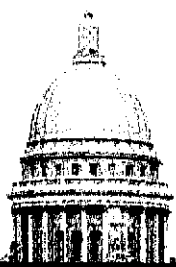


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Wisconsin State Journal

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

MADISON, WISCONSIN

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Capitol shines again



Joseph W. Jackson III/WJSJ

In the dome's oculus, or eye, rings of gold-painted flourishes and daylight from 20 windows surround the mural "Resources of Wisconsin" by Edwin Blashfield. The tile mosaics were created by Kenyon Cox and depict Justice, top, and Government, bottom. During its cleaning and restoration, scaffolding filled the rotunda so workers could reach the dome.

ATOP the Isthmus' highest point, the state Capitol constantly beckons to those viewing it in Madison and from surrounding hilltops.

It is ubiquitous with Madison, and a view of its noble dome will often boost

a property's value.

This month, with the completion of its \$141 million, 11-year restoration, the Capitol's interior is restored to its original grandeur and its Bethel granite exterior is as white as it was the day it was finished.

Those walking through its doors will appreciate architect George B. Post's

historic designs that make it worthy of its new place as a National Historic Landmark.

What will be less apparent is that it is as technologically advanced as the brand new State Justice Center a block away.

— Lisa Schuetz



Wisconsin Historical Society

Construction on the Capitol, designed by New York architect George B. Post, began in 1906 and was completed in 1917. It replaced Madison's second Capitol, which had been damaged by a 1904 fire. The old Capitol was demolished one wing at a time, starting with the fire-damaged West Wing. A new wing was built in its place so government functions would be disrupted as little as possible. The North Wing of the old Capitol is shown at right.

State's jewel rises anew

More than 20 years after the first words of Capitol restoration were uttered, the long-anticipated and painstaking project is completed, and it is being celebrated as the building joins the list of National Historic Landmarks.

By Lisa Schuetz
Wisconsin State Journal

Six years ago, with the law on her side, a Middleton interior designer started working as the state's bounty hunter.

Diane Al Shihabi's quarry: the Capitol's original furniture.

Armed with original drawings and a legislative mandate, Al Shihabi poked through antique malls, estate sales and the bowels of 23 state buildings.

Our state Capitol is one of the most architecturally significant in the country, and is considered George Browne Post's finest work, even above his New York Stock Exchange building in Manhattan.

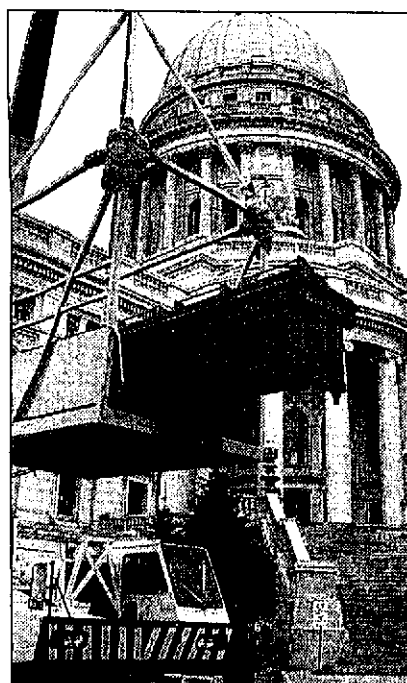
She was looking for the furnishings architect George Browne Post had designed and earmarked for specific rooms in the Capitol. Over the years, furniture has been sold, sneaked or moved out.

"It was a huge task," she said. "It took me a long time to understand what was ordered (by Post), what was

canceled and what actually was received."

Besides unearthing the furnishings that were original to the building, Al Shihabi designed new furniture, relying heavily on the Arts and Crafts style of Post's designs to meet today's ergonomic requirements as well as historical appropriateness.

Al Shihabi and thousands of others took painstaking care



Joseph W. Jackson III/WJSJ

The Assembly Chamber furniture was moved out through a window and lowered to the ground with a crane on March 8, 1993, so the pieces could be restored by Carley Wood Associates and the Lost Finish.

throughout the 11-year, \$141 million restoration of Wisconsin's Capitol.

Wing by wing, room by room and layer by layer, a troop of craftspeople removed paint, partitions, acoustic ceilings, fluorescent lighting, inexpensive carpeting, staples, nails and broken stone and returned the Capitol to its original magnificence.

In contrast to earlier haphazard remodeling, this time those in charge strove to balance ar-

chitectural integrity while making way for modern technology, such as computers, air conditioning and improved electricity.

This week, more than 20 years after the first whispers of a Capitol restoration echoed in its marble and granite halls, the efforts of those involved will be unveiled in a celebration today. It will also mark the Capitol's new status as a National Historic Landmark. Thirty other Wisconsin sites are on the list, including Frank Lloyd Wright's Taliesin in Spring Green.

Our state Capitol is one of the most architecturally significant in the country, and is considered Post's finest work, even above his New York Stock Exchange building in Manhattan.

Post, a New Yorker, was hired in 1906 after his design won a competition to replace the second Capitol damaged in a 1904 fire.

"Post's design is not only beautiful, but a premier example of trends in monumental government architecture at the turn of the century," said architectural historian Anne Biebel, co-owner of Isthmus Architecture.

In the 19th century, American architects such as Richard Morris Hunt were heavily influenced by the Renaissance Revival styles espoused by the Ecole de Beaux Arts, an architecture school in Paris. It's evident that Post, who started his career at Hunt's studio, created the classically detailed Capitol in the American adaptation of Beaux-Arts tradition.

Please see **CAPITOL**, Page 3

Capitol facts

◆ **Capitol architect George Browne Post** of New York died in November 1913 at age 76 before the building was completed. His sons, William S. Post and James O. Post, supervised the building's last four years of construction.

◆ **The Capitol's stone — marble and granite** — was obtained from Missouri, Tennessee, Vermont, New York, Illinois, Minnesota and Wisconsin, as well as France, Italy, Greece, Germany and Algeria. The most common stone on the interior is Kasota stone quarried in south-central Minnesota. The exterior is White Bethel granite quarried in Vermont.

◆ **The tip of the Capitol dome** is 184 feet, 3 inches from the ground, not including the gold-leafed statue of "Wisconsin" atop the dome.

◆ **The statue atop the Capitol's dome** is called "Wisconsin," not "Forward" as many people think. It was sculpted by New-Englander Daniel Chester French, whose most famous work is the seated Abraham Lincoln at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington.

◆ **World War I impacted the Capitol's construction** in many ways, including slowed ironwork production, early shipment of European marbles, and threatened long-term contracts due to wartime inflation. The most visible effect is that proposed exterior bronze and granite statues, which would have stood on stairway posts, were never completed.

◆ **Apart from the Supreme Court law murals**, the only national event depicted in the allegorical murals around the interior of the Capitol is the opening of the Panama Canal, which occurred in 1914. The three-panel mural, painted by Kenyon Cox and called "The marriage of the Atlantic and the Pacific," is in the Senate Chamber above the dais.

◆ **Albert Herter**, who painted the mural in the Supreme Court, was Post's second choice for the job. Painter Francis Millet went down with the Titanic before beginning work.

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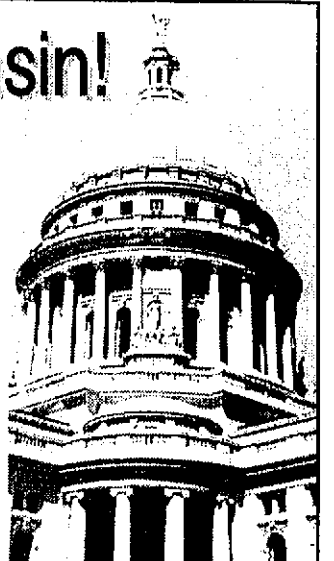
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are so evident in the extraordinary work they did on this challenging project.

