



Large marble sections being set into place on the Capitol's exterior; Joseph Huston at far left.

C • H • A • P • T • E • R

THREE

THE HUSTON CAPITOL INSPIRATION, DESIGN, & CONSTRUCTION

JANUARY 17, 1899, was inauguration day in Pennsylvania. William A. Stone, a lawyer from Pittsburgh and a Tioga County native, was the new chief executive of the Commonwealth. Stone was a bit more even-tempered than Hastings regarding the red brick shell on Capitol Hill. This building, he felt, was a substantial beginning, and the necessary monies to complete it should be somehow raised or appropriated. Stone stated that the building “is a structure which is of sufficient stable foundation to warrant a further appropriation for its completion... and cannot now be regarded as a wasteful expenditure. The problem now to be dealt with is the completion of this structure.”¹

In the interim, while the new administration became situated within Harrisburg, both houses of the General Assembly mulled legislation to complete the start that Henry Ives Cobb had provided. HR-277 would have led to the reappointment of Cobb as architect and the appropriation of the \$4 million amount Cobb estimated as necessary to complete his structure. Several measures, all dealing with various amounts of money, were debated but none were passed, and the issue faded for two years.

In 1901, with no legislation having been enacted to finish the Cobb building, Representative Charles E. Voorhees proposed a bill to return the capital to Philadelphia. Once

1900

60% of U.S. steel production came from Pennsylvania. The state also led the nation in textile production and was 4th in lumber production.

1902

The Pennsylvania anthracite coal strike of 1902, in which President Theodore Roosevelt intervened, set the pattern for non-violent arbitration in labor relations.

An explosion at the Rolling Mill Mine in Johnstown kills 112 miners. The tragedy was blamed on firedamp, a methane buildup in the mine that is highly flammable. It is estimated that during this time period an average of 500 miners a year lost their lives.

Willis Carrier designs first air conditioning system.

1903

Cuba leases Guantanamo Bay to the U.S. "in perpetuity."

Morris Michtom and his wife Rose introduce the first teddy bear to the United States.

Orville Wright flies the first powered aircraft at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina in the first documented heavier-than-air flight.

First debut of Crayola Crayons by Binney and Smith of Easton, Pennsylvania.

again, this measure was debated at great length, and various riders and provisions were attached to the bill. In the end, however, the cost of moving the capital city and a strong feeling against returning the seat of government to Philadelphia prevailed. The bill was defeated, but only by a vote of 103 to 75.²

The issue of moving the seat of government may have been the impetus for action to finish the Capitol building. After consulting with Cobb to determine the amount needed to adequately complete the building, Senator John Fox of Dauphin County introduced legislation at the start of the 1901 session, which would authorize \$5 million for that task. This time, the main controversy in the bill was who exactly was going to serve on the Capitol Building Commission and how that body would operate. Fox stipulated that the new Commission would not be bound by any rules governing or actions taken by the 1897 Commission. Therefore, the new Commission would have to decide whether to reappoint Cobb as architect. The Fox bill was defeated on April 17, 1901, but Fox then added an amendment to allow the governor to appoint the entire Commission. On May 1 his bill passed the Senate.

Meanwhile, the House was introducing its own bills for a new Commission. HR-647 was similar in nature to Senator Fox's bill, except that it required the



“The exterior or outer walls of the building ARE TO BE of granite of the best quality, and in so far as practicable the interior decoration, finish, and style of the Congressional Library at Washington will be taken as TYPE, SCHEME, OR MODEL...”

construction of a heating and power plant for the building and stipulated the employment of a Pennsylvania architect, a statement that would later cause much controversy. On June 6 it was amended to lower the appropriation from \$5 million to \$4 million, and on June 11 the bill passed the House by a vote of 139 to 39. The two bills were reconciled in a joint House-Senate conference committee, with the committee adopting the House's version. The bill repealed the act of April 14, 1897, pushed the completion date for the building back to 1906, and placed a ceiling of \$800 thousand upon annual appropriations for the Capitol, unless a surplus was to be had. The total cost of

construction, including all architectural fees, could not exceed \$4 million.³ Both chambers approved the compromise bill on June 27, the last day of the session, and Governor Stone signed the act on July 18, 1901. A new third Capitol was indeed going to be built in Harrisburg. Governor Stone quickly named the new members of the Commission. They were to be: Nathan C. Shaeffer of Lancaster, the state superintendent of public instruction; William H. Graham, congressman from Pittsburgh; William P. Snyder, Senate president pro tempore; and Edward Bailey, a banker from Harrisburg. The Commission organized in August, naming Stone



The Institute went even further, advising all architects in Pennsylvania not to participate in the competition, because of its poor planning, favoritism, and injustice.

selected by the Commission, and the top five runners-up would receive \$1 thousand for their efforts.

By October the Commission was becoming concerned. They had received few entries, and many of the state's most qualified architects had not taken part. This may have been a result of the debacle with the 1897 design competition, with architects reluctant to enter into a competition that would involve lengthy litigation and professional discredit. To entice more submissions, the Commission ordered copies of the newspaper notice, topographical plan of Capitol Park, a floor plan of the Cobb building, and a statement of space requirements mailed to all Pennsylvania members of the American Institute of Architects (AIA). In addition, it hired Professor William H. Ware of the Columbia University School of Architecture as its consulting architect.

As the month of October wore on, the Commission became more concerned with the lack of entries and considered canceling the competition entirely. Ware was outraged at this notion, stating that regardless of how many entries they received, it was still a legally binding agreement with the men who had

submitted designs. Ware balked at the politics surrounding the competition. He had agreed to serve as consultant, then resigned in disgust at the Commission's discussion over canceling it. He then wrote a letter to Edward Bailey, stating that he would serve in a limited role on the Commission and that he would make his colleagues in the profession aware of his role. All the vacillating on the part of Ware did little to bring more entrants and in fact further alienated architects and the AIA.

The architectural community became even more galvanized against this competition than in 1897, with the AIA issuing a resolution of condemnation. The AIA stated that the program was "loosely drawn and offered little promise that designs would be considered on their merits."⁵ They went on to mention Ware's indecisiveness in serving and that there was a recognized method already in use by the Federal government and recognized by the AIA, which stipulated how architectural competitions were to be conducted. The Institute went even further, advising all architects in Pennsylvania not to participate in the competition, because of its poor planning, favoritism, and injustice. (It would later inform its members that participation constituted unprofessional conduct.)



1904

A great fire in Baltimore, Maryland destroys over 1,500 buildings in 30 hours.

Cy Young of the Boston Americans pitches the first perfect game in modern baseball against the Philadelphia Athletics.

Lincoln Steffens' *The Shame of the Cities* is published, highlighting urban blight.

Ida Tarbell, a native of Erie County, Pennsylvania, publishes *The History of Standard Oil Company*.

as president and Bailey as treasurer. Robert K. Young of Wellsboro was named as legal counsel. Edgar C. Gerwig, Stone's personal secretary, was appointed secretary for the Commission, and Thomas L. Eyre, superintendent of public grounds and buildings was named the Commission's superintendent.

The first order of business was to approve a new design competition. However this Commission, anxious to get the process in motion, seemed to do so rather hastily. Unlike the 1897 competition, which rigorously stipulated what could and could not be submitted, there was no detailed program for the new competition. Having no architectural advisor as of yet, the members of the Commission simply placed announcements in Pennsylvania newspapers and ordered Gerwig to run them throughout the month of September in nine specific Pennsylvania papers.

The notice called for interested Pennsylvania architects to submit designs for a new Capitol of the Commonwealth on or before November 30, 1901. The cost ceiling of \$4 million was repeated, and it was noted that under no terms shall the price rise above that cost. The notice in the papers also gave the completion date—January 1, 1906. The Commission did stipulate what the inner and outer finishes would be made of, stating, "The exterior or outer walls of the building are to be of granite of the best quality, and in so far as practicable the interior decoration, finish, and style of the Congressional Library at Washington will be taken as type, scheme or model..."⁴ The Capitol would be built according to the winning design

After an informal vote they chose ENTRY NUMBER ONE, which when uncovered read, “J. M. HUSTON, PHILADELPHIA.”

In answer to the charges of political favoritism, the Capitol Building Commission met in mid-November and decided to issue a statement, which dictated that upon receipt of the entries, Professor Ware had promised to review all of them, without knowing names of the submitters. As planned the competition ended on November 20, 1901. In all, the Commission had received nine entries. The names of the seven known entrants were: William C. Hays, Joseph M. Huston, Addison Hutton, Herman Miller, Fred J. Osterling, Trimble and Stevens, and James H. Warner.

Both Warner and Huston had entered the 1897 competition, with Warner as an invited guest architect of the Commission and Huston as one of the finalists. Gerwig opened them, only to seal the names and number them one through nine. He gave them to Ware who evaluated them and issued his report at the end of December 1901. On December 28, Ware went before the Commission to verbally discuss his conclusions. He stated that he had commented on each plan by number. He did not, however, rank any of the plans, but selected four that were superior, three that were lesser, and two that should not even be considered because they were distinctly poorer than the rest.

Of the top four numbers that Ware had selected, numbers one, three, four, and seven were those that impressed him most. He talked at great length about the merits of number four, and apparently this was the one he thought best, though he did not specifically say so to the Commission. He stated that the Commission would be justified in selecting any of the first four designs, and reiterated that his evaluations had been made without knowing any of the names of the architects. Upon Ware's evaluation, the Commission members confined their debate to the selected plans.

THIS PAGE: Italian print purchased by Huston, undated.

OPPOSITE PAGE: Early rendering by Huston of the House Chamber, 1901.



Following the signing of his contract in January 1902, HUSTON would quickly set out to turn his vision of Pennsylvania's Capitol into a REALITY.

However, the plans, which Ware had mailed from New York two days prior, had not yet made it to Harrisburg because of heavy express traffic over the Christmas holiday. The Commission adjourned until 3:30 P.M. the same day, December 28, 1901.

During the interim, the plans arrived, and they were arranged for the Commission's inspection. There was a period of general reviewing, and then the members proceeded to debate the four that Ware had suggested. After a period of time they narrowed the field to numbers four and one. The Commission asked Ware if they would be justified in selecting either entry, and he replied in the affirmative, if the authors were of known reputation.

