

Minnesota State Capitol: Overview of the Fine Art



 MINNESOTA
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

2015

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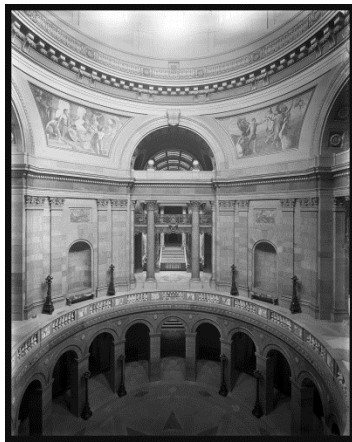
2015



An Overview of the Original Art in the Minnesota State Capitol

In the planning and construction of Minnesota's third state capitol building from 1896-1905, Cass Gilbert, its architect, had envisioned the exterior having statuary in marble and bronze and interior spaces decorated with impressive works of art. His inspiration was not only from trips to Europe but directly influenced by a pivotal event in United States history, the World's Columbian Exposition (Chicago World's Fair) of 1893.

The Fair not only presented new technological advancements and wonders, but it opened the door to a new generation of architects and artists who oversaw the construction and decoration of what became known as "The White City." Trained in classical architecture and art, in particular at the Ecole des Beaux Art in Paris, the goal of these professionals was to revive the features and themes of the Italian Renaissance into public buildings. Through the use of Classical symbolism and allegory, the art was designed to inspire and educate the visitor. The construction of the Library of Congress (Jefferson Building) in the mid-1890s was the first test case after the fair which captured in large scale, that Beaux Art philosophy. It was a resounding success and set the direction in public architecture for the next forty years.



Despite budget concerns, Gilbert's vision for the interior of the capitol did not waiver. In his 1901 architect report, he noted clearly his intention for the art:
"Nothing will give the building greater distinction or lend more to its educational value and to the evidence of the advancement of civilization and intelligence of the State than the recognition of the arts as represented by the great painters and sculptors of the present day, and I unhesitatingly and strongly recommend that ample provision be made to decorate the building with mural painting and sculpture..."

To keep that goal high on the priority list, Gilbert took several members of the Board of Capitol Commissioners on a fact-finding trip out East to view similar art programs and decorations in recently opened public buildings. After their visit, the board members were convinced this needed to be done and became strong advocates to direct the necessary funding to make that happen. As the process moved forward, Gilbert also established an advisory board of well-known muralists to assist with the decorative elements and themes that we see today. He

hand-picked the artists that would do the work, commented on their sketches, and oversaw all decisions related to the art.

As the interior work was in full swing after 1900, the Minnesota Historical Society, politicians and Civil War veterans and groups, resisted the direction the art program was taking – portraying historical happenings in allegorical settings. Instead, they advocated for artwork that represented real people and real events of Minnesota’s past. Changes to the Governor’s



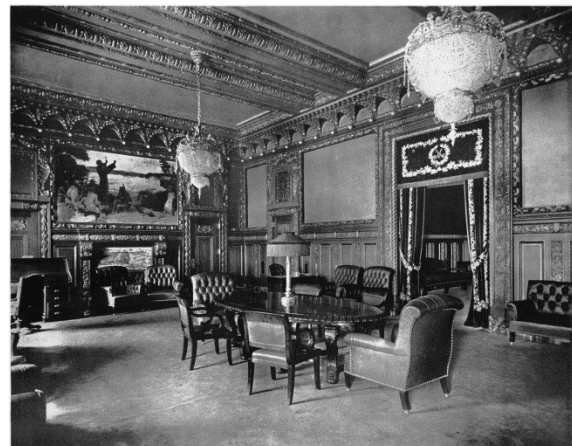
Reception Room were made to include eight large paintings that span two hundred years of the state’s history.

The majority of the murals and other artwork were completed and installed between 1903 and 1906. Of the \$4.5 million construction budget, just over \$300,000 was dedicated to artwork (approximately an impressive 7% of total project cost). What Minnesotans received for their investment was nearly 60 individual works of art, some measuring over 30 feet in length and completed by the nation’s leading muralists and artists. The combination of the white marble exterior, stunning architectural detail and expansive spaces decorated with stencil work, paintings and murals made this a truly stately Capitol building.

Edwin Blashfield, who painted the two murals in the Senate Chamber and later a painting for the Governor’s Anteroom, summed up the purpose of their work and goal as muralists in *The Brochure of the Mural Painters*: “Decorative Art [architecture, sculpture, painting] is at once an embellisher, a celebrant and a recorder. It records the happenings of the state, it lends significance to the walls, it celebrates actions and immortalizes the features of worthy citizens. It acquaints the spectator with history, it stimulates patriotism and morals.... In sum, mural painting is an integral and essential part of that public and municipal art which is a public and municipal educator.”

The importance of the original artwork to tell a story or inspire the viewer to greater thought and contemplation cannot be overlooked. Each artist utilized their skills and artistic ideas to complete, in the view of many art critics, their finest work in the Minnesota State Capitol. Each permanent mural has its special place within the overall design of the building. Although classical in their depictions and often allegorical in what they represent, they also symbolize Minnesota’s continuing story to link the past, to the present and for the future.

In succeeding years, art in the form of busts, statuary, memorial plaques and governor portraits have been added inside the building to continue telling that story. A list of firsts includes: a bust of Henry Rice in 1906 (Senate Chamber), the William Colvill statue in 1909 (2nd Floor Rotunda), three plaques commemorating the Board of Capitol Commissioners, Capitol dedication and a building general description (1st floor) in 1907. The *Third Mn. Entering Little*



Rock, was the first framed painting installed in 1910 (Governor's Anteroom). The tradition of hanging governor portraits in the public corridors was established in 1944. No original work of art has been removed from the capitol in its 110 year history.



With finite space available to continue that practice, the Minnesota Historical Society, along with the Capitol Area Architectural Planning Board (CAAPB) in 1971 was given the charge to approve design, structural composition and location of all works of art. As stated in statute 138.68, any repairs, relocation or removal falls upon the final authority of the Minnesota Historical Society. To ensure a level of quality, historical and aesthetic integrity to public and ceremonial spaces in regard to artwork, the Minnesota Historical Society and CAAPB created, "Policy for Works of Art in the Minnesota State Capitol". This defines process, procedures and guidelines for new art. A copy is included as an appendix.

There has never been a comprehensive conservation or restoration effort for the original mural art work. The work that has been completed was due to an urgent repair need or coupled with another repair project. Due to coal dust, residue from smoking and the accumulation of dust and dirt, many of the paintings were cleaned about every 20 years – usually with workers using a brush and a pail of water.

More careful professional examination, conservation and cleaning was completed in the 1970s and 1980s for the large murals in the east grand stair and rotunda, and three paintings in the Governor's Reception Room. In 1988, as part of the restoration of the Senate Chamber the two large murals were cleaned. Decorative ceiling stencils have been restored in the Rathskeller (1999) and the third floor corridors (2007-2008).

The following list of the major works of art provides background information about each artist, their narrative of what the painting represents, previous conservation efforts and a listing of all works of art in the Capitol.

Brian Pease
Site Manager, State Capitol Historic Site
Minnesota Historical Society

Brian Szott
Head of Collections
Curator of Art
Minnesota Historical Society

Fine Art at the Capitol by Location

East Grand Staircase

Contemplative Spirit of the East
Lunettes

Senate Chamber

Discoverers and Civilizers Led to the Source of the Mississippi
Minnesota: Granary of the World

West Grand Staircase

The Sacred Flame (Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow)
Lunettes

Rotunda

Civilization of the Northwest (Southwest Corner)
Civilization of the Northwest (Northwest Corner)
Civilization of the Northwest (Northeast Corner)
Civilization of the Northwest (Southeast Corner)

Supreme Court Chamber

Moral and Divine Law
Recording of the Precedents
The Adjustment of Conflicting Interests
The Relation of the Individual to the State

Governor's Reception Room

Father Hennepin at the Falls of St. Anthony
The Treaty of Traverse des Sioux
The Battle of Nashville
The Fourth Minnesota Entering Vicksburg
The Second Minnesota Regiment at Missionary Ridge
The Battle of Gettysburg
The Third Minnesota Entering Little Rock
The Fifth Minnesota at Corinth

Miscellaneous

Flora of Minnesota
Zodiacs
Old Fort Charlotte on the Pigeon River
Untitled (River Fishing Scene)
Attack on New Ulm
Eighth Minnesota at the Battle of Ta-Ha-Kouty (Killdeer Mountain)

Appendices

Inventory of Art in the Minnesota State Capitol – March 2013
Policy for Works of Art in the Minnesota State Capitol

East Grand Staircase

Contemplative Spirit of the East
Lunettes



Courtesy Minnesota Historical Society

Contemplative Spirit of the East, 1904

Kenyon Cox

Oil on canvas, permanently fixed to wall

East Grand Staircase

Installed 1904

Description (original by artist):