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Capitol

Continued from Page 2

The interior, which he designed down to the switch plates, is also representative of the times. Post, still influenced by Hunt, created its furnishings in the Arts and Crafts style typified by the use of a variety of woods, intricately crafted metalwork and walls painted with colors derived from nature. He also hired nationally renowned artists to create the classical sculptures, paintings and mosaics, most of which relate to Wisconsin's history.

The blend of classical architecture and interior craftsmanship are particularly significant for that time in history, Biebel said. By the early part of the 20th Century, the Ecole's influence was waning in favor of modern architecture pioneered by Louis Sullivan, Wright and others.

Post's American interpretation of Beaux-Arts style, as well as the restoration's adherence to that style, helped secure the Capitol its place as a National Historic Landmark, she said. The new status should protect it from piecemeal remodeling and furniture loss.

"The National Historic Landmark status does presuppose that the building has historic integrity," Biebel said. "The restored areas are glorious. I think Post could walk into any entrance and he would walk into a building that was entirely familiar to him."

The restoration came about after years of political wrangling over space and improvements. Legislators had taken over more of the Capitol year after year, pushing state agencies to other buildings.

Especially in the 1960s and 1970s, piecemeal remodeling was used to solve space shortages.

Sen. Fred Risser, D-Madison, said that in those days, legislators would send staff members to squat in recently vacated rooms until they could move in. To make more space, practical division rather than architectural integrity were watchwords. Hastily built partitions broke up the largest rooms. New occupants would often paint walls according to their tastes, covering up colors and decorative painting carefully chosen by Post.

As technology improved, the building's tenants improvised: Computer cords cluttered rooms; drop ceilings with acoustical tiles were put in to reduce noise; fluorescent lighting replaced incandescent chandeliers and sconces.

In 1979, the state Building Commission, headed by Risser, first discussed the restoration, proposing a comprehensive remodeling at a cost of \$1 million but the measure was never approved.

It wasn't until 1989 that the Legislature approved spending around \$40 million for a comprehensive restoration. It would include updated plumbing, electrical, heating and air conditioning and computer wiring as well as restoring the interior to its former condition and restoring artwork.

Aside from a small-scale restoration of the Assembly Chamber in 1988, construction work on the full-scale restoration began in the Capitol's North Wing in 1990.

That the restoration was accomplished with architectural integrity can be attributed not only to the expertise of designers, decorative painters and architects, but to a handful of legislators.

Risser, who has been a legislator since 1956, has been a

Capitol tours

Free tours of the Capitol are offered daily. Tours depart from the ground floor Information Desk on Mondays through Saturdays at 9, 10 and 11 a.m., and 1, 2 and 3 p.m.; and Sundays at 1, 2 and 3 p.m. A 4 p.m. tour is offered Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day. Tours last about 45 to 55 minutes. The sixth floor museum and observation deck is also open during the summer months.

Groups of 10 or more should make a reservation by calling call (608) 266-0382 or going online at www.wisconsin.gov/state/core/wisconsin_state_capitol_tour.html.

Guide books are available at the Information Desk for \$3.

vocal proponent of remaining true to Post's vision during restoration.

"I've lived all my life in the shadow of the Capitol. I've seen its beauty and know its history," Risser said. "I've seen how that piecemeal approach to remodeling used by departments and various bodies had adversely affected the beauty of the building. It seemed to me we ought to have a coordinated approach (in its restoration)."

Project manager and general contractor Jim Schumacher of J.P. Cullen and Sons said the project's biggest challenges were protecting the historic architecture and artwork, and doing construction in an occupied building.

But finding willing workers — about 2,000 in all — for the project hasn't been a problem.

"People were standing in line to get to work on the Capitol," he said. "It's pride and its gratitude. For me, it was also a good portion of my career's work."

Architect Laura Davis, co-owner of Isthmus Architecture, has worked on the project for nine years. Like Schumacher, she said she found the work to be particularly inspiring.

"I was ready to quit architecture altogether nine years ago because I was working on what I considered disposable buildings," Davis said. "Then I was offered work on this building and it changed my life. I'm now part owner of an architecture firm. This project has breathed new life into lots of people."

Al Shihabi oversaw the interior design work in the South and East wings — from finding furniture to making sure woodwork finishes matched what had been done in the 1910s.

"For me, it was just a fantastic project," she said, "because I'm so interested in history and mystery and solving the mystery."

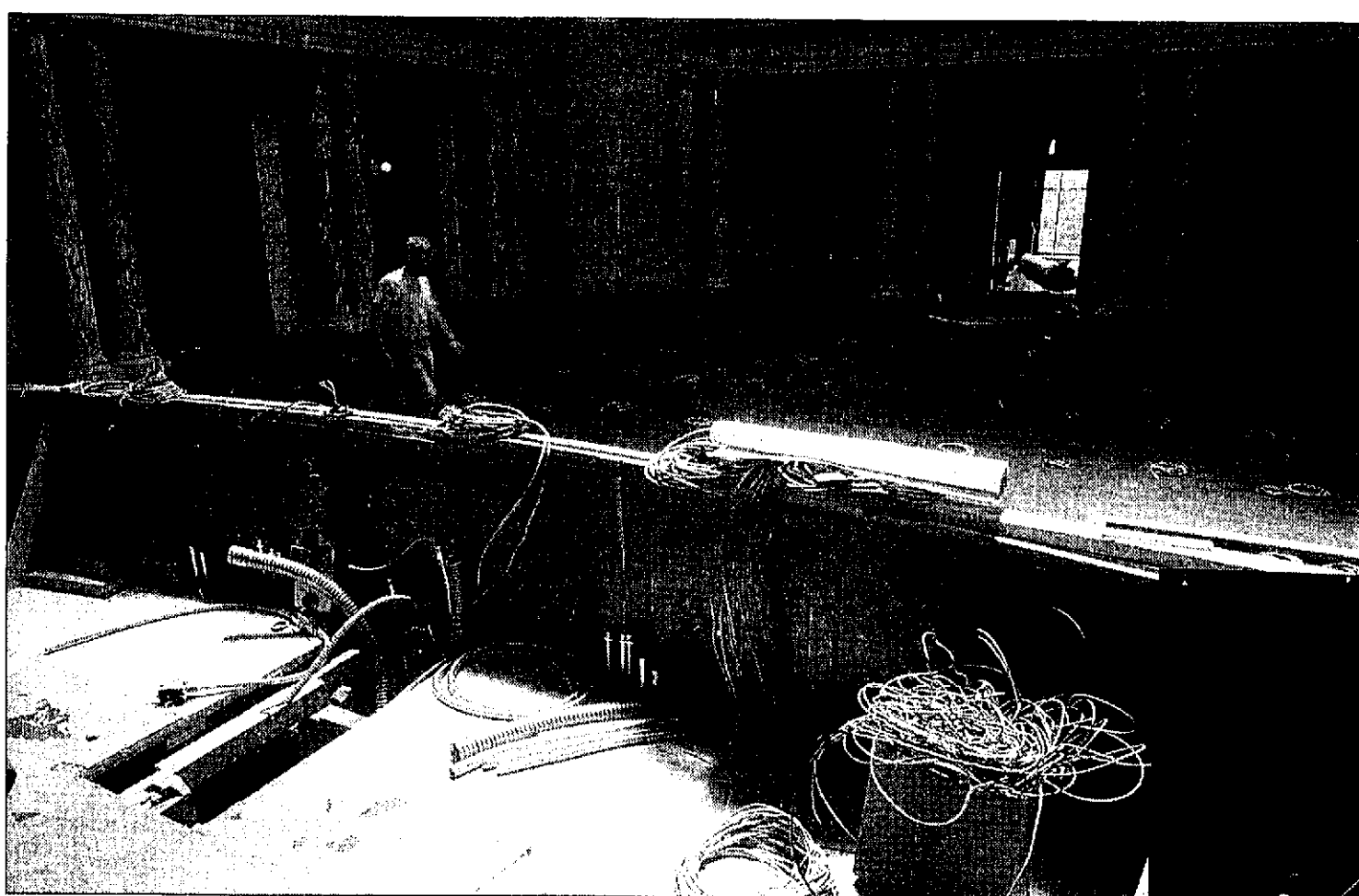
Furniture brought back to the Capitol was found as far away as Oconto, when a former senator's belongings were sold at an estate sale. At another sale, one of Al Shihabi's colleagues slept in her car all night until the doors opened the next morning.