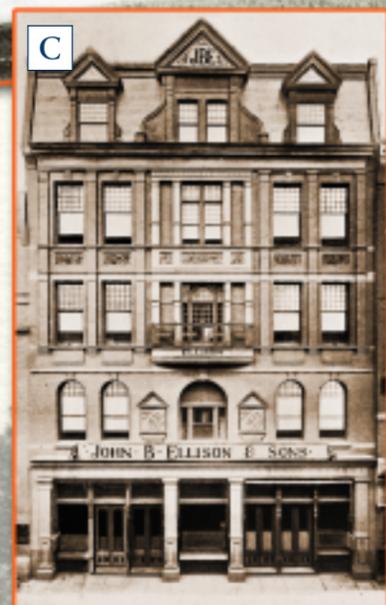
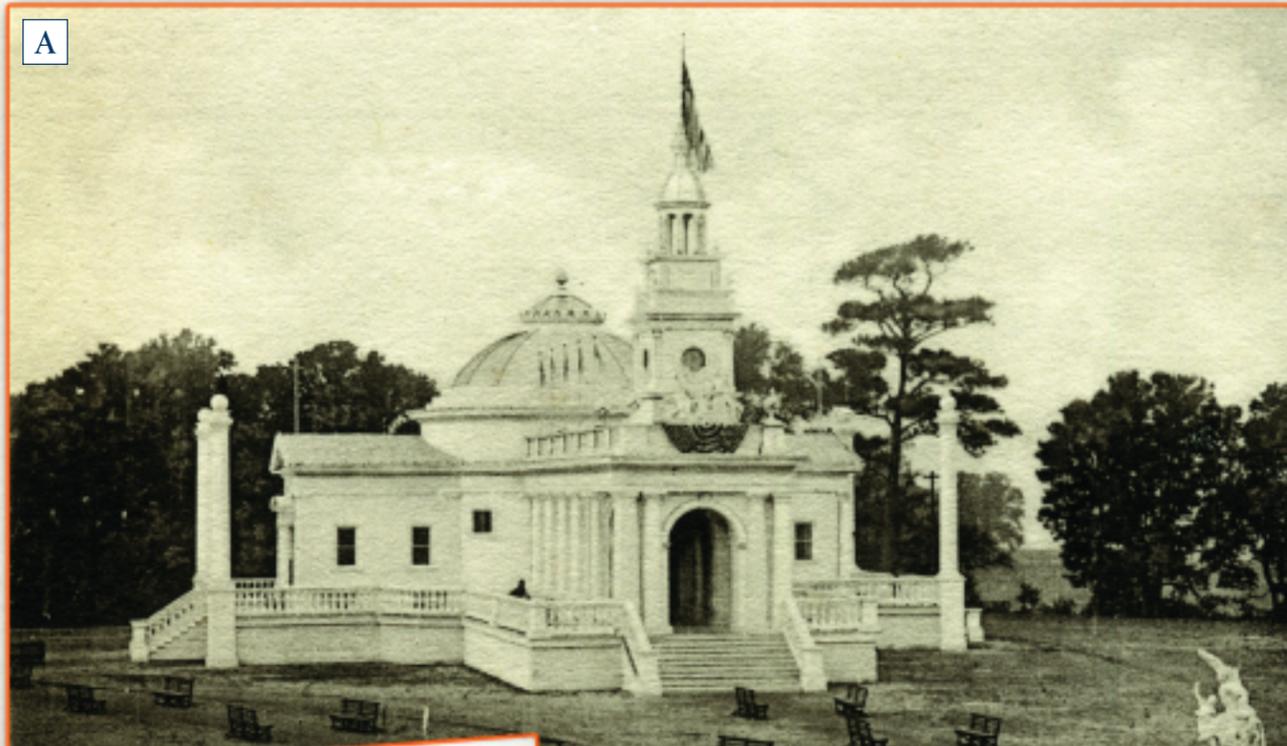
Finally, the Commission was ready to vote on the plans, but they asked Ware one last question as to whether they should cancel the competition altogether and begin anew. Ware stated that he thought this would be counterproductive, wasteful of time and money, and most likely would not provide entries any better than the ones already in hand. Following this assertion, the Commission voted. After an informal vote they chose entry number one, which when uncovered read, “J. M.

Huston, Philadelphia.” Discussion then ensued, followed by Senator Snyder moving for adoption of a motion:

Resolved: That J. M. Huston be selected as architect of the new Capitol building, provided he can satisfy the Commission that the building proposed by him will not exceed in cost the amount appropriated. . . on the roll call being called, all members voted in the affirmative.⁶

Joseph Miller Huston, the selected architect, was a thirty-five-year-old resident of Germantown, Pennsylvania. He had grand ideas, but little experience within the field, and certainly he had never attempted anything as large as the scale of his plans for the Capitol.

Almost immediately controversy arose over his appointment. Some papers, such as the *Harrisburg Telegraph*, praised the selection of Huston and attributed his success to his hard work and attention to detail. Certain newspapers, however, were not convinced that Huston had been randomly selected on the merits of his plans. There were other rumors regarding a rigged selection process, but none of which could be corroborated through any type of conclusive evidence.



All of the conjecture, articles, and editorials were enough to make Herman Miller, one of the disappointed runners-up, call for an investigation of the selection process. The *Philadelphia Press* editorialized that the Commission should make public all its documentation of the competition, but the members refused. In 1907, when the impending Capitol graft scandal came to light, those who remembered the 1901 competition would derisively point fingers and say that the fraud was present from the very beginning with the selection of the architect. Regardless, it remains troublesome for history to try to pinpoint or uncover with any degree of accuracy the inner workings of a process cloaked and veiled in secrecy. Certainly Professor Ware, despite his reluctance at judging the entries, did commend Huston's design to the Commission. Later, insinuation on the part of other entrants in the competition would indicate, largely without proof, that some members of the Commission knew beforehand which entry to choose. There has been no evidence found to prove any of these allegations leveled by architects unhappy that they had lost the competition.

In the long term, the structure that Joseph Huston's vision would create in Harrisburg over the next four years did much to bolster his supporters, silence his critics, and make the people of the Commonwealth forget how the Capitol's architect was selected. Following the signing of his contract in January 1902, Huston would quickly set out to turn his vision of Pennsylvania's Capitol into a reality.

JOSEPH MILLER HUSTON

Architect Joseph Miller Huston was a man who, from a very early age, was determined to make his mark in the world of architecture. Joseph Huston was born in 1866 in Philadelphia the fifth of six children. He was the son of Irish immigrants and a gifted young man of high standing in his church and community. He was known even then to have high artistic visions. By

1880, he completed public school, which at the time was eighth grade. He went to work with John B. Ellison and Sons, a well-known Philadelphia businessman. At age seventeen, he joined the architectural firm of Furness and Sons for a period of five years. While with the firm he studied Greek, Latin, and mathematics with a tutor. His self-education progressed so rapidly that he gained admittance to Princeton University in

September 1888. At Princeton, Huston was an honors student and a member of several artistic and literary societies. At college

Huston had the good fortune to meet numerous artists and architects who would remain his friends for life. Between the summer of his freshman and sophomore years he traveled to Europe with fellow Princetonians, Frank Hays, Edward Redfield, and Alexander Calder. The three men and Huston made a sketching tour of Ireland, England, Belgium, and France.

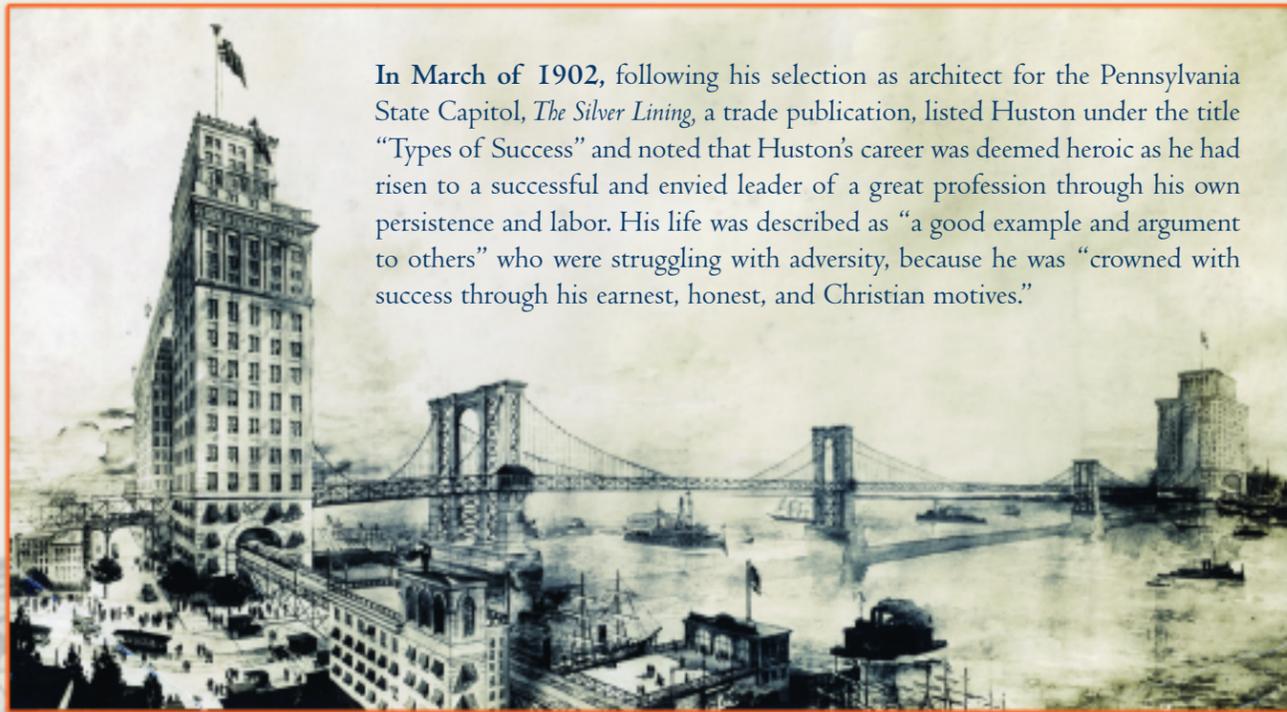
Upon his return to school in September, Huston was awarded the Sophomore Medal, an award given to the Freshman at the top of their class. The next summer Huston produced a bird's-eye view of the entrance of the Reading Railroad into Philadelphia for A. A. McLeod, president of the Reading line. In large part it was his years and associations at Princeton that molded Huston's desire to do something great in the world of architecture. During his senior year of college, he had won three gold medals for oratory and began to make note of the people he met and their impact upon him.

After graduating in 1892, Huston returned to the firm of Furness and Sons,⁷ during which time he

THIS PAGE: *Joseph M. Huston, ca. 1906.*

OPPOSITE PAGE: HUSTON'S EARLY CAREER

- A. *The Philadelphia Building at the Charleston Exposition was designed by Joseph Huston to resemble Independence Hall, 1902.*
- B. *The completed Library of the University of Pennsylvania, which Huston delineated early in his career, 1888.*
- C. *John B. Ellison & Sons Building, Philadelphia, ca. 1898, Huston's first employer.*
- D. *Witherspoon Building, 1901. Inset, Huston at work inside the building, undated.*



In March of 1902, following his selection as architect for the Pennsylvania State Capitol, *The Silver Lining*, a trade publication, listed Huston under the title “Types of Success” and noted that Huston’s career was deemed heroic as he had risen to a successful and envied leader of a great profession through his own persistence and labor. His life was described as “a good example and argument to others” who were struggling with adversity, because he was “crowned with success through his earnest, honest, and Christian motives.”

