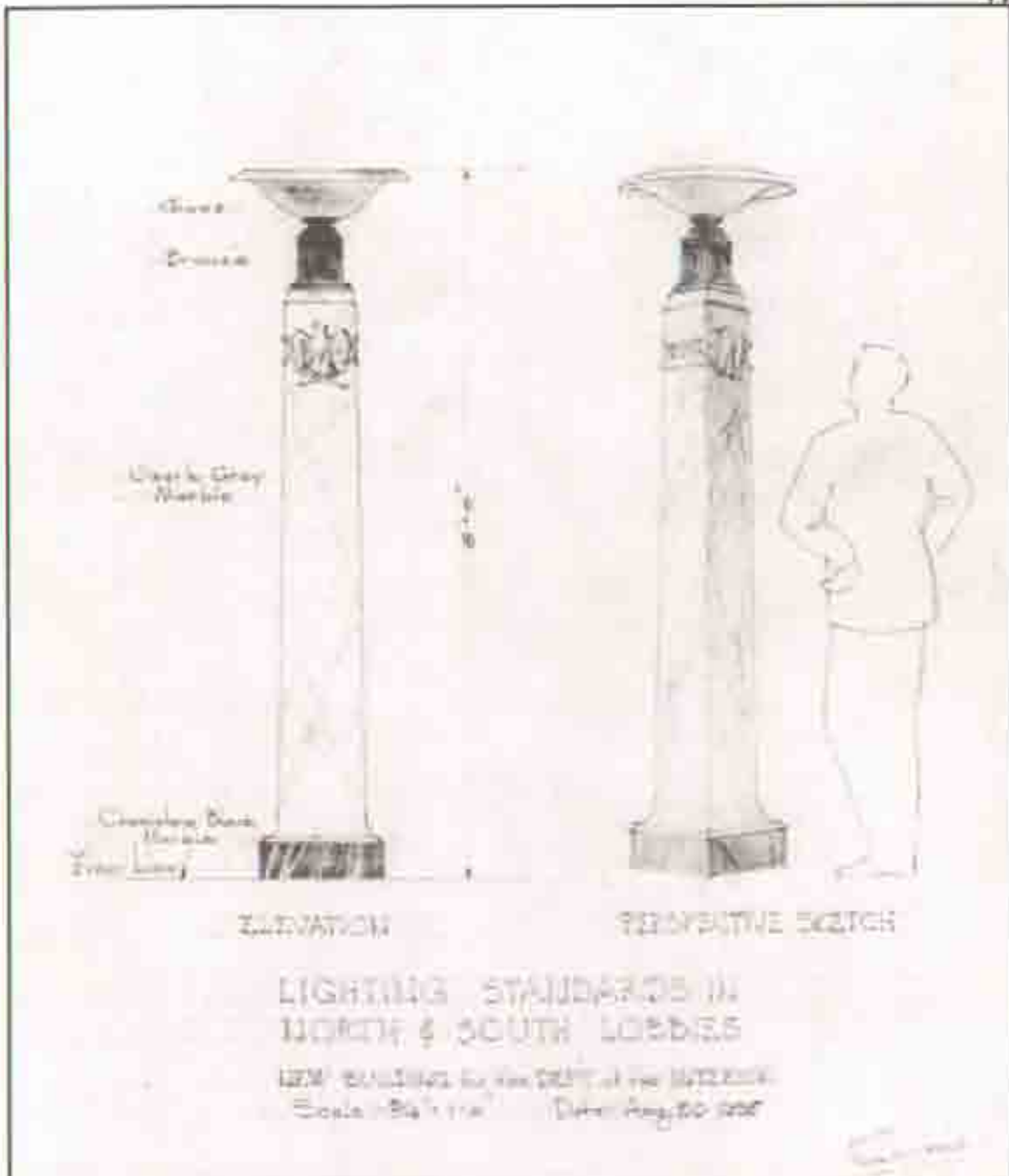


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Historic Furnishings Report

NORTH AND SOUTH LOBBIES MAIN INTERIOR BUILDING

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Washington, D.C.

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HISTORIC FURNISHINGS REPORT

NORTH AND SOUTH LOBBIES
MAIN INTERIOR BUILDING

U.S. Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C.

by

David H. Wallace

Division of Historic Furnishings
Harpers Ferry Center
National Park Service
1992

APPROVED: By memorandum from WASO
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ADMINISTRATIVE DATA

Purpose

The dual purpose of this historic furnishings report is (1) to bring together the available evidence on how the furnishings in the two lobbies of the Interior Building have evolved over the years since the building opened in 1937 and (2) to recommend a new furnishing plan which seeks to recapture the "dignified simplicity" Secretary Ickes aimed at in the 1930s, while taking into account the security and environmental requirements of the 1990s.

The plan calls for restoration of the original lighting scheme, use of original or reproduction accessories (benches, sand jars, bulletin boards), redesign of barriers and security stations to meet modern needs without compromising the aesthetic character of the lobbies, and reduction of signage and other wall embellishments to the minimum necessary for efficient operation of this public area.

HISTORICAL DATA

ANALYSIS OF HISTORIC OCCUPANCY

The New Interior Building, 1934-1937

The new Interior Building, situated between 18th and 19th Streets and C and E Streets, was authorized in 1934, constructed during 1935-36, and occupied by the Department of the Interior early in 1937.¹ Designed by Waddy Butler Wood (1869-1944), a prominent Washington architect, with considerable personal input from Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes (1874-1952), the new structure deliberately avoided the Roman look of many other Federal buildings in the city. "Utility and economy" guided its design, which incorporated many technological advances new to Washington, so much so that at least one newspaper referred to it as a "robot" building. Among these innovations were open courtyards between each wing, giving every office a window; escalators between the basement, first, and second floors; central air-conditioning; central vacuum cleaning system; a separate floor for mechanical equipment; movable steel partitions between offices; acoustically treated ceilings; and indirect lighting. Special features included an auditorium, a central library, a museum wing, a small art gallery, a spacious cafeteria and fully-equipped kitchen, an employees' gymnasium, and -- most up-to-date of all -- a broadcasting studio on the top floor. As Secretary Ickes put it in his speech at the building dedication on April 16, 1936:

This new building represents much more to us than merely better and more desirable office space; it means something besides relieving the overcrowded conditions in our present building; it is to us a symbol of a new day....²

When it was first opened to public inspection in April 1937, the new building received generally good notices, despite a teapot tempest over the Secretary's

1 The information on the design and construction of the Interior Building is derived from the definitive monograph: *The Interior Building: Its Architecture and Its Art*, by David W. Look and Carole L. Perrault (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1986), one of the projected series of "Preservation Case Studies" prepared by the Preservation Assistance Division of the National Park Service. Cited hereafter as Look and Perrault.

2 Quoted in Look and Perrault, p.11.

blue-tiled bathroom. One of the most favorable comments appeared in the *Washington News*:

The new Interior Building has apparently fulfilled one of its missions -- it has shamed the monumental mausoleums along the Mall.... About the best thumbnail description is that it is streamlined inside, with simple, smooth-flowing lines. But the rooms are still too small.³

To those who criticized the new structure, Secretary Ickes was quoted as responding testily that it was "graceful and dignified," and that he would "stack his building against any other in town for dignified simplicity."⁴

To a degree unusual in a public building of its size and expense (reportedly \$11,000,000), the Interior Building expressed Secretary Ickes' personal taste not only in the innovative use of technology, but equally in its exterior and interior decor.⁵ One reporter described the Secretary as having

waged a running battle with the architects; he erased from the blueprints and chipped from the structure scores of columns, capstones and decorative devices that were too "fluffy" for his severe mood and taste.⁶

This picture may be a little overdrawn, but Ickes certainly kept a watchful eye on the progress of the construction and insisted on changes from time to time, especially in his own office area. He also monitored the acquisition of furnishings for the executive offices and public areas, which was being carried out, against his wishes, by the Procurement Division at the Treasury Department rather than by Interior's own procurement people. As the moment approached for the opening of the building in April 1937, he voiced his doubts in his private diary:

3 Bob McCormick, "Ickes' Quarters Shame Other Mall Buildings," clipping from *Washington News*, April 7, 1937 (Library of Congress, Harold L. Ickes Papers, [cited hereafter as LC, Ickes Papers], scrapbooks, vol. 14, 1937).