"We found two chairs original to the Supreme Court that we did not have any like," she said.

A few pieces she's identified have yet to be returned to the Capitol. One is an intricately carved table that will be installed into the governor's conference room.

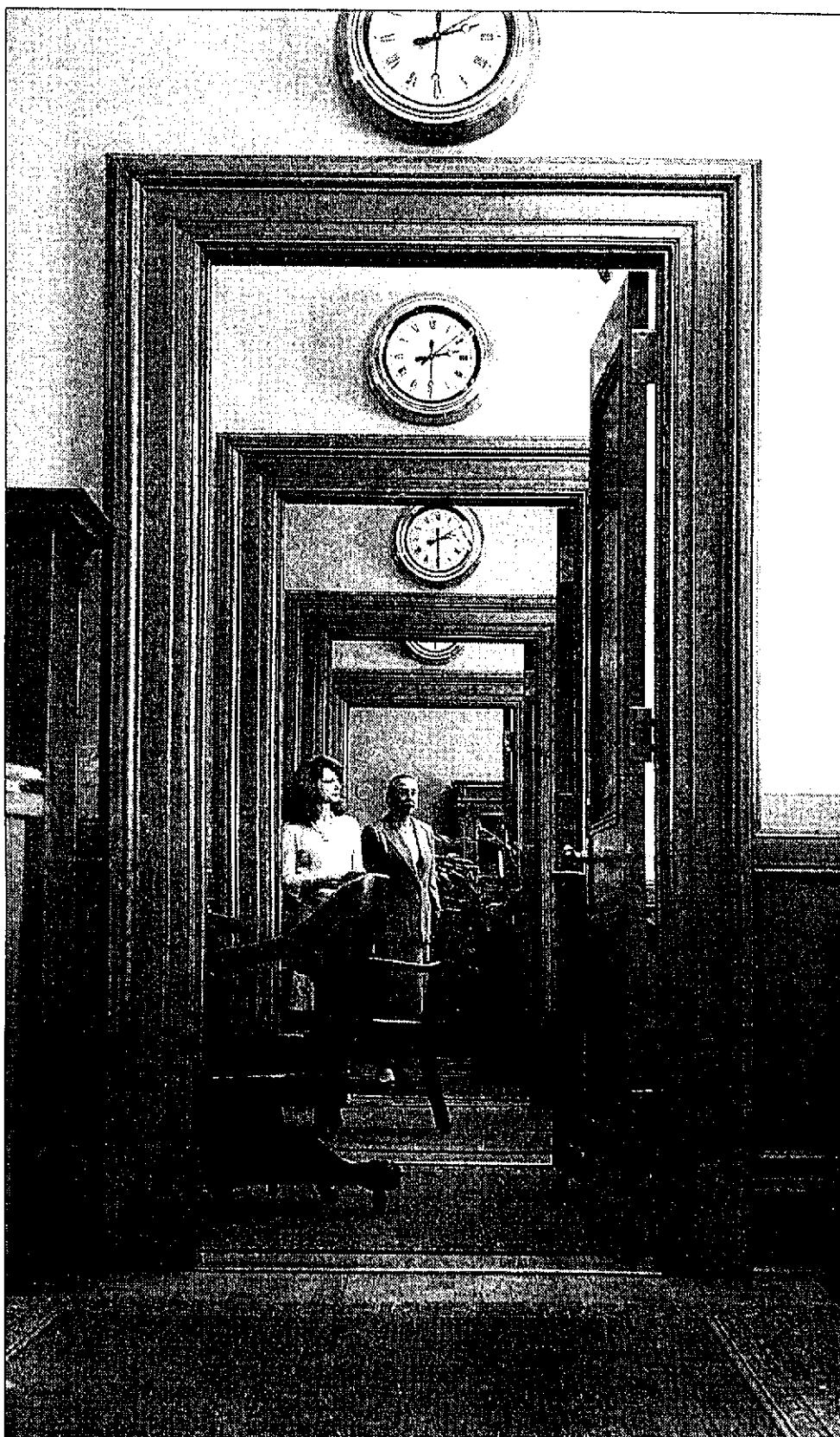
Once it is restored to the conference room, the room will look almost exactly as it did when it was finished in 1910, Al Shihabi said — right down to four 19th century Persian rugs she found.

"That's the reason why this restoration project is being looked at by people from all over," she said. "Most restorations stop at the structural work. This project kept going and included the furnishings."



Joseph W. Jackson III/WJSJ photos

Although the Capitol is now a National Historic Landmark, it is also technologically up-to-date. The restoration included installing upgraded plumbing, electric, heat and air conditioning systems, as well as state-of-the-art telephone, computer and data systems. The Assembly chamber, shown above, was rewired in July 1995.



The Supreme Court administrative offices in the East Wing of the Capitol are the only spaces where maple floors still exist. Restoration specialist Diane Al Shihabi, left, oversaw much of the interior detailing in the South and East wings, including replication of the Capitol's clocks and matching new woodwork to its original finish with the help of Roxanne Nelson, the Supreme Court and Senate's project liaison.

Capitol's architect had grand vision

George Browne Post (1837-1913) started his career in 1858 after graduating from New York University with a degree in civil engineering. For two years, he studied architecture at the New York studios of renowned architect Richard Morris Hunt.

In 1868, after a stint as an Army officer in the Civil War, he opened his own architecture firm.

Post was part of the late-19th century architectural movement that pioneered the use of steel to make taller and stronger structures, and several of his buildings showed up on Manhattan's skyline. Although many do not stand today, they included the 20-story Pulitzer Building (1889-90), also known as the World Building, and the 26-story St. Paul Building (1897-99).

Post also participated in Chicago's Columbian Exposition in 1893, an important showcase for American Beaux-Arts style architecture. It was that exposition that fueled his desire to create "America's Grandest Monument," which he nearly constructed as a museum of history on the Hudson River in New York.

Although that project never materialized, Post used a similar design, four proportional wings and a central dome, when designing the Wisconsin Capitol in 1906.

Post supervised much of the Capitol's construction as well as its interior design, but he died in 1913 before its completion. His sons, who had joined him in 1904 to form George B. Post and Sons, finished the project.

— Lisa Schuetz

Capitol Internet sites

To find out more about the Capitol's history and restoration, check out these Internet sites:

- ◆ www.legis.state.wi.us/senate/scclkids/toppage2.htm
- ◆ www.doa.state.wi.us/dbps/capitol/index.asp
- ◆ <http://danenet.wicp.org/hml/capital/ideal/idea/homepage.html>
- ◆ www.cupola.com/html/bldgstrulstatecap/cap01.htm
- ◆ www.library.wisc.edu/text/WIReader/Galleries/Capitoltrip.html

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THROUGH THE YEARS

1836
The first legislature of the Wisconsin Territory meets in Belmont in a two-story, white-framed building — Wisconsin's first Capitol — rented from John Atchinson.

1837
Construction begins on the Capitol in Madison. The cost of Wisconsin's second Capitol is \$60,000.

1857
Construction begins on the third Capitol as the state government outgrows the original Madison Capitol building. Work is completed in 1869.

1882
Two wings are added to the Capitol building, allowing additional space for the State Historical Society, the Supreme Court, the State Library and increased legislative staffs. The cost of the third Capitol, including the additions, is \$900,000.

1903
The Legislature appoints a commission to consider constructing a new and larger Capitol.

1904
The Capitol building is destroyed by fire.

1906
The commission approves the plan of George B. Post and Sons of New York. Work is started to rebuild the West Wing. Completed in 1909.

