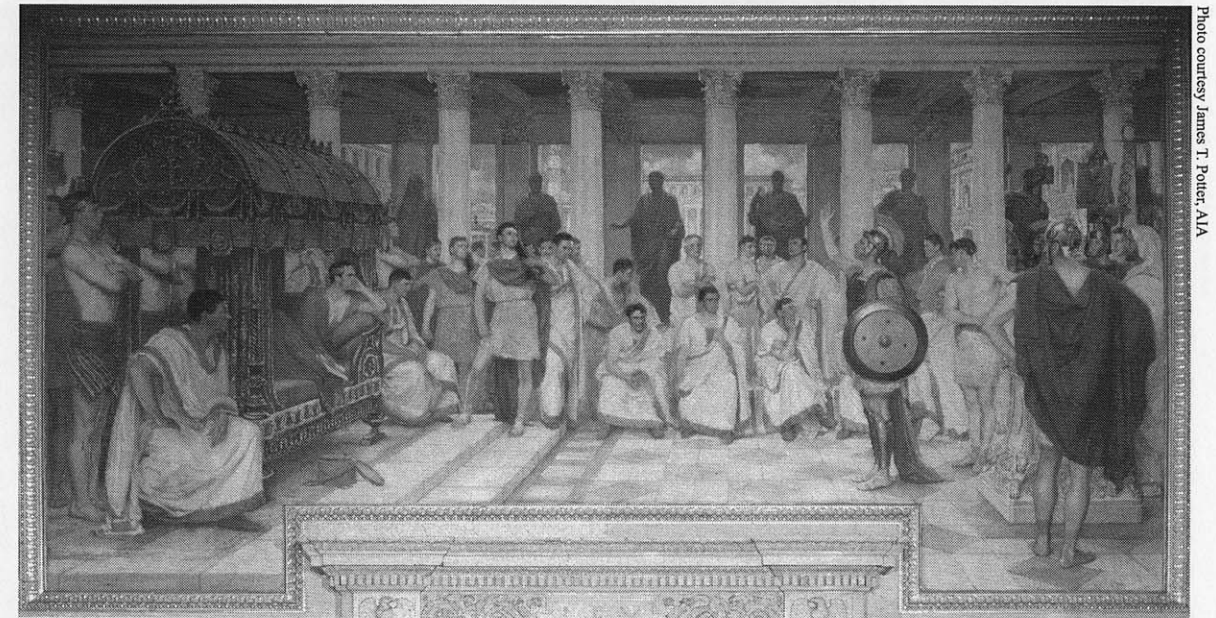


Before intended thematic content could be resolved, Millet lost his life in the sinking of the *Titanic* on 15 April 1912. The commission experienced some difficulty in finding a replacement but eventually selected Albert Herter. Initially it attempted to engage painter Barry Faulkner, as recommended by Post. However, the Executive Committee rejected Faulkner on 17 May 1912, because his proposed fee of \$32,000 exceeded what the commission wanted to spend. Post responded on 3 June that he was “disappointed at the action of the Executive Committee, with regard to Mr. Faulkner’s appointment.” Then matters turned around. On 14 June, the committee reversed its decision and offered a contract to Faulkner for \$28,000; Post authorized him to prepare studies for the murals. In the interim, Faulkner had reduced his fee to \$24,000 but this information did not reach the commission before it tendered its offer of \$28,000. So on 10 July, the committee reduced the contract fee to \$24,000.<sup>101</sup> What happened between July and December is unclear, but as of 10 December 1912 Faulkner and the commission had not reached terms about the schedule for the work and Faulkner “refused to enter into a contract.” Post suggested Albert Herter as an alternative; the artist was willing to complete the work by 31 May 1915 for a fee of \$28,000; a contract and bond were executed on 30 January 1913. Herter’s four murals were to depict historical themes related to law, with “one representing the Roman Law, one the Anglo Saxon or Common Law, one the establishment of Federal Law, and one the application of Wisconsin Law.”<sup>102</sup>

Albert Herter (1871-1950) was the son of Christian Herter, an interior designer, cabinetmaker and one of the founders of the internationally known Herter Bros., a decorating and furniture-making firm prominent in New York in the late 1800s. With the encouragement of his father, Albert Herter studied at the Art Students League before moving to Paris for additional instruction under J. P. Laurens. After returning to the United States, he taught at the Chicago Art Institute through much of the late 1890s. With an entrepreneurial bent similar to his father’s, Albert Herter returned to New York and established Herter Looms, a manufacturer of fine fabrics and tapestries. As a painter, Herter was well known for his works both as a portraitist and muralist; his murals included works for both the Connecticut and Massachusetts capitols. In undertaking the murals for the Wisconsin supreme court, Herter appears to have had studio space at both his Herter Looms headquarters on Madison Avenue in Manhattan and also at his East Hampton, Long Island home.

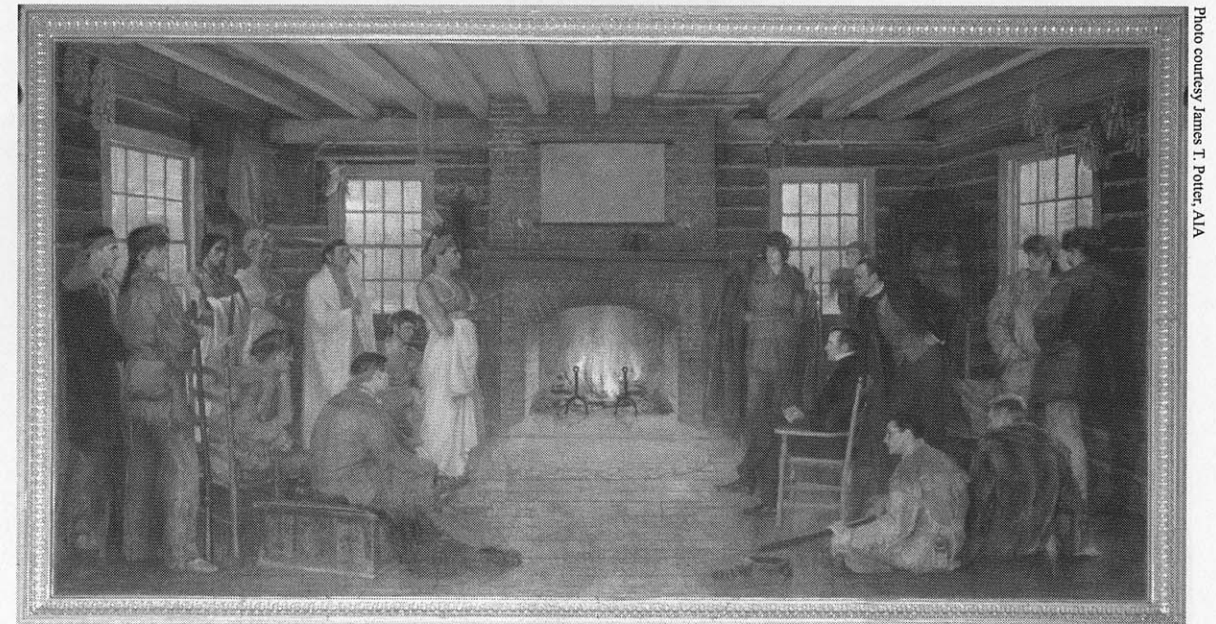
Nearly two-and-a-half years transpired between the execution of the contract and completion of the murals, provoking some anxiety on the part of the justices. In April 1914, Chief Justice Winslow inquired about the schedule and put Lew Porter on notice, “When the artist comes here to lay his sketches before the Commission the Judges will, of course, expect to be consulted.” On 20 May, Herter made his presentation with the justices in attendance. “Considerable discussion” ensued and the justices decided to meet about the “appropriateness” of the trial of Chief Oshkosh as the Wisconsin scene, which they eventually approved. The commission also suggested a change in subject matter in the mural representing Anglo Saxon Law from the trial of Charles I to the signing of the Magna Carta.<sup>103</sup> Development of the Magna Carta sketch dragged on until October, despite Porter’s plea to Herter in June for early completion. Reviewing Herter’s work in October, the justices made some suggestions about the demeanor of Stephen Langton, the figure presenting the charter to the king. Winslow wrote, “His attitude in the sketch gives the impression . . . that he is humbly petitioning for something. While that was nominally the fact, I understand that he was in truth stoutly insisting on the King’s signing the Charter and was conscious that he had behind him the power to make his insistence good.” Marshall suggested further “that Pandulph, the pope’s Legate, be moved a little further to the right of the King and quite apart from the bishops with whom he had no sympathy; that he should be given an expression of protest, rather [than] supporting the King’s reluctance.” The completed painting indicates that Herter adopted both suggestions.<sup>104</sup>