4 "Ickes Defends New Building," clipping from *Washington Times*, April 29, 1937 (LC, Ickes Papers, scrapbooks, vol. 14, 1937). Ickes' comments were prompted by an unflattering description of the new building as "squatty and uninspiring" in the WPA's just-published *Washington Guide Book*.

5 Look and Perrault, p. 13.

6 Clipping from unidentified newspaper, April 15, 1937 (LC, Ickes Papers, scrapbooks, vol. 14, 1937).

It looks to me as if Procurement has over-furnished us to a considerable extent. I wouldn't be surprised if we should find that money has been spent wastefully on furniture. I think that over-furnishing is cheap and vulgar, as well as wasteful. Government offices ought not to be ostentatious, although they ought to provide every comfort and even some luxuries.⁷

When he finally moved into the new building on April 5, 1937, the Secretary admitted to himself that his office was "really lovely."⁸ The very next day, in response to his invitation, First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt came by for a personally conducted tour of the new building, on which she commented the following day in her newspaper column, "My Day":

After lunch, I went with a friend for a brief visit to the new Interior Department Building. The Secretary showed us his office and many points of interest. I think the decoration and color scheme is restrained and simple, enough color but not too much. It is pleasing and restful. I particularly like the blue leather which the Secretary has chosen for the furniture in the corridor and in his own office.⁹

Mrs. Roosevelt's public approbation undoubtedly helped make up for the silly furor inspired by highly colored descriptions, some of them rather inaccurate, of the bathroom attached to Mr. Ickes' office. One reporter wrote of the "gold and blue marble Roman bath suitable for a Turkish harem," although in truth the fixtures were white and the tile blue and gray. Blue was Ickes' favorite color, apparently, but he is reported to have said that if he had known such a fuss would be made about the bathroom, he would have chosen white tile.¹⁰

To sum up, the architect and the Secretary, who were jointly responsible for the design of this first "New Deal" governmental office building in Washington, placed strong emphasis on simplicity and quiet dignity in its appearance and on efficiency and economy in its operation and maintenance. Changes introduced in the intervening years, some of them reflecting new conditions, some merely the result of changing taste, have tended to obscure these original goals. Nowhere is this more immediately evident than in the

7 Harold L. Ickes, *The Secret Diary of Harold L. Ickes* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1953), p. 113.

8 Ibid.

9 Eleanor Roosevelt, "My Day," clipping from *Washington News*, April 7, 1937 (LC, Ickes Papers, scrapbooks, vol. 14, 1937).

10 Look and Perrault, p.17.

building's two main entrances, the South (C Street) Lobby and the North (E Street) Lobby.

The Lobbies

There are two public entrances to the Interior Building. The main entrance from C Street is at the south end of the first floor; the secondary entrance from E Street is at the north end of the second floor. Both entrances consist of an outer vestibule, a large lobby, and a smaller foyer leading into the main north-south corridors of their respective floors. The architecture and ornamentation of these spaces are fully described and illustrated in Look and Perrault's monograph.¹¹ For present purposes the following limited descriptions of the two lobbies, along with the accompanying illustrations, should suffice to place the subsequent discussion of their furnishings in perspective.

South Lobby

From C Street five sets of monumental bronze-and-glass doors lead into the shallow South Vestibule and from its north wall another set of five similar doors lead into the South Lobby. The South Lobby is a spacious (2,220 square feet), two-story rectangular space, approximately 19 feet high. The north wall is broken by three open doorways leading to the South Foyer and main first-floor corridor. Three mahogany double doors on the east side lead to the Auditorium; one mahogany double door on the west side leads to the Departmental Library.

The lobby floor is of white Georgian and dark Creole Georgian marble, laid in a checkerboard pattern. Set in the center of the floor is a replica in bronze, 54 inches in diameter, of the Departmental Seal.

The walls are of smooth gray Tennessee marble in regular ashlar pattern, with a polished, Champlain Black marble base, 10 inches high. The pylon-like door surrounds have architraves consisting of egg-and-dart molding over a bead and reel. The two blind panels flanking the doorways on the north wall contain incised memorials listing Interior employees who gave their lives in wartime, both added since the building was completed.

The recessed, white acoustical plaster ceiling is decorated with two bands of classically-inspired, stencilled designs in gray. The existing lighting fixtures, mounted on the ceiling, were installed about 1983, replacing track lighting

11 Ibid., pp. 33-43.

installed in 1970, which had, in turn, replaced the original marble, bronze, and alabaster standard lamps visible in 1937 photographs.

North Lobby

The North Lobby is in most respects similar to the South Lobby, although it is only one-third the size, as befits a secondary entrance. Access from E Street is through three monumental bronze-and-glass doors, across the shallow North Vestibule, and into the Lobby through three plainer bronze and glass doors. The floor, ceiling, walls, and classical ornamentation match those in the South Lobby, but the open doorways on the east and west sides of the North Lobby lead to wing corridors and to the U-shaped North Lobby Corridor, which wraps around the lobby. The departmental seal in bronze is set in the center of the floor.

As in the South Lobby, the ceiling light fixtures date from about 1983, replacements for the track lighting of 1970 that was installed when the original marble, bronze, and alabaster standard lamps were removed.

Lobby Furnishings, 1936-1991

Sources

Information on furnishings in the two lobbies of the Interior Building is relatively limited. The principal source for the early years is a set of six photographs taken in April or May 1937 by National Park Service photographers Andrew T. Kelley and George A. Grant.¹² These were taken primarily to show the distinctive rubber mats, designed especially for the new Interior Building by nine American Indian students at Haskell Institute in Lawrence, Kansas, but the photographs incidentally reveal many other details of the lobby furnishings (figs. 6-9) as well as the two vestibules (figs. 10-11). For the later period, there are two photographs taken in 1976 by the Historic American Buildings Survey (figs. 12-13) and a few taken early in 1991 for this report (figs. 14-19, 23).

12 National Park Service Historic Collection, Harpers Ferry Center, Harpers Ferry, WV. Although the file prints of these six photographs are dated May 25, 1937, the photographs probably were taken shortly before April 8, since the press memorandum (Appendix B) released on that date mentioned that photographs of the mats were available. There are photographs of other parts of the Interior Building, also taken in 1937, in the same collection.

Documentary information specific to the lobbies is even sparser and less revealing, except for material relating to the aforesaid mats and the lighting fixtures. Most of it is to be found in the Central Classified Files of the Secretary of the Interior, File 12-33, Interior Building, Furnishings & Equipment, 1936-37 (National Archives, Washington, DC) and in the General Correspondence and Related Records, 1934-39 (under Interior Office, 1936-37), of the Public Buildings Service, Department of the Treasury (National Archives and Record Center, Suitland, MD). Additional sources are cited in the footnotes and bibliography of this report.

The following section presents the evidence regarding each type of furnishing associated with the lobbies from 1937 to the present. Recommendations for the future will be found in the succeeding section, the Furnishing Plan.

Original Planning For The Lobby Furnishings, 1936

An April 29, 1936, estimate of furniture needed for the new building included \$500 for the South Lobby and \$175 for the North Lobby, but gave no specifics.¹³

In July 1936, Chief Clerk Floyd Dotson wrote to Ebert K. Burlew, Administrative Assistant to the Secretary of the Interior, enclosing "for consideration and for approval, if correct," blueprints of several areas in the new building, including the north and south lobbies. On them he had indicated "the furniture and equipment which it is proposed to place in the various units." Unfortunately, the blueprints were not filed with the covering memorandum, presumably having been returned to Dotson, so the information on lobby furnishings they could have provided is lost.¹⁴

13 National Archives, Washington, DC, Record Group 48, Interior Department [cited hereafter as NA DC, RG 48], Central Classified Files, file 12-33, Interior Building, Furnishings & Equipment, 1936.