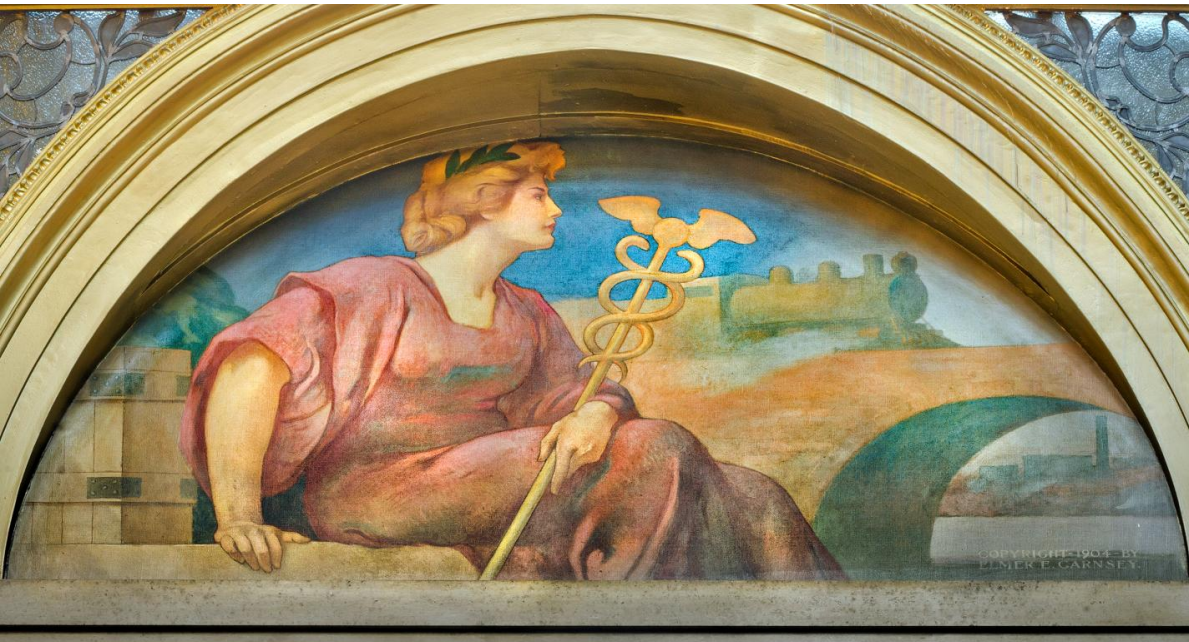
The intention is to symbolize the East as the land of contemplation and stability as contrasted with the progress and activity of the West. The composition therefore made as grave and formal as possible. Enthroned in the centre, with brooding wings, sits Contemplation, draped and hooded in deep blue. She is lost in thought and stares into space with unseeing eyes. On either side sit Letters and Law, both of Eastern origin. Letters is laurel crowned and reads from a great book. Law bears the scepter of power and the bridle of control.

The composition as a whole is meant to form a fitting introduction to the decorations of the Supreme Court, which depict the development of Law.

Kenyon Cox (1856-1919) was born into a prominent mid-western family of theologians, lawyers, and politicians. Despite poor health and his mother's concerns for his welfare, Cox took art courses, hoping one day to combine his artistic talent with his family's commitment to social service. He studied in Paris from 1877 until 1882, when he moved to New York to work as an illustrator and art critic. Within ten years Cox was accepting mural commissions for such prestigious institutions as the Library of Congress and the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences. These projects helped realize his hopes that art could serve an educational purpose. [Biography provided by the Smithsonian American Art Museum]

Conservation Notes:

In 1979, the painting was cleaned of surface dirt and water stains. Old varnish was removed and a new layer of varnish applied to the surface.



Courtesy of House of Representatives Photographer Andrew Von Bank

Lunettes, c. 1904 (six pieces)

Commerce (above)

Winnowing (not pictured)

Stonecutting (not pictured)

Milling (not pictured)

Mining (not pictured)

Navigation (not pictured)

Arthur Willett

Oil on canvas, permanently fixed to wall

East Grand Stair – Below skylight vault

Installed 1904

Description:

Located at the base of the skylight vaults above the stairs are six lunettes. Each one represents or notes important industry and activities that helped create the state's identity and success in the early 1900s. When looking at each one carefully, the viewer can see what activity is represented by what each figure is holding or other visual clues, like a train, a lighthouse, grain elevator, and the Capitol in the background.

Arthur Willett (1868-1951) was an English born artist who worked with Elmer Garnsey to execute the allegorical paintings of Minnesota's economic activity and industries.

Conservation Notes:

Senate Chamber

Discoverers and Civilizers Led to the Source of the Mississippi
Minnesota: Granary of the World



Courtesy of David Oakes, Senate Media Services

Discoverers and Civilizers Led to the Source of the Mississippi c. 1905

Edwin H. Blashfield

Oil on canvas, permanently fixed to wall

Senate Chamber, North Wall

Installed 1905

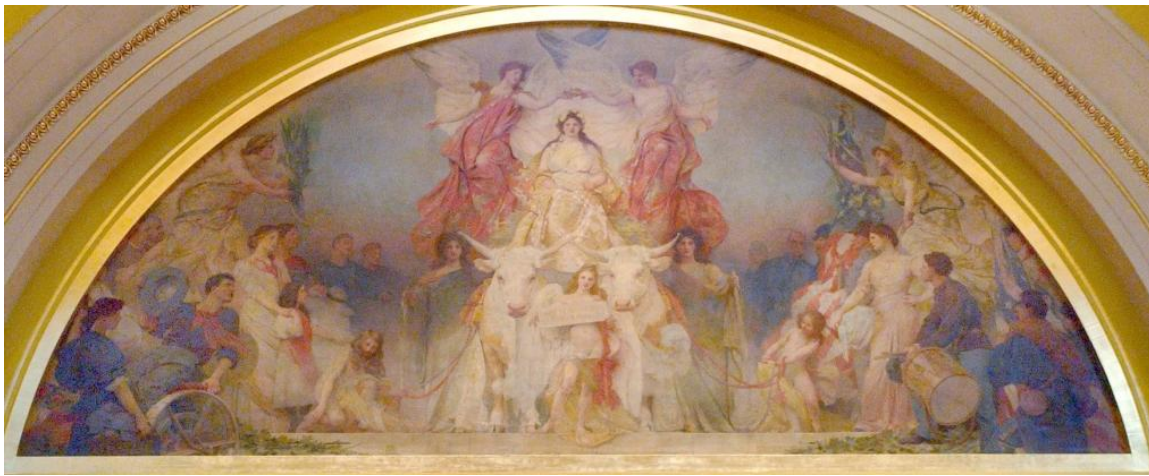
Description:

Set in a northern Minnesota forest, in the center of the lunette sits the Manitou or Great Spirit. He is symbolically pouring water out of an urn to start the flow of the river. In front of him is a young Indian woman and in a protective stance, an Indian wearing an eagle feathered headdress. At the right are the explorers who searched for the source of the river. They are led by the Spirit of Discovery who holds in her hand a compass. The left side of the lunette shows the civilizers, representing families and religion coming to this area led by the Spirit of Civilization.

Born in New York and groomed for a career in engineering, **Edwin Howland Blashfield** (1848-1936) studied at Boston Latin School, Harvard College, and Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). While at MIT, his mother, an artist, sent some of his drawings to the French academic painter Jean Léon Gérôme, whose interest convinced Blashfield's father to allow his son to pursue a career in art. He studied in Paris with the French history and portrait painter Léon Bonnat from 1867 to 1870 and, interrupted by the Franco-Prussian war, from 1874 to 1880. During the interregnum, he traveled in Europe and returned to New York, where he painted genre pictures. He settled in New York in 1881, producing paintings and illustrations for *St. Nicholas Magazine* and for books, and decorating private homes. Not until 1892, at the request of Frank Millet, whom he had met during a stay, in Broadway, England, did he begin the large mural painting at the World's Columbian Exposition for which he became well known. The patriotism evident in his public commissions for state capitols and court houses took the form of triumphal, classicizing allegories. He continued to paint large murals for public and private commissions, including the Library of Congress and the Appellate Division Courthouse in New York, until his beaux-arts style was no longer in favor. He closed his studio in 1933, when Public Works of Art project muralists were using a less decorative style, harsher colors, and dissenting political themes. [Biography provided by the Smithsonian American Art Museum]

Conservation Notes:

Painting cleaned of surface dirt and old layer of varnish as part of the chamber restoration project in 1988.



Courtesy of David Oakes, Senate Media Services

Minnesota: Granary of the World, c. 1905

Edwin Blashfield

Oil on canvas, permanently fixed to wall

Senate Chamber, South Wall

Installed 1905

Description:

In the center, riding upon a cart drawn by oxen and filled with wheat and corn is a seated woman representing Minnesota. The right side of the lunette represents the role the state had as a preserver of the Union. Civil War soldiers hold battle flags in the foreground and a nurse with bandages along with the other figures are covered by the Spirit of Patriotism. The left side represents 1900 and extols Minnesota as a leader in agriculture and through our products a contributor to national prosperity. Flying above the figures is the Spirit of Agriculture. Each group of figures also represents changes through time. On the right side, in the background are figures of aging Civil War veterans to provide a contrast to the young men in the foreground who served forty years before in the Civil War. The seated male figure on the left corner of the mural, with hat in hand, is sitting on a turn-of-the-century tractor which also shows the changes in agriculture from oxen pulled wagons to mechanization.