1908
The East Wing construction begins, finished in 1910.

1909
The legislature meets for the first time in the new quarters.

1910
The South Wing construction begins, finished in 1913.

1911
Construction on the rotunda and dome begins, finished in 1915.

1914
The North Wing construction begins.

1917
Capitol construction is completed. The cost of building Wisconsin's fourth Capitol is \$7.3 million. The dedication of the Capitol is deferred due to World War I.

1923
The Christmas Pageant, now a 77-year tradition, takes place for the first time at the Capitol. The pageant is held outdoors the first year, but is moved inside the following year. It has been held in the Capitol each year except during the 1997 and 1998 renovation of the rotunda.

1925
Robert "Fighting Bob" La Follette lies in state in the Capitol's rotunda. The Wisconsin State Journal reports, "Home from the wars of politics, Robert M. La Follette rests today in a magnificent sepulchre which he himself conceived - the \$7,000,000 state house high above the dark blue lakes of his homeland."

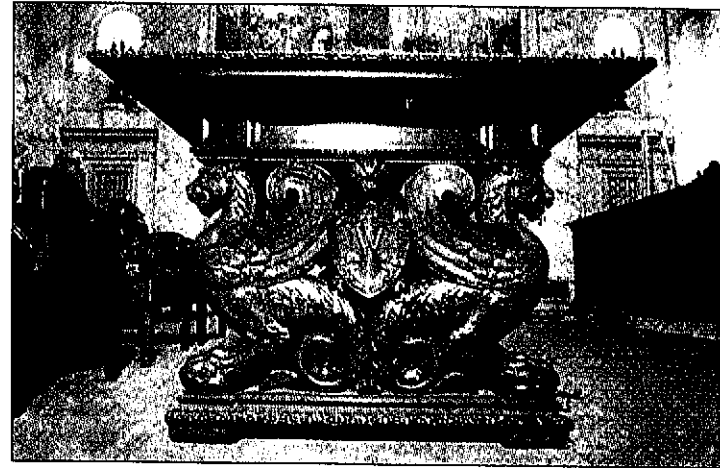
1931
Due to crowded conditions in the Capitol, the state builds an office building on Wilson Street. This marks the first time when the Capitol is not the home for all of state government.

1942
A large red, electric "W" is removed from the dome of the Capitol and stays down throughout World War II for energy conservation.

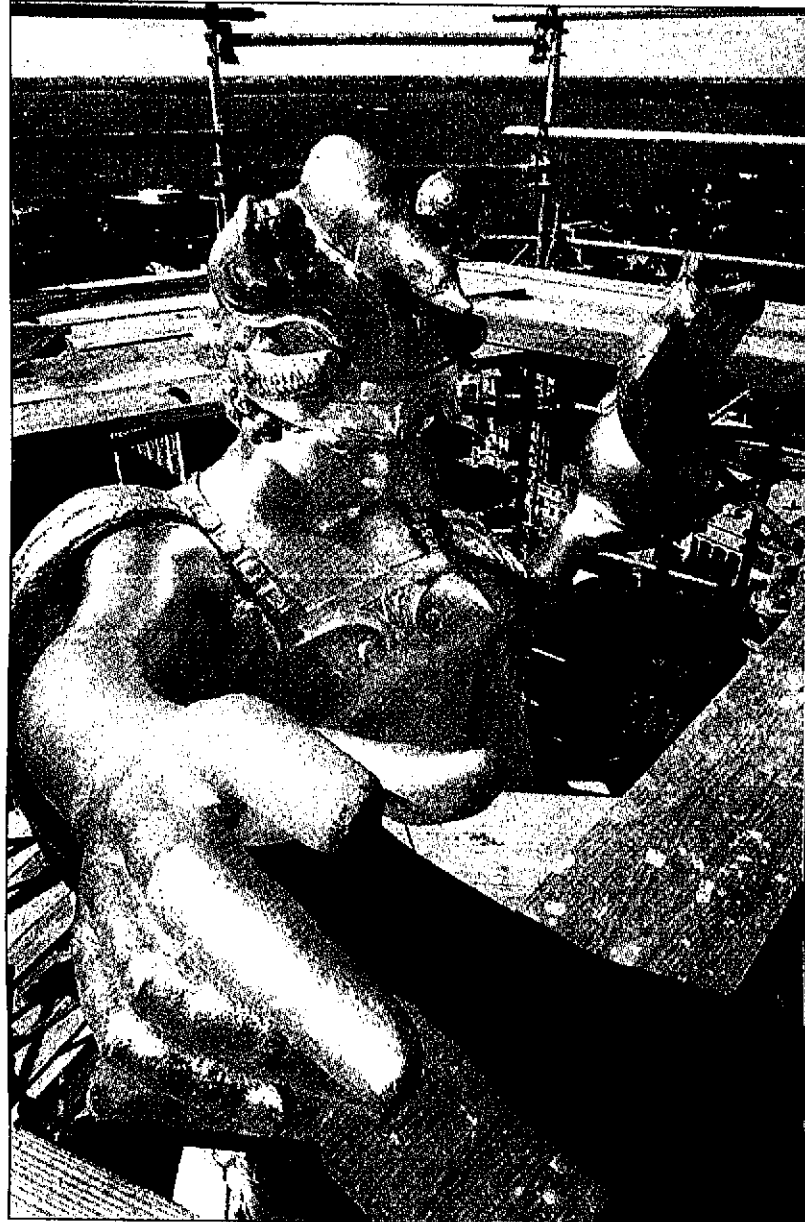
1965
Forty-eight years after its completion, the Capitol's dedication ceremony is held. The Capitol is given an "acid bath" to clean the pollution stains from the granite exterior. The cleaning damages some of the stone.

1967
The legislature creates the State Capitol and Executive Residence Board, making it responsible for setting standards for designs, repairs and additions.

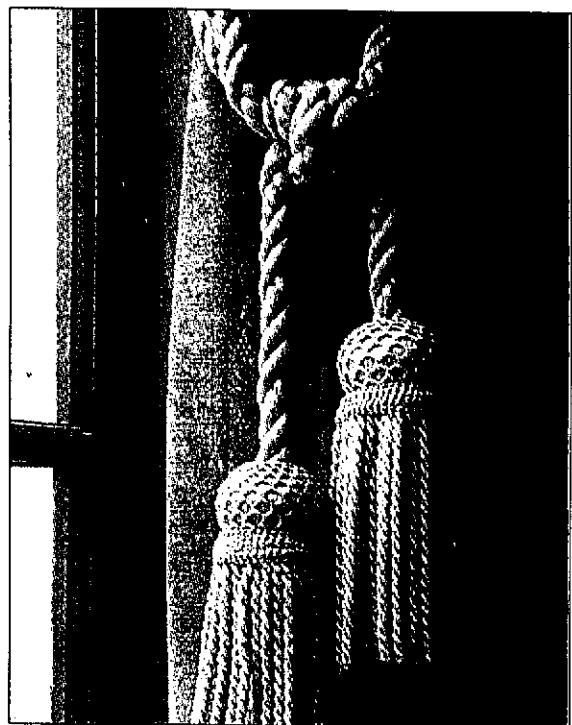
1967
The Department of Public Instruction is removed from the Capitol, marking the first time a cabinet member did not have an office in the Capitol.



The Wisconsin Supreme Court hearing room has been returned to its original grandeur, including the ornately carved counsel table, restored by Jim Dieter of Milwaukee. The table has been used by attorneys for the past 84 years during oral arguments before the Supreme Court.



During renovations, scaffolding surrounded Wisconsin, the 15-foot 5-inch gilded bronze statue atop the Capitol dome. Wisconsin received new gold leaf in worn areas, including her raised arm and finger.



Draperies for the Capitol were recreated from original drawings and were handcrafted in Janesville by Country Quilters. Fabric, trim and braided tie-backs were color-matched to historic remnants.