THIS PAGE: Top, Early sketch of Huston’s proposed suspension bridge in Philadelphia, 1913; Bottom, Newspaper showing Huston’s proposal for a bridge spanning from Philadelphia to Camden (the future Benjamin Franklin bridge), January 21, 1917.

OPPOSITE PAGE: Elevation drawing comparing the architecture of St. Peter’s Basilica to that of the Pennsylvania State Capitol.

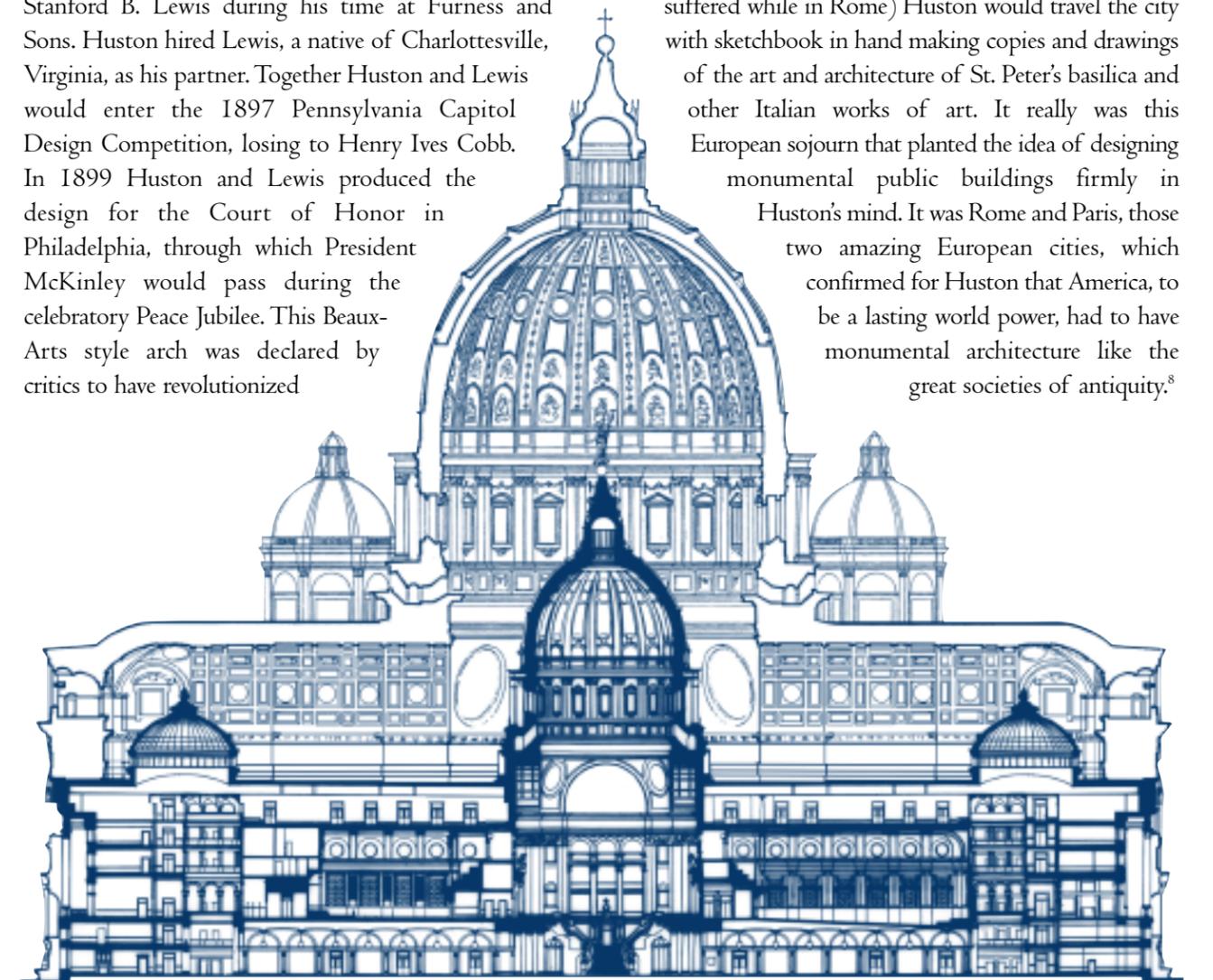


worked on the design for the Pennsylvania Railroad’s Broad Street Station in Philadelphia. In 1895 Huston set up his own firm and spent the next two years working on the design of the Witherspoon Building at Juniper and Walnut Streets in Philadelphia. In 1897 Huston moved his personal office into the newly completed building. Huston was also a member of several civic and professional organizations such as the Presbyterian Social Union, the Union League, the University Masons Lodge 610, F.&A.M. (Free and Accepted Masons), the T-Square Club, the Merion and Germantown Cricket Clubs, and the Princeton Club of Philadelphia, among others.

Huston had met a young architect named Stanford B. Lewis during his time at Furness and Sons. Huston hired Lewis, a native of Charlottesville, Virginia, as his partner. Together Huston and Lewis would enter the 1897 Pennsylvania Capitol Design Competition, losing to Henry Ives Cobb. In 1899 Huston and Lewis produced the design for the Court of Honor in Philadelphia, through which President McKinley would pass during the celebratory Peace Jubilee. This Beaux-Arts style arch was declared by critics to have revolutionized

the architecture of pageantry in the United States and to have given birth to decorative arches to follow, such as the Dewey Arch in New York. Throughout this time and even following the creation of the Capitol, Huston and Lewis would produce designs for numerous private residences in the Philadelphia area. It was Huston who in 1913 suggested the idea of a suspension bridge between Camden and Philadelphia. Though Huston was never awarded the commission, the Benjamin Franklin bridge was built in the mid-1920s.

In 1898 Huston and his older brother Samuel would depart on an around the world tour to see the great art and architecture of Europe, Arabia, and Asia. While Samuel was sick (he nearly died from appendicitis suffered while in Rome) Huston would travel the city with sketchbook in hand making copies and drawings of the art and architecture of St. Peter’s basilica and other Italian works of art. It really was this European sojourn that planted the idea of designing monumental public buildings firmly in Huston’s mind. It was Rome and Paris, those two amazing European cities, which confirmed for Huston that America, to be a lasting world power, had to have monumental architecture like the great societies of antiquity.⁸



A



B

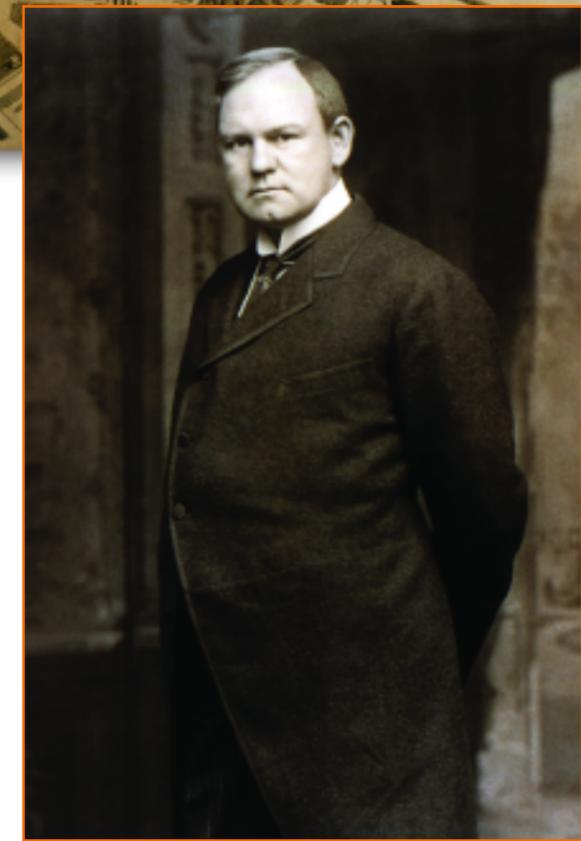
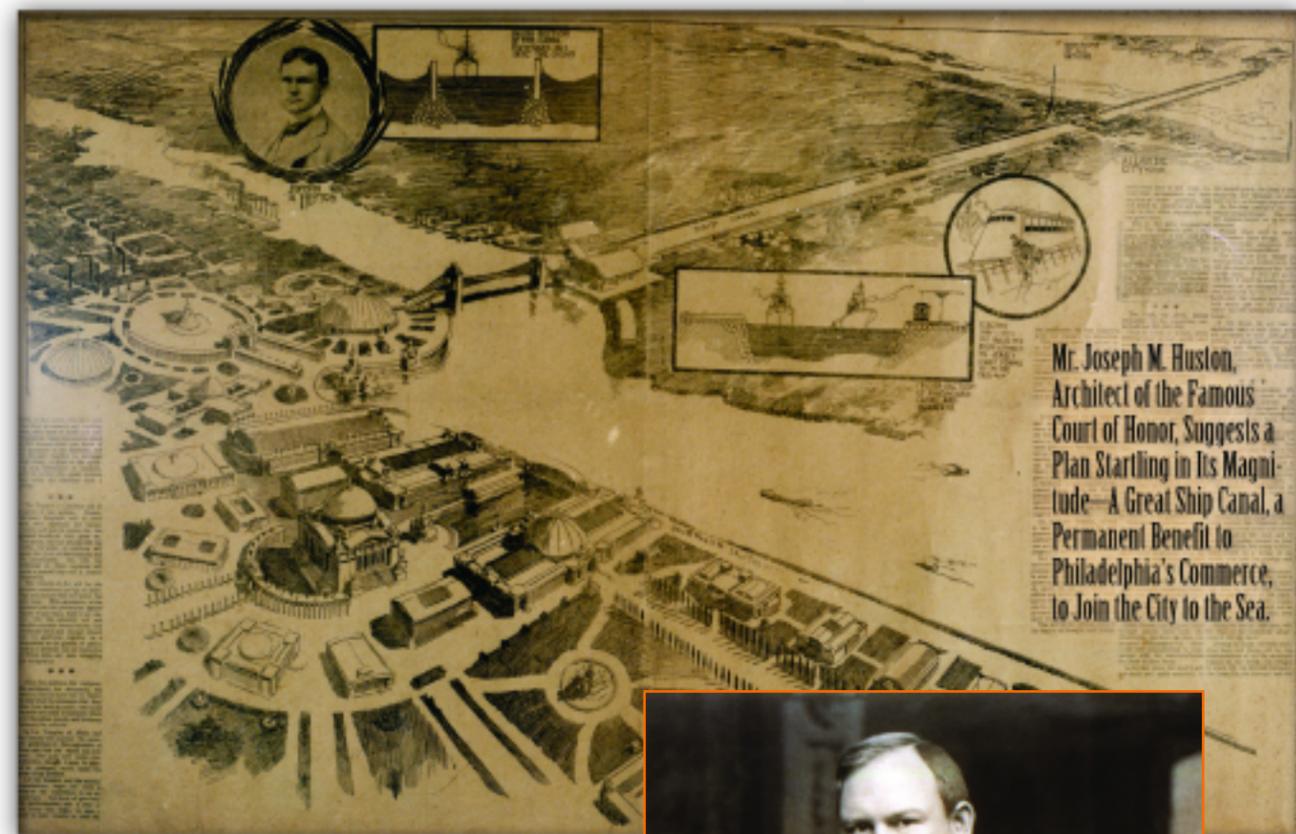


C



A STUPENDOUS! EXPOSITION!