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Conservation Notes:

Painting cleaned of surface dirt and old layer of varnish as part of the chamber restoration project in 1988.

Curatorial Notes:

Blashfield also paid homage to the Capitol's architect, Cass Gilbert and the vice president of the Board of Capitol Commissioners, Channing Seabury by putting their profiles on the left edge of the canvas behind the curve of the leg of Agriculture.

West Grand Staircase

The Sacred Flame (Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow)

Lunettes



Courtesy of David Oakes, Senate Media Services

The Sacred Flame (Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow), c. 1903

Henry Oliver Walker

Oil on canvas, permanently fixed to wall

West Grand Staircase

Installed 1905

Description (original by artist in letter to Channing Seabury):

The painting for the lunette over the entrance to the Senate Chamber has for its subject “The Progress of the Flame”.

The composition is an arrangement of three draped female figures. The central and most important one is that of a mature and thoughtful woman, seated, bearing in her outstretched right hand a blazing torch which she has lighted at a fire seen burning on the ground beside her. The fire is kept alive by an aged woman, half kneeling, who throws twigs upon it. The torch in the hand of the central figure is lighting a lamp held by a youthful, floating figure which appears to be passing onward to the left. The arrangement of the personages explains at a glance the idea of the painting –which is the transmission of a flame from the Past, by the Present, to the Future. The flame may be “Civilization”, or “Thought”, or “Knowledge”, or even “Being” itself; perhaps the Sacred Flame of the Greeks and Romans. In fact, the central figure, called in this instance “The Present”, bows her head deep in emotion at the seriousness of her task.

The figures are placed among rocks, apparently in a high place, and above them are clouds; below them, afar off, is a plain with towers, as of distant cities.

Henry Oliver Walker (1843 – 1929) was an American painter of figures and portraits best known for his mural decorations. His works include a series of paintings honoring various poets for the Library of Congress and decorations for public buildings such as the Appellate Court House in New York City, Bowdoin College in Maine, the Massachusetts State House, the Minnesota State Capitol, and the Court House in Newark, New Jersey.

[Biography provided by artfinding.com]

Conservation Notes:



Courtesy of House of Representatives Photographer Andrew Von Bank

Lunettes, c. 1904 (six pieces)

The Logger (above)

Horticulture (not pictured)

Huntress (not pictured)

Pioneer (not pictured)

Sowing (not pictured)

Dairy (not pictured)

Arthur Willett

Oil on canvas, permanently fixed to wall
West Grand Stair – Below skylight vault
Installed 1904

Description:

Located at the base of the skylight vaults above the stairs are six lunettes. Each one represents or notes important industry and activities that helped create the state's identity and success in the early 1900s. When looking at each one carefully, the viewer can see what activity is represented by what each figure is holding or other visual clues, like a train, a lighthouse, grain elevator, and the Capitol in the background.

Arthur Willett (1868-1951) was an English born artist who worked with Elmer Garnsey to execute the allegorical paintings of Minnesota's economic activity and industries.

Conservation Notes:

Rotunda

Civilization of the Northwest (Southwest Corner)

Civilization of the Northwest (Northwest Corner)

Civilization of the Northwest (Northeast Corner)

Civilization of the Northwest (Southeast Corner)



Courtesy of House of Representatives Photographer Andrew Von Bank

Civilization of the Northwest, c. 1904

Edward Simmons

Oil on canvas, permanently fixed to wall

Rotunda, Southwest Corner

Installed circa 1905

Description (original by artist):

Southwest Panel: The American Genius – a young man – is led by Wisdom and Hope, scourging from the land, the Bear, (typifying savagery,) the Cougar, (cowardice), female figure, (sin,) and male figure, (stupidity). The woman bears the plant, Deadly Nightshade – the man, Stramonium – both evil plants.

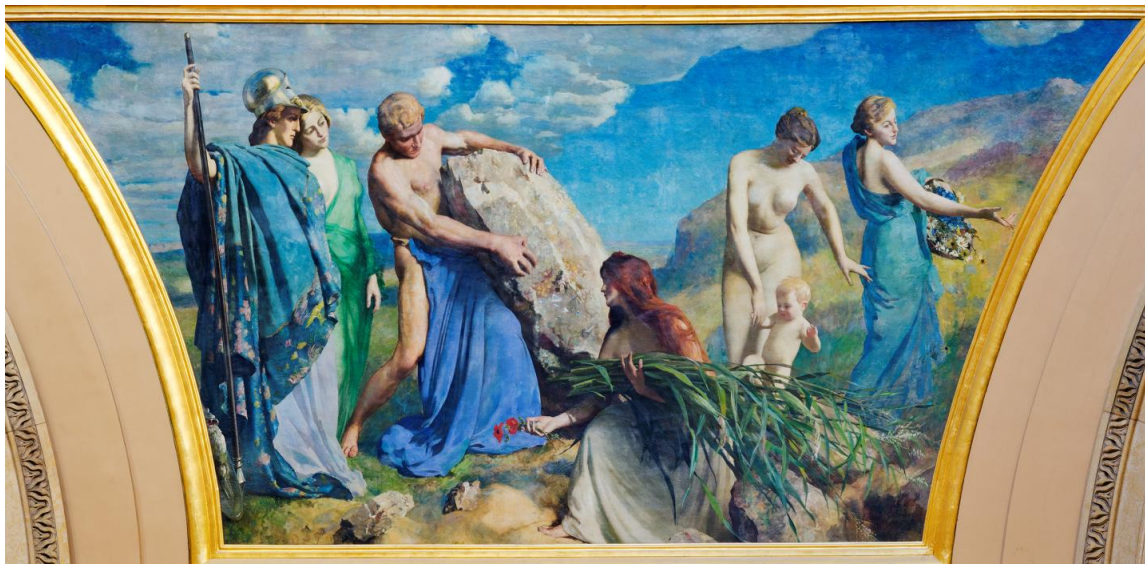
Painter-writer **Edward Emerson Simmons** (1852-1931) was born in Concord, MA the son of Unitarian minister George Frederick Simmons and Mary Emerson Ripley. When his father died (ca. 1858), the family was left in poverty and Simmons was raised in Concord's Old Manse by his mother, grandmother and Bible-toting grandfather. For years, Simmons liked to listen to his father's cousin Ralph Waldo Emerson tell stories because he "rendered the commonplace sacred". Throughout his staunch New England upbringing, the only solace Simmons found was through art, literature and song. After obtaining a degree from Harvard in 1874, he traveled alone to Cincinnati and met the famous teacher-painter Frank Duveneck, who convinced him to go to Europe and become a painter. Upon his return to Boston, Simmons studied at the Boston Institute of Technology with William Rimmer. Rimmer convinced Simmons to study at Boston's Museum School with Frank Crowninshield. In 1878, he studied in Paris at the *Academie Julian* with C.R. Boulanger, J.J. Lefebvre and was inspired by a friendship with J.A.M. Whistler. After winning an award at the *Academie* (1881), he painted in Concarneau and Pont Aven his *La Blanchisseuse* won an honorable mention at the Paris Salon (1882). In 1891, he was commissioned to construct a stained-glass window for Harvard and in 1893, Frank Millet chose Simmons to decorate the domes at the Manufacturer's Building for the World's Columbian Exposition. From that point on, Simmons devoted himself to murals of American life. Simmons remained a dedicated, inquisitive painter and spokesperson for artist's rights until his death in Baltimore, MD in November 1931. [Biography provided by Pierce Galleries, Inc.]

Conservation Notes:

In 1985 all four murals had surface dirt removed, small tears were repaired along the edges and where paint loss was discovered, inpainting was completed.

Curatorial Notes:

This series of paintings were painted in Paris. In 1912, this mural's canvas came loose from the plaster and fell to the 2nd floor Rotunda.



Courtesy of House of Representatives Photographer Andrew Von Bank

Civilization of the Northwest, c. 1904

Edward Simmons

Oil on canvas, permanently fixed to wall

Rotunda, Northwest Corner

Installed circa 1905

Description (original by artist):

Northwest Panel: The American Genius – a young man - is lifting a stone, bearing crystals and gold, thereby breaking the soil. Beside him stand the figures of Wisdom and Hope. One figure, typifying Fertility of the soil, bearing Maize and Poppies—another, the mother and child,—another strewing flowers – and the fields behind him, all carry the sense of advancing agriculture.

