

The Pennsylvania  
Capitol Preservation Committee

Presents

The Restoration  
of the  
Rotunda Murals  
& Dome

Tuesday, September 30, 1986  
12 O'Clock Noon  
Capitol Rotunda

# Capitol Preservation Committee

**CHAIRMAN:** Joseph R. Pitts, Representative **MEMBERS:** James R. Kelley, Senator, Vice Chairman; Walter Baran, Secretary, Department of General Services; Renee Jones, Supreme Court; Denise Scott Brown, Architect; John M. Dickey, Architect; Robert L. Glenn, Secretary, State Art Commission; William J. Moore, Senator; Edward P. Zempirelli, Senator; Honorable Richard A. Snyder; John Shumaker, Senator; Larry E. Tise, Executive Director, Historical & Museum Commission; Peter C. Wambach, Representative; James L. Wright, Jr., Representative; Thomas R. Caltagirone, Representative  
**ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF:** Ruthann Hubbert, Administrative Assistant

## Program

### Overture

**Introduction:** Master of Ceremonies - Honorable Joseph R. Pitts - Chairman, Capitol Preservation Committee

**Opening Remarks:** Honorable Walter Baran, Secretary, Department of General Services

**Welcome:** Honorable Dick Thornburgh - Governor

**History:** Honorable James R. Kelley - Vice Chairman Capitol Preservation Committee

### Presentation of Citations:

Honorable Matthew J. Ryan - Republican Leader, House of Representatives;  
Presenter - Honorable James L. Wright

Honorable K. Leroy Ivis - Speaker, House of Representatives;  
Presenter - Honorable Peter C. Wambach

Biltmore, Campbell, Smith Restoration Inc. - Mr. William Cecil, President  
Presenter, Honorable John Shumaker

Chief Conservator - Mr. Richard Pelter  
Presenter, Honorable William J. Moore

Universal Builders Supply, Inc. - Mr. Harold O'Callaghan, President and Mr. Tony O'Callaghan, Vice President  
Presenter, Honorable Edward P. Zempirelli

### Introduction of Capitol Preservation Committee Members:

Honorable Thomas R. Caltagirone

**Sound & Light Ceremony:** "The Holy Experiment"  
Robert Alexander - Narrator

### Closing Remarks

### Credits:

Robert Alexander, Narrator  
Tony Arms - Actor: William Penn  
Charles Wilson - Actor: Ben Franklin  
Michael Endy - Actor: Andrew Carnegie  
David Hoffman - Actor: John Dickinson  
David Richmond - Script Writer  
Ron Allen Margolis - Sound Production  
Michael Lamb - Light Score & Production  
Tom Stephenson - Production Coordinator  
Paul Foltz - Harrisburg Community Theater, Costumes

### Program Notes

Today's ceremony commemorates the Capitol Preservation Committee's completion of the restoration of the Rotunda murals and dome.

The restoration project began in May 1984, when Biltmore, Campbell, Smith Restoration, Inc., Asheville, North Carolina, was awarded the contract. Sub-contractor for the scaffolding was Universal Builders Supply, Inc., New York, who began erecting the 220-foot high tower with decks in January, 1985. Three months later the scaffold and decks were completed and the conservators began the cleaning and repainting in the upper dome. One hundred and forty feet below, on the lower deck, the mural conservation, sub-contracted to West of England Restoration Studio, began the process of removing the first mural from the wall.

Time passed and the painters completed the upper dome and moved below to the lower rotunda levels, cleaning marble, repainting the decorative plaster elements and regilding the elaborate fixtures. Restoration was begun in the Capitol first floor vaulted and stenciled hallways where twenty-eight smaller oil paintings were cleaned and repaired. Marble walls, pillars and statues were scrubbed and polished. Workers were everywhere with buckets, brushes and paint.

On the mural deck, conservators in the final stage of restoration added the finishing touches. All four murals were mounted on marouflage panels. During July 1986, the mural panels were hoisted into the lunettes and anchored to the walls making the final phase of restoration complete. August was a busy and noisy month as each section of scaffold was carefully removed from the dome and carried out the main Capitol entrance to be loaded on trailers and hauled away.