Capitol returns to glory



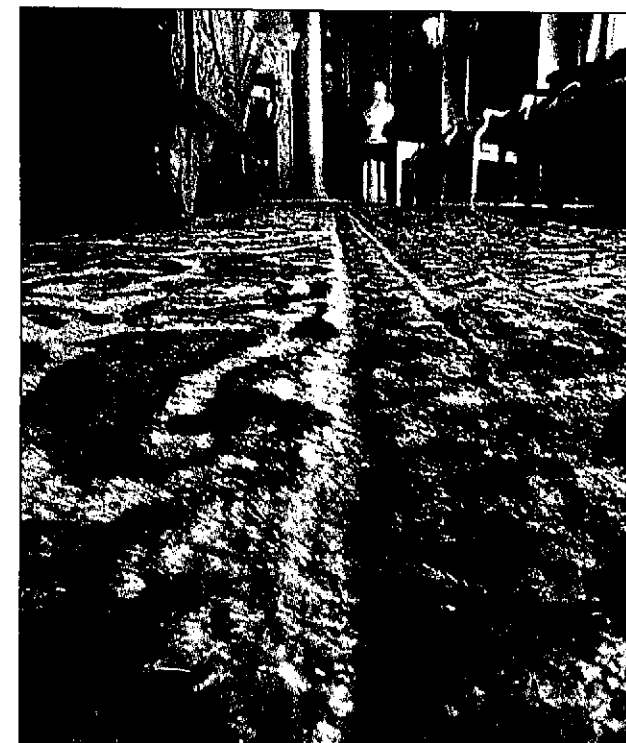
The mural "Resources of Wisconsin" by artist Edwin Blashfield in the eye of the Capitol's coffer dome is 34 feet in diameter and 200 feet from the rotunda's marble ground floor. Painted in Blashfield's New York studio and shipped to Madison, the mural features a female figure holding the state Coat of Arms and a scepter of wheat. She is surrounded by other women offering the bounty of Wisconsin: lead, copper, tobacco, fruit and a fresh water pearl.



Pieces of glass, some backed with gold leaf, form the mosaic "Government" in the Capitol rotunda. The figure of a Roman-style centurion is one of four giant mosaics that have been delicately cleaned, mostly with cotton swabs, during the restoration. It's the first comprehensive cleaning for the mosaics.



Prior to the restoration of the Senate Parlor, the large conference table was the only original piece of furniture in the room. Since then, furniture has been reclaimed from other offices or recreated. The elaborate murals and decorative flourishes were architect George B. Post's way of marking the room's importance.



The three original Persian rugs which graced the hardwood parquet floors in the Governor's Conference Room were removed sometime during the last 80 years. Restoration specialist Diane Al Shihabi chose four period rugs, including this circa-1917 Sarouk Persian to reappoint the room.

THROUGH THE YEARS

1967
Dorothy Knowles, wife of Gov. Warren Knowles, proposes to remodel the Governor's Conference Room by painting over the dark cherry wood walls and ceiling. The plan generates a great deal of publicity and opposition, but is approved by the State Capitol and Executive Residence Board, its first official action.

1968
The Capitol rotunda is renovated, including the cleaning of the inner dome's mural and the interior walls.

1969
Welfare marchers, led by James Groppi, occupy the state Assembly chambers for nearly 11 hours. Groppi is arrested on charges of legislative contempt.

1977
The secretary of state's office is moved out of the Capitol.

1980
The Department of Administration issues the "State Capitol Restoration Guidelines." The guidelines recommended restoring the Capitol to its architectural glory, stating that "past renovations had made serious mistakes that harmed the architectural integrity of the building and should be avoided."

1981
The Treasurer is moved out of the Capitol.

1982
The State Building Commission approves over \$1 million to restore the original cherry wood windows, rather than replacing them with energy-efficient aluminum windows.

1987
The Capitol Master Plan is approved, which calls for a single, large-scale renovation. The Capitol is rededicated as part of the state's celebration of the bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution.

1988
The Assembly chambers are renovated as a pilot project in the Capitol Master Plan. The Assembly finishes its session in another area of the Capitol.

1988
Two vandals damage 32 windows in all four wings of the Capitol.

1989
The Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.) Museum is moved from its Capitol location to temporary quarters at the State Historical Society. It reopens in 1993 as the Wisconsin Veterans Museum.

1990
The North Wing is closed for renovation, causing Assembly members to relocate their offices. The renovation is completed in December 1992 at a cost of \$13.6 million.

1993
The West Wing is closed for renovation, forcing the state Assembly to relocate for two years to the former Guardian Insurance Building on Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. The renovation is completed in July 1995 at a cost of \$16.2 million.

1996
The South Wing is closed for renovation, moving the state Senate to its two-year temporary quarters at the Guardian Insurance Building. The renovation is completed in January 1999 at a cost of \$24.5 million.

1997
The renovation of the rotunda begins and is completed in October 1998.

1999
Renovation on the East Wing begins. The governor's office moves to temporary quarters in the South Wing. The attorney general's office and the Supreme Court are temporarily located in nearby office buildings. The Supreme Court's law library is moved from the Capitol permanently. The East Wing renovation is completed in September 2001 at an estimated cost of \$38.4 million.

2000
The exterior of the Capitol is cleaned and restored, completed in 2001.

2001
The Capitol is designated a National Historic Landmark. The cost of the entire renovation project is \$141 million.

Research by Ron Larson, State Journal library director
Sources: State Journal archives, Wisconsin Blue Book, East Wing Architects, LLC

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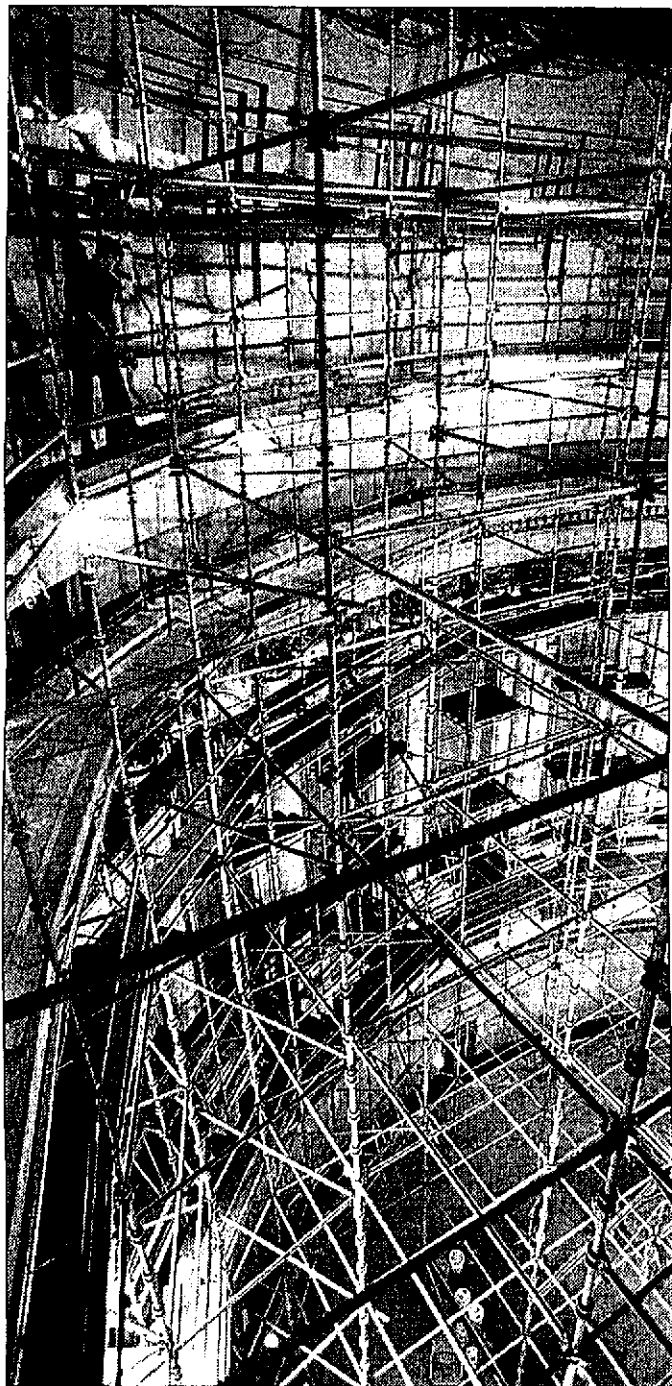


SCAFFOLDS
65 YEARS
SAFWAY
1936-2001



Craig Schreiner/WISJ

Steve Kaatz of Thomas A. Mason Co. of Milwaukee keeps the state mascot covered in July 1998 as he puts a gold border above the North Hearing Room on the Capitol's second floor. Painters used heavy-duty acrylic paint which should last 30 years or longer. Like most workers involved in the project, Kaatz said he loved coming to work at the Capitol. "I live to work in this place."