From Philadelphia to Atlantic City!
The Twentieth Century Dream!

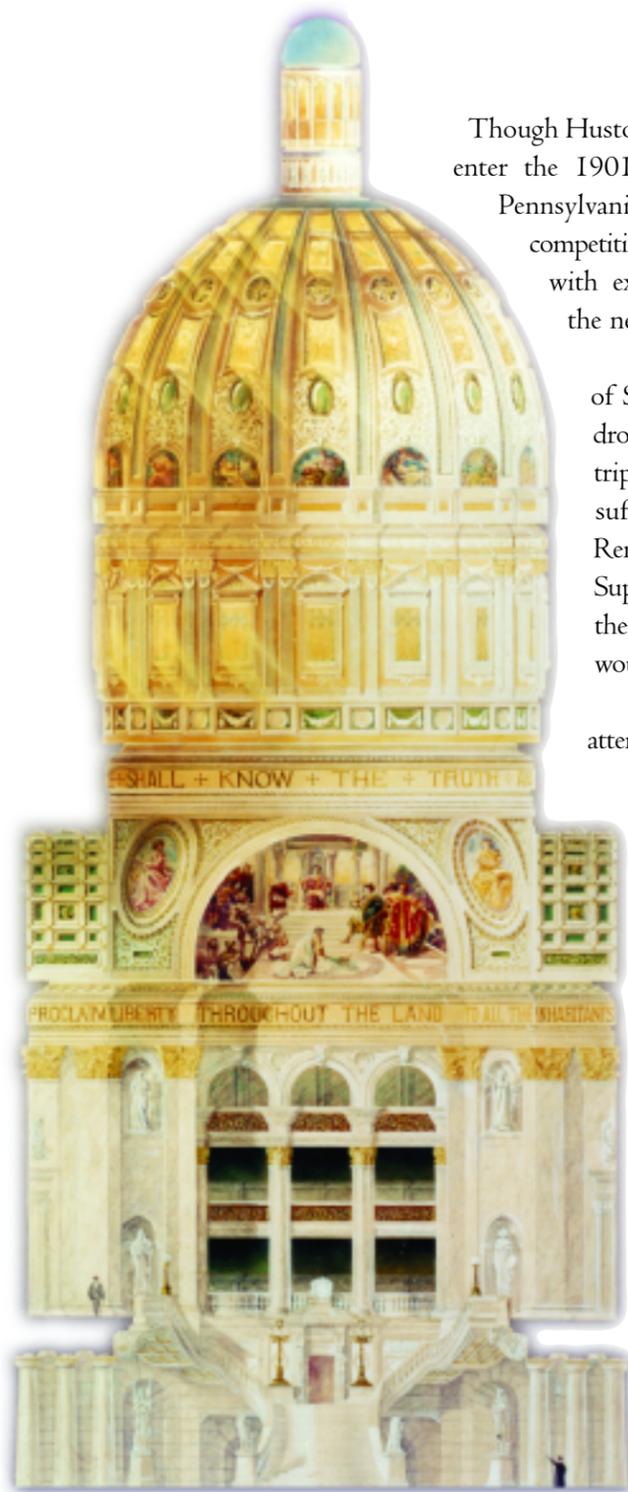


Other Works by Joseph Huston.

THIS PAGE: Top, Newspaper page from the Philadelphia Press showing Huston's proposal for a bridge spanning from Philadelphia to Atlantic City, March 10, 1901; Bottom, Joseph M. Huston, by famed Philadelphia photographer Frederick Gutekunst, undated.

OPPOSITE PAGE:

- A. Memorial Arch for the Navy Yard, designed by Joseph M. Huston, 1898.
- B. Huston's invitation for Peace Jubilee reception, 1898.
- C. Court of Honor at the Peace Jubilee, designed by Joseph M. Huston, 1898. This was the first monument honoring the Spanish-American War.



Though Huston and Lewis' 1897 plan was not chosen, their firm still chose to enter the 1901 Capitol design competition, which was restricted to only Pennsylvania architects and firms. Upon the decision to enter the competition, it was those European motifs and ideas that Huston remembered with extreme vividness, so much so that they became incorporated into the new building's design.

For the dome, Huston chose a one-half scale replica of the dome of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. When it came to the magnificent backdrop of the central rotunda, only a replica of the grand staircase and triple arcaded gallery from Charles Garnier's 1868 Paris Opera would suffice. The House Chamber would be adorned in Italian Renaissance style, the Senate Chamber in French Renaissance. The Supreme Court Chamber would be Greek and Roman in design, and the Governor's Reception Room would be Tudor. The Ladies' Lounge would be adorned in the style of Louis XV.

After having won the competition, Huston set about paying attention to every minute detail of the new building's construction. He, Lewis, and several employees would design almost every feature for the Capitol, from the decorative arts to custom clocks, to escutcheon plates and doorknobs, ornate bronze railings, chandeliers, torchieres, painted finishes, and specially-designed furniture. Huston's attention to detail was exceptionally meticulous—everything down to the last rosette, acanthus leaf, types of columns, pediments, and Greek keys would be designed, drawn, and implemented in just the location that Huston envisioned.

Professor Ware, as consultant to the Commission, did issue a caveat regarding Huston's selection, primarily based on his youth and inexperience as an architect undertaking a project as large as the Capitol. Ware stated, "In case the choice should fall upon a design the author of which, by reason of youth or inexperience, or for any other cause, an unsuitable person to be entrusted with the sole charge of so important a work, he shall be called upon to associate with someone more experienced..." Ware's advice was followed only loosely by the Commission. Though they never officially asked Huston to choose a consulting architect, the Commission hired Bernard

R. Green, the former superintendent at the Library of Congress, to serve as clerk-of-the-works for the Capitol. Joseph Huston received a congratulatory letter from William Ware on December 30, 1901, informing him of his selection. From early January until mid-July 1902, Governor Stone, William Ware, Bernard Green, and Huston debated over changes and modifications that each wanted in the building, with Huston maintaining adherence to his original plans in most cases. After



HARRISBURG, PA., THURSDAY EVENING, JUNE 9, 1904

Stanford Lewis' Son Drowned in Millrace

Little Stanford Huston Lewis, a son of Stanford B. Lewis, assistant architect on the new Capitol, was drowned in a millrace at Telford on Tuesday morning. Mr. Lewis had left home to come to Harrisburg with Architect Huston to attend the opening of the bids for State supplies, and did not learn of his son's death until he returned home in the evening.

The little fellow had gone to a millrace near his father's residence, and was standing on a bridge across the race throwing pebbles in the water. He lost his balance on the slimy, moss-covered boards and fell into the water. His mother missed him and intuitively felt that he had fallen into the race.

The race was shut off and the stream dragged, and the little boy's body found. Mr. Lewis only left Philadelphia for his country place last Saturday. The little boy was an exceptionally bright lad, giving every promise of a bright future.

his contract was signed in January 1902, Huston set to work designing electrical and mechanical system plans for the building.

Huston's working plans, all dated July 1, 1902, were submitted to the Commission on July 9. Huston asked the Building Commission to allow four weeks for contractors to prepare bids for the various work. Though the Commission approved his plans, they also sent them on to Bernard Green for comment.

Green in turn prepared a thirty-four page report detailing various changes, mainly in terms of the engineering of the building and not the art or architecture proposed. He suggested numerous clarifications and improvements, specifically on the proposed telephone and electrical systems, which he stated were "hastily written."¹⁰ Though Green had several other items with which he had problems, he thought that all of these were relatively minor to what he termed the "ruling question"—could the building be created within the \$4 million budget; Green believed, given the specifications, ornamentation, and artwork, that it could not.

Whether Huston or the Commission adopted many of Green's changes is unknown. Throughout the Capitol's construction, there existed several modified sets of blueprints. One important revision, that may have come at Green's suggestion, was that Huston's revised July 1902 specifications show no quadriga (four horsemen with a