Once again visitors stand in the Capitol Rotunda and, looking toward the light above, see Pennsylvania's history bursting forth.

## Edwin Austin Abbey (1852-1911)

In 1902, Edwin Austin Abbey, a native Pennsylvanian, was commissioned to decorate the State Capitol in Harrisburg. Abbey had gained an international reputation as an illustrator and was greatly admired in his day. He knew this monumental project, his largest commission, would require much time and effort. He was not concerned merely to execute a contract, but to pay tribute to his countrymen as he loved Pennsylvania and its history. Abbey was in love with his work and his themes. To him Harrisburg was his Florence.

The Capitol murals were painted in Abbey's studio in England. By spring of 1908 a semi-private exhibition of the first eight completed paintings were on display at the Royal College of Art in London. Among those who went to see the paintings were the King and Queen, and other members of the Royal family. By 1909, the murals for the Capitol Rotunda had been shipped to Harrisburg and were placed in the collar of the dome. Four circular canvases, fourteen feet in circumference, were installed in the pendentives and the four large murals, measuring 38 feet by 22 feet, were placed in the lunettes. Abbey described his creations as attempting to touch the imagination of everyone entering the building with a sense of what Pennsylvania has owed to divine inspiration and the bounty of the earth.

Complete titles, locations and original descriptions are as follows:

**East** - "The Spirit of Religious Liberty, Accompanied by Faith and Hope Guiding the Ships of the Early Settlers to the New World."

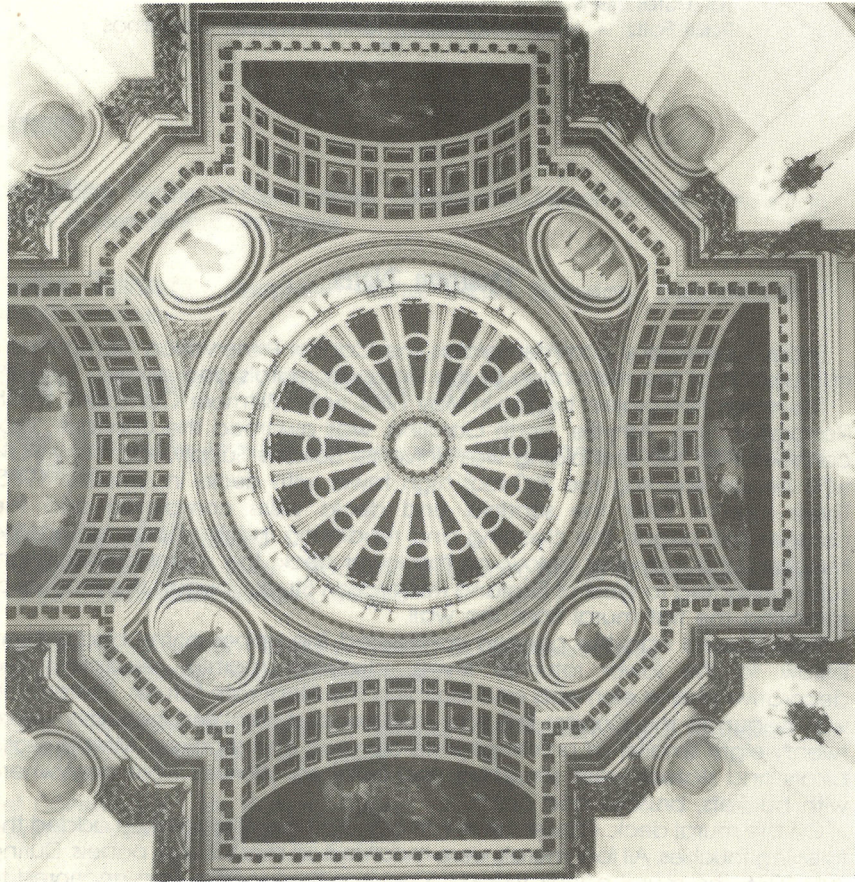
Pennsylvania was the first place in the world where people were really at liberty to worship as their consciences dictated. Abbey's painting depicting Religious Liberty is manifest at once when the observer enters the main portal and looks upward to the east wall. Across the bottom stretches a narrow strip of deep blue sea. Narrow as it is, it has enormous weight as you feel the pressure of an illimitable body of water. The foam rises, subtly suggesting the depths of the sea itself, under the forefoot of the nearest vessel. The ocean moves, and is alive with colour and sound. Abbey has painted the sea as it is and at the same time making it a sort of pedestal for the intensely decorated ships that tower above it. Something of their glow faintly flushes with rose the white draperies of the three celestial guides. Back of it all is a cloudless sky, vague, opalescent and spacious. Filled with the large airs of the open sea, eloquent of the wide horizons faced by the founder and his people, is this beautiful painting that touches the imagination with a sense of an old hope gloriously fulfilled.