Completion of the murals and their installation occurred as planned. By mid-May 1915, the hearing room was made available to Herter, the murals were ready and the decorative finish painters were notified they were to complete their



**8.58 Albert Herter, *The Appeal of the Legionary to Caesar Augustus*, 1987**

*Opposite The Signing of the American Constitution and over the entrance door, Herter created a work that harked back to Roman law and the legend of a legionary named Scutarius. He had fought for Augustus and appealed to him for help with a legal matter; Augustus awarded him clemency.*



**8.59 Albert Herter, *The Trial of Chief Oshkosh Before Judge Doty*, 1987**

*The mural on the south wall draws upon a well-known 1830 trial in the Wisconsin area (then a part of Michigan Territory). Federal Judge James Duane Doty presided over the murder trial of Oshkosh, a Menominee Indian chief. He ruled that while Oshkosh had violated American law, he had not violated Indian law, which took precedence, in part because the tribe still owned the territory and had maintained sovereignty.*





Photo courtesy Department of Administration

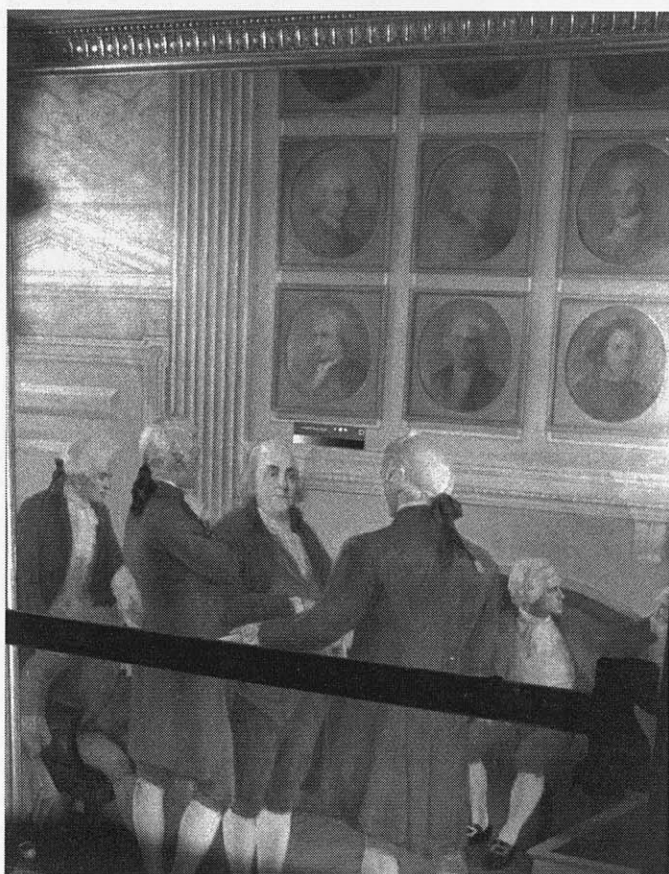


Photo courtesy Department of Administration

**8.60 (above) Franklin group in the Constitution mural before restoration, 2000**

Conservators identified Herter's murals as being among the most altered in the Capitol. Previous cleanings and repainting efforts on *The Signing of the American Constitution* resulted in a background that was too light and that compromised some features such as the portraits on the walls and the marble panels above the walls.

**8.61 (left) Franklin group in the Constitution mural after restoration, 2000**

Restoration efforts were directed toward reconstructing what analysis revealed to be the artist's original composition. A system of shadows and background color was implemented to replicate the original state of the painting as closely as possible, and to reestablish the relationship of the paintings throughout the room.

work immediately following the placement of the paintings. *The Signing of the American Constitution* takes the most prominent position in the room, above the justices' bench on the east wall. Set in Philadelphia in 1787, the scene shows George Washington seated behind the table, with James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, Benjamin Franklin and, mistakenly, Thomas Jefferson, who was in Paris at the time, elsewhere in the painting. There are portraits hung on the wall behind the low dais with the table where Washington sits; they may provide an ironic reference to the earlier controversy between Post and the justices. On the north wall, *The Signing of the Magna Carta* depicts this event as it might have occurred in 1215 on the meadows of Runnymede, England. King John and his prelates are on the right with Stephen Langton and the angry barons on the left. Herter's son Christian sat for the mural and appears as the young man with the dog in the left foreground. Christian Herter later became governor of Massachusetts and secretary of state in the Eisenhower administration.

On the west wall above the door, *The Appeal of the Legionary to Caesar Augustus*, portrays the legend of a legionary (Scutarius), who as a youth had fought for Augustus and, as in the painting, successfully appealed to him for his help in a legal matter. Finally, on the south wall, *The Trial of Chief Oshkosh Before Judge Doty* represents Wisconsin law. It is based on an 1830 case in what was then the Michigan Territory. In the case, James Duane Doty was the sitting U.S. judge for the Wisconsin region and decided in favor of the Menominee chief, Oshkosh; although Oshkosh had killed a Pawnee Indian, Doty ruled that he had acted in accord with Indian law.<sup>105</sup> By 9 June 1915 with his work done, Herter slipped out of town before Porter could thank him personally. Porter later wrote to express his sentiments of "appreciation of the work which you have done and the manner in which the work in the building was carried on. Every one with whom I have talked, including several members of the Supreme Court and some of the Capitol Commission, have expressed themselves as being delighted with your work. It certainly adds greatly to the room and I feel sure will be universally appreciated."<sup>106</sup>

**Restoration of the Supreme Court Hearing Room Murals, 1999-2001**

In 2001, Preservar submitted a report that detailed its analysis and subsequent restoration of the Supreme Court murals.<sup>107</sup> The photographic documentation and paint analysis conducted in 1999 revealed a number of interventions had occurred that modified the four murals significantly between their installation in 1915 and the time the East Wing restoration began in 1998. Preservar found that relatively soon after their placement, the four murals were cleaned with a highly alkaline agent, which compromised the integrity of the paint. This led to subsequent attempts to repair the damage by overpainting. Apparently earlier attempts to restore the murals in the years following installation were thwarted by a misunderstanding of Herter's use of color, presumably based on analysis of black-and-white photographs that did not document color values accurately. Blue and green both appeared as light gray while red, browns and purple showed as black and, in general, the colors applied by the repainters shifted to warmer hues. In the reworking of the paintings, the color scheme of the backgrounds of each, originally peach and gray-green to suggest backlighting and highlighting, was sometimes modified through the use of darker, hotter colors out of harmony with other elements within each mural, with the others, and with the decorative finish of the room.