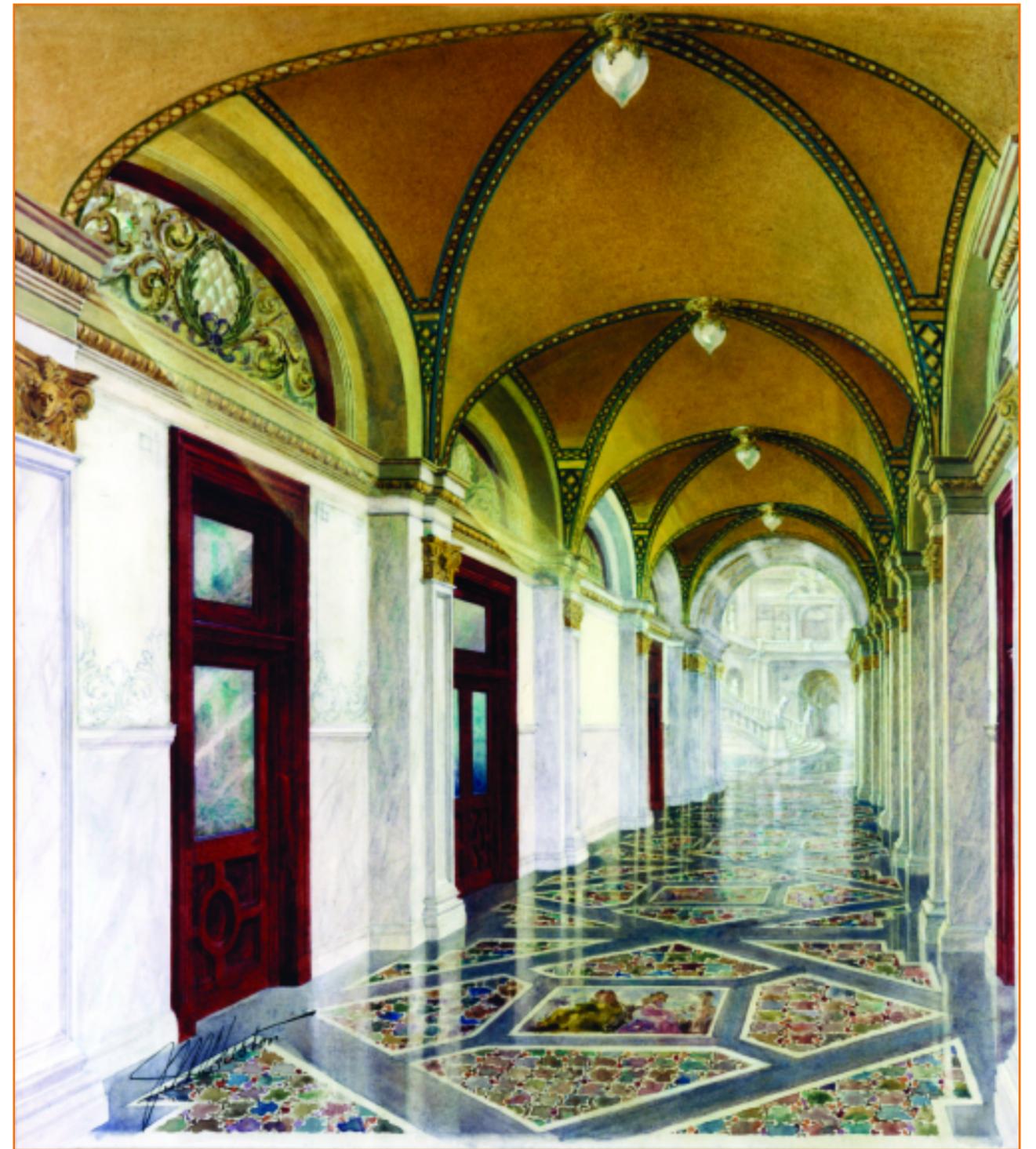




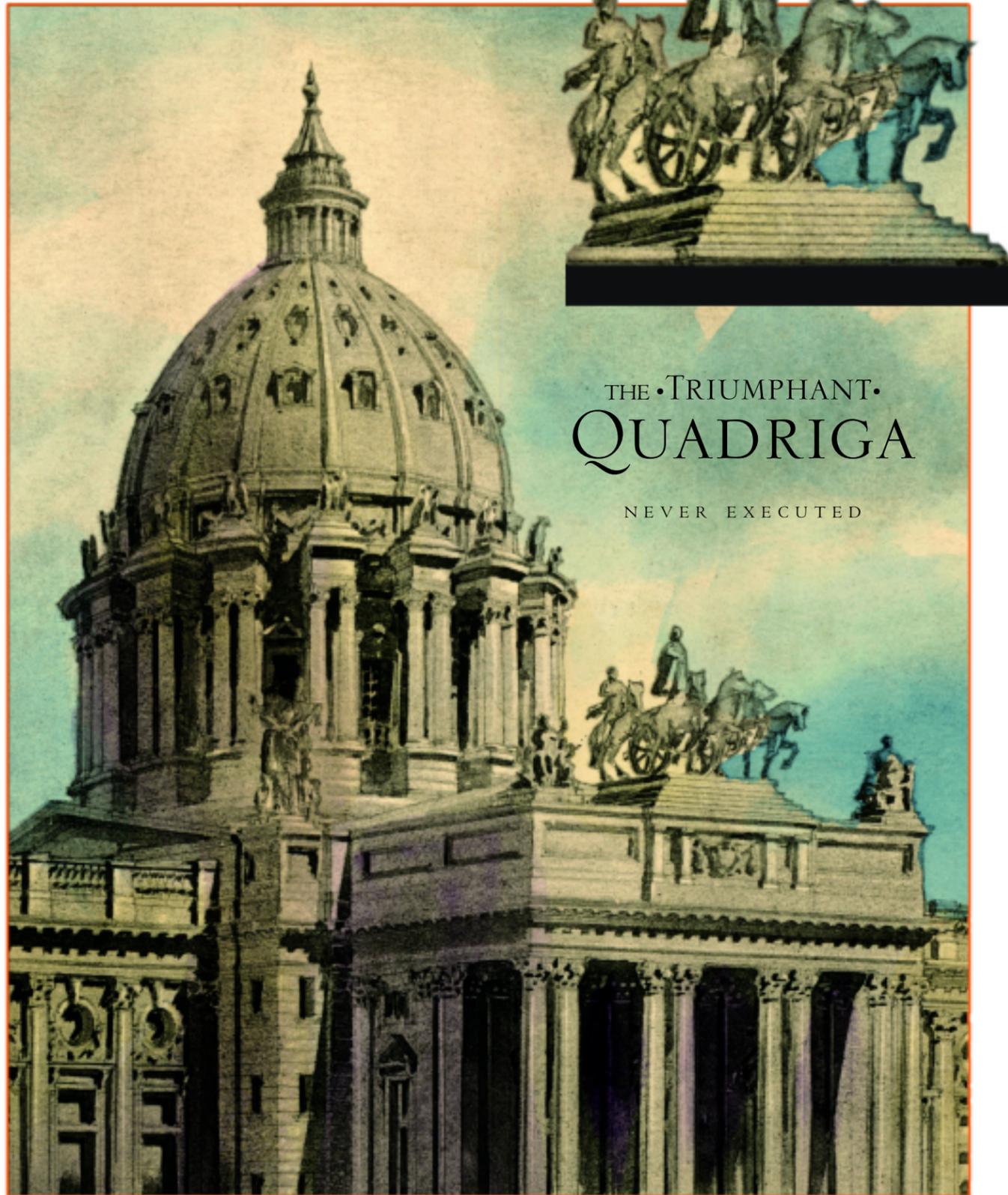
JOSEPH HUSTON'S CAPITOL Vision

1901 Capitol Renderings

- A. Vestibule.
- B. West entry bronze doors.
- C. North corridor, first floor.



Huston's attention to detail was exceptionally meticulous—everything down to the last rosette and acanthus leaf, types of columns, and pediments would be designed, drawn, and implemented in just the location that Huston envisioned.



THE TRIUMPHANT
QUADRIGA
 NEVER EXECUTED

chariot), on the center roof area, no tympanums (bas relief triangular sculpture above porticoes), nor sculptural groups at the north and south wing entrances. Huston cut these from his original competition sketch due to budget constraints, and in addition, he lessened the amount of sculpture to be placed at the center or main entrance. Still Green was skeptical about Huston's construction estimates and asked two other firms to give their evaluations of probable cost.

Regardless of the disagreements between Green and Huston, bid opening was scheduled for September 6, 1902, at twelve noon with numerous construction firms bidding. Both Huston and Green concurred on the issue that when all the bids were examined, George F. Payne and Company had submitted the lowest proposal. In late September, Payne and Company was awarded the general contract for the Capitol's construction.

The month of October saw Payne conducting preliminary work before he could begin construction of the Capitol. Onsite activity actually began mid-October with the demolition of some of the Cobb Capitol's interior walls.

THE CONSTRUCTION

The official groundbreaking ceremony for the new building took place on November 2, 1902. Joseph Huston marked the outline of a Masonic Cross on the ground where excavation of the south wing was to begin. The event was not a large ceremony; only Huston, Payne, Wetter, Superintendent of Construction Owen Roberts, Huston's partner Stanford Lewis, and a few other public figures were present. It was not until December 3 that workers from Payne and Company were able to begin demolition of the 1811–1812 Hills north and south Capitol offices.¹¹ On December 11, Stanford B. Lewis, reported in his daily log that one hundred twenty-five men and approximately sixty carts were engaged in tearing down the old buildings.¹²

New construction on the Capitol actually began in January 1903, despite the winter weather. Payne enlisted Joseph Bechtel as the masonry contractor, and on January 5 Huston arrived from Philadelphia to inspect the progress on the dome pier footings. On the same day Huston, with his brother Samuel and partner Stanford Lewis, placed a small sealed bottle containing a copy of the New Latin Testament and his speech *Literature in Stone* into one of the basement pier footings for the dome. Stanford Lewis carefully recorded the location of the private ceremony in his daily journal.¹³ January was a busy month, with both the inauguration of Governor-elect Samuel Pennypacker and the meeting of the 1903 General Assembly. Both the 1903 and 1905 Assembly were to hold session in the Capitol, even as it was being built. Despite the fact that the presence of the legislature greatly slowed construction, both sessions did sit in the building, as stipulated in the specifications.¹⁴

Over the winter months, Green, Huston, and Payne debated the type of granite to be used on the exterior of the building. By March 18 the pool of potential granite types had been narrowed, and Huston, Green, and several other Commission members took a trip to Vermont, to examine the quality of the granite. After their return, the Commission voted and decided that either Barre or Woodbury granite would suffice.

The first underground line of the New York City Subway opens.

THE U.S. IN THE YEAR 1905...

- The American flag had 45 stars.
- There were 8,000 cars in the country and only 144 miles of paved roads; Common maximum city speed limit was 10 MPH.
- Over 95% of all births occurred in the home.
- Average life expectancy was 47 years.
- Five leading causes of death were:
 1. Pneumonia and influenza
 2. Tuberculosis
 3. Dysentery
 4. Heart disease
 5. Stroke
- 6% of all Americans graduated from high school.
- 90% of all doctors had no college education.
- 20% of adults could not read or write.
- Average wage was 22¢ per hour; Average worker made between \$200 and \$1,400 per year.
- Sugar cost 4¢ a pound; eggs were 14¢ a dozen; coffee was 15¢ a pound; A three-minute call from Denver to New York City cost \$11.
- 8% of homes had a telephone.

President Theodore Roosevelt was inaugurated for his first full term in office, having succeeded the slain William McKinley in 1901.

Albert Einstein continues work on the special theory of relativity as well as the theory of Brownian motion.

The first all-motion-picture theater in the world was opened on Smithfield Street in Pittsburgh by John P. Harris and Harry Davis. The term "nickelodeon" is coined there. The Warner brothers begin their careers in western Pennsylvania.

With the help of President Roosevelt, Japan and Russia make peace, ending the Russo-Japanese War.

Britain produces the HMS Dreadnought naval ship, revolutionizing battleship design and triggering a naval arms race.

The Hershey Chocolate Company built its first factory in Hershey and the H. J. Heinz Company was formed.



HUSTON CAPITOL CONSTRUCTION 1904

1. Large pieces of stone are winched into place.
2. View of the southwest wing, showing brickwork, steel skeleton, and completed first floor granite facing.
3. Work on the granite facing overtop of the existing Cobb building progresses rapidly.
4. Wing construction May 17, 1904.
5. Workmen laboring on the drum of the dome and center wing roof in April 1904.
6. A large piece of stone is hoisted into the building through the window.