**West** - "Science Revealing the Treasures of the Earth; With Her She Has Brought Fortune and Abundance."

An open mine is in the foreground, with miners climbing down into it, and in the golden sky, poised over the mine are three figures - 'Science' pointing to the mine, accompanied by 'Fortune' and 'Abundance.' The trunks of huge, primeval trees rise from the surface of the mine and a rich landscape indicates that in spite of the abundance of the fruits of the earth's surface, a wealth of treasure lies below it.

**North** - "The Spirit of Vulcan, The Genius of the Workers in Iron and Steel."

Here are groups of iron and steel workers, about twenty figures, each nine feet high: some engaged in hammering out a rudder post, others shaping



red-hot steel, armor-plate in a 'bending press,' others at work with large machinery. Shown in the background are smelting furnaces, huge machines in proportion to the figures, and at the top, in clouds of steam and smoke, presiding over the site, sits Vulcan, the Genius of the workers in iron and steel. (Details of all the machinery were supplied to Abbey by the works at Bethlehem, Pennsylvania).

### South - "The Spirit of Light."

This lunette represents the familiar oil fields of Pennsylvania. The background is crowded with derricks and in the foreground is a great company of figures symbolizing the bringing of light out of darkness.



## Medallion Paintings in the Pendentives

In the medallion paintings Abbey has sought to create four episodes of design, emphasizing them as to give each an independent existence. Uniting while they divide the canvases to which they are subordinate, each are necessary members of the scheme, embracing Abbeys' zone of the rotunda in one chord of colour. To this end he causes the figures to stand-out against golden backgrounds so that each medallion counts vividly in the ensemble.

### Religion

"For Religion, pure Religion, I say, standeth not in wearing of a Monk's cowl, but in righteousness, justice and well doing."

Latimer.

Religion, clad in the white robe of innocence and treading underfoot the dragon of evil, stands with arms uplifted between her altar and the torch with which she passes on the sacred flame.

### Law

"Justice is the end of government. It is the end of Civil Society. It ever has been, ever will be pursued until it be obtained or until liberty be lost in the pursuit."

Alexander Hamilton

Law, in heavy red habiliments, is blindfolded, but she, too, has conquered the enemy at her feet. In one hand she bears the scales and in the other a sword.

### Science

"I am what is, what shall be, what hath been. My veil hath been disclosed by none. The fruit which I have brought forth is this. The sun is born."

Temple of Isis, Egypt

The owl of wisdom perches on the wrist of Science, whose right hand holds lightning. The serpent coiled beneath the hem of her garment lifts its head above her knee. Her face is veiled.