In *The Appeal of the Legionary to Caesar Augustus*, the interior columns had been repainted too white and the sky was repainted a blue-green color that flattened the visual planes. Further, many of the figures had been badly abraded and repainted. Similar alterations had been made to *The Trial of Chief Oshkosh Before Judge Doty*. The split-log interior was repainted a drab, muddy brown and other interior features, including the chimney bricks, mantle and fire were repainted several shades too bright. A greatcoat on Doty's lap had been painted over and his assistant was altered to be shown wearing historically inaccurate clothing. In *The Signing of the Magna Carta*, alterations were made that made the figures seem stiff and lifeless. Figures including the principal barons and King John were overpainted in colors that

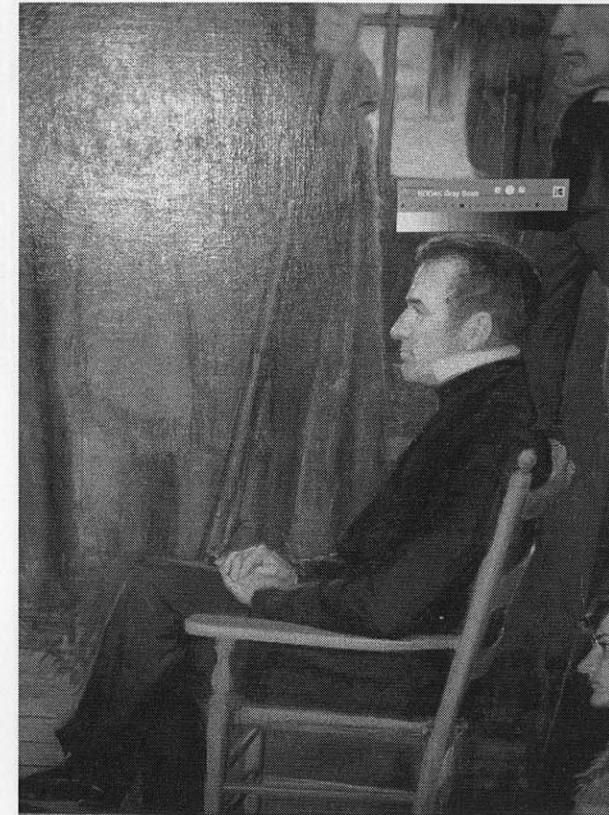


were too hot and in a way that blunted the original tension of the scene. Many elements, including the royal standard and the drapery were in darker tones that were discordant with the overly bright elements in the background, including the bluish leaves, yellow fields and white river. Furthermore, the foreground border, originally green and strewn with flowers, was modified to show autumn leaves against a drab ground.

Of the four paintings, *The Signing of the American Constitution* suffered the greatest number of well-intended modifications over the years. Wigs and stockings were overpainted in bright white, in heightened contrast to shoes and hair ribbons, which became stark black. By 1941 overpainted areas included parts of the central figure of George Washington, and by 1952 the mural essentially had a new surface. Other figures were repainted in inappropriate, pastel-colored clothing, more reminiscent of French courtiers than American colonists. Additionally, the portraits on the wall in the background had been repainted and overly defined and other elements, including the floor, were changed in value. The cumulative effect of this repainting was to obscure Herter's careful use of shadows and highlights. Sometime in the 1960s, the murals were cleaned and in some places "scrubbed down to the point where all paint, both overpaint and original was utterly destroyed, leaving preparation, under-drawing and raw canvas exposed." Two heavy coatings, one a varnish, the other a polyurethane, were applied.

The first phase of the restoration involved removing the discolored surface coatings, one a natural-resin varnish, the other a heavy coat of polyurethane. Preservar applied solvent mixtures (including benzyl alcohol, pyrrolidinone, and xylene) with small stencil brushes to remove the thick and gummy coatings. After removing the varnishes, conservators discovered that most of the overpainting could not be removed. In some cases the overpaint was insoluble, and in other areas the original paint had been completely removed and replaced. Accordingly, Preservar presented three options for the restoration of the murals. The first was to conserve the murals in their current condition, which represented the least expensive option but would have resulted in, as one conservator put it, "quite grotesque renditions of the original paintings and an historic room that would have been profoundly out of harmony." Option two was to determine the original colors and composition through research and reconstruct the murals in place. Option three, the most costly, was to determine original colors and have the murals replicated in a studio. Option two was selected as the most cost-effective alternative and one that provided an acceptable level of restoration.

To determine original colors, 186 cross sections were taken. Gradually conservators began to discover long-buried color schemes and extrapolated their findings among the paintings to create as accurate a reconstruction as possible. A key finding was the observation of Herter's use of the gray-green and peach combination in all four murals. In *The Appeal of the Legionary to Caesar Augustus*, conservators reconstructed the columns in a correct shade of gray-green, changed the sky to blue and adjusted lines and shadows in the composition. Figures that had been overpainted were reconstructed. In *The Trial of Chief Oshkosh Before Judge Doty* the figures were reconstructed wearing the correct style of clothing. Original colors for the log house's interior walls, fireplace and mantel within the scene were replicated; on the ceiling, gesso was applied and the original highlights and shadows reconstructed. In *The Signing of the Magna Carta*, overpainted figures such as King John and some of the barons and bishops were reconstructed. The sky, fields and drapery were restored to approximate their original colors and the overpainted border was glazed extensively to tone it down. *The Signing of the American Constitution* required the most work to reconstruct the background and floor to their original colors. Most of the figures were repainted in colors that more closely matched the originals, with whites and blacks toned down. Painters made full-scale cartoons to re-create original forms; some areas were so badly overpainted that they had to be covered with a reversible gesso in order to be reconstructed from an accurate cartoon. Inpainting and reconstruction were carried out using Goldens MS paints, specifically designed for artwork restoration and the murals were surfaced with BEVA isolating varnish and sprayed with ConserveArt varnish.



**8.62 Judge Doty in the Oshkosh trial mural before restoration, 2000**

Like the Constitution mural, the Chief Oshkosh mural had been abraded and overpainted as part of earlier conservation efforts. The clothing on the figures of James Duane Doty and his assistant had been re-created anachronistically, and the assistant's hand (resting on Doty's chair) had been all but obliterated.



**8.63 Judge Doty in the Oshkosh trial mural after restoration, 2000**

Conservators repainted the clothing of many figures to restore a more historically accurate and dramatic scene. A heavy coat worn by Doty's assistant was re-created, as was Doty's, which lies folded across his lap.





Photo from *Architectural Record*, vol. XLII, July-December 1917

#### 8.64 Kenyon Cox, *The Marriage of the Atlantic and the Pacific*, 1917

Cox, the creator of the Rotunda's mosaics, sought the commission for the Senate Chamber murals after George Post's first choice declined. In 1914, he received the contract and proposed to honor the Panama Canal, an international subject unlike any other in the Capitol. The three panels, arranged in a triptych configuration, show the Pacific Ocean on the left, the marriage of the two oceans in center (with a U.S. shield at the bottom) and the Atlantic Ocean (with a British shield) at the right.

#### South Wing: *The Marriage of the Atlantic and Pacific* by Kenyon Cox, 1915

In October 1913, Kenyon Cox learned that Post & Sons' first choice for the artist of the Senate Chamber mural paintings, John Alexander, had declined the commission. Earlier, George Post had considered Cox for the work and, after completing the Rotunda mosaics, Cox presented himself as a possible replacement. He wrote Porter that the project represented "an opportunity for an especially sober and serious piece of work."<sup>108</sup> By 1914, the construction of the South Wing had been completed and the building was occupied by state agencies and the state senate. The outstanding piece of work left unfinished was the triptych mural planned for the Senate Chamber. In May, James Otis Post reported to the commission that he had engaged Kenyon Cox to complete the work in accord with a previous understanding. Cox proposed a subject that was timely but wholly unrelated to Wisconsin: the opening of the Panama Canal, which was due to be completed in 1915. The commission accepted this theme, and Cox went to work immediately, developing sketches throughout the summer. In August the commission formally entered into a contract with Cox under which he was to be paid \$12,000 for the three panels. The outbreak of war in Europe added another layer of meaning to Cox's work, about which he wrote Porter, "Present European news gives an ironic aspect to my subject. But the canal will be there when the wars are over." Cox submitted the sketches in September, and the commission approved them on 29 September. For the three-panel scheme, centered behind the president's desk, Cox proposed a panel each for the Atlantic Ocean, the Pacific Ocean and, in the center, an allegorical marriage of the two, presided over by a figure representing the United States.<sup>109</sup>

Cox devoted most of his time to developing the cartoons through late 1914, and he expected to have them done by early 1915. James Otis Post inspected and approved the completed cartoons in mid-February, and Cox recounted proudly that fellow Capitol artist Edwin Blashfield had declared them the "finest thing I have done." Until this time, Cox routinely had worked with assistants, but he painted the canvases for the Senate Chamber completely on his own. This unavoidably slowed the work, and at the end of May, Cox informed Porter that he found the work "bigger and more difficult than I reckoned" and requested a deadline extension. He assured Porter that he had "never worked so hard and so continuously for so long a time in my life." Porter agreed to extend the contract to 1 November 1915. On 4 October, Cox proudly informed Porter that his paintings were at last complete. After being exhibited in New York for a week, they were shipped to Madison and installed at the end of October.