THIS PAGE: East facade of the Capitol during its construction, looking west from Pennsylvania Railroad, April 1, 1904.

I • N • S • I • G • H • T

GEORGE PAYNE GENERAL CONTRACTOR

Little is known about **George F. Payne** as a child and a young man. It is known that he was a member of the Washington Grays, serving with that Philadelphia artillery corps during the infamous railroad strike at Pittsburgh in 1877. How this experience affected Payne's attitude toward organized labor is unknown. After his departure from the Washington Grays, he apprenticed with a carpenter and, when he had finished, went into business for himself.

Payne and Charles G. Wetter together founded the Philadelphia construction firm of George F. Payne and Company in 1881. While most of their work was done in and around Philadelphia, they also served as contractors in State College, Pennsylvania; Newport, Rhode Island; and Spring Lake, New Jersey.

A listing of the Philadelphia buildings that were erected by Payne and Company is quite impressive: the Bullitt building at 133–137 South Fourth Street, the Crozer building at 1420 Chestnut Street, the United Gas Improvement Company building at Broad and Arch Streets, a professional building at 1831–1833 Chestnut Street, the Perry Building at 16th and Chestnut Streets, the Loraine Hotel at Broad Street and Fairmount Avenue, the Academy of Natural Sciences at 19th and Race Streets, Widener Memorial Home on York Road above Logan, the Wistar Institute at 36th and Spruce Streets, and St. Joseph's Academy in Chestnut Hill. Other buildings of note outside Philadelphia include the Carnegie Library; a dormitory and an agricultural building in State College; residences for Peter A. B. Widener and

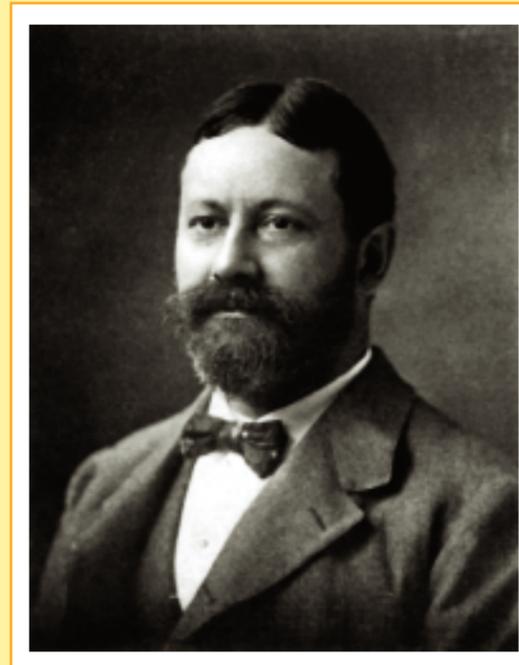


Owen Roberts
Chas. G. Wetter Jos. M. Huston Geo. F. Payne Stanford B. Lewis

William L. Elkins in Ashbourne, Pennsylvania; and three Newport, Rhode Island residences.

Payne was the successful bidder for the Capitol contract over five other contractors. His firm also became a subcontractor to John H. Sanderson, the Capitol special furnishings contractor, as the Capitol project progressed.

Payne and Company was implicated in the Capitol graft scandal, and Payne, himself, was subsequently indicted for conspiracy to defraud the Commonwealth. Payne retreated to Mount Clemens, Michigan in 1907, during the investigation by the Capitol Investigation Commission.



His health gradually failed and he died there during the latter part of 1907. His estate was not listed among the parties paying restitution to the Commonwealth for the Capitol graft.¹⁵ ♡

THIS PAGE: Top, Groundbreaking ceremony on November 7, 1902; Bottom, George F. Payne, ca. 1906.

OPPOSITE PAGE: Ground excavation beginning in January 1903.



Throughout the Capitol's construction, there existed several modified sets of blueprints.

Payne and Company chose the Woodbury Granite Company of Hardwick, Vermont, to quarry, cut, and ship the granite to Harrisburg via rail.

Throughout the spring of 1903 Huston and the other members of the Commission had difficulty in getting George Payne to submit a complete list of his subcontractors, and as late as August, the Commission's attorney, Robert K. Young, was still asking for the list. Payne and Company had their fair share of problems and setbacks in the first year of the construction. Delays in granite and steel continued into June, and a strike at the quarry further prolonged shipments. Bricklayers went on strike from the middle of May through mid-June. On May 25 Payne's construction superintendent, Owen Roberts, was killed when a wall that was being demolished collapsed onto him. As a result, George Payne was forced to personally supervise the onsite work for a number of months, until a replacement construction superintendent could be found.



Joseph Huston sailed to Europe in June 1903 to check on the progress of artists George Grey Barnard and Edwin Austin Abbey, both of whom were producing their Capitol artwork abroad.

By mid-summer Payne was moving forward, attempting to replace the time that was lost through the strikes and delays of the spring. He reported to the *Harrisburg Telegraph* that five hundred men were onsite and that the workforce would be doubled within a month.¹⁶ Soon after this time Payne named Samuel B. Rambo as the new construction superintendent.

Throughout the summer the delinquent steel and granite shipments began to arrive in larger numbers and more frequently. The American Bridge Company of New York supplied the steel from its Pencoyd, Pennsylvania mill, and the Etter Erecting Company of Philadelphia was in charge of setting the granite. By September granite shipments averaged approximately one carload per day for the first time all summer. While the pace of work was quickening, Huston and the Commission's rapport was lessening.

The Commission was not always happy with Huston, because both he and George Payne seemed all too willing to conduct business on their own without contacting the Commission, or Clerk-of-the-Works Bernard Green, when requested. In addition Huston complained to Governor Pennypacker that the Building Commission did not have sufficient funds to complete the approaches to the building, along with numerous other items, which Huston was forced to drop from his original plan. Huston stated, "The work of the Capitol Building Commission is at an end so far as entering into any more contracts is concerned."¹⁷ The Commission had no authority other than to construct the building—furnishing it was a separate matter entirely. For this reason, and probably to maintain the unity that was in



THIS PAGE: Elevation of rotunda by Joseph M. Huston, 1901.

OPPOSITE PAGE: Top, Miniature plaster model of frieze for Capitol's tympanum, undated; Bottom, Fountain located in Capitol Park, undated.

HARDWICK, VERMONT
Granite Quarry



THIS PAGE:

- A. Brickwork continues on the building's exterior, ca. 1903.
- B. Marble columns and capitals are loaded onto flatbeds in preparation for shipping, ca. 1903.
- C. Train car awaiting transport to Harrisburg, July 10, 1903.
- D. Workers use a system of ladders to maneuver the steep quarry landscape, 1903.

OPPOSITE PAGE: Rock cutters take a break from the laborious quarry work, 1903.



Huston's original plan, the Board of Commissioners of Public Grounds and Buildings resolved to hire Huston to design the furnishings for the building.¹⁸ This contract, completely separate from the contract for the Capitol, had no stipulation or ceiling over the amount that could be spent. This section would later come back to haunt both commissions during the Capitol graft scandal, but at the time it seemed a logical decision.

Throughout the fall and into December granite, steel, and brick came with more frequency to the jobsite and were installed quite rapidly. Huston told the bricklayers to work beyond the level of the granite facing, in an attempt to get as much of the building as possible covered before winter. This, however, was not able to be accomplished to the height that Huston wanted for fear of making the walls unstable. Work came almost to a standstill from January until March 1904, because of the cold winter weather. Warmer weather allowed the pace of construction to again speed up and Huston noted that sixty thousand bricks had been laid in the week prior to March 9. In April, areas of the building were sufficiently complete to allow the Department of Public Grounds and Buildings and the Department of Public Instruction to move into the structure. On May 5, 1904, the cornerstone of the building was laid at a ceremony which, unlike the Capitol's groundbreaking, drew a large crowd.¹⁹

The PA Department of Health records vital statistics, such as births and deaths, for the first time. The state's population at the time is 7,133,500 people.

1906

The Pennsylvania Elks State Association is founded in Philadelphia.

More than 500,000 coal miners walked off their jobs seeking higher wages. The American Federation of Labor met with President Roosevelt demanding an eight hour workday.

Mt. Vesuvius erupts in Italy.

111

A major earthquake estimated at a magnitude of nearly 8.0 decimates the city of San Francisco killing from 700 to 3,000 people.

I • N • S • I • G • H • T

1904 LABOR UNION PROTESTS

Merritt and Company 1024–1030 Ridge Avenue, Philadelphia was one of the “Associated Expanded Metal Companies,” which manufactured products sold by the individual member companies. Merritt furnished and installed the steel lath throughout the Capitol. The firm was considered by organized labor to be a nonunion firm and was one of the subjects of the labor union protests of 1904.²⁰

David A. MacGregor and Brother of 212 South 13th Street, Philadelphia was a family firm of decorators who supplied glass and performed decorating work and painting under subcontracts both to Payne and Company and with John S. Sanderson. Considered an “old established firm,” according to a Capitol handbook of 1906, the company had previously traded under the name of D. R. MacGregor and Sons, when the artist, Donald R. MacGregor, managed it. Two sons, David A. and Norman R., joined him in the business, and shortly after 1901, the name of the firm was changed. Announcement in June 1904 of the company’s contract to decorate the Capitol provoked a labor dispute, due to its reputation among organized labor as an anti-union firm.²¹ ♡

Workers begin the arch that will support a small dome on a wing of the Capitol when complete, 1904.