14 Ibid., undated but docketed to be filed under date of July 8, 1936.

Lighting Fixtures

Although the original construction drawings for the lobbies showed bronze lamp standards with paw-like feet and a slender column flaring at the top to support a glass bowl, an entirely different style of fixture, more in keeping with the austere simplicity of the space, had been adopted by August 1935. The original drawing for this fixture, the Type E "Lighting Standards in North & South Lobbies" (fig. 3), survives in the records of the Public Buildings Service, Department of the Treasury.¹⁵ Specifications on this drawing indicate that the square, slightly tapered standard was to have a base of Champlain Black marble (matching the base of the lobby walls); a main shaft of Ozark Grey marble, ornamented with a thunderbird in relief on the front, and an ornamental band on the sides and back; and a decorated bronze urn-like top surmounted by a shallow glass reflector bowl. The overall height was to be 8 feet.

In September 1936, the Procurement Division of the Treasury Department awarded the contract for the 16 lobby light standards, as well as all other "special lighting fixtures," to the Mutual Metal Manufacturing Company, of Chicago.¹⁶

The Washington Ornamental Company constructed a plaster model of the Type E light standards, of which only a photograph survives (fig. 4). After approving the model on November 5, 1936, Treasury sent the bronze portion of the model to Mutual Metal and the marble portion to the marble subcontractor, Gray-Knox Marble Company, Knoxville, Tennessee.¹⁷ On November 4, 1936, the project superintendent approved the marble samples submitted by Gray-Knox; Imperial Black for the base and Special Gray for the shaft. As late as December 8, Gray-Knox was instructed to carve the thunderbird only on the front and a "floral band" on the other three sides, correcting an error in the plaster model. Mutual Metal's second sample of "Medium Statuary Bronze finish" for the metal portion was not accepted until January 5, 1937. Another subcontractor, O.R. Evans & Brother, of

15 National Archives, Cartographic and Architectural Records Branch, Alexandria, VA, Record Group 121, Public Buildings Service, District of Columbia, Department of the Interior, DC0020ZZ/ ANGS-0010 3/ 06-AR-0233.

16 National Archives and Records Center, Suitland, MD, Record Group 121, Public Buildings Service [cited hereafter as NARC, RG 121], General Correspondence and Related Records, 1934-39, Interior Department Office, 1936 (Box 2973). The contract (T 1-PB-736), signed September 22, 1936, with the construction specifications, is not extant, since records disposal schedules call for discarding contracts after 6 1/2 years. See Appendix A for correspondence between the project manager and Mutual Metal Manufacturing Company regarding the lobby lights, 1936-37.

17 Ibid., 1936 (Box 2972).

Washington, D.C., installed the light standards on March 5, 1937.¹⁸ A photograph taken shortly after shows the completed South Lobby with its light standards in place, but lacking their 24-inch alabaster reflector bowls (fig. 5). While the original 1935 drawing and the 1936 contract called for glass or "alabaster glass" bowls on the lobby light standards, Mutual Metal Manufacturing Company apparently persuaded the project managers to go for "genuine alabaster" at no extra cost. A sample of alabaster submitted by Deprado (or Daprato) Statuary Company was approved on November 4, 1936, with the stipulation that the outer surface was to have a satin finish, the inner surface a polished finish. Manufactured in Italy, the bowls left Leghorn on March 16, 1937, reached New York on March 31, and may have been installed shortly before the building officially opened on April 6.¹⁹ The completed light fixtures are visible in the lobby photographs taken in April or May 1937 (figs. 6-9).

These light standards, eight in each lobby, remained the lobbies' sole source of illumination until 1970, when they were removed "to upgrade lighting in the North & South Lobbies to improve aesthetic tone, also provide adequate power to service lobbies."²⁰ The track lighting installed on the ceiling at this time is visible in the 1976 photographs (figs. 12-13). About 1983, the track lighting was replaced with ceiling-mounted mercury vapor lights in square white metal boxes with plastic diffusers (figs. 14-17).²¹

The fate of the 16 original lobby light standards is uncertain, although David Look, co-author of *The Interior Building: Its Architecture and Art*, partially solved the mystery in 1977. In a memorandum of August 16, 1977, to the

18 Ibid., 1936 (Box 2971).

19 Ibid., 1937 (Box 2629), telegram and letter of March 17 and 27, 1937; and *ibid.*, 1938 (Box 2965), Construction Engineer's final report, February 24, 1938. Also, Progress Report No. 4, new Interior Building, April 5, 1937 (NA DC, RG 121, Public Buildings Service, Entry 92, Miscellaneous Operating and Fiscal Records, Inspection File 1935-40, Box 7 Del-III). Of the 18 alabaster bowls shipped in March 1937, 16 were for the lobby lights and the other two presumably for the pair of chandeliers in the Secretary's office, which were not hung until mid-April (Ickes, *Secret Diary*, p. 113).

20 Work Order Request No. 080020, received by Design Project Control Office, Region 3, General Services Administration, Washington, DC, April 25, 1969. The contract was awarded on December 22, 1969, to M.C. Dean Electrical Contracting, Inc., Fairfax, VA, and completed about May, 1970. President Nixon's Secretary of the Interior, Walter Hickel, is said to have objected to the lobby light standards because the "thunderbird" carvings reminded him of the monuments of Fascist Italy (telephone interview with David Look, January 25, 1991).

21 Historic Structure Report and Preservation Manual for the Interior Building [cited hereafter as Historic Structure Report], prepared for General Services Administration, National Capital Region, by Geier Brown Renfrow Architects with Oehrlein & Associates Architecture/Preservation (Washington, DC: General Services Administration, March 1988), p. 76.

Chief of the National Park Service's Technical Preservation Services Division, Architect Look reported his efforts to track down these important relics of the original Interior lobbies. What he found was that the marble and bronze standards and the alabaster bowls were released to the Smithsonian Institution on May 20, 1970, for use in the Freer Gallery. Since they could not be installed there, as it turned out, because Mr. Freer's will prohibited alterations to the building, they were sent instead to the Pension Building, then being prepared to house the National Portrait Gallery. Although they were deemed unsuitable for the new gallery, the building manager had all or some of the alabaster bowls crated and sent to the Smithsonian's storage facility at Silver Hill, Maryland. At the time of Look's research, they could not be located at Silver Hill. Despite another search in 1992, the alabaster bowl reflectors have not turned up.

Of the 16 marble and bronze standards (the Smithsonian's 1970 appraisal of \$1600 suggests they had received 16 valued at \$100 each) at least eight found a temporary home in the West Court of the Museum of Natural History until 1975, when the courtyard was sacrificed to make room for three Hot Shoppes. Although certain items in the court were retained by the Smithsonian, the lamp standards were not. Under the terms of his contract, the demolition contractor was entitled to take as salvaged materials anything not specified for retention by the Smithsonian. Although the demolition contractor was ABC Demolition of Arlington, VA, at least four of the lamp standards came into the possession of another construction firm (possibly a sub-contractor), FJR Builders Co., who operated out of the Adelphi, Maryland, home of one of three partners. Told that this partner had intended to line his driveway with the light standards, Look visited the site in Adelphi and found four of them lying on the ground in the man's back yard. Since there appeared to be no one at home, Look photographed the light standards and left without learning anything more about these and the other 12 light standards. Other work assignments prevented him from continuing his efforts to trace the missing standards and bowls, and no further attempts to track them down were made until 1992.

In the summer of 1992, National Park Service curators John Brucksch and Andrew Chamberlain of the Historic Furnishings Division, Harpers Ferry Center, resumed the search for the light standards. While the four marble standards Look found in Adelphi in 1977 had not survived, their bronze caps had, in the guise of flower planters. Better yet, the Adelphi contractor put them in touch with a private individual who had three of the light standards at his residence in Potomac, Maryland. This gentleman, while unwilling to part with the standards, permitted the National Park Service to carefully measure and photograph one of them in return for the Service's moving it and re-erecting it in a new location on his property. As a result of these 1992

discoveries, the Service has the information needed to accurately reproduce the standards for the Interior lobbies.

Reception/Security Area

In 1937 the receptionist in the South Lobby occupied the northwest corner, between the Library door and the entrance to the South Foyer (fig. 7), seated in a high-back, leather-covered swivel armchair behind a mahogany desk with single-panel sides and three-panel back, set at an angle across the corner. Behind and to her left was a small mahogany stand on which sat her telephone and a metal desk lamp. The lamp was plugged into a wall outlet behind the stand; above it, in the blind door recess in the north wall, was a brass-covered fire alarm panel.