### Art

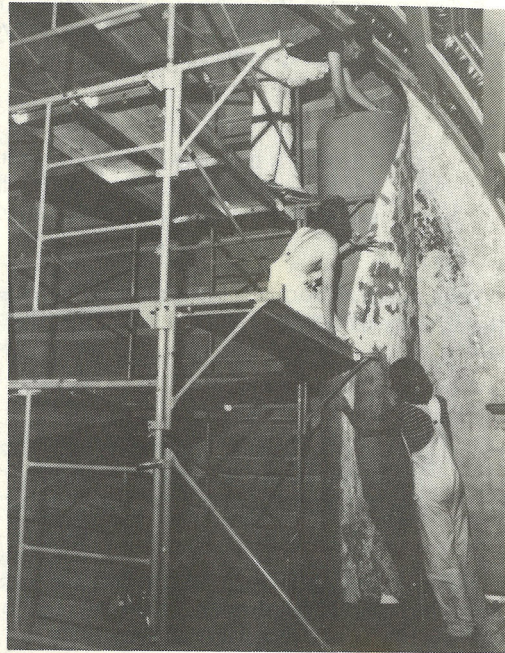
"Art deals with things forever incapable of definition, and that belongs to love, beauty, joy and worship, the shapes, powers and glory of which are forever building, unbuilding and rebuilding in each man's soul, and in the soul of the whole world."

Plotinus

The figures of religion and law are tall, solemn, hieratic figures. Science is made more human. She is the most beautiful of the four. Her robes are bewitching in colour, agleam with the deep greens of the emerald and the hues of a dark Egyptian scarab.



Moisture damage to  
"Spirit of Light"  
prior to restoration.



Mural conservators,  
Richard Pelter (top),  
Alan Bush and,  
Jonathan Berry  
unrolling canvas from wall.



Conservators,  
Spencer Sands (left),  
and Nick Wright  
heat-activate canvas  
to panel.

## Glass Mosaic Restoration

An inscription encircling the frieze of the upper and lower cornice in the dome is a quotation from William Penn which reads:

There may be room there for such a Holy Experiment, for the Nations want a Precedent. And my God will make it the seed of a Nation. That an example may be set up to the Nations. That we may do the thing that is truly wise and just.

This mosaic inscription is made up of one-half inch squares of glass in two shades of blue pot metal opaque glass. The blue glass is surrounded by light amber colored glass that has been backed with gold leaf and applied directly on to the wall with an adhesive. This process has, over the years, produced a chemical reaction between the adhesive and the gold leaf, creating a mottled effect. The infiltration of moisture had penetrated several areas causing the glass to fall from the mounting surface. During the restoration, the glass pieces were reattached to the wall.

## North & South Corridor Capitals

The House and Senate wings of the Capitol are connected to the rotunda by corridors that are wainscoted with Vermont marble. Each corridor has a series of pilasters with gilded capitals adorned with portrait heads of the various nationalities. Entering from the Rotunda, the capitals, facing the center, one on each side of the front of the arch, contains the head of Franklin, wreathed with oak leaf and acorn cluster.

The first capitals within the corridor, commemorate the Scottish element. The foliage is the thistle and the portrait that of George Keith, a clergyman born in Aberdeen, Scotland, in 1638.

In the following pair of capitals, the shamrock proclaims the Irish-Scotch influence, and the portrait is that of James Logan. This statesman and author was born at Lurgan, Ireland, of Scotch Quaker ancestry, in 1674.

The next two capitals contain the English rose and the portrait of Daniel Boone. Born in Berks County, Pennsylvania in 1735. Cornflowers in the following capitals and a portrait head of Heinrich Melchior Muhlenberg proclaim the German element. Remembered as an organizer of the Lutheran Church in the United States, Muhlenberg was born at Einbeck, Hanover, in 1711.

The French influence is suggested in the following capitals by fleur-de-lis associated with a portrait of the famous physician and surgeon, Daniel Hayes Agnew. He was born in Lancaster County of Huguënot descent in 1818.

The Swedish element is recorded in the following capitals by fir cones and foliage and the portrait of Gustavus Hesselius, who is known as the earliest painter and organ-builder in America. He was born in Folkarna Dalarna, Sweden, in 1682, of a family distinguished for piety and learning.

In the next pair the Welsh immigration is recalled by the leek and a portrait of David Jones. This clergyman, famous in the early annals of the Baptist

Church in this country, was born in White Clay Creek Hundred, Newcastle County, Delaware, in 1736.

The Dutch of Pennsylvania are commemorated in the following pair of capitals, decorated with tulips and a portrait of David Rittenhouse. Famous as an astronomer and mathematician, he was born in 1732 at Paper-Mill, Roxborough Township, near Germantown.