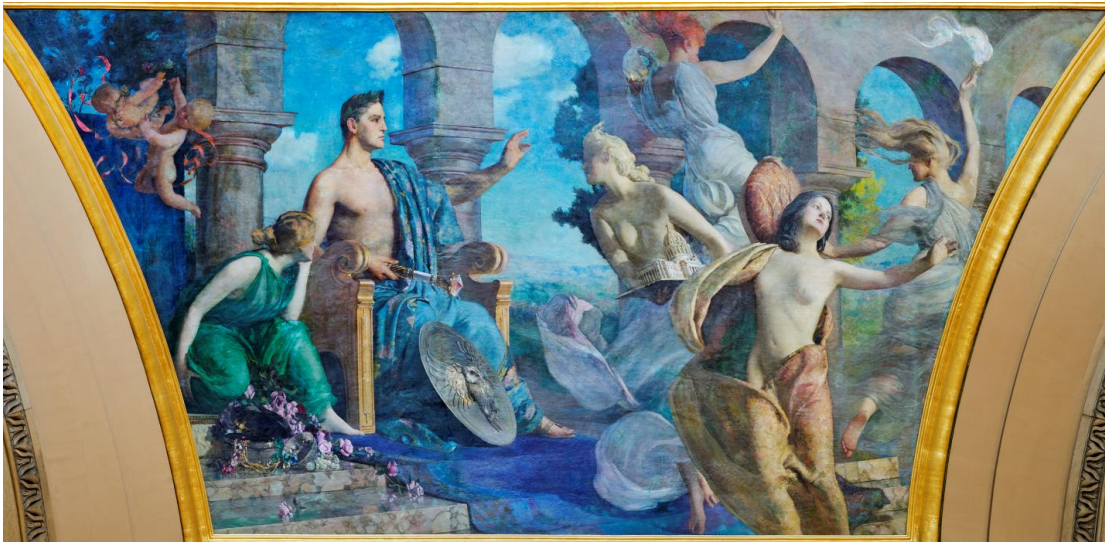
For biography on this artist see first page in this section.

Conservation Notes:

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Curatorial Notes:

This series of paintings were painted in Paris.



Courtesy of House of Representatives Photographer Andrew Von Bank

Civilization of the Northwest, c. 1904

Edward Simmons

Oil on canvas, permanently fixed to wall

Rotunda, Northeast Corner

Installed circa 1905

Description (original by artist):

Northeast Panel: The youth having now acquired wisdom, Minerva no longer appears, but he now wears her cloak and her shield rests against his knee. He is commanding the Four Winds to bear to the four corners of the earth, the products of the state—wheat, minerals, the fine arts, etc. The figure bearing the torch typifies mental progress. Beside him, sits Hope, no longer leading but watching, and bearing jewels and flowers, indicating prosperity and wealth.

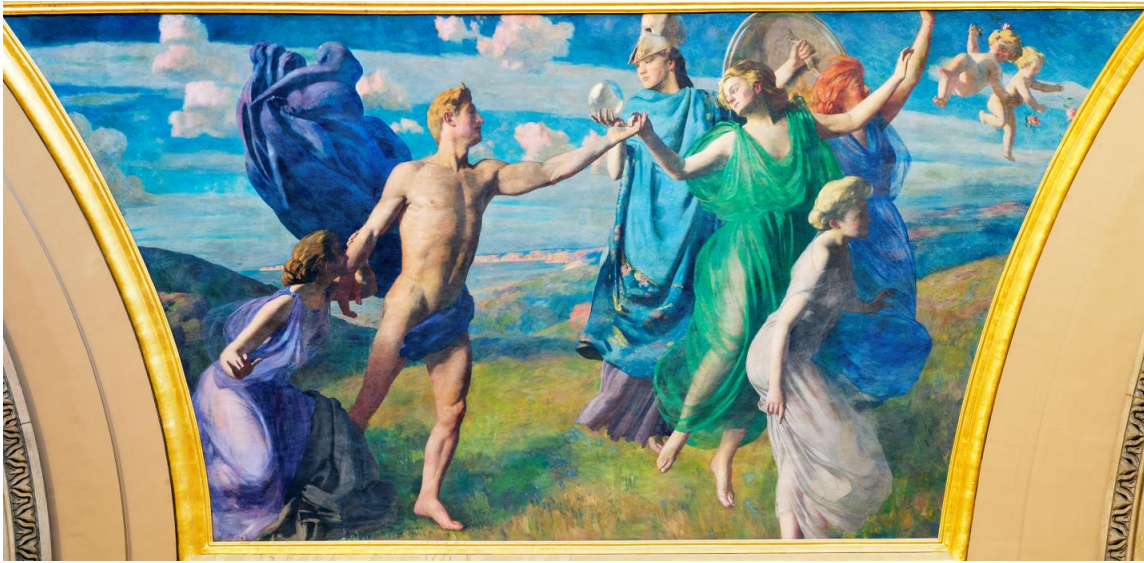
For biography on this artist see first page in this section.

Conservation Notes:

In 1985 all four murals had surface dirt removed, small tears were repaired along the edges and where paint loss was discovered, inpainting was completed.

Curatorial Notes:

This series of paintings were painted in Paris. In 1912, this mural's canvas came loose from the plaster wall and tore in two pieces, landing on the 2nd floor Rotunda.



Courtesy of House of Representatives Photographer Andrew Von Bank

Civilization of the Northwest, c. 1904

Edward Simmons

Oil on canvas, permanently fixed to wall

Rotunda, Southeast Corner

Installed circa 1906

Description (original by artist):

Southeast Panel: The American Genius – a young man – leaves home. He is held back by a figure representing “Timidity”, and other figures at his left typify those who will not leave home, but he starts forward to follow the beckoning of a figure representing “Hope”, who is accompanied by handmaidens. Minerva (Wisdom,) stands at his shoulder, encouraging him. The background, with a glimpse of the sea, suggests the east, from which he turns his face, westward.

For biography on this artist see first page in this section.

Conservation Notes:

In 1985 all four murals had surface dirt removed, small tears were repaired along the edges and where paint loss was discovered, inpainting was completed.

Curatorial Notes:

This series of paintings were painted in Paris.

Supreme Court Chamber

Moral and Divine Law

Recording of the Precedents

The Adjustment of Conflicting Interests

The Relation of the Individual to the State



Courtesy Minnesota Historical Society

Moral and Divine Law, c. 1903

John La Farge

Oil on canvas, permanently fixed to wall

Supreme Court Chamber, East Wall

Installed circa 1905

Description (original by artist)

Moses is represented receiving the Law “in the mount.” Joshua warns the people away. Aaron kneels in reverence and fear. Clouds and vapor cover parts of the scene. The mountain “is on a smoke.” Fire comes out of the rocks, and the wreaths of vapor crawl out of the crevices. Far below to the left the vapor wreaths ascend. The studies have been made from personal observation in a volcano and from photographs of the eruptions in the Caribbean Islands (kindly loaned by Professor E. O. Movey). The distance represents a portion of the actual mountain. This subject has been treated in a realistic manner because of the other subjects requiring such treatment and to harmonize with them. There is no distinct archaeology aimed at, but the costumes and the types of character have been carried out in harmony with tradition. It is needless to remark that there are no documents extant.

John La Farge, (1835-1910) was an American painter, muralist, and stained-glass designer. After graduating from St. Mary’s College in Maryland, La Farge studied law, but in 1856 he went to Europe to study art. He worked independently, studying briefly in Paris with Thomas Couture and coming under the influence of the work of the Pre-Raphaelites in England. Returning to the United States, in 1859 La Farge went to Newport, Rhode Island, where he studied with the artist William Morris Hunt. La Farge produced landscapes and figure compositions in the 1860s and was among the earliest American painters to adopt the stylistic elements derived from progressive French landscape painting of the mid-19th century as well as from Japanese prints, which he collected. He took up mural painting in 1876 with a commission to decorate the interior of Trinity Church in Boston. His finest mural is the *Ascension* (1887), in the Church of the Ascension in New York City. He also decorated the homes of William Watts Sherman and Cornelius Vanderbilt II and painted murals in New York’s Union League Club. About the same time, he became interested in stained glass. Through his invention of opalescent glass and his imaginative designing, he contributed to a revival of the art of stained glass in America and gained an international reputation. In later life La Farge traveled to exotic places, painting a notable series of watercolor scenes during his trips to Japan and the South Pacific in