The receptionist in the North Lobby (fig. 8) also sat behind a desk in the northwest corner, which put her in a rather drafty spot between the west corridor doorway and the westernmost of the vestibule doors. As in the South Lobby, an electrical outlet and a fire alarm unit were on the wall behind her. Since much of the wall space next to her desk was occupied by one of the tall light standards, the North Lobby receptionist's telephone sat by itself on a small stand against the west wall and her desk lamp was on the desk, along with what looks like a visitor register, a small clock, an inkwell, and a pen. Her desk and chair seem to have been identical to those in the South Lobby.

In 1937 the doorways into the South and North Foyer were completely open and unguarded, although there was a small mahogany table in front of the light standard to the right of the central doorway in the South Lobby. The 1976 photograph of the South Lobby (fig. 12) shows nothing at the foyer doorways, although there could have been something in the northwest corner, not visible in the photograph. In the North Lobby at that time (fig. 13) a curved, wooden enclosure occupied the southwest corner; it had a white counter top and a plaque with the departmental seal mounted on the front. The photograph does not reveal whether there was a receptionist or a guard behind the counter nor does it show any furniture within the enclosure.

About 1982, the need for tighter security in government buildings dictated the installation of guard stations on both sides of the central doorway leading from each lobby to the foyers (figs. 14-17). Constructed of dark-stained plywood, these counter-high enclosures provide barely enough room for one person to stand or to sit on a high stool, with some shelf space below for storage of personal or work-related supplies, while the counters have to accommodate such things as a visitor register, telephone, and a small computer monitor. On the counter or on the wall above are displayed placards with special instructions, such as **"SHOW YOUR GOVERNMENT IDENTI-**

FICATION CARD," and **"NO SMOKING."** To further control entry, planters with live plants block open doorways other than the central one in each lobby. During the Persian Gulf crisis of 1990-91, a folding table near the center of each lobby facilitated the checking of briefcases and pocketbooks.

Seating

In the initial planning for the building, one estimate of furnishing costs included 36 benches for "library, elevator lobbies, conference hall [auditorium], etc.," while another listed among the Museum's expected needs eight 6-foot benches covered with Lackawanna leather "color MC-21."²² While neither of these estimates mentioned the entrance lobbies, one of the May 1937 South Lobby photographs (fig. 6) shows part of a backless bench beside the easternmost of the vestibule doors. This bench appears to be similar in style to the two benches at the east end of the North Lobby in 1976 (fig. 13) and still in use in the Interior Museum and both lobbies in 1991 (fig. 16). While these benches are now all covered with green or brown corduroy, a piece of supposedly original blue leather from one of the Museum benches survived until recently, possibly an example of Lackawanna Leather Company's "MC-21" of 1936.²³

Except for the benches and the office chairs behind the receptionists' desks in 1937, no other seating furniture is documented in either lobby until the installation of high metal stools in the guard stations of the 1980s.

Floor Mats

A distinctive feature of the two lobbies in 1937, when the building first opened for business, were a number of "gay rubber mats" designed specifically for the new Interior Building by nine young Indian women enrolled in the Art Department of Haskell Institute, Lawrence, Kansas, and produced by the American Mat Corporation of Toledo, Ohio. These mats were the subject of a special Interior Department "Memorandum for the Press," for release on

22 NA DC, RG 48, Secretary of the Interior, Central Classified Files, file 12-33, Interior Building, Furnishings and Equipment, 1936: estimate dated April 18, 1936, and memorandum dated November 5, 1936, from A.B. Russell, Equipment Engineer, Museum Branch, National Park Service, to Arthur Demaray, chairman of the Interior Building Committee.

23 Information courtesy Debra Berke, Curator, Interior Museum. Ms. Berke and James Gasser, Program Analyst, Office of Construction Management, agree that the color of this original leather was similar to sample "2036 - Dusk - S.T.G. [snuffed top grain]" in a ca. 1950 catalogue: "Color Unlimited," issued by The Lackawanna Leather Co. (of Canada) Ltd. (Harpers Ferry Center Library, Trade Catalogue Collection).

April 8, 1937 (see Appendix B). Photographs taken by National Park Service photographers in April or May 1937 show the mats on the floors in both vestibules (figs. 10-11, showing four out of five mats in each, at least two of which were duplicates) as well as in both lobbies (figs. 6-9, showing eight in the South Lobby, six in the North Lobby, again with some duplication of designs). The angled placement of the mats on either side of the North Lobby's outer doors suggests that only the center door was actually used at that time, while in the South Lobby the mat placement suggests that three of the five vestibule doors were in use. There appears to have been a mat in front of all five doors inside each of the vestibules, even those not in use.

In a memorandum of April 27, 1937 to Chief Clerk Dotson, Administrative Assistant Burlew relayed a message concerning these mats:

....The Secretary would like to have the mats removed from the main entrance lobby and placed only in the outside lobby. They can be placed in front of each of the doors, even though some of them may be locked.²⁴

We can only guess why Secretary Ickes wanted the mats out of the South Lobby (assuming that was what Burlew meant by "main entrance lobby"). In view of his concern for dignity and simplicity, it may be that he found the colorful mats a jarring note in the otherwise black, white, gray, bronze, and mahogany lobby. Nor is it clear whether his wishes were carried out, since there were eight mats on the floor of the South Lobby when it was photographed a month later, on May 25, 1937 (figs. 6-7). It is possible, of course, that these photographs were posed and that the colorful mats no longer graced the South Lobby by that time. It is also possible that the photographs were taken earlier than May 25, which may simply be the date the negatives were filed. In any case, it appears likely that in the South Lobby the mats were used for a very short time, while those in the vestibules and North Lobby may have remained for a longer period. By 1976 the only mat in either lobby, according to the HABS photographs (figs. 12-13), was one just inside the center door of the North Lobby; it appears to have been a plain dark fabric mat with a rubber or synthetic edging. The mats in place in both vestibules and lobbies since 1986 are of a wine-red, synthetic fabric, with the departmental seal in black. These were designed especially for the Interior Building.²⁵

24 NA DC, RG 48, Central Classified Files, File 12-33, Interior Building, General, 1937-39, Box 3824: memorandum, E.K. Burlew to Floyd Dotson, April 27, 1937.

25 Information courtesy Paul Michael Cyr, Chief, Branch of Facilities Management, Department of the Interior.

Sand Jars

The original estimate for furnishing the "library, elevator lobbies, conference hall, etc." included 102 "sand jars," the white, glazed ceramic urns filled with sand (fig. 18) that have stood next to doors and elevators and in office reception areas since the building opened in 1937.

The 1937 photographs of the South Lobby (figs. 6-7) show only one sand jar, in the northwest corner next to the left foyer doorway. The photographs do not cover the area to the left of the Library door or the entrances to the Auditorium, logical places for visitors to extinguish cigarettes, cigars, and pipes. In the 1976 HABS photograph (fig. 12) no sand jars are visible, although a snapshot taken by David Look the same year (not illustrated) shows a pair of sand jars flanking the central door to the Auditorium. In January 1991 two of the original sand jars, chipped and age-stained, flanked the same door. There were also two more modern metal sand receptacles in the smoking area to the right of the guard stations.

In May 1937, the less ceremonial North Lobby contained at least four sand jars, two flanking the central door from the vestibule and two flanking the central doorway to the foyer. There were none at the doorway to the west corridor; the entrance to the east corridor is not shown. No sand jars appear in the 1976 photograph (fig. 13) or in a snapshot also taken in 1976 by David Look (not illustrated). In January 1991, there were none of the original sand jars in the North Lobby, but there were two metal, columnar ash trays beside the benches on the east wall.

Sand jars of the original type stood next to several of the building's elevators in 1937 photographs (fig. 18); they also appear in 1976 HABS photographs (not illustrated) of the Secretary's corridor and one of the elevator lobbies.

In 1937 the sand jars appear to have stood on a light-colored circular mat slightly larger than the base of the jar (figs. 8, 20). This may have been intended to protect the jar bases from contact with dirty floor mops. At least one of the surviving jars is badly stained around the base, probably from lack of such protection.

Bulletin Board

The tall, free-standing bulletin board in the South Lobby's southwest corner (fig. 15) has been there as long as anyone seems to remember, although the date of its placement there is not documented. That corner is not visible in the 1937 and 1976 photographs, so it is not possible to say whether it was there when they were taken.