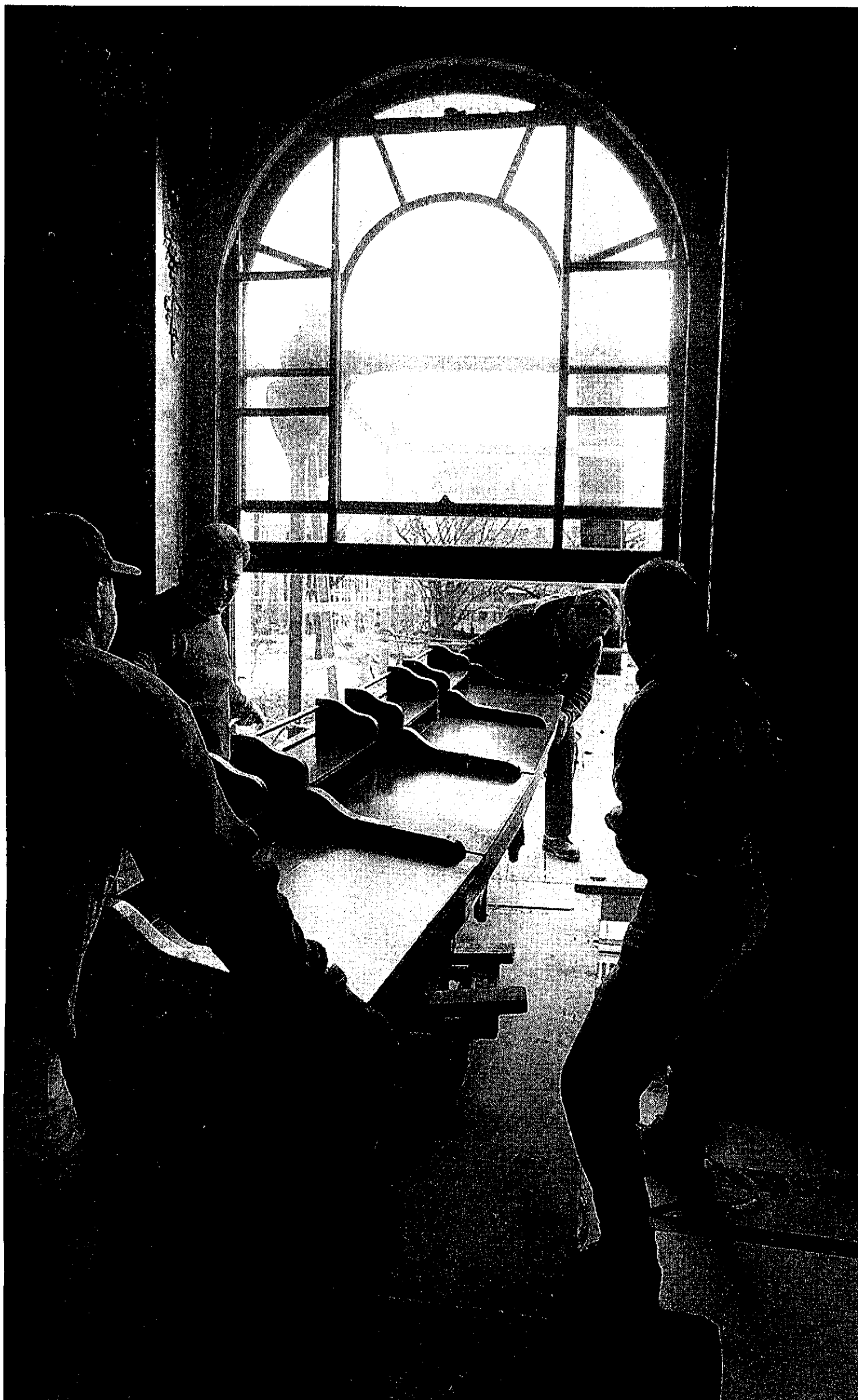


Roxanne Nelson/photo

Intricate scaffolding filled the rotunda to allow craftspeople to work on its walls up to and including the eye of the dome. Scaffolding planners, who created an engineering marvel, considered weight-bearing capacities, structural soundness and safety.

Werner Driese, left, and Dave White of Monona Masonry regROUT a marble pattern on the first floor of the Capitol in 1995. Most floors were cleaned and regROUTed, but some floors, such as the Supreme Court corridors, had to have pieces replaced due to damage from earlier remodeling.

Joseph W. Jackson III/WISJ



Joseph W. Jackson/WISJ

The furniture from the Assembly Chamber in the West Wing was taken out through a window and lowered to the ground by crane March 8, 1993. An earlier pilot restoration of the chamber took place in 1988, which helped set up the parameters for the massive restoration of the West Wing from 1993 to 1995.