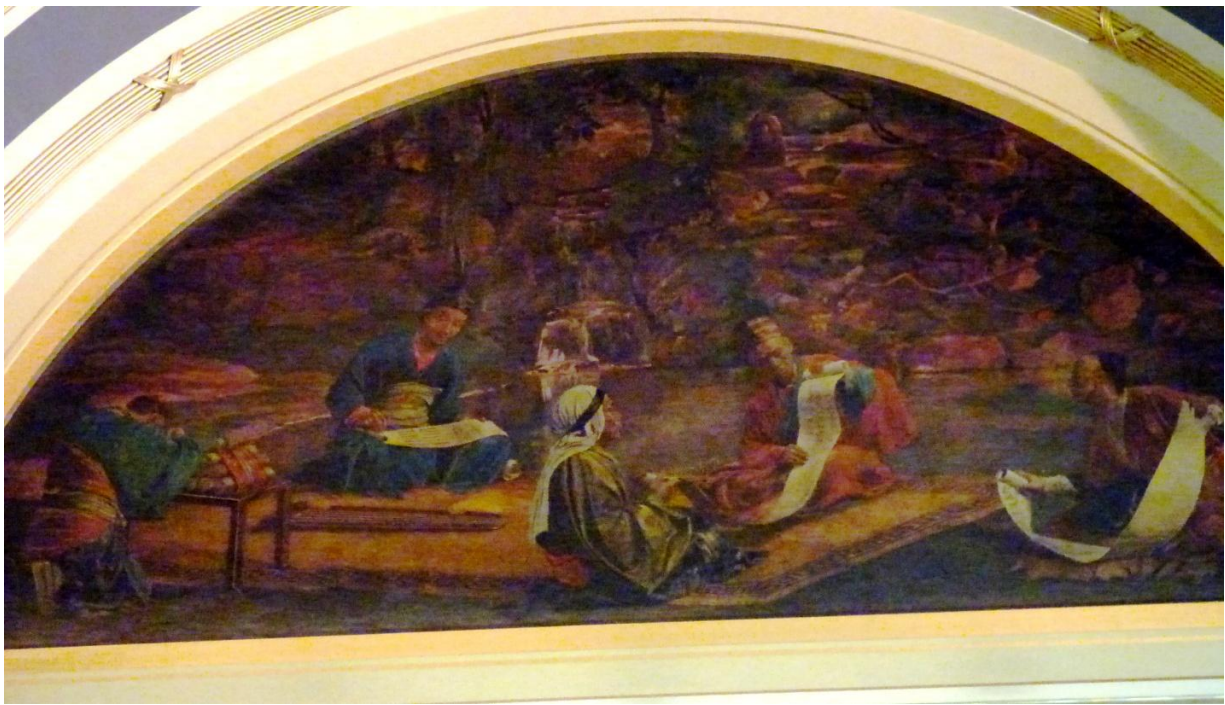
the late 1880s and early '90s. His writings include *Considerations on Painting* (1895), *An Artist's Letters from Japan* (1897), and *The Higher Life in Art* (1908).
[Biography provided by Encyclopaedia Britannica]

Conservation Notes:

Treated 1974

Curatorial Notes:

At age 68, La Farge was the oldest artist to receive a commission to complete a work of art in the Capitol.



Courtesy Minnesota Historical Society

The Recording of the Precedents, c. 1904

John La Farge

Oil on canvas, permanently fixed to wall

Supreme Court Chamber, North Wall

Installed circa 1905

Description (original by artist)

Confucius took the Past to build on and seemed to comment rather than discover principles. He said of himself the he was “a transmitter and not a maker, believing and loving the Ancients.” “He examined and arranged old literature, monuments and records, deciding to commence with the ancient heroes, Yao and Shun, and to come down to the time of Hau. All these deserve to be handed down to other ages and to supply permanent lessons; he made in all one hundred books, consisting of canons, counsels, instructions, announcements, speeches and charges.” So says a descendant of his in the Eleventh generation in the Second Century before Christ.

Hence he has been chosen as a type of the preservation of Precedents. Of course, he is a thinker and poet and this charm of thought and of sentiment remains with his memory.

Fortunately also for the painter there are facts about him which easily lead to such a pictorial representation of him and of his scholars as I have attempted. He taught in groves and by waters and rivers, and therefore with picturesque backgrounds. Indeed, one of the elegancies of Chinese records is the connection of the thinker and the landscape.

The young Confucius and three of his disciples are here represented seated upon the river bank. Confucius ponders over his annotation to the roll of manuscript stretched upon his knee.

Two of his disciples unroll the long fold of another manuscript for further comment and elucidation of the Master. The text is ancient and refers to the work of one of the early kings and heroes whom he admired and commented upon. Another younger pupil has partly unrolled a scroll, about which he intends to consult his Chief and Friend. It has inscribed upon it a few words of ancient lore which Confucius interpreted thus, “Laying on the colours follows the preparation of the plain ground;” a lesson like that of Socrates that one’s duty is first to the work and not to outside influences.

Confucius is represented as young. He began teaching in his twenty-eighth year, and by his thirtieth year he had already a number of pupils and disciples about him. We have no authentic portrait of him; one of the very earliest is many centuries after him, and he is represented as an older man, as of course is the usual fate of men of celebrity who have lived long.

On the left of the picture, a servant or messenger, bowing in the traditional manner, presents a collection of manuscripts, sent to the Philosopher by some great lord, perhaps for explanation or annotation.

Alongside of Confucius is the musical instrument upon which he played before talk or discussion. It is called the "kin" and has very many stories and associations connected with it. The instrument as here depicted is much later than the time of Confucius, but it is copied from the document nearest his time. The archaeology of the case is almost impossible, there being very few pictorial words of any date near to that of the subject, and therefore the costumes have necessarily taken a much more recent form. The advice of a very learned Chinese scholar, recently returned from a long visit to China where he traced the earliest remains of Chinese history, especially as connected with literature, has guided this work.

Confucius taught in various places, and the picture represents a Chinese garden landscape made out according to Chinese precedent. By the little cascade hangs the willow which waves perpetually in the draft of the stream. The rocks are partly natural and partly artificial, so as to allow a series of natural steps, and each tree has been chosen and placed for some reason of contrast and also of symbolic meaning.

The scale of the garden landscape is very small, but simulates the effect of larger forms and shapes.

For biography on this artist see first page in this section.

Conservation Notes:

Treated 1974

Curatorial Notes:

La Farge repainted Confucius' robe from yellow to blue after his research noted that Confucius despised the color yellow.



Courtesy Minnesota Historical Society

The Adjustment of Conflicting Interests, c. 1905

John La Farge

Oil on canvas, permanently fixed to wall

Supreme Court Chamber, South Wall

Installed circa 1906

Description (original by artist):

The subject or pretext of Count Raymond of Toulouse in this imaginary action has been chosen because the story of the rulers of that race is fairly a type of the very many difficulties in the judgment of Mediaeval ideals and necessities. This line of sovereign lords had to struggle with the demands of the Church, formulated more distinctly than before, to meet the opposing claims of their vassals or their subjects, heretical and denounced by the representatives of the Church, to meet the various possible questions of their rights as regarding their own interior claims of sovereignty; and their relations to the King whose power, gradually increasing, devoured theirs; and to meet both in policy and arms the ferocious attacks of other lords anxious to dispossess them of their properties and rights of sovereignty, now urged and now held back by the Roman Pontiff. Moreover, there is a romantic character to the troubled story of the establishment of the Inquisition and the violent excesses of Orthodox and Heretic.

There is also the memory of fierce Mediaeval war, so that in this picture "the figures in the story, acting within the four walls of a church, represent the organized bodies, whose chiefs and representatives meet in a form of war, therein strict law and no longer ethical justice is the theme.

Each of the personages is, to a certain extent, opposed to the others and ready to meet any contradictory inimical intention on their part. The rights of the Bishop, which are partly ecclesiastical and partly temporal, may be in opposition to these of each of the religious orders whose representatives stand by him. They, whatever their submission to the Bishop may be, have their claim both of religious liberty for themselves, and their obligations and duty to their Bishop. They are also either friendly or antagonistic to the temporal ruler of the city, according

to what his attitude may be in matters spiritual; and they too have property which they have to guard.

The representatives of the city have the relative freedom of the city at heart, the rights of the citizens easily trampled upon by both war-lord and ecclesiastic, and they too may in the future discover manners of balancing the power of their immediate ruler by that of the sovereign lord, the King.

The picture is meant to be strictly accurate in archaeological detail, but it is sufficiently so for the question of typical representation. The moment of the story was chosen so as to allow a certain latitude of accuracy in the garments of the personages. This southern place was also chosen because of the great freedom in many matters, such as the dress of ecclesiastics; all of which would allow the artist to be less tied down than in some other choice of moment.

For biography on this artist see first page in this section.

Conservation Notes:

Treated 1974



Courtesy of David Oakes, Senate Media Services

The Relation of the Individual to the State, c. 1905

John La Farge

Oil on canvas, permanently fixed to wall

Supreme Court Chamber, West Wall

Installed circa 1906

Description (original by artist):

Socrates has gone down from Athens to the Piraeus “because he wanted to see in what way they would celebrate the festival of Bendis, the Thracian Artemis, which is a new thing.”

After the procession and the prayers, as he turns with a friend in the direction of the City, Polemarchus, the son of a wealthy citizen detains him, asking him to spend the day and later to see the races and other festivities. Socrates accepts, and goes to his friend’s residence and remains in conversation with the two sons and the father and various other guests and friends who come in and out through the story.

In this representation, which is not meant to be literal, but typical, Socrates may be said to be talking to the eldest son of his host. One of the other guests, presumable the sophist, Thrasymachus, listens ready to interrupt. The younger son has come in for a moment from the outside – a slave girl with tambourine drops in from one of the processions, to look and listen, and a little further a charioteer drives his horses past. The festival is foreign, so perhaps is the charioteer. The family of Cephalus, the host, is also foreign.

If a moment in the discussion be chosen for my representation, it may be the argument of Socrates when he explains to Polemarchus and Thrasymachus that “the true artist in proceeding according to his art does not do the best for himself, nor consult his own interest, but that of his subject.”