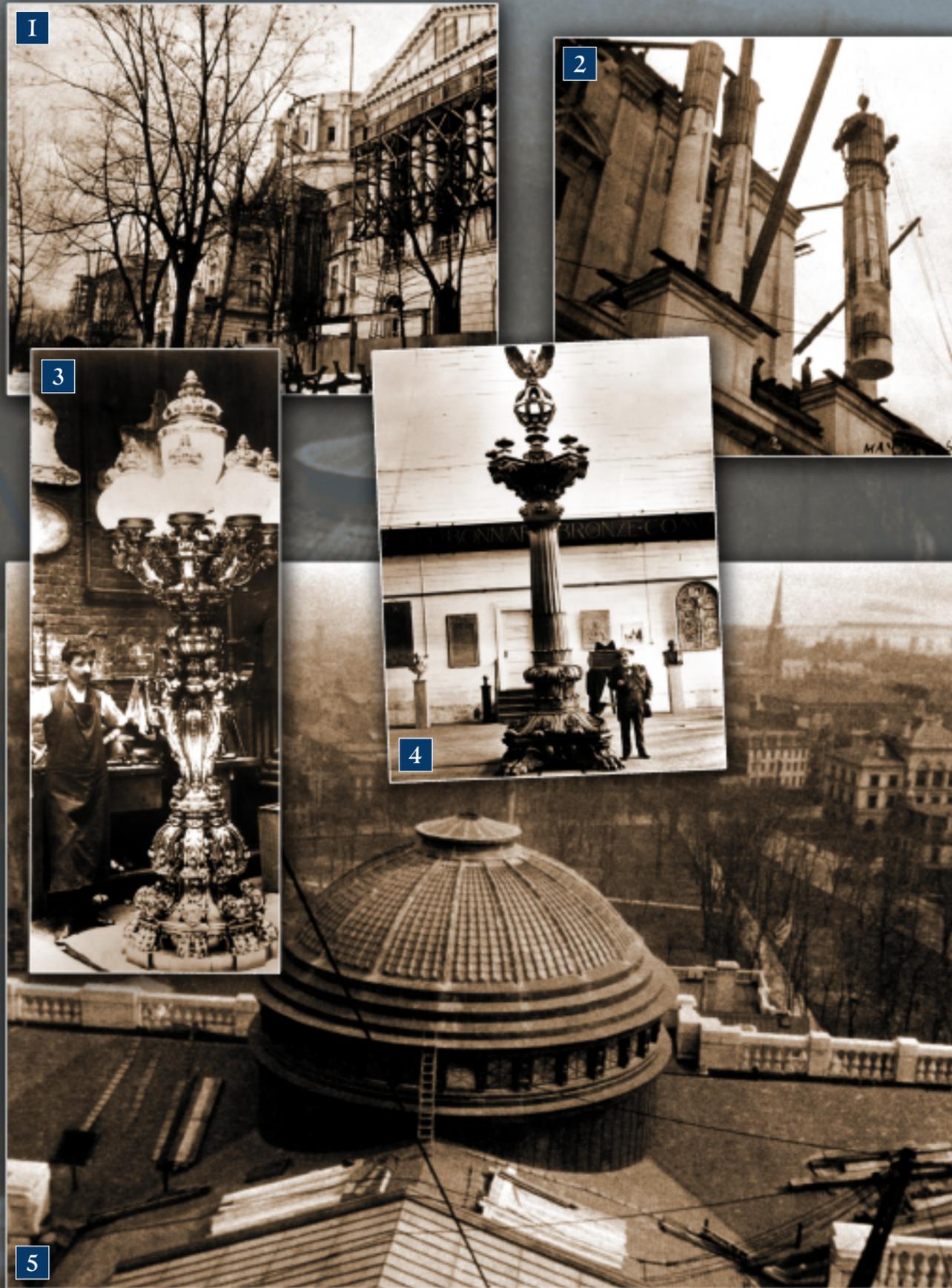
Joseph Huston poses for the camera while inspecting construction progress, 1903.



Pennypacker, Huston, and Payne were all present, and each delivered several short speeches. The stone was placed at an area to the right of the main entrance portico. Numerous state documents, several Pennsylvania newspapers, a copy of Penn’s *No Cross, No Crown*, coins of the period, and a Saint Louis Exposition silver dollar were all placed in a bronze box, which was laid in the stone. Governor Pennypacker, Huston, and Payne then each ceremoniously cemented on the capstone and workmen lowered it into place.

Prior to the laying of the cornerstone, Huston had been making numerous drawings for decorative work, lighting fixtures, metal filing cases, and improvements for Capitol Park. Bids for the special furnishings contract were opened on June 7, 1904, and Philadelphian John H. Sanderson presented the lowest bid and was subsequently awarded the contract.

During the summer and autumn of 1904 attention turned to getting the building sufficiently completed for the upcoming legislative session starting in January 1905. Huston assured the Commission and the governor that the rooms would be ready on time. However, as the construction progressed, it became evident that the chambers and meeting rooms would not be finished at the very beginning of the session, due to back orders of supplies. The *Harrisburg Telegraph* reported that the legislature would meet on January 3, 1905, adjourn until January 15, when it would elect a U.S. Senator, and then reconvene in the middle of February.



HUSTON CAPITOL CONSTRUCTION 1•9•0•4

1. Scaffold lifts workers to proceed in setting mortar for the porticoes of the building despite harsh weather conditions.
2. A granite column is set into place.
3. Henry-Bonnard Bronze Company light standard awaits placement in the Governor's Reception Room.
4. Eugene Aucaigne of the Henry Bonnard Bronze Company stands alongside a light standard for the Capitol's main entrance.
5. The 1905 skyline of Harrisburg from one of the smaller wing domes.

THIS PAGE: *Front west facade of the Capitol during its construction in 1905.*

DEATHS DURING CONSTRUCTION

IN MEMORIAM:

William Campbell, mason's helper
Lucas A. Hoelle, laborer
George Johnson, laborer
Meyer Kauffman, roof tiler
Albert Lyter, steel setter
Owen Roberts, superintendent

Six fatal accidents and an unknown number of worker injuries occurred while the Capitol was under construction. The first took place on May 25, 1903, when Owen Roberts, the Capitol construction superintendent for Payne & Company, was killed when a large piece of terra cotta fell on his head, fracturing his skull. The accident occurred "at the very outset of the work," when workmen were "tearing out" the Cobb Capitol as part of the Capitol's transformation.²²

On January 9, 1904 the *Harrisburg Independent* reported the death of William Campbell, a mason's helper, due to an accident on the job. Although the nature of his accident is not clear, Campbell's death led to a belated recognition of the danger inherent in the bricklaying and granite setting for the Capitol. The dangerous combination of high winds and the height of the dome had proven to be hazardous during the bricklaying process for the dome. Many construction delays and interruptions were attributed to bad weather.²³

On September 10, 1904 several laborers were injured when a scaffold in the rotunda collapsed and fell twenty-seven feet to a hard wooden floor. The workers were hauling a 1,000-pound girder



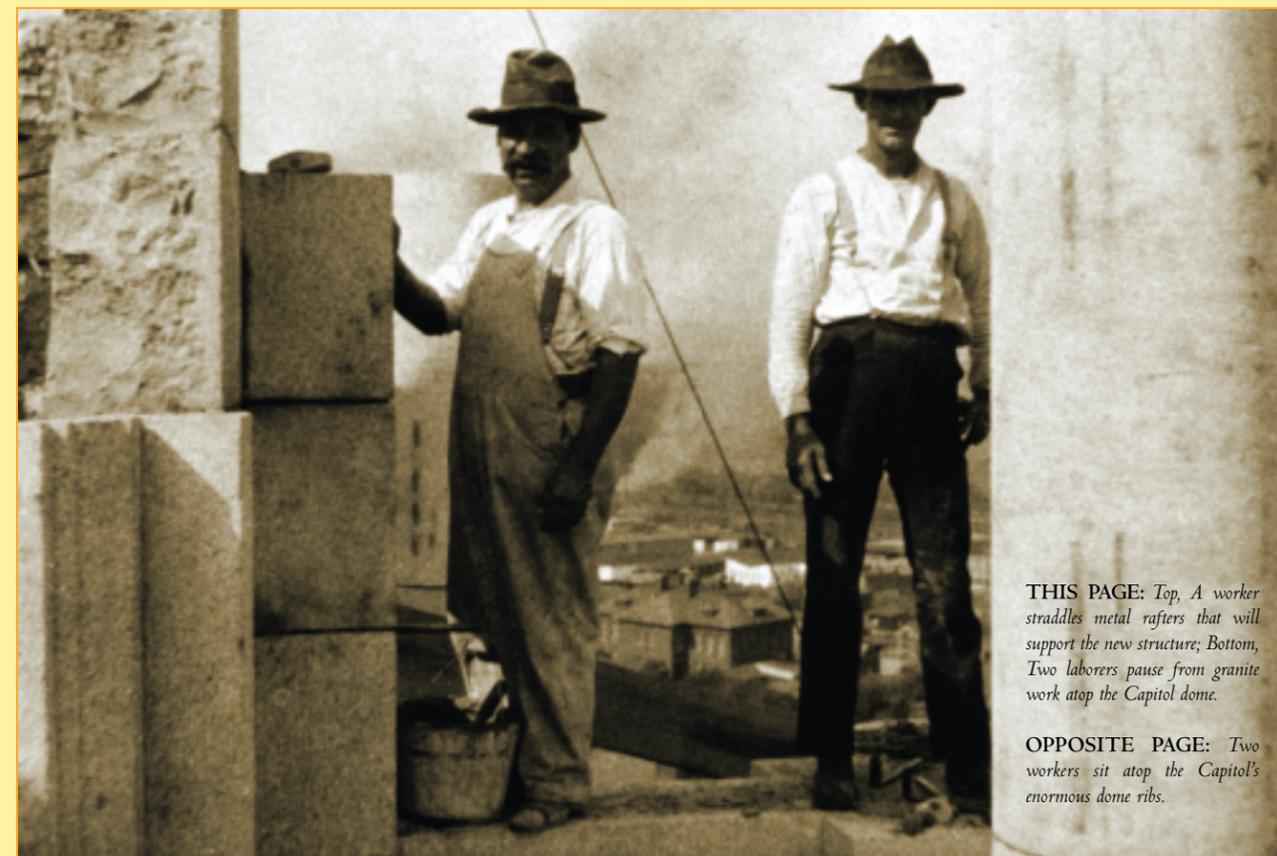
from the Senate Chamber on the second floor across a heavy frame scaffold to a crane that would lower it to the first floor. The scaffold collapsed under the weight. The workers were pulled from the mass of broken timbers with three of the men in serious condition. George Johnson, a African-American laborer from Harrisburg, died as a result of the accident.

On April 12, 1904 steel setter Albert Lyter, of Philadelphia, fell to his death while working with an iron girder in the northern wing of the Capitol.²⁴ Again in November 1904, laborer Lucas A. Hoelle was killed when he fell twenty-six feet through an opening in the Senate floor. In August 1905, Meyer Kauffman of Pittsburgh, was preparing to tile the inside of the dome when he fell through an empty elevator shaft that was to hoist him to the base of the dome.

The Final Count: Although the deaths of these men were mourned within the Capitol community and beyond, the six fatal accidents during the Capitol's



construction were considered to be "the smallest number of accidents that ever happened on the erection of a building the size of the Capitol."²⁵ Builders at the time ordinarily estimated one worker fatality for each \$200 thousand of contract price. According to this scenario, an estimated eighteen deaths could have been anticipated during the Capitol's construction.²⁶ ♡



THIS PAGE: Top, A worker straddles metal rafters that will support the new structure; Bottom, Two laborers pause from granite work atop the Capitol dome.

OPPOSITE PAGE: Two workers sit atop the Capitol's enormous dome ribs.



Left, George Payne and Stanford Lewis talk amidst the construction site, 1905; Right, The cornerstone laying ceremony held on May 5, 1904.