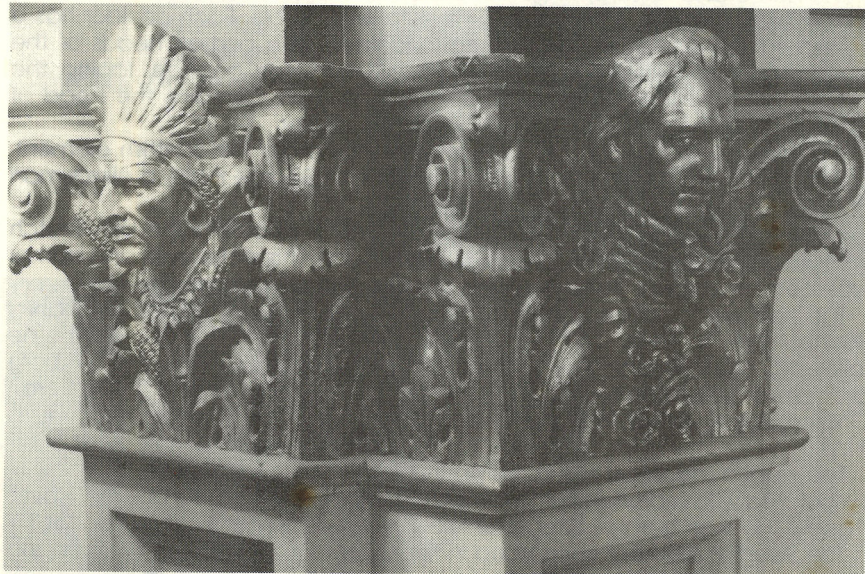
The influence of the Polish immigrant is commemorated by the national flower, a carnation and by the portrait, Pulaski. Born in 1748, Count Casimir Pulaski joined his father in the national struggle against the despotism of King Stanislaus Augustus. After many reverses he escaped to France, where he made the acquaintance of Franklin and offered his services to the cause of American Independence.

The last pair of capitals as you leave the corridors, or, as the case may be, the first facing you as you enter from the Courts in the extreme wings, are decorated with corn, and represent the original inhabitants of the State.

Entering from the North Corridor, is the portrait of the Oneida Chief Swatana (Schickellamy). As acting representative of the Six Nations in their business relations with the Proprietary Government of Pennsylvania, he was concerned in nearly all the treaties regarding land purchase made between 1728 and 1748.

In the South Court the Indian portrait is that of Teedyuscung, a Delaware Chief, born near Trenton, about 1700, who died in Wyoming Valley, Pennsylvania, in 1763.

As part of the restoration project, these capitals have been cleaned.



Corridor Capitals depicting Chief Schickellamy (left) and Count Pulaski.

## William Brantley Van Ingen Murals (1858-1955)

In keeping with the blending of art and history, Van Ingen's commission in 1902 was to paint a series of fourteen murals for the first floor corridor that would represent the religious development of the State. "Van", as he was known to close friends, was born in Philadelphia and was a pupil of Thomas Eakins at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. Completing his studies at the academy, he went to New York and apprenticed with three noted stained glass artists, John LaFarge, Francis Lathrop and Lewis C. Tiffany. Van Ingen was best known for the murals that he painted for the rotunda of the Administration Building at Balboa Heights, Canal Zone. The five murals, comprising an area of 958 square feet, depict features of the construction of the Panama Canal. He achieved considerable fame from his mural work in the Congressional Library in Washington, D.C. and the U.S. Mint in Philadelphia. Van Ingen's talents in both mediums enabled him for commissions to design the stained opalescent glass circular windows located in both the House and Senate Chambers and the hemisphere glass dome in the Supreme Courtroom.