In style this free-standing bulletin board seems to be compatible with the directory boards installed in the foyers and elevator lobbies of the new building late in 1937, but its base and frame are of aluminum or stainless steel, while the directory boards furnished in 1937 by Albro Metal Products Corporation, Brooklyn, New York, were framed in bronze, with aluminum inserts to hold the lettering. Albro's contract for 43 directory boards did include "one large board in the South lobby of the building," but there is nothing in the records concerning this contract to indicate that the lobby board was to be constructed of anything other than the bronze framing and aluminum inserts called for in the contract.²⁶ It may be that the existing bulletin board was substituted later for Albro's, since the aluminum inserts Albro supplied were accepted with strong reservations in 1938 because of poor workmanship.

While additional research might reveal the precise date of the existing bulletin or directory board, it appears to have been in the South Lobby long enough to be considered part of the "original" furnishings.

The nearest thing to a bulletin board visible in later photographs of the North Lobby (figs. 13, 17) is an easel supporting a poster or informational placard.

Clock

The 1937 photographs show no clocks in either lobby, except for a small clock on the receptionist's desk in the North Lobby (fig. 8). The earliest evidence for a wall-mounted clock in either lobby is in the 1976 HABS photographs (figs. 12-13), which show one in each lobby, mounted in the recessed panel above the central entrance to the respective foyers. Interestingly, the two clocks were similar in style -- small, round, strictly utilitarian -- but opposite in decorative detail. The South Lobby clock had a white dial, with dark hands, numbers, and frame, while the North Lobby's dial was dark and its frame, hands, and numbers were white. Since there is no electrical wiring in the walls on which these clocks were mounted, they presumably ran on batteries. They have recently (1990) been replaced by battery-operated clocks of similar style, but with dark frames and bronze-colored dials.²⁷

26 Albro, under contract T 1-PB-1580 (no longer extant), submitted drawings on February 15, 1937, for 42 wall directory boards and one "free standing directory board, bronze frames, aluminum inserts." The drawings were approved on February 25 and filed as project drawings 66807-66808 in the project files, but do not appear to have survived in the records of the Public Buildings Service (NARC, Suitland, RG 121, Public Buildings Service, General Correspondence and Related Records, 1934-39, Interior Office, 1937, March 22 and June 15, 1938), and in NA DC, RG 48, Secretary of the Interior, General Classified Files, file 12-33, box 3824 (May 8 and October 27, 1937).

27 Information courtesy Paul Michael Cyr, Chief, Branch of Facilities Management,

Pictures and Signs

When the building first opened, the lobby walls were bare of any sort of decorative or instructional material and even three years later the Secretary's office was adamant about keeping special exhibits out of the main lobby.²⁸ The free-standing bulletin board in the South Lobby presumably was intended to provide space for any information visitors might need before going on into the building.

By 1976, and probably long before, it became customary to display photographs of the current President and Secretary of the Interior to the left and right, respectively, of the main doorway leading from each lobby into the main corridors of the building. The earliest direct evidence for this practice, which still prevails, is the 1976 HABS photographs (figs. 12-13).

Placement of signs and small posters on the walls, especially near the major interior doorways, probably began at least as early as World War II, although it cannot be documented earlier than 1976. At that time, if the HABS photographs truly reflect the workaday appearance of the lobbies, the walls were still fairly free of signage.²⁹ In the South Lobby, (fig. 12) the only visible additions were the President's and Secretary's photographs, a Civil Defense sign on the side of one doorway into the foyer, and a large circular white plaque with the American Revolution Bicentennial logo (in red, white, and blue) hanging above the central Auditorium door. There is nothing on the walls of the North Lobby in the 1976 photograph (fig. 13); the departmental seal is mounted on the front of the reception counter. However, David Look's candid snapshot taken the same year dimly shows an easel in the southeast corner, holding some kind of poster, as well as a presidential photograph on the south wall.

Department of the Interior, January, 1991.

- 28 Memorandum from Chief Dotson to First Assistant Secretary Burlew, October 14, 1940, regarding a request from the Fish and Wildlife Service to place an exhibit in the lobby for one week. Dotson wrote that he felt they should not "permit exhibits to be installed in either of the main lobbies of this building" and suggested that there was ample space in the Museum for such temporary exhibits. Burlew docketed the memorandum: "I concur." (NA DC, RG 48, Central Classified Filed, file I-46, Interior Museum and Art Gallery, box 2494).
- 29 It does appear that both lobbies were tidied up a bit for the formal HABS photographs. Comparison with the snapshots taken by David Look the same year (not illustrated) shows this clearly. Look's photograph of the central Auditorium door shows it flanked by two sand jars and a "no smoking" sign, while the HABS photograph (fig. 12) shows the same door flanked only by two flags. Similarly, Look's North Lobby photograph shows a newsstand, a small table, a floor mat, and an easel, while the HABS photograph shows none of these in the almost empty lobby.

In January 1991, the gray lobby walls were dotted with colorful signs and logos conveying various messages to visitors. Smoking and no-smoking logos indicated where smoking was permitted. Prominently displayed signs on or above the guard stations advised employees and visitors to show their Government identification and warned that, because of the war in the Middle East, "increased security" was in effect. In the North Lobby, a small exhibit panel stood in front of the planter that blocked access to the west corridor.

Flags

Flags are not evident in the 1937 photographs. In 1976 the center door to the Auditorium in the South Lobby was flanked by an American flag on the left and a departmental [?] flag on the right; none is visible in the North Lobby.

In January 1991 an American flag stood to the left of the center foyer doorway in each lobby.

Plants and Planters

Planters containing artificial or live plants had been introduced into the lobbies by 1976, originally to relieve the austerity of the spaces (fig. 12), more recently to serve also as barriers preventing access to the side foyer entrances in the South Lobby and the side corridors in the North Lobby (figs. 14-17). Constructed of plywood and stained to match the guard stations, the most recent planters (ca. 1982) are mounted on casters so that they can be moved easily in case of emergency and to facilitate floor cleaning. Since about 1989 the planters have held live plants that can survive under present lighting conditions.

Barriers

In the less security-conscious 1930s, no barriers blocked access to open doorways, although some outer doors may have been locked in order to funnel visitor traffic through the center doors.³⁰ Besides the above-mentioned planters used to block certain doorways, rope-and-stanchion barriers have also been used in the South Lobby to define a visitor waiting area (fig. 15).

30 Cf. Burlew's note to Dotson, April 27, 1937, quoted above, p. 10.

Fans

Two tall electric fans, one on either side of the guard stations, were present in the South Lobby in January 1991 (figs. 14-15); they are said to be needed year-round to provide air circulation in this poorly heated and cooled space.³¹

Totem Pole

In December 1939, the Department purchased from Mr. James E. Clark of White Oak, Maryland an Alaskan totem pole (fig. 19), which his grandfather, H. M. Hutchinson, had brought from Alaska by ship around Cape Horn "70 or 75 years ago."³² Because of its height (18'5"), there was some initial uncertainty about its placement in the new Interior Building. Harry L. Raul, Curator of the Interior Museum, relayed to E. K. Burlew the following suggestions:

Report on suggestions received on locations:

1. The Secretary's Office:

Mr. Carpenter, of Mr. Eagleton's office, has supplied measurements and finds only two possible permanent locations in the Secretary's office, in case the Secretary desires to have it placed there. The locations are at the centers of the ends of the office. The curved ceiling height at center is 18 feet.

2. "D D" Court [sic, for EE Court], adjoining basement cafeteria, against west outside wall. (specimen here subject to weather conditions).

3. Main Foyer, C Street entrance, against inside wall, northeast corner, left of auditorium entrance.

Suggestion also has been received that two poles be placed in main foyer, C Street entrance, namely; the original pole and an exact plaster reproduction of same, one on each side of doorway of main corridor....³³

31 Information courtesy Paul Michael Cyr, Chief, Branch of Facilities Management, Department of the Interior.

32 Memorandum, H.L. Raul, Museum Curator, Interior Museum, to A.E. Demaray, Associate Director, National Park Service, December 1, 1939.