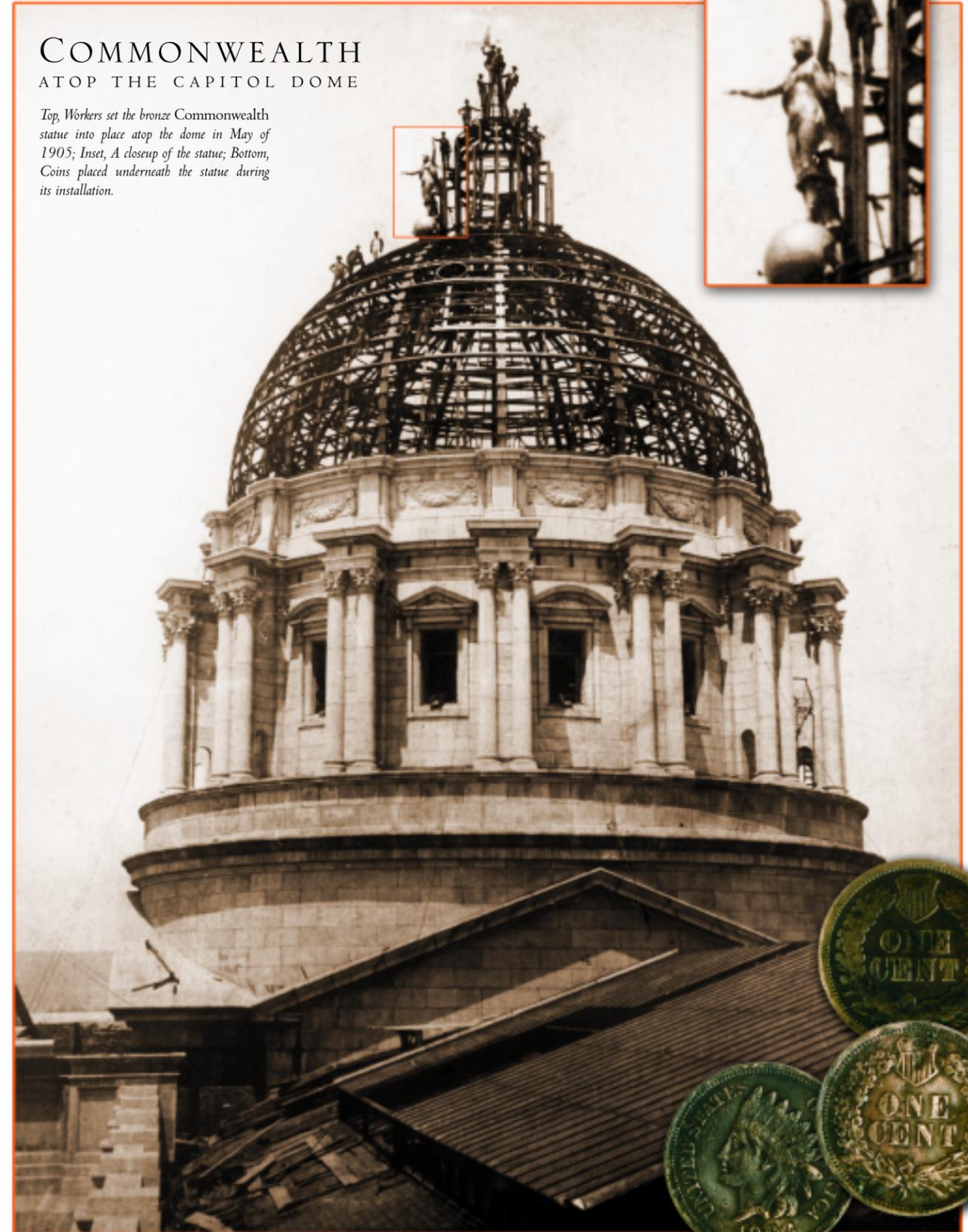
BIDS for the SPECIAL FURNISHINGS CONTRACT were opened on June 7, 1904, and **Philadelphian JOHN H. SANDERSON...** was subsequently awarded the contract.

On October 5, 1904 the Board of Commissioners of Public Grounds and Buildings awarded a contract for the completion of the Capitol's fifth floor or attic. Five new departments of state government were to be created under the 1903 and 1905 sessions, and none of these were reflected in Huston's original plans. Huston was issued a change order for the attic design and engineering work. The construction contract was awarded to Payne and Company and their subcontractors. This additional contract would also extend the completion date for the Capitol. The problem that arose for Joseph Huston was that he had to set up walls with doors to allow the large turnbuckles for the House and Senate chandeliers, weighing three to four tons apiece, to be solidly attached to the beams above the attic.

The addition of a 6th or "attic" floor also created a design change for Joseph Huston. He had originally designed a large stained glass dome in the center of the House Chamber to help illuminate the large room with exterior light. The floor above the chamber meant that his dome had to be eliminated. This left a twenty-four-foot circular void in the center of the room. Huston, in turn, wired Edwin Austin Abbey in England and asked if he could produce an additional mural to fill this

COMMONWEALTH ATOP THE CAPITOL DOME

Top, Workers set the bronze Commonwealth statue into place atop the dome in May of 1905; Inset, A closeup of the statue; Bottom, Coins placed underneath the statue during its installation.



I • N • S • I • G • H • T

SAMUEL RAMBO CONSTRUCTION SUPERVISOR

Samuel Rambo (1863–1930) was trained as a carpenter and served as superintendent of Capitol construction for George F. Payne and Company from 1903 until the completion of the Capitol in 1906. Afterwards, he made a career for himself as a respected member of the Commonwealth government. Rambo was a native of Elkton, Maryland and served an apprenticeship with a carpenter in Wilmington, Delaware. In 1884, at the age of twenty-one, he moved to Philadelphia and began employment with George F. Payne and Company. During the summer of 1903, Payne named Rambo to be superintendent of construction for the Capitol, replacing Owen Roberts who had been killed in an accident on the job.

In February 1907 Governor Edwin S. Stuart appointed him to succeed James M. Shumaker as Superintendent of Public Grounds and Buildings, a position he would hold for a decade. Later that year, Rambo served as a key witness during the hearings of the Capitol Investigation Commission. As superintendent, he successfully oversaw the first Capitol Park extension from 1911 to 1916. In 1915 Rambo, together with Harrisburg architect Charles A. Keyworth, proposed the enlargement of the Capitol in an extension eastward which would have doubled its size, but his plan was rejected. Rambo was appointed Deputy Secretary of the Department of Property and Supplies in 1923 and served in that capacity until his resignation in 1919. During the course of his final governmental tenure, he collected extensive files documenting both the Capitol's construction and its artwork.²⁸ ♡

THIS PAGE: *Capitol Grounds, 1917; Inset, Samuel Rambo, ca. 1906.*



space on the ceiling. The concept that Abbey developed was the *Hours* mural that was placed on the House Chamber ceiling.

The work on the Capitol's second through fourth floor areas would largely cease during the legislative session of 1905, but in May the Department of Public Grounds and Buildings and the Department of Public Instruction were already housed in their permanent offices on the Entresol Floor, and the Adjutant General's Department was expected to be in by summer. Also in May the statue of *Commonwealth* was hoisted onto the top of the nearly completed dome. One of the workers present on that day in May placed three Indian Head pennies under the base of the statue.²⁷

“THE WORK of the Capitol Building Commission IS AT AN END so far as entering into any more contracts is concerned.”

By summer the Capitol Building Commission began to look forward to the completion of the building, and Huston assured them that construction was progressing as fast as possible. Huston, Payne, and Wetter (Payne's partner) disagreed about the exact date. Wetter claimed the building would be done by November 1, but Huston reported on September 11 that the building would not be done until January 1, 1906, the date that was stipulated in the original legislation. Former Governor Stone raised the subject of the penalty clause, which provided that the Commonwealth could reclaim \$250 per day that Payne was over schedule. As the dome neared completion, it appeared to most everyone that the Capitol really would be completed by its due date of January 1, and at every meeting of the Commission the question was raised as to when the building would be done. It became obvious to Huston, and no doubt to Payne and Wetter, that the building, though mostly finished, would not be one hundred percent complete by January 1, 1906.

Huston issued the opinion that Payne and Company not be charged the \$250 per day for not meeting the deadline, but suggested instead the state retain the contractor and withhold \$75 thousand until all the work in the Capitol was complete. Although the Capitol Building Commission was by law scheduled to be abolished on January 1, Attorney General Hampton L. Carson stated that they could still meet to settle bills and expenditures, and also because the building was not fully complete. The Commission would continue to meet until the building was officially accepted by the Commonwealth in August 1906.



The interior of the House Chamber was temporarily setup for members to hold session during construction in 1905.

Standard Oil Company is charged with stifling competition through intrigue and trickery.

1906

France accepts a loan of \$50 million from Pennsylvania railroads.

Harry K. Thaw is arrested for the fatal shooting of New York architect Stanford White. The shooting centered around Thaw's wife, White's former lover, Florence Evelyn Nesbit.

The first Pure Food and Drug Act becomes law largely because of Upton Sinclair's book, The Jungle, which exposed the filthy conditions of Chicago's meat packing houses.

Captain Alfred Dreyfus receives the Legion of Honor for his wrongful imprisonment on Devil's Island in the South Atlantic.

An earthquake in Chile kills 5,000 people and injures thousands more.

The Chicago White Sox beat the Chicago Cubs in the World Series after 6 games.

Pierre Samuel du Pont begins the creation of Longwood Gardens by saving an arboretum of trees near Philadelphia.

President Roosevelt returns to Washington after surveying progress at the Panama Canal.

The Building Commission took possession of the building and formally accepted the new Capitol in the name of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Late in 1905 Governor Pennypacker called for a special session in January of 1906, which further delayed the full completion of the building, especially since the majority of the work was on the interior. In actuality, the completion of the building would drag on well into 1906. As late as July 20, Bernard Green still found workmen laying wood floors in the House and Senate Chambers.



Huston presented his final certificate of July 27, 1906, to the Commission for approval. The Commission met for the last time on August 15, 1906, and accepted Huston's certificate. The Commission further resolved:

Whereas, the Architect and the Engineer have certified to the Capitol Building Commission that the Capitol Building is completed. Therefore, be it resolved, that the Board of Public Grounds and Buildings be notified of this fact and that it be requested to assume entire charge, custody and control of the building until the formal transfer to the Governor at the dedicatory ceremonies in October 1906, and that the Capitol Building Commission be relieved from all further responsibility in the custody and control of the building.²⁹

With this measure, the Commission took possession of the building from Payne and Company and formally accepted the new Capitol in the name of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

THIS PAGE: *The unfinished Capitol as it appeared in late 1905.*

OPPOSITE PAGE: *Portrait of Joseph M. Huston, by Horace W. Snyder, ca. 1930s.*