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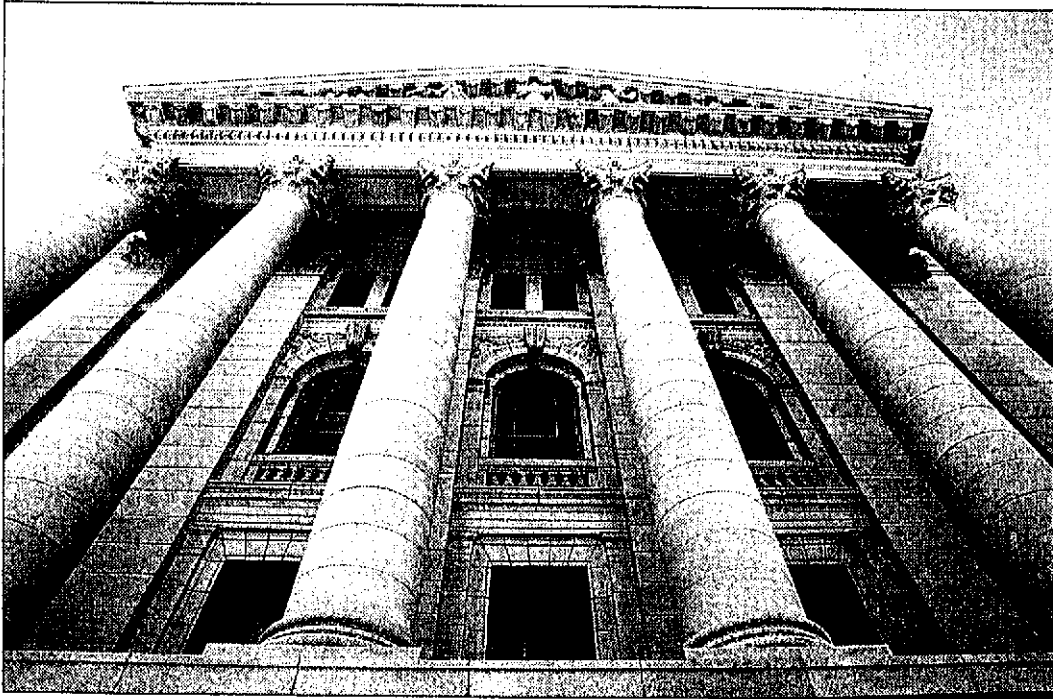
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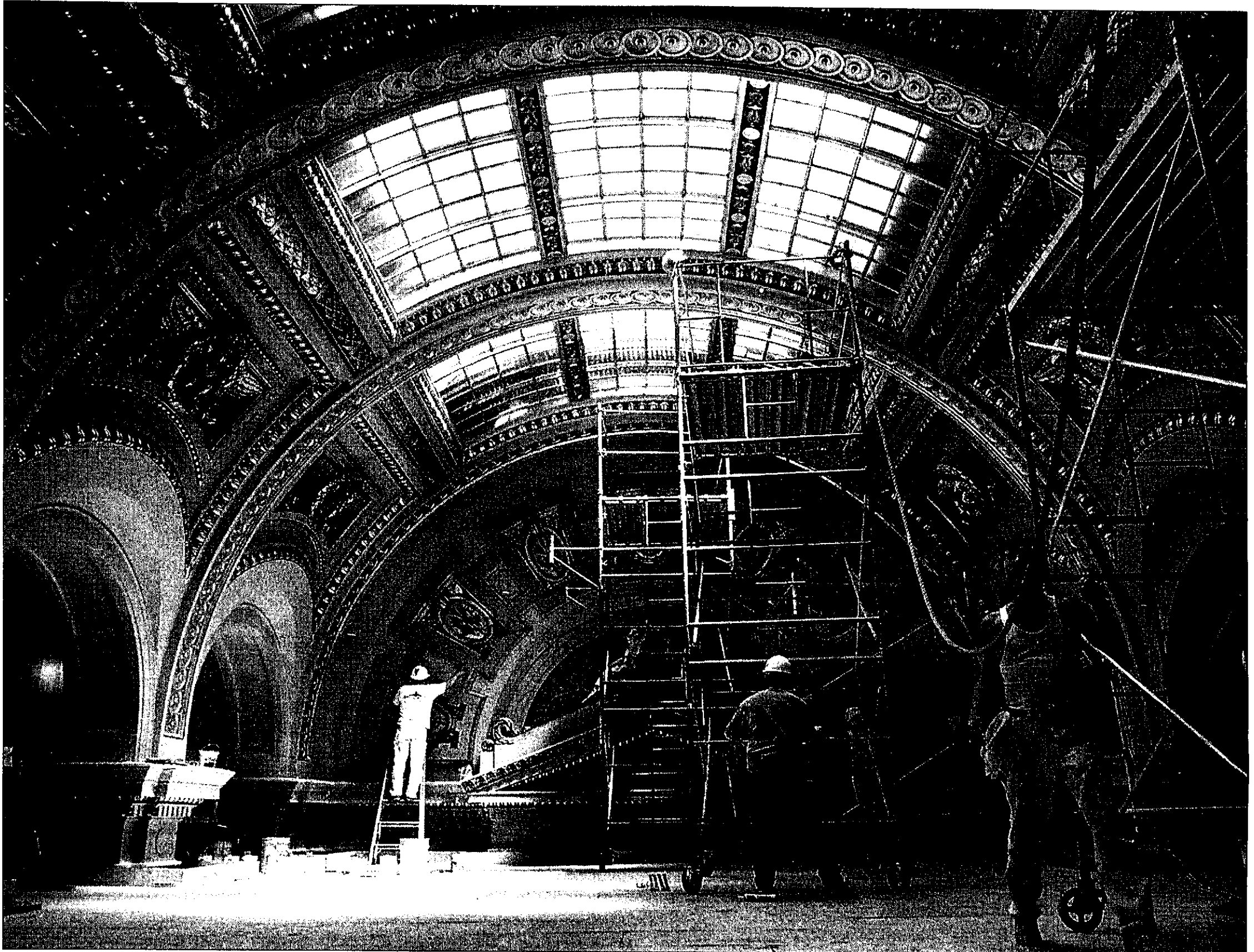
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Craig Schreiner/WJSJ

The Capitol's North Hamilton Street entrance shows a facade that is the whitest it's been since it was completed in 1917. The white Bethel granite from Vermont was treated with a \$5.3 million sponge-jet cleaning that removed only the flaking granite and dirt.



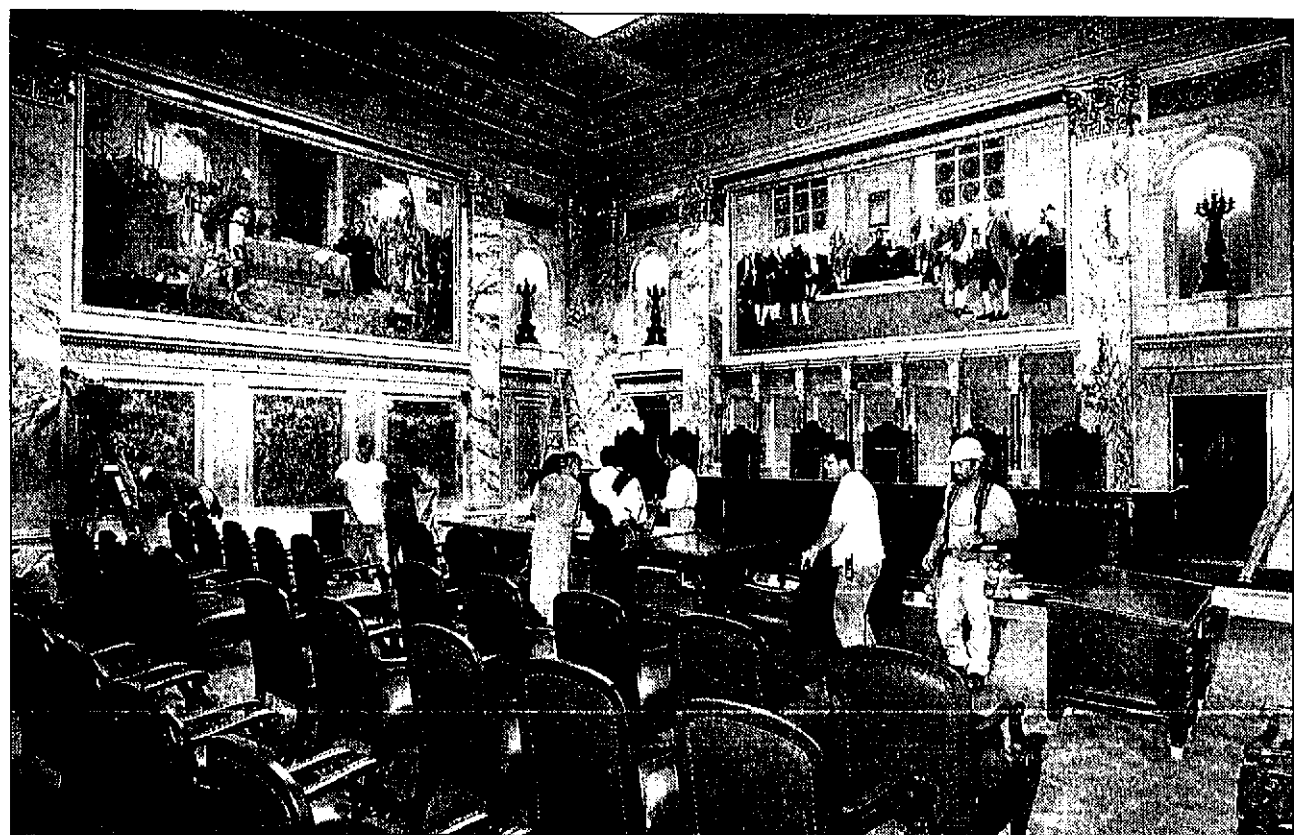
Craig Schreiner/WJSJ

The Capitol restoration included each wing's fourth-floor barrel vault and skylights. Architect George B. Post's design allowed light to flow like water throughout the building via skylights, glass block floors and light panels in corridors.