Cox described the completed work and the description was reprinted in the early versions of the Capitol guidebook:

The three panels are to be taken as one picture, symbolizing the opening of the Panama Canal. In the center, America enthroned, blesses the union of the two oceans. The Atlantic, typified by the figure of Neptune, places a ring on the finger of a goddess with a steering oar, who represents the Pacific. Below two children support the shield with the arms of the United States.

In the side panels Peace and Commerce welcome the nations of the world to the ceremony. To the right, behind the Atlantic, Peace welcomes France with the artist's palette, Germany with the book of Science, and Great Britain. A muscular boatman drags at the barge with gilded figurehead. In the opposite panel, Commerce, with the attributes of Mercury, beckons to Japan and China, behind whom is a figure symbolizing Semitic races. Seated in the prow of the boat is the garlanded figure of Polynesia. A water nymph of the local stream plays beside the barge.<sup>110</sup>

#### Cleaning and Repair of *The Marriage of the Atlantic and the Pacific*, 1995

Relatively little intervention occurred to the Senate murals between their installation in 1915 and their examination by conservators in 1995, when it was learned that they had been cleaned and varnished most recently in 1969. Abraded paint in some areas suggested at least one earlier cleaning, as well. The 1969 cleaning was done selectively; highly



soluble areas like reds and oranges were not treated and other areas of the murals were cleaned. Cross-section analysis revealed a thin layer of synthetic resin that was applied at the same time. Abraded paint also was discovered along the edges of the paintings, consistent with years of careless cleaning of the mural frames. Preservar's 1999 report further indicated that the construction carried out during the South Wing project had a deleterious affect on the murals and resulted in "an extensive network of cracking throughout the lower registers of the two murals."<sup>111</sup>

The Cox murals were repaired and cleaned as part of an artwork conservation program for the senate that included ceiling and wall paintings in the Senate Parlor, Lobby and vestibules. Conservators first removed heavy dust by dry brushing and then cleaned the surfaces with mildly ammoniated water applied with cotton swabs. Chemical analysis revealed xylene to be the most effective means of removing varnish and grime, although heavy deposits of grime were removed with a 3 percent solution of Triton X 100. Damaged and abraded areas were inpainted with Goldens MSA colors. Following cleaning and inpainting, the murals were coated with Soluvar gloss varnish, diluted in a ratio of one part varnish to three parts mineral spirits applied by spraying.<sup>112</sup>

### North Wing: North Hearing Room Murals by Charles Yardley Turner, 1915

By the end of 1913 it was established that what has come to be known as the "North Hearing Room" would be a public space under the jurisdiction of the Railroad Commission, and its purpose would be to provide a location for conferences between state regulatory agencies and the owners of private corporations and utilities.<sup>113</sup> It seems likely that Governor McGovern advocated the modification of this space from a library, as initially intended, to a public hearing room. His administration had been active in establishing the Industrial Commission and the Board of Public Affairs, and McGovern also had participated in the enactment of the nation's first workers' compensation law and state income tax. These measures depended on the cooperation of government, business and labor, so it follows that the North Hearing Room was established as a place for regulatory agencies to solicit information and hear appeals. In this way, the space embodied architecturally the changes that the progressive movement had brought to state government.<sup>114</sup> By the time the commission authorized James Otis Post to negotiate with Charles Yardley Turner to execute the murals, the purpose of the room had been finally and unequivocally established and the theme of the paintings, "transportation," was considered appropriate to the room's use by the Railroad Commission. On 6 January 1914, the Capitol Commission signed a contract with Turner to paint four panels that would be placed in the concave coves at the base of the ceiling. His contracted fee was \$20,000 and work was to be completed by 1 July 1915. A month later Turner submitted a proposal outlining his intended subject matter.

First: I have made a sketch of a number of Indians [on] horseback on the uplands . . . with the trailing poles attached to the horses upon which they placed their goods and chattels. They are seen against the mountain tops and sky. I think it will make a very good design for the primitive form of transportation.

Second: I have represented the French and Indians trading for furs, etc., etc., the canoe being very much in evidence with the stretch of the blue lake in the distance. The trading post is also indicated with a number of French and Indians in the foreground.

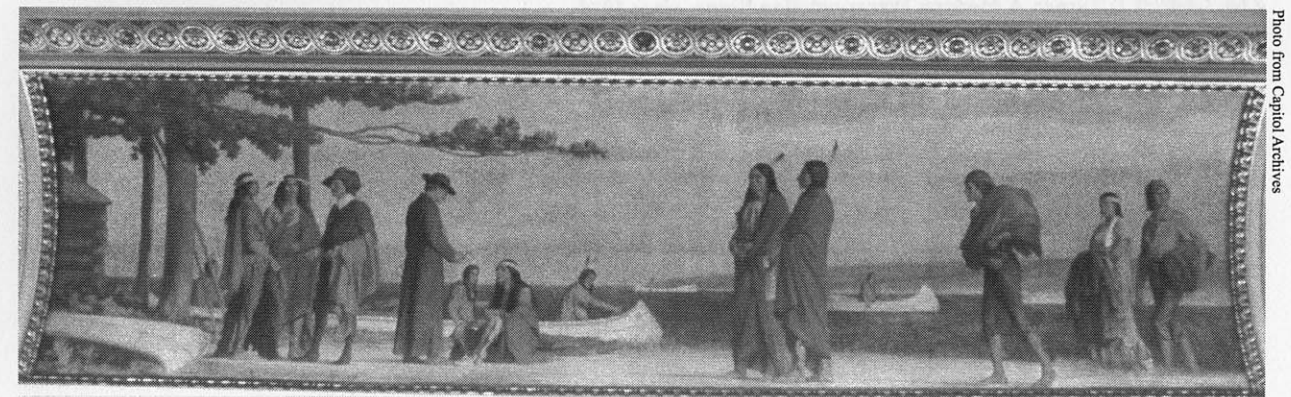
Third: I have represented the prairie schooner drawn by oxen and other wagons disappearing in the distance, down the slopes, into the valley, and into the distance.

Fourth: Represents the Colonial Period. The use of the stage-coach drawing up to the Inn discharging and receiving passengers.



**8.65 Charles Y. Turner, Native Americans Striking the Trail, circa 1980**

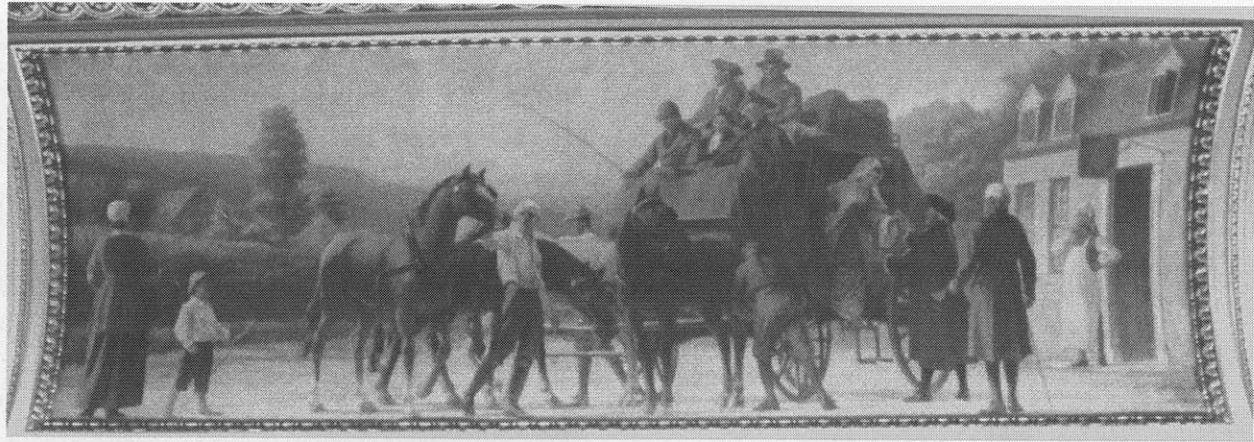
Charles Turner, the muralist for the North Hearing Room on the second floor of the North Wing, was another New York artist; the commission contracted with him in early 1914 to complete a series of four murals for placement in the ceiling coves of the room. The theme of transportation was considered appropriate for a room used principally by the Railroad Commission. The Native American panel, Turner said, represented a "primitive form of transportation."