33 Memorandum, H.L. Raul to E.K. Burlew, First Assistant Secretary, January 17, 1940 (NA DC, RG 48, Secretary of the Interior, Central Classified Files, file 1-46, Interior Museum and Art Gallery, Box 2494). The "main foyer" in this and the following memorandum was

Burlew's response eliminated the first and third suggested locations:

...It is out of the question to put it in the Secretary's office, and, of course, we would not wish to have it in the main foyer. This leaves only the court adjacent to the cafeteria as a satisfactory place. Mr. Raul suggests the west inside wall, but I am sure that this is where one of the statues will be placed. If so, it could be placed in the middle of the south wall facing the cafeteria.³⁴

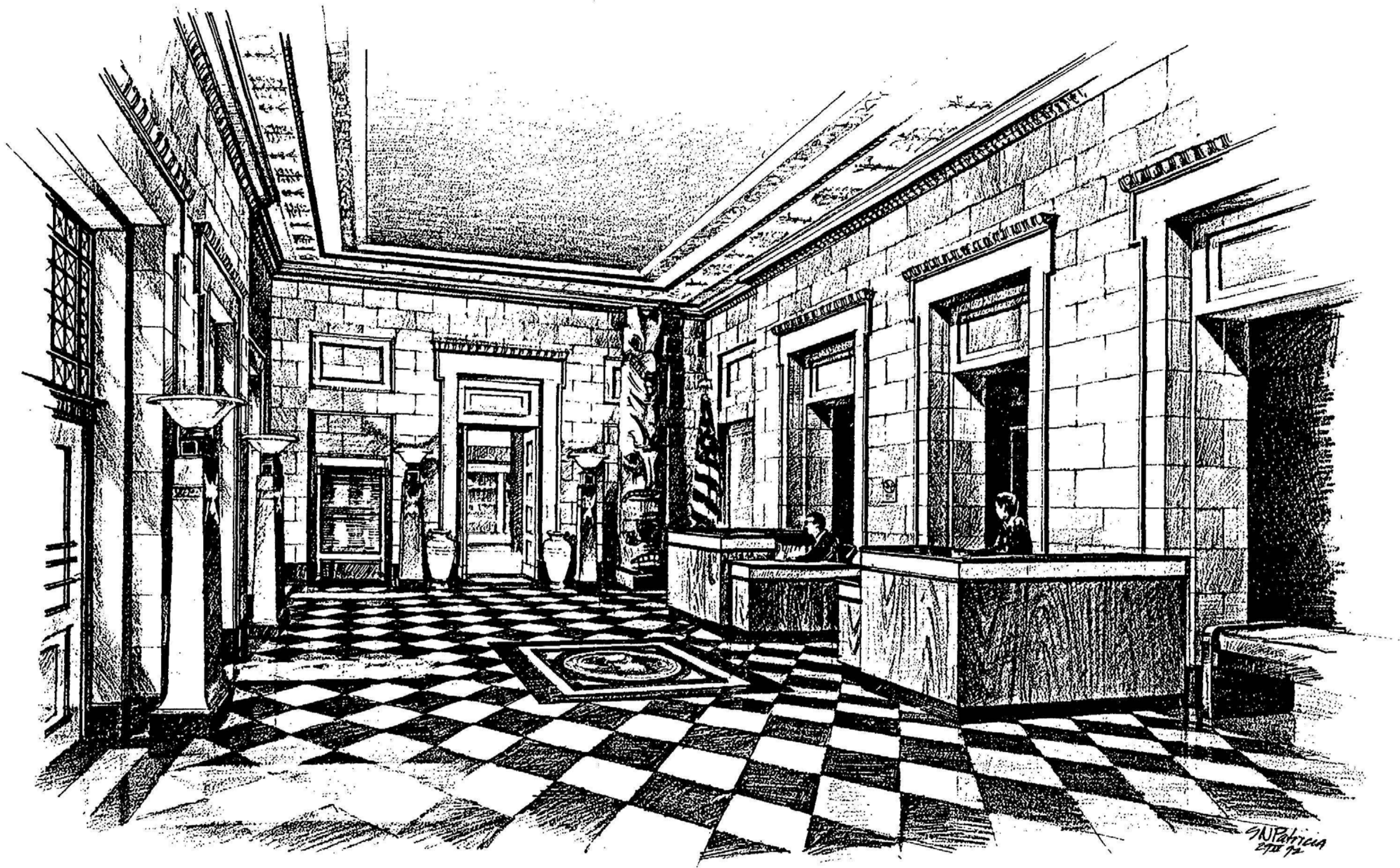
The totem pole was placed as Burlew suggested on November 20, 1940, (fig. 20),³⁵ and it remained in the cafeteria court for 50 years, until its removal in 1989 for conservation necessitated by its long exposure to weather and air pollution. In order to preserve it from further deterioration, in February 1991 it was permanently installed in the northwest corner of the South Lobby, to the right of the Library entrance (fig. 21).³⁶

clearly the South Lobby, where the Auditorium entrance was located. In the January 17 memorandum, Raul pointed out that the overall height of the pole could be reduced to 17'2", if necessary, "by removing unnecessary part of underground section."

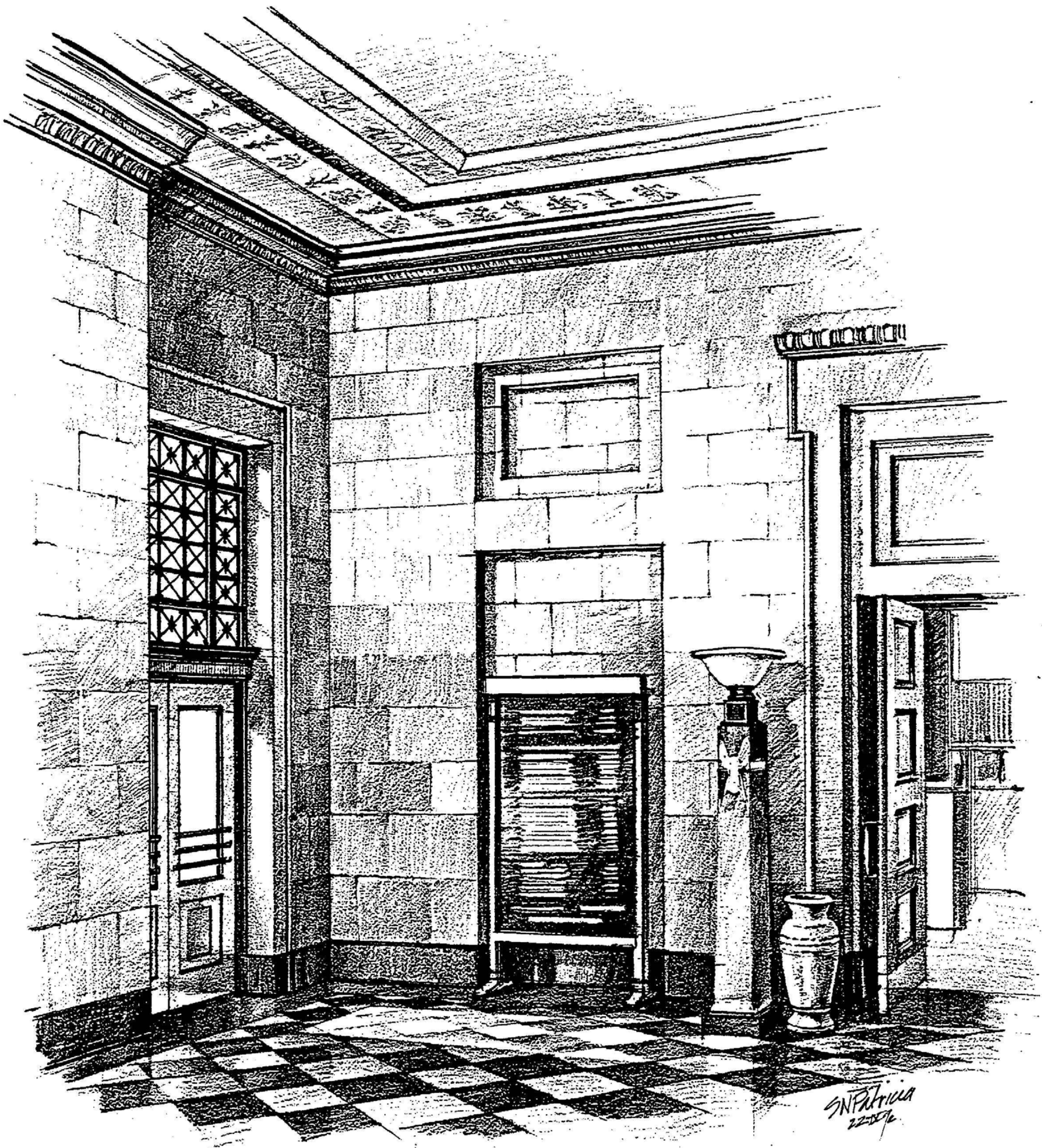
- 34 Memorandum, E.K. Burlew, First Assistant Secretary, to Chief Clerk Dotson, January 25, 1940 (NA DC, RG 48, Central Classified Files, file 1-46, Interior Museum and Art Gallery, box 2494).
- 35 Ibid., Report of the Curator, Interior Museum, for November 1940.
- 36 Conservation of the totem pole was carried out by the National Park Service's Division of Conservation, Harpers Ferry Center, Harpers Ferry, WV. Secretary of the Interior Manuel Lujan presided at the unveiling of the totem pole in the South Lobby on March 6, 1991.