Viewing his murals from the rotunda walking south through the vaulted decorative corridor the lunettes from right to left portray:

- The Ephrata Sisters, Lancaster County, spinning and carding.
- William Tenant, Sr., Scotch Irish Professor, teaching ministerial candidates at Log College, near the Fork of the Neshaminy Creek, Bucks County, Pennsylvania, which marked the birth-place of the University of Princeton, New Jersey.
- Mennonite Sisters, "Pedelavium," or semi-annual feet-washing services.
- Peter Miller, one of the Ephrata Brethren, transcribing the Declaration of Independence for early Congress into seven different languages.
- Quaker Sisters, worshipping at their meeting house.
- Landing of the Sara Maria, with first settlers of Germantown, Philadelphia. Notable among this group was Daniel Pastorius, leader of the Mennonites in Pennsylvania.
- A Rosicrucian Monk, worshipping at the cave of Kelpius along the Wissahickon Creek, Fairmont Park, Philadelphia.
- Burning of Bonfires, to celebrate Christus, on old English custom.
- Moravian Lady, teaching the Bible to the Indians.
- Open-air Baptismal Services of Dunkards, by immersion.
- Moravian Trombone Quartet, of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.
- Old Swedes Church, Swanson and Christian Streets, Philadelphia, erected 1702.
- Printing of the Bible on the Sauer Press, for the early colonists.
- Daniel Pastorius, founder of Germantown, Philadelphia, circulating petitions for the abolition of slavery.



Paintings conservator  
Barney Lamar restoring  
Van Ingen corridor mural.

These murals had large amounts of dirt on the surface of the paintings which darkened them considerably. The varnish layer had also darkened, changing the total aspect of the paintings. The paint layer showed cracks and missing paint on almost all the paintings. Overpainting was evident from previous attempts to clean the paintings. These later alterations were removed during the restoration.

## Vincent Maragliotti (1888-1978)

Murals for the Capitol's north corridor were to be filled with paintings by an Allegheny, Pennsylvania native, John White Alexander. They were to represent the change which had passed over the physical aspect of Pennsylvania, in the course of its industrial and mechanical development. The contract with Alexander was never executed and the panels remained vacant spaces until 1970-73, when Maragliotti, at that time living in Summerdale, Pennsylvania, received the contract to paint the fourteen murals for the corridor.

A native of Italy, Maragliotti emigrated to America at the age of seventeen. He studied architecture and fine arts and was noted for the murals he painted for the Copley Plaza Hotel in Boston, New York's Strand Theater, the Waldorf Astoria, and the Shubert Theaters in New York. He began his work in the decorating of the South office building in the mid-twenties, when he became acquainted with architect William Gehron. Eventually he worked on all the artwork in the Capitol and the Capitol Complex Buildings including Barnard's statues, and Abbey's and Oakley's murals. His final work in the Capitol was completed in 1973, when he made repairs to the Abbey murals in the rotunda.

Seven murals are located on each side of the corridor. One side depicts "Primitive Pennsylvania Industries" and the other side "Primitive Pennsylvania Transportation."

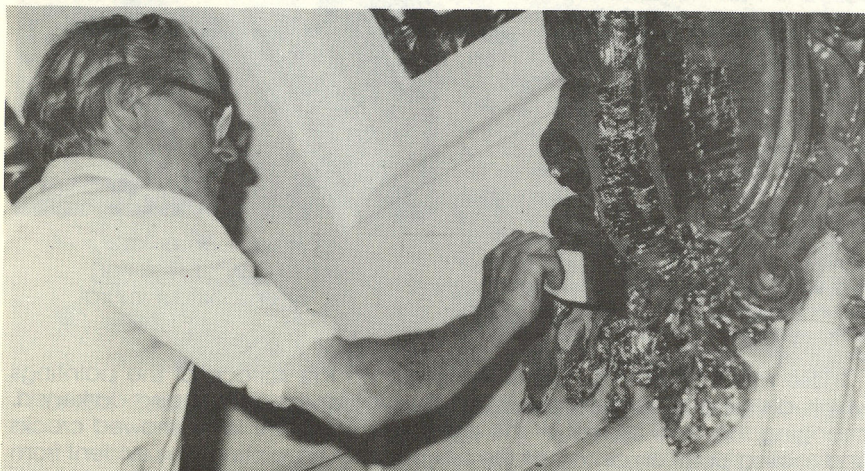
His description is as follows:

### Pennsylvania Industries

Amish Farming - 1730-1740  
Lumber - circa 1880  
Coal - circa 1880  
Drake's First Oil Well -  
Titusville 1859  
Blacksmith Shop 1880  
Country Store - circa 1900  
Steel - 1867-2870

### Pennsylvania Transportation

Philadelphia Commerce -  
Early 1800  
Canal Boat - 1835  
Ship Building -  
Philadelphia 1760-1770  
Railroad and Telegraph 1838  
Digging Tunnel - Turnpike 1840  
Turnpike Boom -  
Conestoga Wagon 1828  
John Fitch's Steamboat - 1787



Painter, Dick Jones gliding the marble crest  
on the Grand Staircase in the Capitol Rotunda.

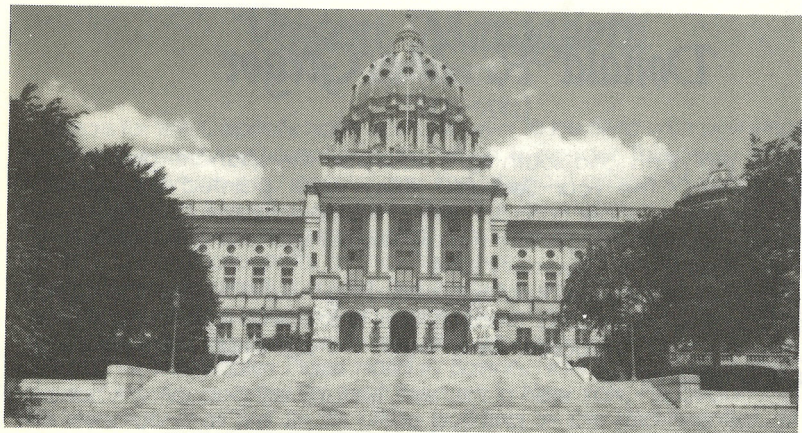
## Donald R. MacGregor (1870-1930)

Located in the north and south light courts on the spandrel arches are paintings entitled "The Four Seasons." They were painted by Donald MacGregor, who was under contract during the construction of the present Capitol. In addition to the corridor murals, MacGregor painted the ceiling mural in the Lieutenant Governor's suite.

These mural paintings were darkened, obscuring the details and changing the formal qualities of the works. Small vertical cracks with missing paint was present and areas in the border were loose. The paintings were cleaned, repaired and revarnished.



The Four-Seasons Mural (Autumn)