In this painting there has been no strict intention of giving an adequate and, therefore, impossible historical representation of something which may never have happened. But there has been a wish to convey, in a typical manner, the serenity and good nature which is the note of the famous book and of Greek thought and philosophy. Hence, the choice of open air and sunlight and a manner of representation that will exclude the mistake of any Academic formality.

For biography on this artist see first page in this section.

Conservation Notes:

Treated 1974

Governor's Reception Room

Father Hennepin at the Falls of St. Anthony

The Treaty of Traverse des Sioux

The Battle of Nashville

The Fourth Minnesota Entering Vicksburg

The Second Minnesota Regiment at Missionary Ridge

The Battle of Gettysburg

The Third Minnesota Entering Little Rock

The Fifth Minnesota at Corinth



Courtesy Minnesota Historical Society

Father Hennepin at the Falls of St. Anthony, c. 1905

Douglas Volk (1856-1935)

Oil on canvas

7'4" x 10'5"

Governor's Reception Room

Placed in 1905

Description:

In this painting, Douglas Volk interpreted an event that took place in 1680, when Europeans were first exploring the area that is now Minnesota. Dakota Indians captured Father Louis Hennepin, a Belgian priest, as he traveled northward along the Upper Mississippi River with two French explorers. The priest is portrayed naming the falls after his patron saint, Anthony of Padua. Drawing upon Hennepin's popular travel book, "New Discovery of a Vast Country in America," and upon his own familiarity with the riverside terrain, Volk created an image that reflects his interpretation, with Hennepin dominating the scene, when in fact, he was a prisoner of the Dakota. The painting also incorrectly depicts Dakota dress customs for women.

Son of the noted sculptor Leonard Wells Volk (1828-1895), the genre, history, and portrait painter **Stephen Arnold Douglas Volk** (1856-1935) was born in 1856 in Pittsfield, Massachusetts. At the age of fourteen he attended classes at the Accademia di San Luca in Rome; at that time he also received informal guidance from George Inness. Volk exhibited his first major painting, *En Bretagne*, at the Salon of 1875, and in the following year he visited America and was one of the youngest exhibitors at the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia. Volk continued to study in Paris until 1879, when he permanently returned to America and initiated a lifelong career in art education by accepting a professorship at the Cooper Institute in New York City, where he taught until 1884. In 1886 he founded the Minneapolis School of Fine Art, Minnesota (now the Minneapolis College of Art and Design) and served as its director until 1893. Volk moved back to New York and became an instructor at the Art Students' League until 1898. He also taught classes at the New York Society for Ethical Culture, and his moral

philosophy of art was greatly influenced by the society. He also taught a class in portraiture at Cooper Union from 1906 to 1912, and was an instructor at the National Academy of Design from 1910 to 1917. During the last fifteen years of his life Volk painted a series of posthumous portraits of Abraham Lincoln. Throughout his long career Volk received numerous awards and distinctions, and was a member of many artists' organizations. [Biography provided by National Gallery of Art]

Conservation Notes:

Curatorial Notes:

When Volk did this painting, St. Anthony Falls had receded hundreds of feet from when the event portrayed occurred. To create the appearance of the falls as they may have appeared, he studied Hennepin's journals and accounts and visited the location where the falls would have been in 1680.



Courtesy Minnesota Historical Society

The Treaty of Traverse des Sioux, c. 1905

Francis D. Millet

Oil on canvas

7'4" x 10'5"

Governor's Reception Room

Installed 1905

Description (original from artist in letter to Channing Seabury):

The ceremony took place under a large shelter of boughs which was built to protect the negotiators from the July sun. At one end of this shelter a platform was erected and behind it was hung a piece of canvas for the purpose of shade. Rough benches were arranged in front and on the sides for the accommodation of the chiefs. Quantities of blankets, miscellaneous articles, powder, &c., &c., were heaped near the platform, and in the middle of the shelter stood a barrel of sugar and water, the favorite soft drink of the Indians.

Thirty-two white men were present, and a large number of chiefs, representing the two thousand Indians who had assembled to settle the question of the sale of twenty odd million acres of land. The incident selected for illustration is the signing not only of the treaty, but of the agreement to assign a certain portion of the payment for the land to the traders, to satisfy their claims against the Indians furnished them on credit.

The United States Indian Commissioner, Colonel Luke Lea of the Tennessee, and General Alexander Ramsey are standing on the platform behind a small table on which the treaty is spread to receive the signatures, the former shaking hands with a chief in token of amity, and the latter holding a medal to present to the chief after he had signed the document. Seated behind the two officials are various members of the party, and to the left, on the ground, the chiefs are about to sign the agreement which is spread out on a table improvised out of a barrel and a board. In the extreme left is a group of traders, missionaries and other white men, with a heap of blankets and other presents.

In the immediate foreground and in the shadow of the shelter on the right are benches crowded with seated Indians and behind them a mass of spectators.

In the distance, seen under the leafy fringe of the shelter, is a glimpse of the river and numerous wigwams, suggesting an extensive and populous encampment.

The warm July sun strikes the foreground figures, and, breaking through the canopy, touches here and there the figures in the shadow.

The Indians are dressed in all their barbarian finery and a great variety of colored blankets, ingeniously arranged head-dresses and ornaments, many of them with pipes or fans or other characteristic articles dear to the Indian's heart.

There are between seventy-five and one hundred figures in the composition, and the details of costume and type have been studied from all available [sic] sources, from the correspondence in the "Pioneer", from Frank Mayer's diary and sketches, from the Department of Ethnology and the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, and from various data supplied through the courtesy of several artists who have made of study of the Indians of the Plains. Every effort has been made to chronicle the scene with consistent accuracy to avoid anachronisms, and at the same time to produce a picture agreeable to the eye and harmonious with the surroundings.

During his lifetime, **Francis Davis Millet** (1846-1912), always known as Frank, was a prominent artist who was well known for murals that contained exactly accurate historical details. His broad-ranging career included work with world's fairs in Vienna, Chicago, Paris, and Tokyo as a juror, administrator, mural painter/decorator, or advisor. In addition, Frank Millet was a newspaper writer who published short stories and enjoyed adventures as a war correspondent during the Russo-Turkish War and in the Philippines during the Spanish American War. Millet was among the founders of the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and was influential in the early days of the American Federation of Arts. Millet was involved with the American Academy in Rome from its inception and served as Secretary from 1904-1911. In 1911, Millet went to Rome as Chief Administrator of the newly combined Schools of Fine Arts and Classical Studies. He died aboard the Titanic while traveling to New York City on Academy business. [Biography provided by Archives of American Art]

Conservation Notes:

Curatorial Notes:

Millet based his composition from artist Frank Mayer, a witness to the treaty signing event in 1851.



Courtesy Minnesota Historical Society

The Battle of Nashville, c. 1906

Howard Pyle

Oil on canvas

6'8" x 8'4"

Governor's Reception Room

Installed 1906

Description (original from artist in letter to Cass Gilbert):

Representing the Second Brigade under the command of Col. Lucius F. Hubbard, comprising the Fifth and Ninth Minnesota, the Eleventh Missouri, the Eighth Wisconsin, the Second Iowa Regiments, which, at four o'clock p.m., on the 16th of December 1864, made the final charge that broke the Confederate lines and drove them back in rout from their last position.

The following brief account may supply any additional data which you may care to put upon the tablet to be placed below the picture;-

The battle of Nashville was fought upon the 15th and 16th of December, 1864. The battle picture represents the second and final day of battle at about four o'clock in the afternoon of the 16th of December, 1864. It had been raining during the latter part of the afternoon, but ceased a little before four o'clock. The order was given to charge and the advance was made across a sodden cornfield, and against a stone wall, behind which lay the Confederate line. In spite of the shot and shell which poured upon them, the Minnesota regiments dashed against the wall and over it, driving the Confederates before them. The Minnesota regiments were nearest the turnpike, and the viewpoint of the picture is taken at or near the juncture of the stone wall and the turnpike.

The two regiments, becoming somewhat intermingled in the charge, rushed to breast-work at about the same time, and each planted its flag almost simultaneously upon the captured stonewall. The nearest regiment is the Fifth, and the flag in the middle distance is the flag of the Ninth, which perhaps was planted upon the captured wall a fraction of time before the other.

Howard Pyle (1853-1911) has long been considered ‘The Father of American Illustration,’ as much for his prolific and superb work as a writer and illustrator as for his commitment to teaching. While his most familiar works remain the images of rakish pirates, tough cowboys and noble knights populating children’s adventure novels, they are the paradigms, prototypes, and stereotypes that will forever remain our models. In the 1890s, Pyle was well established as an illustrator and turned his mind to teaching others. He founded the first School of Illustration in the nation at Drexel Institute (1894) in Philadelphia. During his career, Howard Pyle produced illustrations for nearly 3,500 publications and about half of those images illustrated books and articles he authored - 200 magazine articles and 19 books. [Biography provided by the National Museum of American Illustration]

Conservation Notes:

Curatorial Notes:

Pyle believed and often told his students to “throw your heart into the picture and then jump in after it”. This held true for him too. When working on this painting, he is quoted as saying he had to “go to the door of the studio and breathe fresh air to clear my lungs of the powder and smoke”. This painting has been featured in hundreds of books and publications on the Civil War.