**8.66 Charles Y. Turner, A Lake Trading Station, circa 1980**

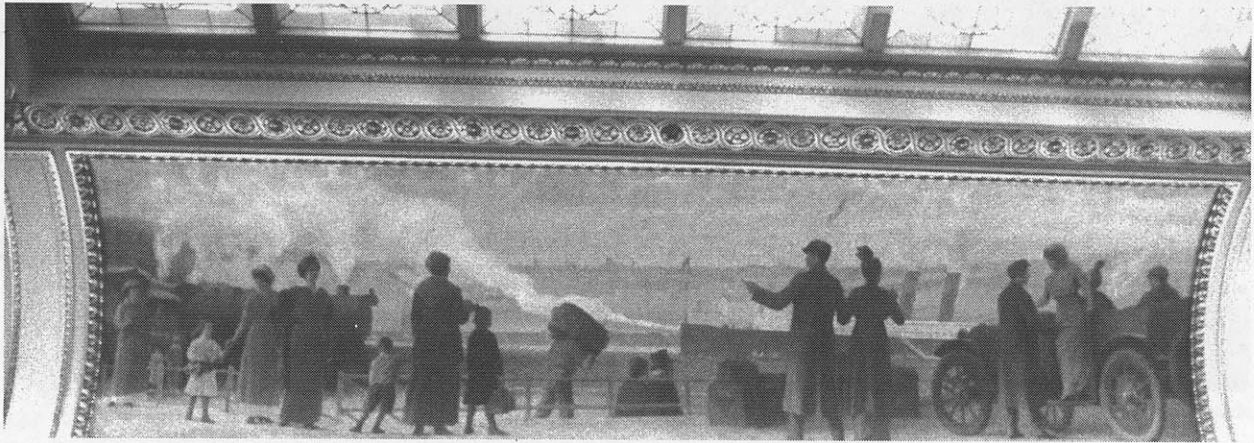
Canoes were standard methods of transportation for early fur trading in the Upper Great Lakes region until the early nineteenth century. The mural attempts to capture the ambiance of an early northern Wisconsin trading post in the wilderness.





**8.67 Charles Y. Turner, The Stagecoach, circa 1980**

*Throughout the early nineteenth century, various forms of horse-drawn conveyance dominated transportation. Turner chose a late colonial stagecoach scene as being representative of this period.*



**8.68 Charles Y. Turner, A Modern Transportation Scene, circa 1980**

*At the urging of Governor Francis McGovern, Turner discarded plans for a panel that showed a covered wagon on the plains. Instead he painted a modern scene, as suggested by McGovern, who was from Milwaukee, illustrating “a harbor, with railroad terminal, docks, railroad trains, motor trucks, automobiles, etc.” An airplane is included at the center of the painting.*

The commission approved the first three sketches and descriptions, and McGovern suggested that the fourth should represent something modern, such as “a harbor, with railroad terminal, docks, railroad trains, motor trucks, automobiles, etc.” Thus, the governor who hailed from Milwaukee ensured that the final painting completed for the Capitol would represent both his home and the largest and most industrial city in the state. Porter urged Turner to revise the sketches as early as possible and Turner quickly complied, submitting modified drawings in June and July 1914.<sup>115</sup> He completed the panels and had them delivered to Madison by the end of February 1916; they were installed in July. Turner’s depiction of a busy port became the only modern scene represented throughout the building and provided an indication of a changing aesthetic, since the other compositions were based either on historical or allegorical references. The public viewed the panels for the first time in December 1916. It was reported that the “story of transportation” impressed visitors with its color and warmth.<sup>116</sup>

#### **Cleaning and Repair of the North Hearing Room Murals, 1991-1992**

Because of their relatively inaccessible location in the ceiling coves of the room, the four Turner murals appear to have undergone comparatively fewer modifications than the paintings in other second floor chambers. The perceived relative significance of the other rooms, too, may have led to more frequent cleanings than were undertaken in the North Hearing Room. Sometime during the early 1970s, the four murals were cleaned and coated with a modified alkyd resin, similar to polyurethane. Over the next fifteen years, the varnish discolored and became insoluble.<sup>117</sup> The North Hearing Room murals were cleaned as part of the North Wing project between 1991 and 1992. Anton Rajer of Sheboygan received the contract and completed work on three of the murals by late 1991 and on the fourth in early 1992. The old varnish was removed and the canvases touched up. Several small stress cracks were found; during restoration they were consolidated and filled. A new coating of conservation varnish was applied.<sup>118</sup>



# Conclusion

The thorough study, careful analysis and thoughtful conservation given to the Capitol’s artwork as part of the restoration and rehabilitation matched the careful consideration given the development and execution of this work in the Capitol by George Post and the Capitol Commission. Although the sculptural groups, murals and mosaics were conceived independently of one another, each was set into an architectural context established by the architect, who played a pivotal role both in hiring artists and in developing the thematic content for the work. As a testament to Post’s design skills, a successful integration of art and architecture has been achieved in each instance. This integration occurred with equal dexterity in the grandest of Post’s interior spaces and in the embellishment of the Capitol’s monumental exterior. As the years passed, the colors of the murals became muddied through well-meant intervention, technical difficulties that occurred during the installation of the mosaics revealed themselves and needed immediate attention and the exterior statuary had weathered during decades of Wisconsin’s extreme climate. The successful conservation of these invaluable and irreplaceable works of art was an appropriately serious and well-studied aspect of the restoration of the Capitol. As with other aspects of the project, an increasingly refined understanding of the nature of the work and processes for its analysis and conservation evolved throughout the course of the project.



**8.69 Plot of restoration plan, A Modern Transportation Scene, 1991**  
*The North Hearing Room murals were found to be in relatively good condition, compared to the murals elsewhere on the second floor. This was likely due to their relative inaccessibility. The white lines indicate areas that conservators identified as needing treatment.*







## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Carolyn Porter, “The State Capitol: Its Art and Architecture” (unpublished manuscript, copy in Capitol Archives, c. 1914), 2.

<sup>2</sup> Telephone conversation with Russell Flinchum, Century Association archivist, 7 July 2003. See also the index entries and pages for Capitol artists in Sarah Bradford Landau, *George B. Post, Architect: Picturesque Designer and Determined Realist* (New York: Monacelli Press, Inc., 1998) and in Thomas O’Sullivan, *North Star Statehouse: An Armchair Guide to the Minnesota State Capitol* (n.p.: Pogo Press, Inc., 1994).

<sup>3</sup> The standard work on Bitter is James M. Dennis, *Karl Bitter: Architectural Sculptor, 1867-1915* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1967).

<sup>4</sup> Correspondence between John Grignola and Lew F. Porter (hereinafter Porter), folder 17, box 9, Capitol Commission records, ser. 833, Archives Division, Wisconsin Historical Society, hereinafter cited only as Capitol Commission records, ser. 833.

<sup>5</sup> George B. Post (hereinafter Post) to Porter, 4 November 1909, and “Memorandum” dated 1 November 1909, both in folder 6, box 21, *ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Wisconsin State Journal*, 25, 26 and 27 October 1909. See also the correspondence among Karl Bitter (hereinafter Bitter), Porter, and George H. D. Johnson (hereinafter Johnson) in folders 2, 3, 13, 14 and 15, box 5; folder 5, box 12, and folder 5, box 13, Capitol Commission records, ser. 833.