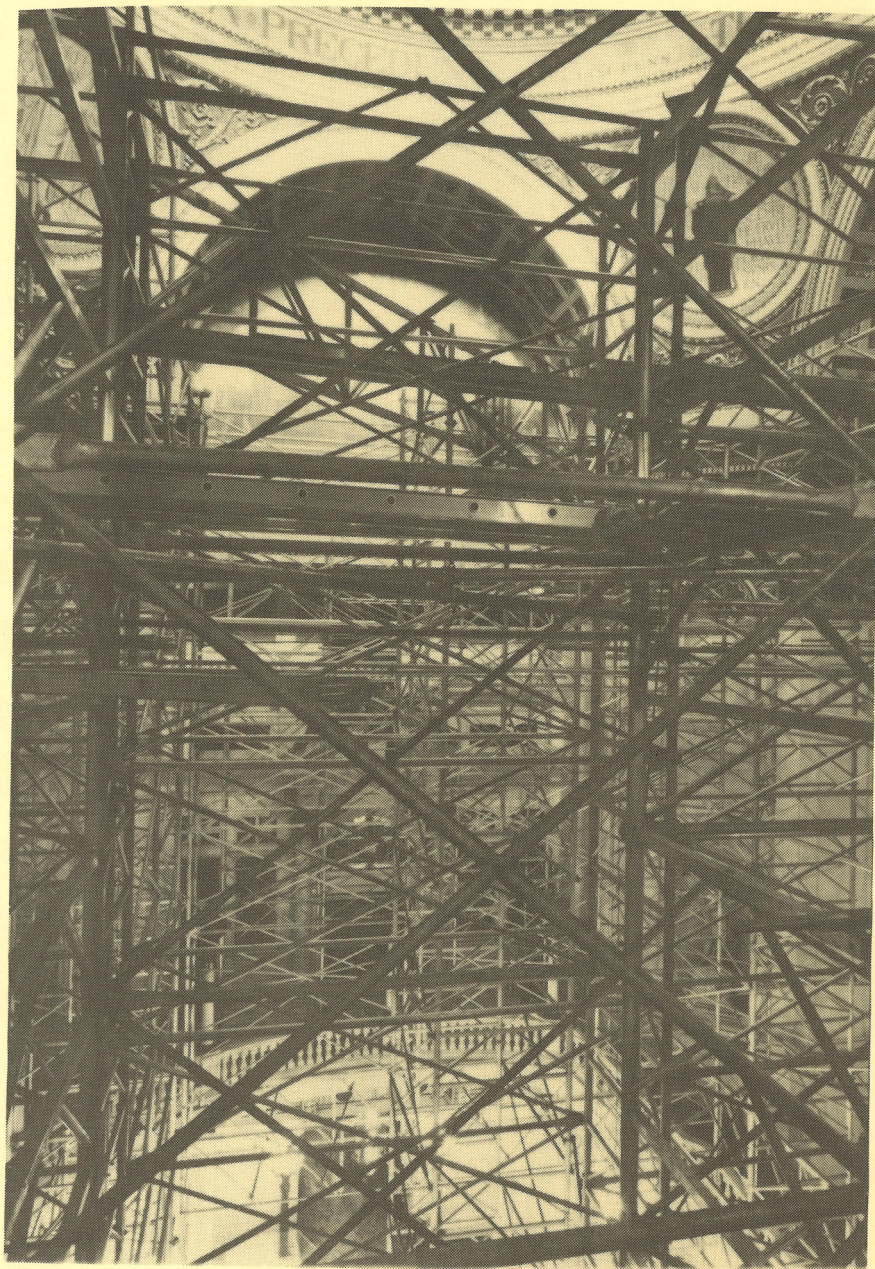
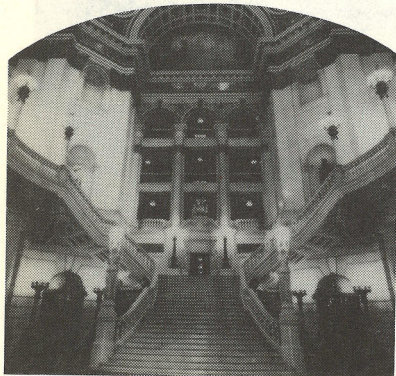


## Joseph Miller Huston (1866-1940)

### Architect of the Capitol

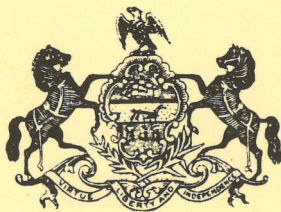
The Pennsylvania Capitol was designed by a man who envisioned a dream. As an artist conceives a painting, Joseph Huston so conceived the State Capitol. His concept for creating a building rich in classical architectural detail was implanted during one of his early trips to Europe. Upon graduation from Princeton, in 1892, he and his brother Samuel, due to unexpected circumstances, spent several months in Rome. A near fatal attack of appendicitis left Samuel bedstricken. During this time brother Joe, according to his diary, with sketch pad in hand, took daily walks to St. Peters. He so contemplated that some day he would build a structure modeled after the likeness of the beauty he beheld at that great Renaissance Cathedral.

At the day of the Capitol's dedication, October 4, 1906, President Theodore Roosevelt exclaimed as he stepped inside the entrance "This is the handsomest State Capitol I ever saw." Those sentiments are expressed today, some 80 years later and stand in tribute to a man who dared to dream.



Aluminum scaffolding erected by Universal Builders Supply extending throughout the entire dome, 220-feet high.





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