Courtesy Minnesota Historical Society

The Fourth Minnesota Entering Vicksburg, c. 1904

Francis D. Millet

Oil on Canvas

6'8" x 8'4"

Governor's Reception Room

Installed 1906

Description:

The event depicted here occurred on July 4, 1863, when the Fourth Minnesota Regiment entered the Confederate stronghold of Vicksburg, Mississippi. The city had just surrendered, following a six-week siege. The honor of being one of the first units to march into the city was bestowed upon the regiment for the significant role it played in combat preceding the surrender. In the background is the Warren County Courthouse, which served as an artillery target during the siege. Col. John B. Sanborn, a St. Paul lawyer and brigade commander, is shown on horseback, leading his troops.

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and Classical Studies. He died aboard the Titanic while traveling to New York City on Academy business. [Biography provided by Archives of American Art]

Conservation Notes:

Painting cleaned in 1985. Old overpaint was removed and losses due to scratches and abrasion were inpainted. It was given a new layer of varnish.



Courtesy Minnesota Historical Society

The Second Minnesota Regiment at Missionary Ridge, c. 1906

Douglas Volk

Oil on canvas

6'8" x 8'4"

Governor's Reception Room

Installed 1906

Description:

On November 25, 1863, still stinging from defeat in the Battle of Chickamauga two months earlier and under siege with dwindling supplies, Union forces charged Confederate-held Missionary Ridge, outside Chattanooga, Tennessee. After overtaking trenches at the base of the steep hills, the Army of the Cumberland, including the Second Minnesota Regiment, daringly pushed forward without orders and swept Confederate troops from atop the ridge. Because this assault was spontaneous, many have called it the "Soldiers' Battle." The officer waving his hat and urging his men upward is Lt. Col. Judson Bishop, a teacher and newspaper editor from Chatfield, Minnesota.

Son of the noted sculptor Leonard Wells Volk (1828-1895), the genre, history, and portrait painter **Stephen Arnold Douglas Volk** (1856-1935) was born in 1856 in Pittsfield, Massachusetts. At the age of fourteen he attended classes at the Accademia di San Luca in Rome; at that time he also received informal guidance from George Inness. Volk exhibited his first major painting, *En Bretagne*, at the Salon of 1875, and in the following year he visited America and was one of the youngest exhibitors at the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia. Volk continued to study in Paris until 1879, when he permanently returned to America and initiated a lifelong career in art education by accepting a professorship at the Cooper Institute in New York City, where he taught until 1884. In 1886 he founded the Minneapolis School of Fine

Art, Minnesota (now the Minneapolis College of Art and Design) and served as its director until 1893. Volk moved back to New York and became an instructor at the Art Students' League until 1898. He also taught classes at the New York Society for Ethical Culture, and his moral philosophy of art was greatly influenced by the society. He also taught a class in portraiture at Cooper Union from 1906 to 1912, and was an instructor at the National Academy of Design from 1910 to 1917. During the last fifteen years of his life Volk painted a series of posthumous portraits of Abraham Lincoln. Throughout his long career Volk received numerous awards and distinctions, and was a member of many artists' organizations. [Biography provided by National Gallery of Art]

Conservation Notes:

Painting cleaned in 1986. Yellowed varnish and surface dirt removed.

Curatorial Notes:

After reviewing Volk's sketch of this battle scene, Cass Gilbert suggested a different perspective. Instead of showing the soldiers cresting the top of the ridge – the climax of the charge – he had the artist move the view down the slope to show the assault in progress. This new point of view provided a dramatic setting to help tell the story of the ground they covered and how extensive this charge really was.

Volk corresponded with veterans of the 2nd Minnesota regiment to get advice on uniforms worn, location of the regiment on the battlefield and other details to create this scene. He, like other artists commissioned to create historic themed paintings, included portraits of participants in each one.



Courtesy Minnesota Historical Society

The Battle of Gettysburg, c. 1906

Rufus Fairchild Zogbaum

Oil on canvas

6'8" x 8'4"

Governor's Reception Room

Installed 1907

Description:

The First Minnesota Regiment, one of the most seasoned and respected units of the Union Army, played a crucial role in this turning-point battle of the Civil War. Ordered to charge down Cemetery Ridge on July 2, 1863, the regiment successfully stopped the advance of a Confederate brigade that was nearly six times larger and threatened to break through the Union-held line. Of the 262 men ordered forward to buy time until reinforcements could arrive, 220 were either killed or seriously wounded; the 82-percent casualty figure was the highest single-battle toll for any Union regiment during the war. Col. William Colvill, standing behind the tattered flag, rallies his men forward. He would soon be wounded and crippled for life.

Rufus Fairchild Zogbaum (1849-1925) was a well-known painter and illustrator of battle scenes of Army and Navy life whose work was published widely in magazines in the late 19th century. He also wrote prolifically about cowboys and the American West and was an artist/correspondent during the Spanish-American War.

Conservation Notes:

Painting cleaned in 1986. Yellowed varnish and surface dirt removed. After some inpainting of areas of loss and abrasions, it was given a final covering of varnish.

Curatorial Notes:

After he was commissioned to begin work on the Capitol battle scene, Zogbaum came to St. Paul and spent several weeks interviewing and gathering Civil War era photographs of the 1st Minnesota soldiers to make the painting as realistic as possible.



Courtesy Minnesota Historical Society

The Third Minnesota Entering Little Rock, c. 1910

Stanley M. Arthurs

Oil on canvas

6'8" x 8'4"

Governor's Reception Room

Installed 1910

Description:

After an embarrassing surrender to Confederate Gen. Nathaniel Bedford Forrest in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, in July 1862, the Third Minnesota was sent home, where it served during the U.S.-Dakota War. Later that year, it was redeployed back to the South. This scene shows the regiment marching into Little Rock on the morning of September 11, 1863, a significant event given these soldiers were the first infantrymen to enter Arkansas's capital after its desertion by the Confederate Army. In recognition of its efficiency and discipline, the Third Minnesota was chosen to serve as the occupation force. The garrison's commander, Col. Christopher Columbus Andrews, went on to play a key role early in Minnesota's forest-conservation movement.

Stanley Massey Arthurs (1877-1950) was a student of American artist Howard Pyle. Arthurs devoted his career to depicting American historical subjects, painting a series of events from earliest Colonial times through the Civil War era. After Pyle's death, Arthurs occupied his studio and set for himself the same high standards Pyle had taught. Every detail of his pictures was painstakingly researched, and he immersed himself as thoroughly as possible in the mood and character of his picture subjects. [Biography provided by The Illustrated Gallery]

Conservation Notes:



Courtesy Minnesota Historical Society

The Fifth Minnesota at Corinth, c. 1912

Edwin H. Blashfield

Oil on canvas

7'8" x 14'7"

Governor's Reception Room

Installed 1912

Description:

On October 4, 1862, the second day of the Battle of Corinth, Lt. Col. Lucius Hubbard led the Fifth Minnesota Regiment in a pivotal charge that thwarted Confederate efforts to retake this strategic Mississippi railway center. Near the center of the painting Hubbard, astride a brown horse, leads the charge. Visible farther back amid the troops is the clean-shaven John Ireland, who served as regimental chaplain and reportedly distributed ammunition to the men during the fight. He later became archbishop of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and, early in the 20th century, directed construction of the Cathedral of St. Paul.

Born in New York and groomed for a career in engineering, **Edwin Howland Blashfield** (1848-1936) studied at Boston Latin School, Harvard College, and Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). While at MIT, his mother, an artist, sent some of his drawings to the French academic painter Jean Léon Gérôme, whose interest convinced Blashfield's father to allow his son to pursue a career in art. He studied in Paris with the French history and portrait painter Léon Bonnat from 1867 to 1870 and, interrupted by the Franco-Prussian war, from 1874 to 1880. He settled in New York in 1881, producing paintings and illustrations for *St. Nicholas Magazine* and other publications, and decorating private homes. Not until 1892, at the request of Frank Millet, whom he had met during a stay, in Broadway, England, did he begin the large mural painting at the World's Columbian Exposition for which he became well known. The patriotism evident in his public commissions for state capitols and court houses took the form of triumphal, classicizing allegories. He painted large murals for public and private commissions, including the Library of Congress and the Appellate Division Courthouse in New York, until his beaux-arts style was no longer in favor. [Biography provided by the Smithsonian American Art Museum]

Conservation Notes:

Miscellaneous

Flora of Minnesota

Zodiacs

Old Fort Charlotte on the Pigeon River

Untitled (River Fishing Scene)

Attack on New Ulm

Eighth Minnesota at the Battle of Ta-Ha-Kouty (Killdeer Mountain)



Courtesy Minnesota Historical Society

Flora of Minnesota, c. 1904 (detail)

Elmer Garnsey (designer)

Oil on canvas, permanently fixed to wall

House Retiring Room

1904

Description:

Based on a suggestion from Cass Gilbert, Elmer Garnsey, the Capitol's director of decorations, designed the layout of the canvas above the wainscoting to depict trees and flowers found in Minnesota. In the background, amidst the variety of trees are sunlit ponds and other landscape features.