FURNISHING PLAN

The following recommendations for refurnishing the two vestibules and lobbies of the Interior Building are designed to restore to these spaces, so far as possible, the simple dignity the architect and his client, Secretary Ickes, strove for in 1936-37. To achieve this, the plan calls for restoration of the original lighting scheme, use of original or reproduction accessories (benches, sand jars, bulletin boards), redesign of barriers and security stations to meet modern needs without compromising the aesthetic character of the lobbies, and reduction of signage and other wall embellishments to the minimum necessary for efficient operation of this public area.



South Lobby looking west



South Lobby looking southwest

RECOMMENDED FURNISHINGS

SOUTH VESTIBULE

None recommended.

SOUTH LOBBY

OBJECT and LOCATION

RECOMMENDATION

LIGHT STANDARDS (6), marble shaft, bronze top, alabaster bowl reflector; two on south, west, and east sides of lobby, flanking central doorways, as originally installed in 1937.	Acquire reproductions. Light standards on north wall will not be replaced because of security station.
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South Side

OBJECT and LOCATION

RECOMMENDATION

BENCHES (2), backless, covered in blue synthetic leather; between east and west pair of doors.	Use original (ca. 1937) museum benches or reproductions.
LOW SAND JARS (2), ceramic, standing on round fiber MATS; beside benches.	Use original sand jars.
SMOKING-PERMITTED SIGNS (2); on architraves of left and right foyer entrances.	Use existing signs.

West Side

OBJECT and LOCATION

RECOMMENDATION

BULLETIN BOARD (original), metal, free-standing; in southwest corner, where it is believed to have stood since the 1930s.	Retain original.
TALL SAND JARS (2), white glazed ceramic, standing on round fiber MATS, as in 1937 photographs; flanking Library entrance.	Use original jars or reproductions; acquire modern mats.
NO-SMOKING SIGN, logo-type; on wall above sand jar.	Acquire modern logo-type sign.
TOTEM POLE, Alaskan, mid-19th century, displayed in Court EE 1940-1990; installed in northwest corner of lobby in February 1991.	Retain original.

North Side

OBJECT and LOCATION

RECOMMENDATION

SECURITY STATIONS (2); flanking central doorway. Stations will hold one seated person each, with shelf and drawer space for a video monitor, telephone, and other necessary equipment and supplies, and counters for visitor registration and security checking.	New stations compatible with the lobby architecture have been fabricated and installed.
GUARDS' CHAIRS (2)	Modern swivel chairs have been purchased and installed.
BENCHES (2), backless, covered in blue synthetic leather; placed in foyer doorways to left and right, to block these entrances.	Design and fabricate benches of appropriate length, similar in style to original benches.
FLAG, American; northwest corner, to right of recess containing war memorial inscription.	Retain flag.
FLAG, Interior Department; northeast corner, to left of recess containing war memorial inscription.	Acquire flag and standard matching that used with American flag.

TALL SAND JARS (2), white glazed ceramic, standing on round fiber MATS; on either side of foyer entrance.	Use original jars or reproductions; acquire modern mats.
NO-SMOKING SIGNS (2), logo-type; to right and left of foyer entrance.	Use existing signs.

East Side

OBJECT and LOCATION

RECOMMENDATION

TALL SAND JARS (2), white glazed ceramic, standing on round fiber MATS; flanking central Auditorium doorway.	Use original jars or reproductions; acquire modern mats.
NO-SMOKING SIGN, logo-type; above one of the sand jars.	Use existing sign.
CLOCK, battery powered; above central Auditorium door.	Use clock installed on north wall in 1990.

Note that the above furnishing plan does not include the following furnishings present in the South Lobby in February 1991: planters in foyer doorways and on south wall beside center door; photographs of the President and Secretary flanking foyer entrance; rope and stanchion barrier on west side of lobby; folding table on right side for checking briefcases and pocket-books.

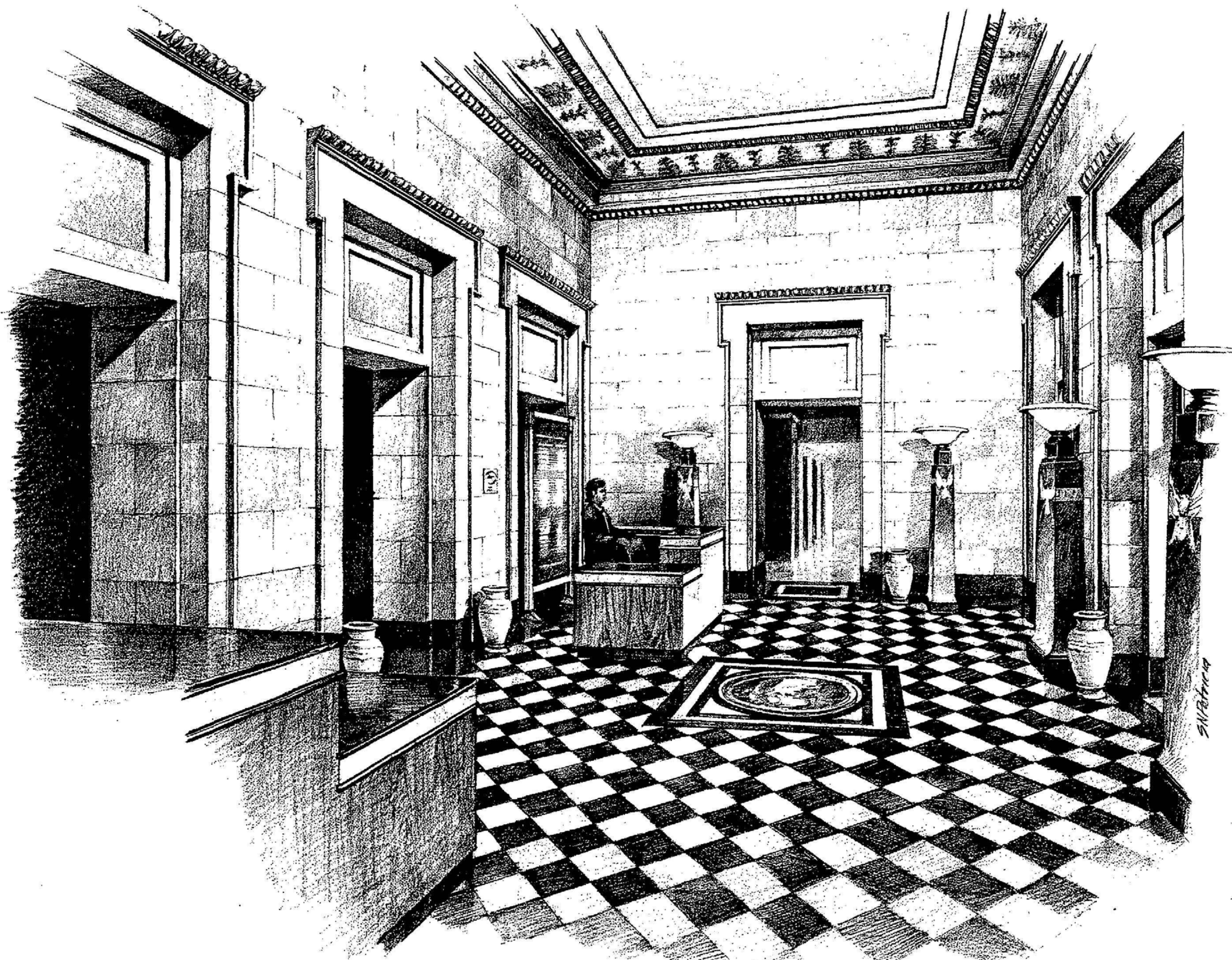
Planters, whether they are filled with live or artificial greenery, seem to look out of scale and out of place in this spacious, rather austere lobby. They also add to the cost of maintenance.