<sup>7</sup> Bitter to Porter, 5 December 1908, folder 1, box 5, Capitol Commission records, ser. 833.

<sup>8</sup> Dennis, *Karl Bitter*, 134.

<sup>9</sup> George H. Bickford (hereinafter Bickford) to Porter, 17 April 1909, folder 2, box 27; Porter to Bickford, 5 May 1909, folder 10, box 36, both in Capitol Commission records, ser. 833.

<sup>10</sup> Porter to Bickford, 20 August 1909, folder 2, box 29, *ibid.*; “Jud Stone’s Gleanings,” 7 August 1909; “Big Derrick Fixed After Havoc Caused by Great Stone’s Fall,” 9 August 1909, both in *Wisconsin State Journal*.

<sup>11</sup> See the Bitter correspondence with Porter and with Woodbury Granite in folders 1 and 2, box 5, Capitol Commission records, ser. 833.

<sup>12</sup> “One Killed, Six Escape By Miracle in Capitol Accident,” 25 October 1909; “Seek Cause of Logan’s Death,” 26 October 1909, both in the *Wisconsin State Journal*; Porter to Orrin H. Ingram (hereinafter Ingram), 29 October 1909, folder 15, box 11, Capitol Commission records, ser. 833.

<sup>13</sup> W. S. Hopkins to Porter, 1 November 1909, folder 11, box 15; Ingram to Porter, 9 November 1909, folder 9, box 1; Bitter to Porter, 22 November 1909, folder 2, box 5; Bickford to Porter, 20 November 1909, folder 2, box 27, all in Capitol Commission records, ser. 833.

<sup>14</sup> Bickford to Porter, 10 December 1909, folder 2, box 27, *ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> Porter to John A. Van Cleve (hereinafter Van Cleve), 2 January 1910, folder 2, box 26; Bickford to J. H. Gormley, 22 March 1910, folder 1, box 30; Porter to James O. Davidson (hereinafter Davidson), 23 December 1910, folder 25, box 7, all *ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> Carolyn Porter, “State Capitol,” 19. The Weinman statue of Lincoln was replicated for placement in the university campus through the efforts of Richard Lloyd Jones, a Madison newspaper man and the cousin of architect Frank Lloyd Wright, and Thomas Brittingham, in 1909. For the Vilas portrait statue, see National Park Service website, Vicksburg National Military Park, [http://www.nps.gov/vick/us\\_cmnd/vilas.htm](http://www.nps.gov/vick/us_cmnd/vilas.htm).

<sup>17</sup> Adolph Weinman contract, folder 2, box 44; Weinman correspondence, boxes 27 and 29, Capitol Commission records, ser. 833. “South Pediment Figures Done; Weinman Here,” *Wisconsin State Journal*, 26 June 1912.

<sup>18</sup> Capitol Commission minutes for 23 August 1911 and 23 April 1912, vol. 1; Attilio Piccirilli contract and bond, folder 5, box 43, all in Capitol Commission records, ser. 833. For Piccirilli, see also Josef Vincent Lombardo, *Attilio Piccirilli: Life of an American Sculptor* (Chicago: Pitman Publishing Corporation, 1944).

<sup>19</sup> Attilio Piccirilli to Porter, 3 July and 3 November 1914, folder 11, box 19; Porter to Piccirilli, 26 October 1914, folder 5, box 20, all in Capitol Commission records, ser. 833.

<sup>20</sup> Wiss, Janney Elstner Associates, Inc., *Exterior Survey and Analysis of the Wisconsin State Capitol Dome, West Wing, and Northwest Pavilion* (Chicago: the author, 1994), 40. See also individual data sheets, nos. SW, SE, NE, W3-D, C4S-A, C5S-A, C6S-A, *ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> Wiss, Janney Elstner Associates, Inc., *Wisconsin State Capitol Restoration and Rehabilitation, Exterior Conservation, 2000-2001* (Northbrook, IL: the author, 2001).

<sup>22</sup> See daily work logs for the exterior cleaning process, *ibid.* For specifications and precautions, see Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc., *Wisconsin State Capitol Restoration and Rehabilitation, Exterior Conservation, Division Project No., 91926.29* (Northbrook, IL: the author, 2000), section 04515, 3 and 6.

<sup>23</sup> Dennis, *Karl Bitter*, 132.

<sup>24</sup> Capitol Commission minutes for 29 October 1907, vol.1, Capitol Commission records, ser. 833.

<sup>25</sup> Post (hereinafter Post) to William F. Vilas (hereinafter Vilas), 16 July 1908, folder 4, box 21, *ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> Bitter contract, folder 2, box 42, *ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> Bitter to Porter, 15 February and 12 May 1911, box 5, *ibid.* See also Dennis, *Karl Bitter*, 140.



<sup>28</sup> Dennis, *Karl Bitter*, 140.

<sup>29</sup> Bitter to Porter, 15 February 1911, box 5, Capitol Commission records, ser. 833.

<sup>30</sup> For a detailed discussion of the removal and reinstallation of the Bitter groups, see Wisconsin, Department of Administration, Division of Facilities Development, et al., *Historic Structure Report, Book V, Wisconsin State Capitol: Central Portion—Dome and Rotunda* (Madison, 1997), 4-6 through 4-7.

<sup>31</sup> Capitol Commission minutes for 29 December 1910, vol. 1, Capitol Commission records, ser. 833.

<sup>32</sup> Capitol Commission minutes for 25 January 1911, *ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> Capitol Commission minutes for 23 August 1911, *ibid.* See also Susan Porter Green, *Helen Farnsworth Mears* (Oshkosh, Wisconsin: Castle-Pierce Press, 1972), 76-82.

<sup>34</sup> Post to Vilas, 16 July 1908, folder 4, box 21, Capitol Commission records, ser. 833.

<sup>35</sup> Porter to George B. Post & Sons, 16 May 1912, box 22; Daniel Chester French to Post, 19 August 1912, box 19, both *ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> Porter to Post & Sons, 16 May 1912, box 22; French to Post & Sons, no folder or box number; Post & Sons to Porter, 22 August 1912, Post to Porter, 4 August 1913, Post to Johnson, 22 August 1912, French to Post, 21 August 1913, all box 19; French to Porter, 4 August 1913, box 8, all *ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> French to Porter, 2 February 1914, box 8; Porter to French, 28 March 1914, box 9; Post & Sons to Porter (telegram), 23 June 1914, box 19, all *ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> James Otis Post to Porter, 23 June 1914 (letter), box 19, *ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> Porter to French, 1 August 1914, box 9, *ibid.* “‘Forward’ Placed on Pedestal,” *Wisconsin State Journal*, 20 July 1914. The newspaper called the statue “Forward,” a misnomer that continued for the next century.

<sup>40</sup> “Miss Forward’s Getting All Dolled Up,” *The Capital Times*, 11 July 1957.

<sup>41</sup> Arthur McClure and Anton Rajer, “The Conservation and Regilding of the Statue ‘Wisconsin’ Atop the State Capitol in Madison, Wisconsin, U.S.A.,” circa 1990, box 1, North Wing Restoration Papers, Capitol Archives.

<sup>42</sup> The contract for project number 8812-02 stipulated that work be completed as described in Section B of the consultant’s proposal dated 20 August 1990 and that the consultant should be paid a fee not to exceed \$50,406.

<sup>43</sup> Contracts, specifications, and correspondence surrounding the *Wisconsin* regilding are in box 1, North Wing Restoration Papers, Capitol Archives.

<sup>44</sup> Christine Roussel, Inc. and Venus Bronze Works, Inc., “Proposal for the Restoration of the Statue ‘Wisconsin,’” 20 August 1990, *ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> Capitol Commission minutes for 23 August and 3 November 1911, vol.1; Post to Porter, 28 October 1911, box 19; and Edwin Blashfield contract, folder 2, box 42, all in Capitol Commission records, ser. 833. “Edwin Blashfield, Noted Artist, Dies,” *New York Times*, 13 October 1936, 27; Helen L. Earle, comp., *Biographical Sketches of American Artists*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. (Charleston, South Carolina: Garnier & Company, 1972), s.v. Blashfield, Edwin Howland, 48-49.