Born in New Jersey, **Elmer Garnsey** (1862 – 1946) moved to New York City and found work as a painter on the Brooklyn Bridge. Wanting to hone his skills as an artist, he studied at the Cooper Union and began working in the studio of artist and decorator Francis Lathrop. He was selected to be an assistant to Francis Millet, who was the chief decorator at the Chicago World's Fair. This experience led him to be named the decorator in charge of the Library of Congress. As the director of decoration for the Minnesota State Capitol Garnsey's role was to determine different color schemes, designs and motifs for the various spaces decorated with artwork. In addition to overseeing all the stencil work, he designed many of the smaller lunettes above the grand stairs, the zodiac paintings in the rotunda and the decorative motifs in the Rathskeller.

Conservation Notes:



Courtesy Minnesota Historical Society

Zodiac, (12 pieces), 1904

Gemini (above)

Aquarius (not pictured)

Aries (not pictured)

Cancer (not pictured)

Capricorn (not pictured)

Leo (not pictured)

Libra (not pictured)

Pisces (not pictured)

Sagittarius (not pictured)

Scorpio (not pictured)

Taurus (not pictured)

Virgo (not pictured)

Elmer Garnsey (Design)

Oil on canvas, permanently fixed to wall

5' x 9'

Rotunda dome

Installed 1904

Description:

In each of the twelve lunettes, two putti hold a framed symbol of the zodiac which suggests the constellations in the skies above.

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director of decoration for the Minnesota State Capitol Garnsey's role was to determine different color schemes, designs and motifs for the various spaces decorated with artwork. In addition to the zodiac paintings in the rotunda, he designed many of the smaller lunettes above the grand stairs, oversaw all the stencil work and the decorative motifs in the Rathskeller.

Conservation Notes:



Zodiac – Gemini – damaged canvas - 2010



Courtesy Minnesota Historical Society

Old Fort Charlotte on the Pigeon River, c. 1935

SERA artist, unknown

Oil on canvas, permanently fixed to wall

Governor's Dining Room

Installed 1935

Description:

In 1936 a private dining room was created for the governor next to the Rathskeller. As part of the decoration of this space, this piece was installed in a recessed space along one wall. The large painting features the Pigeon River next to Fort Charlotte – a fur trading post on the western end of the Grand Portage.

Conservation Notes:

Curatorial Notes:

This art work was part of a SERA (State Emergency Relief Agency) project that helped employ artists during the Depression. The “Spirit of Government” the large statuary group in the House of Representatives Chamber also was also funded through this agency.



Courtesy Minnesota Historical Society

Untitled (River Fishing Scene), 1935

Carl Olson

Oil on canvas, permanently fixed to wall

Justices' Dining Room

Installed 1936

Description:

This artwork was installed in a recessed panel on the south end of this small dining room. The scene is believed to be depicting a Supreme Court justice fishing on a northern river – possibly the Pigeon River.

Carl Olson (1864-1940) was a muralist painter from Sweden.

Conservation Notes:



Courtesy Minnesota Historical Society

Attack on New Ulm, c. 1904

Anton Gag

Oil on Canvas

7'7" x 8'10"

Room 118

Installed circa 1923

Description:

Many Dakota in Minnesota, frustrated and angry after years of deceptive trading practices, the mishandling of annuity payments, forced acculturation efforts, and the signing away of half their reservation lands, went to war in southern Minnesota on August 18, 1862. Their first organized attempts to clear the white settlers and traders from the Minnesota River Valley took place in a series of bold attacks at the Lower Sioux Agency and Fort Ridgely. After defeats at Fort Ridgely, several hundred Dakota soldiers on August 23, 1862, swept down the terraced slopes and attacked the town of New Ulm. Nearly 1,200 inhabitants, refugees and citizen soldiers from neighboring communities, huddled in brick buildings or fought behind barricades in the center of town during the series of attacks. Both parties set fire to nearly two hundred buildings outside the three-block defensive perimeter. The defenders torched buildings that offered protective cover for the attackers and the Dakota, without success, set fires hoping the flames, fanned by prevailing winds would burn the defenders out of the buildings they occupied. The 250-armed citizens held back the Dakota until nightfall when the Indians retired from the engagement. Thirty-four of the town's protectors were killed and sixty wounded. The loss to the Dakota combatants is unknown. Two days later, low on food and ammunition, the survivors evacuated New Ulm. In a large caravan of 153 wagons, they reached safety thirty miles away in Mankato. This tragic episode in Minnesota's history, a war that included thousands of victims on both sides, raged for a total of six weeks. An estimated 450 whites and many Dakota combatants were killed. The Dakota people, including a majority that did not participate in the war, were forced

from their land and placed on reservations in South Dakota and later Nebraska. After hasty military trials, 303 Dakota men were slated for execution. Most were given stays of execution but served time in prison. Those who did not, including thirty-eight Dakota soldiers were hanged in Mankato for crimes committed during the war.

Anton Gág, (1859-1908) an immigrant artist of considerable natural talent, helped to document Minnesota History as well as beautifying homes and public buildings. Income from his work barely stretched to support his large family growing up in the rural community of New Ulm. Wanda, the oldest of his seven children, became an internationally recognized artist and children's author. Anton was 14 when he arrived in the United States from Bohemia in 1873. The following year he came to New Ulm where he found work at the estate of August Schell, founder of the brewing company that remains in operation today. Schell became Anton's friend and mentor, sending him to art schools in Chicago and Milwaukee for several months. This was his only formal art training. Anton earned a living for a time by operating a photography studio. Among his subjects in 1890 were the nine surviving original settlers of the New Ulm area out of the 30 who had come west from Chicago in 1852. Two artists, Chris Heller and Alexander Schwendinger joined Anton in partnership. They did painting, paperhanging, frescoes and signs. The trio became well known throughout Minnesota for their fine work. The partners created the beautiful art on the walls and ceiling of Holy Trinity Cathedral in New Ulm. The attic studio of Anton's home at 226 North Washington Street was filled with his paintings. He favored Minnesota landscapes, its people and still life scenes. Culture, peace and religious tolerance were the qualities Anton, considered necessary for happy living, a philosophy he revealed in his decoration of Turner Hall on south State Street. In a significant contribution to history, Anton interviewed survivors of the Dakota Conflict of 1862 to recreate events in oil paintings. These have been reproduced in history books. His painting, *The First Battle of New Ulm*, was exhibited at the 1893 World's Fair in. A panorama of Dakota conflict scenes, painted by Anton and his partners, is in the Minnesota Historical Society collection. Anton died in 1908 at 49 of occupational tuberculosis. [Biography provided by the Wanda Gag House Association]

Conservation Notes:



Courtesy Minnesota Historical Society

Eighth Minnesota at the Battle of Ta-Ha-Kouty (Killdeer Mountain), c. 1910

Carl L. Boeckmann

Oil on canvas

7'7" x 10'1"

Conservation lab – History Center

Room 317

Installed circa 1914

Description:

On July 28, 1864, as part of a punitive expedition against the Dakota, General Alfred Sully's army arrived in front of a Santee Dakota and Teton Lakota encampment at Killdeer Mountain (Ta-Ha-Kouty) in what is now west-central North Dakota. In the ensuing battle, Sully's twenty-two hundred men defeated a roughly equal number of Dakota and Lakota warriors, most of them armed with bows and arrows. After the Indians retreated, the soldiers burned their camp. Other Minnesota units engaged in the battle included Brackett's Cavalry Battalion, 2nd Minnesota Cavalry, Independent Battalion Minnesota Cavalry and the 3rd Minnesota Light Artillery.

Carl Ludwig Boeckmann (1867 –1923) was a Norwegian-American artist best known as a portrait painter. Boeckmann was born in Oslo, Norway, the youngest of five children. In 1883, he began to study at Knud Bergslien's school of painting. A year later Christian Krogh, Erik Werenskiold, Eilif Peterssen, and Hans Heyerdahl started another art school, where Boeckmann was a student until 1885. In 1886, Boeckmann emigrated to America. He created paintings of several well-known Norwegian immigrants, including Reverend Elling Eielsen and Colonel Hans C. Heg of the 15th Wisconsin Volunteer Regiment in the Civil War Battle of Chickamauga. Other well-known Americans who posed for Boeckmann included President William McKinley, Governor William Merriam, Governor John Sargent Pillsbury, Cyrus Northrop, and John Burroughs. In 1893, Boeckmann won a gold medal at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. He also received a silver medal for a portrait of Congressman Edmund

Rice of St. Paul. In 1905, Boeckmann permanently settled in Minneapolis, Minnesota. In 1914, he received an honorarium and an award for painting the historic fight that took place at Killdeer Mountain in North Dakota on July 26, 1864. [Biography provided by Hawaii Book Library]

Conservation Notes:

Frame received conservation treatment, 2015.

Appendices

Inventory of Art in the Minnesota State Capitol – March 2013
Policy For Works of Art in the Minnesota State Capitol