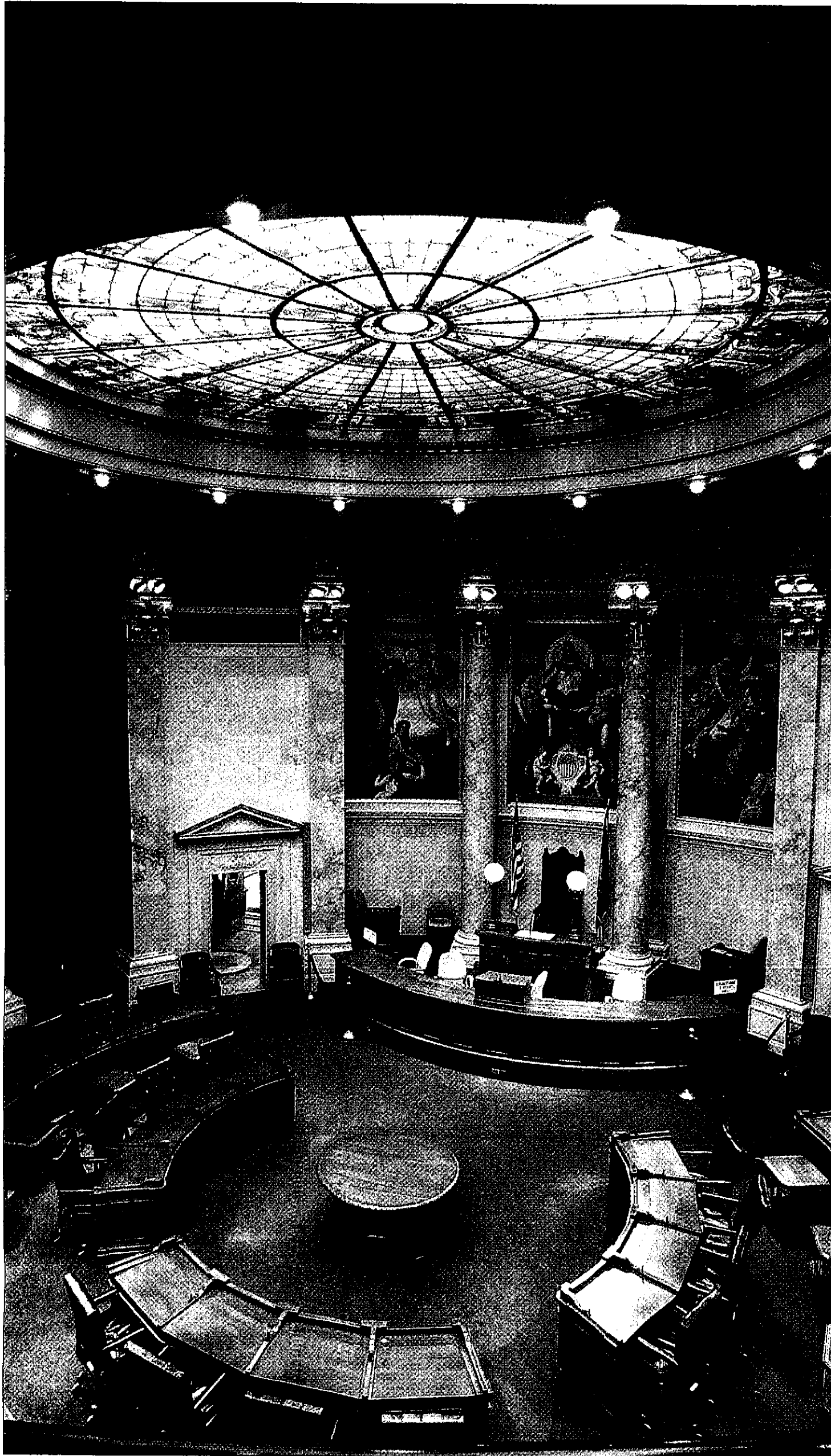
Joseph W. Jackson III/WJSJ

The Supreme Court conference room ceiling, mahogany furniture and glass front bookcases have been returned to their original condition and lustre. The room's Arts and Crafts leaf pattern carpet with border was designed using historic photographs for reference.



Joseph W. Jackson III/WJSJ

Original furniture was returned to the East Wing's Supreme Court hearing room after installing Wilton carpeting woven on vintage looms and hand sewn together. The Supreme Court offices had more of its original furniture than any other area in the Capitol.



Joseph W. Jackson III/WSJ

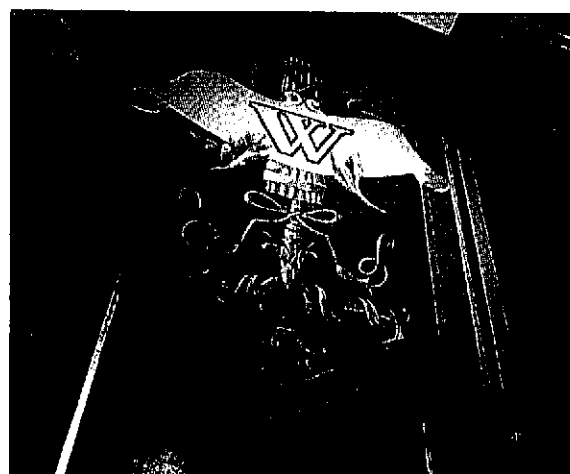
SENATE CHAMBER: The restoration of the Senate Chamber on the second floor of the Capitol's South Wing included conserving Kenyon Cox's three mural panels and restoring the central skylight and the ring of pearl lighting around it. Cox's mural, "The Marriage of the Atlantic and Pacific," symbolized the opening of the Panama Canal in 1914. It was conserved by Constance Silver of New York.



Craig Schreiner photos/WSJ

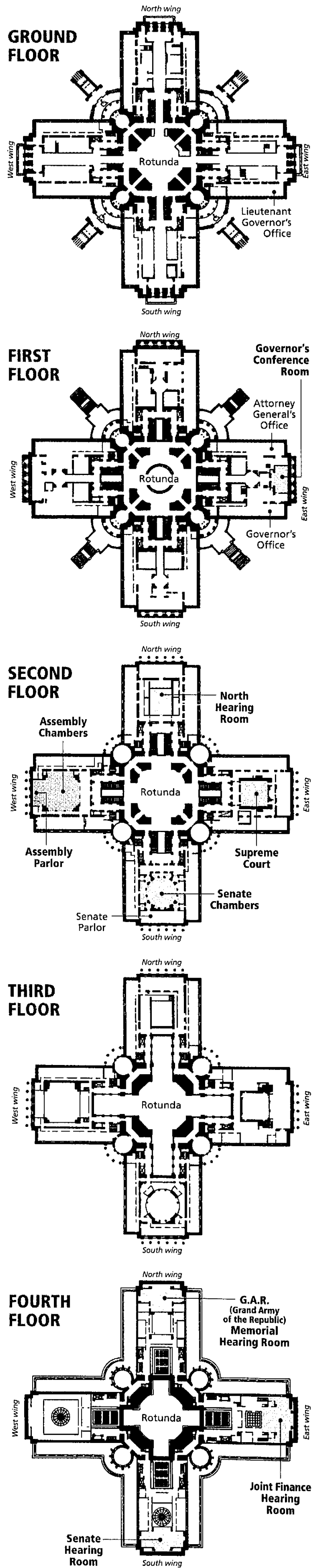
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE (above): The governor's office on the first floor of the Capitol's East Wing has been restored to its original condition. The room's original roll-top desk, shown here without the top, was found in the lieutenant governor's office and had been used by Gov. McCallum when he served as Tommy Thompson's lieutenant governor. The glass-front bookcase was found in another office and returned, but the wardrobe is a recreation.

GOVERNOR'S STAFF OFFICES (right): This decorative finish in the governor's staff offices was originally painted by the renowned New York firm of Mack, Jenney and Tyler. It had been buried under layers of paint until this year when it was discovered and reinstated by Rebecca Garland, owner of the Garland Guild of Indianapolis.



State Capitol floor plans

A guide to the Capitol's layout. Renovation highlights are in yellow.



SOURCE: Department of Administration

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