<sup>46</sup> Post & Sons to Johnson, 22 August 1912, and Porter to Blashfield, 17 September 1914, no folder or box numbers, both in Capitol Commission records, ser. 833.

<sup>47</sup> Porter to Blashfield, 17 September 1914; Post & Sons to Porter, 19 October 1914; Porter to Post & Sons, 27 October 1914; Blashfield 4 December 1914; Porter to Blashfield, 23 January 1915, no folder or box numbers, *ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> Carolyn Porter, “State Capitol,” 12-13.

<sup>49</sup> Kenyon Cox, *Artist and Public and Other Essays on Art Subjects* (New York: C. Scribner’s Sons, 1914), 112-13.

<sup>50</sup> Constance S. Silver, *The 1998 Conservation Treatment of “The Resources of Wisconsin,” A Monumental Mural Painting in the Rotunda of the Wisconsin State Capitol* (New York: Preservar, Inc., 1998), 16-18, in Department of Administration project files.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 19-22.

<sup>52</sup> Post & Sons to Porter, 3 November 1911, folder 2, box 22; Capitol Commission minutes for 23 August and 3 November 1911, vol. 1, all in Capitol Commission records, ser. 833. For Cox, see H. Wayne Morgan, *Kenyon Cox: 1856-1919: A Life in American Art* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1994).

<sup>53</sup> Cox’s remarks are quoted in Morgan, *Kenyon Cox: 1856-1919*, 168

<sup>54</sup> Kenyon Cox contract and bond, folder 3, box 42; Cox to Porter, 16 November 1912 and 12 August 1913, box 6; Post to Ingram, 22 May 1913, and Post & Sons to Porter, 10 October 1913, both box 21, all in Capitol Commission records, ser. 833.

<sup>55</sup> Cox to Porter, 25 November 1912 and 28 May and 19 July 1913, box 6, *ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> Porter to Cox, 24 October 1914, box 7, *ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> This statement, attributed to Cox in Capitol guidebooks since their earliest issue, also appears in Carolyn Porter, “State Capitol.” See also Cox to Porter, 12 February 1914, box 6, Capitol Commission records, ser. 833.

<sup>58</sup> Post & Sons to Porter, 26 February 1915, folder 6, box 22; Van Cleve to Porter, 19 March 1915, folder 11, box 25; and Capitol Commission minutes for 17 March 1915, vol. 1, all in Capitol Commission records, ser. 833.

<sup>59</sup> Porter to Cox, 15 October 1915, folder 3, box 7, *ibid.* There is no evidence as to the outcome of Cox’s inspection. Since Cox died in 1919, it is unlikely anything was done.

<sup>60</sup> Constance S. Silver, *Report on the Conservation Treatment of the Monumental Mosaics by Kenyon Cox in the Rotunda*



of the *Wisconsin State Capitol*, rev. ed. (New York: Preservar, Inc., 1998), 15-20, in Department of Administration project files.

<sup>61</sup> Jerry Podany, *Condition Report and Recommendations* [for] *Kenyon Cox Mosaic Panels, Wisconsin State Capitol* . . . (Los Angeles: the author, 1998), unpaginated report in Department of Administration project files.

<sup>62</sup> Silver, *Conservation of the Monumental Mosaics*, 16-20.

<sup>63</sup> “Unveiling of the Mosaics State Capitol Rotunda,” 22 October 1999, and attached briefs, Department of Administration project files.

<sup>64</sup> Capitol Commission minutes for 16 February 1908, vol.1; Blashfield contract and bond, folder 2, box 41, *ibid*, both in Capitol Commission records, ser. 833.

<sup>65</sup> Blashfield to Vilas, 19 February 1908, and Reuben Gold Thwaites to Vilas, 25 February 1908, both in “1907, Sept. 16—1908, April” folder, box 39 (correspondence, 1907, Sept. 16—1919), Wm. F. Vilas Papers, Archives Division, Wisconsin Historical Society.

<sup>66</sup> Post to Vilas, 16 and 27 July 1908, folder 4, box 21, Capitol Commission records, ser. 833.

<sup>67</sup> John LaFarge, quoted by Carolyn Porter, “State Capitol,” 4-5.

<sup>68</sup> Post to James O. Davidson, 25 November 1908, folder 6, box 2, Capitol Improvement and Supply records, 1839-1917, ser. 138, Archives Division, Wisconsin Historical Society; Porter to Blashfield, 27 November, 1 December 1908, folder 12, box 5, Capitol Commission records, ser. 833.

<sup>69</sup> Blashfield to Porter, 3 December 1908, folder 1, box 5, Capitol Commission records, ser. 833.

<sup>70</sup> *Wisconsin State Journal*, 23 December 1908, 2.

<sup>71</sup> Anton Rajer and Marianne Kartheiser, *Art by the Acre: The Removal of Aged Alkyd Resin on Murals at the Wisconsin State Capitol, A Comprehensive Approach*, 24 September 1990; Anton Rajer, “Conservation of the Mural in the Assembly Chamber, Wisconsin State Capitol, 1988,” both box 9, Pre-1987 Restoration Papers, Capitol Archives. Jo Sandin, “New Wrinkle for an old painting,” *Milwaukee Journal*, 3 November 1988, 1.

<sup>72</sup> Brian Fick and M. Yeager, *Wisconsin State Capitol West Wing Renovation Assembly Chamber: Mural and Pendentive Paintings Condition Report* (New York: EverGreene Painting Studios, 1995), 3-4, in B.11.10a, Capitol Archives.

<sup>73</sup> Anton Rajer and Marianne Kartheiser, *Art by the Acre*, box 9, Pre-1987 Restoration Papers, *ibid*.

<sup>74</sup> Fick and Yeager, *Mural and Pendentive Paintings Condition Report*, 6; West Wing Contract Change Orders, August 1995, B.14.30, *ibid*..

<sup>75</sup> Capitol Commission minutes for 10 June 1908 and 12 and 23 August 1911, vol. 1; Porter memorandum or report, 21

July 1908, box 1a; and Hugo Ballin contract and bond, folder 2, box 2, Capitol Commission records, ser. 833. Howard Pyle received first consideration for the chamber murals. See Post to Vilas, 16 July 1908, and Post & Sons to Porter, 27 July 1908, both in folder 4, box 21, *ibid*.

<sup>76</sup> Ada Rainey, “The Mural Decoration in the State Capitol of Wisconsin Painted by Hugo Ballin,” *International Studio* LI (February 1914), clxxxiii-cxcii; and “Hugo Ballin, 76, Noted Muralist,” *New York Times*, 28 November 1956.

<sup>77</sup> Capitol Commission minutes for 23 April 1912, vol. 1, Capitol Commission records, ser. 833. Vilas’s role in planning the Capitol and his suggestions about artwork are described in Post & Sons to Porter, 27 July 1908, folder 4, box 21, *ibid*.

<sup>78</sup> Capitol Commission minutes for 10 December 1912 and 15 January 1913, vol. 1; Ballin to Porter, 15 January 1913, folder 6, box 5, all *ibid*. Louis Untermeyer, “Hugo Ballin’s Decorations for the Capitol at Madison,” *Art and Progress* 3 (September 1912), 699-702.

<sup>79</sup> Ballin to Porter, 26 February and 19 March 1913, folder 6, box 5, and Porter to Ballin, 24 March 1913, folder 17, box 5, Capitol Commission records, ser. 833; Hugo Ballin, *Mural Paintings by Hugo Ballin, in the Executive Chamber, State Capitol Building, Madison, Wis.* (New York: privately printed, 1913).

<sup>80</sup> Capitol Commission minutes for 15 January 1913, vol. 1; Ballin to Porter, 15 January 1913, folder 6, box 5, all Capitol Commission records, ser. 833.

<sup>81</sup> Capitol Commission minutes for 29 April 1913, vol. 1, *ibid*.

<sup>82</sup> Porter to Johnson, 18 January 1913, folder 9, box 13, *ibid*.

<sup>83</sup> Porter to Ballin, 13 June (folder 17, box 5), 1 (folder 1, box 34) and 9 (folder 17, box 5) July 1913, Ballin to Porter, 19 June, July (n.d.), 20 November, folder 6, box 5; Post & Sons to Ballin, 8 November 1913, folder 1, box 34, and Ballin to Col. McGregor, 12 December 1913, folder 6, box 5, all *ibid*.

<sup>84</sup> Porter to Ballin, 24 November 1913, folder 17, box 5; Post to Johnson, 21 April 1909, folder 5, box 21, *ibid*.

<sup>85</sup> Capitol Commission minutes for 19 December 1913, vol. 2, and Ballin to Francis McGovern, n.d. [circa October 1913], folder 6, box 5, *ibid*.

<sup>86</sup> Porter to Ballin, 9 January (folder 15, box 5) and 26 February 1914 (folder 18, box 5); Ballin to Porter, 22 and 24 February 1914, folder 7, box 5, and 18 March 1915, folder 8, box 5; Porter to Van Cleve, 9 January 1914, folder 4, box 26, and Van Cleve to Porter, 12 January 1914, folder 10, box 25, all *ibid*.

<sup>87</sup> Ballin to Porter, 18 March 1915, folder 8, box 5, *ibid*.

<sup>88</sup> Porter to Ballin, 2 April 1915, folder 19, box 5, *ibid*.

<sup>89</sup> Ballin to Porter, 23 February 1916, folder 9, box 5, and Capitol Commission minutes for 29 February 1916, vol. 2, *ibid*.



- <sup>90</sup> Anton Rajer, *Reports of Technical Examination of Governor's Conference Room* (Madison: Fine Arts Conservation Services, 1988), 1-2.
- <sup>91</sup> Constance S. Silver, *The Governor's Reception Room, Wisconsin State Capitol: Evaluations of Problems of Conservation and Options for Historic Restoration [and] Fine Arts Conservation* (New York: Preservar, Inc., 1999), in Department of Administration project files.
- <sup>92</sup> Cunningham-Adams Fine Arts Painting Conservation, *Conservation Examination Report: Hugo Ballin Murals, Executive Chamber, State Capitol Building, Madison, Wisconsin* (Sandy Hook, Connecticut: 1999), 2, 7-8, in Department of Administration project files.
- <sup>93</sup> Silver, *The Governor's Reception Room*, 1999, 2-10.
- <sup>94</sup> Constance S. Silver, *The Governor's Reception Room of the Wisconsin State Capitol: Analysis of the Mural Paintings by Hugo Ballin and Prospects for Conservation Treatment* (New York: Preservar, Inc., 2001), 1:27-35, in Department of Administration project files.
- <sup>95</sup> Cunningham-Adams Fine Arts Painting Conservation, *Conservation Examination Report*, 10-12.
- <sup>96</sup> Silver, *The Governor's Reception Room of the Wisconsin State Capitol* (2000), 1:24-28.
- <sup>97</sup> Post to Marshall, 12 April 1910, and Post to Porter, 14 and 19 April and 9 June 1910, all in folder 1, box 22, Capitol Commission records, ser. 833.
- <sup>98</sup> Porter to Johnson, 27 November 1909, folder 5, box 13; Post to John B. Winslow, 28 December 1911, Winslow to Post & Sons, 20 January 1912, both in folder 5, box 34, and Post to Porter, 9 June 1910 (quote), folder 1, box 22, and 22 January 1912, folder 3, box 22, *ibid.*
- <sup>99</sup> Francis Millet to Winslow, 15 and 23 February 1912, no folder or box numbers, *ibid.*
- <sup>100</sup> William Timlin to Winslow, 28 February 1912, and Post to Magnus Swenson, 3 June 1912, folder 3, box 22, *ibid.*
- <sup>101</sup> Capitol Commission minutes for 27 May, 14 June and 10 July 1912, vol. 1; correspondence in folder 3, box 22, *ibid.*
- <sup>102</sup> Capitol Commission minutes for 10 December 1912, vol. 1, and Albert Herter contract and bond, folder 7, box 42, *ibid.*
- <sup>103</sup> Porter to Winslow, 7 April 1914, folder 7, box 29, and Winslow to Porter, 8 April 1914, folder 4, box 28; Capitol Commission minutes for 20 May 1914, vol. 2, all *ibid.*
- <sup>104</sup> Porter to Herter, 8 June and 16 October 1914, folder 6, box 11; Winslow to Herter and Marshall to Herter, both 17 October 1914, folder 7, box 29, *ibid.*
- <sup>105</sup> Herter's murals are described in C. de Kay, "Murals at Madison, Wisconsin—Four Historical Paintings by Albert

Herter for the Supreme Court," *International Studio* 57 (December 1915), xlv-xlvi, and in the *Capitol Guides*.

<sup>106</sup> Correspondence on the installation of the murals is in folder 6, box 11 (the quotation is from Porter to Herter, 9 June 1915); folder 1, box 17; folders 19 and 20, box 10; folder 5, box 16, and folder 1, box 36, Capitol Commission records, ser. 833.

<sup>107</sup> Constance S. Silver, *The Supreme Court of the State of Wisconsin, Wisconsin [sic] State Capitol: Report on the Conservation and Restoration of the Mural Paintings: Volume 1: Report on the Conservation and Restoration of the Mural Paintings* (New York: Preservar, Inc., 2001), in Department of Administration project files.

<sup>108</sup> Cox to Porter, 30 October 1913, folder 7, box 7; and Porter to Cox, 11 November 1913, folder 8, box 7, both in Capitol Commission records, ser. 833.

<sup>109</sup> Cox to Porter, 3 July and 2 August 1914, both in folder 9, box 7; Cox to Post, 31 July 1914, copy in folder 10, box 7; and Capitol Commission minutes for 20 May and 29 September 1914, vol. 1, all *ibid.*

<sup>110</sup> The quotation is from the *Capitol Guide*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, 1920, 51, 53.

<sup>111</sup> Constance S. Silver, *The 1998 Conservation Treatment of the Mural Paintings of the South Wing of the Wisconsin State Capitol* (New York: Preservar, Inc., 1999), 2-7, in Department of Administration project files.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 7-8.

<sup>113</sup> "Preliminary Sketch" 1907, Roll #1, Architectural Plans, George B. Post Collection, New-York Historical Society; Capitol Commission minutes for 19 April 1913, volume 1, Capitol Commission records, ser. 833.

<sup>114</sup> John D. Buenker, *The History of Wisconsin, Volume IV: The Progressive Era* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1998), 515-68.

<sup>115</sup> Capitol Commission minutes for 19 December 1913, vol. 2; Charles Y. Tuner contract and bond, folder 1, box 44; Turner to Porter, 9 February 1914, folder 16, box 24; Porter to Turner, 12 February 1914, folder 2, box 25, all in Capitol Commission records, ser. 833.

<sup>116</sup> Porter to Turner, 8 June 1914, folder 2, box 25; Turner to Porter, 24 July 1916, folder 16, box 24; commission minutes for 29 February 1916, vol. 2, p. 49; Porter to Ingram, 13 July 1916, folder 17, box 11, all *ibid.*; "Eminent Artists Submit Designs for Capitol Work," *Wisconsin State Journal*, 22 May 1914, no page number; "Four Stages in Transportation Shown by The Mural Paintings in New Capitol Hearing Room," *Wisconsin State Journal*, 17 December 1916

<sup>117</sup> "Executive Summary of Capitol Art Conservation Activities From January-July, 1990. Madison, Wisconsin," box 9, Pre-1987 Restoration Papers; Anton Rajer contract, 16 October 1991, in "Anton Rajer, Mural Conservation" folder, box 2, North Wing Restoration, all in Capitol Archives.

<sup>118</sup> Lolita Schneiders, "State Capitol & Executive Residence Board, Art Conservation Report," 28 April 1992, box 9, Pre-1987 Restoration Papers. Attached to Schneiders's report is a statement from Rajer, "Art Conservation Executive Summary," dated April 1992.