The presidential and secretarial photographs currently flanking the foyer entrance tend to detract from the originally intended effect of the visitor's initial view of the lobby, besides having to compete for attention with the security apparatus and a no-smoking sign. They could be more effectively displayed on the north walls of the foyer or beside the south bank of elevators.

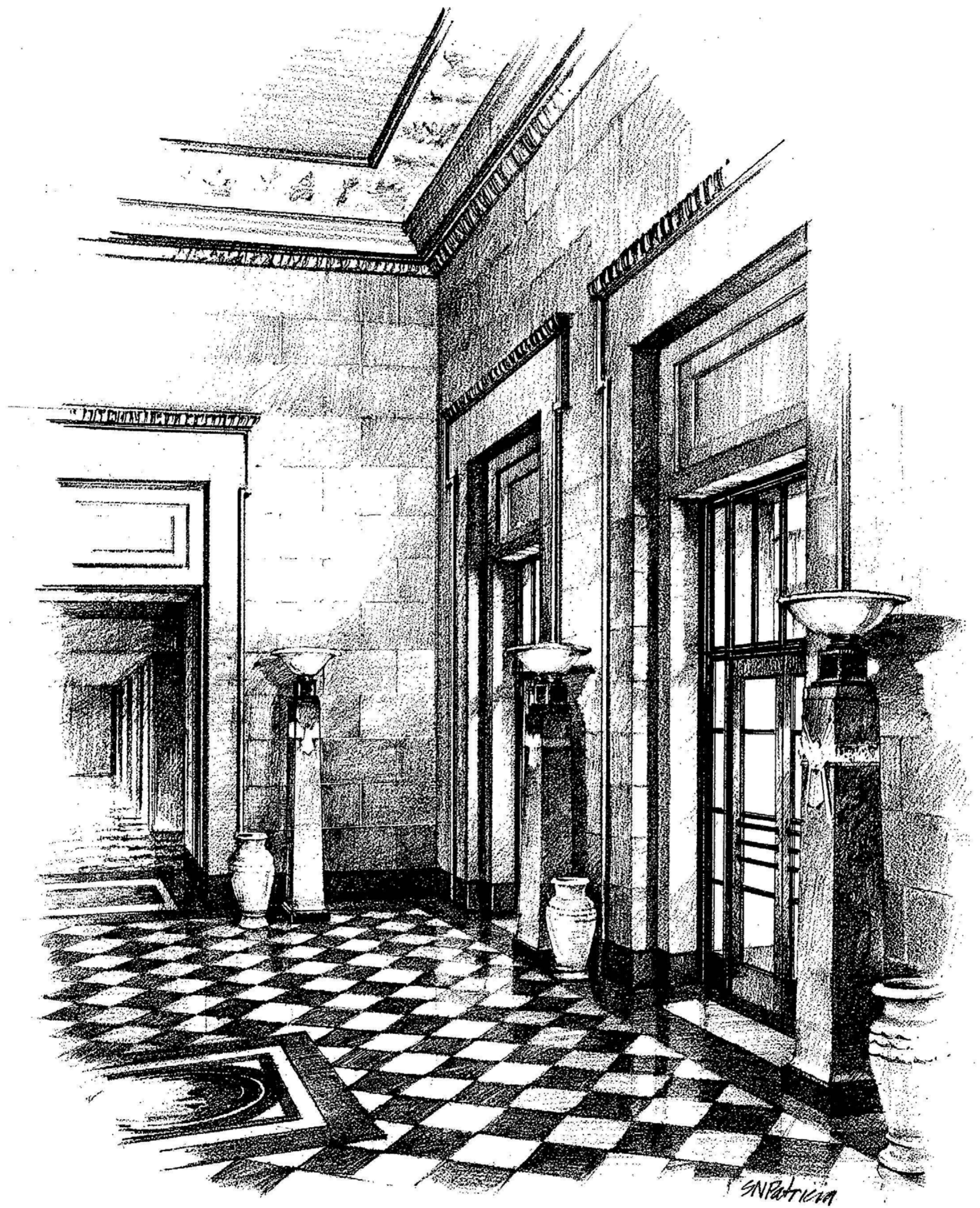
The folding baggage checking tables and rope barriers present at the time of writing presumably reflect the requirements of tightened wartime security and could be dispensed with in normal times, allowing the central lobby space to remain more open and free of obstructions.

The plan calls for moving the non-original but functionally desirable wall clock from the north wall to the east wall over the central Auditorium door, where it will be fully visible to the guards, to visitors, and to anyone waiting for an Interior shuttle, yet less obtrusive than in its present position over the entrance to the foyer.

Existing ceiling light fixtures will be retained in order to supplement the inadequate lighting provided by the six floor fixtures.



North Lobby looking west



North Lobby looking northwest

NORTH VESTIBULE

None recommended.

NORTH LOBBY

OBJECT and LOCATION

RECOMMENDATION

LIGHT STANDARDS (6), identical to those in South Lobby; two on north, west, and east sides, flanking central doorways.	Acquire reproductions. Because of security stations, light standards on south side will not be replaced.
--	--

North Side

OBJECT and LOCATION

RECOMMENDATION

CLOCK, battery powered; over center vestibule door.	Use non-original clock installed on south wall in 1990.
TALL SAND JARS (2), standing on sand MATS; flanking entrance.	Use original jars or reproductions; acquire modern mats.

West Side

OBJECT and LOCATION

RECOMMENDATION

NO-SMOKING SIGN, logo-type; on wall next to west corridor.	Acquire.
TALL SAND JAR (1), standing on MAT; to right of doorway.	Use original jar or reproduction; acquire modern mat.

South Side

OBJECT and LOCATION

RECOMMENDATION

BULLETIN BOARD, similar to bulletin board in South Lobby; in southwest corner, in right foyer doorway, blocking access to foyer.	Use original, if available, or reproduction of South Lobby bulletin board.
SECURITY STATIONS (2); flanking entrance to North Foyer. To provide shelf and drawer space for video monitor, telephone, and other equipment necessary for security and visitor information services.	New stations compatible with the lobby architecture have been fabricated and installed.
GUARDS' CHAIRS (2)	Modern swivel chairs have been purchased and installed.
TALL SAND JARS (2), white glazed ceramic, standing on round fiber MATS; flanking central elevator doors.	Use original jars or reproductions; acquire modern mats.
NO-SMOKING SIGN, logo-type; on doorway architrave behind right security station.	Use existing sign.
FLAG, American; southeast corner, in front of left foyer doorway.	Retain existing flag.

East Side

OBJECT and LOCATION

RECOMMENDATION

BENCH, backless, covered with blue synthetic leather; blocking doorway to east corridor.	Use original or reproduction of museum bench.
LOW SAND JARS (2), white glazed ceramic, standing on round fiber MATS; at either end of bench.	Use original jars or reproductions; acquire modern mats.
SMOKING-PERMITTED SIGN, logo-type; on wall or door architrave.	Use existing sign.

For reasons cited in the plan for the South Lobby, this plan for the North Lobby calls for removal of planters; moving the non-historic clock to the north wall, over the center door, where it can be seen more readily by guards and visitors; moving the photographs of the President and Secretary into the

North Foyer or elevator lobby. Instructional signs should be on the security station counters rather than on the walls. Ceiling light fixtures will be retained

ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 1. South Lobby, looking east, during construction of the new Interior Building. Progress photograph no. 162, December 29, 1936, Commercial Photo Co., for George A. Fuller Co., Builders. Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, entry 5510.

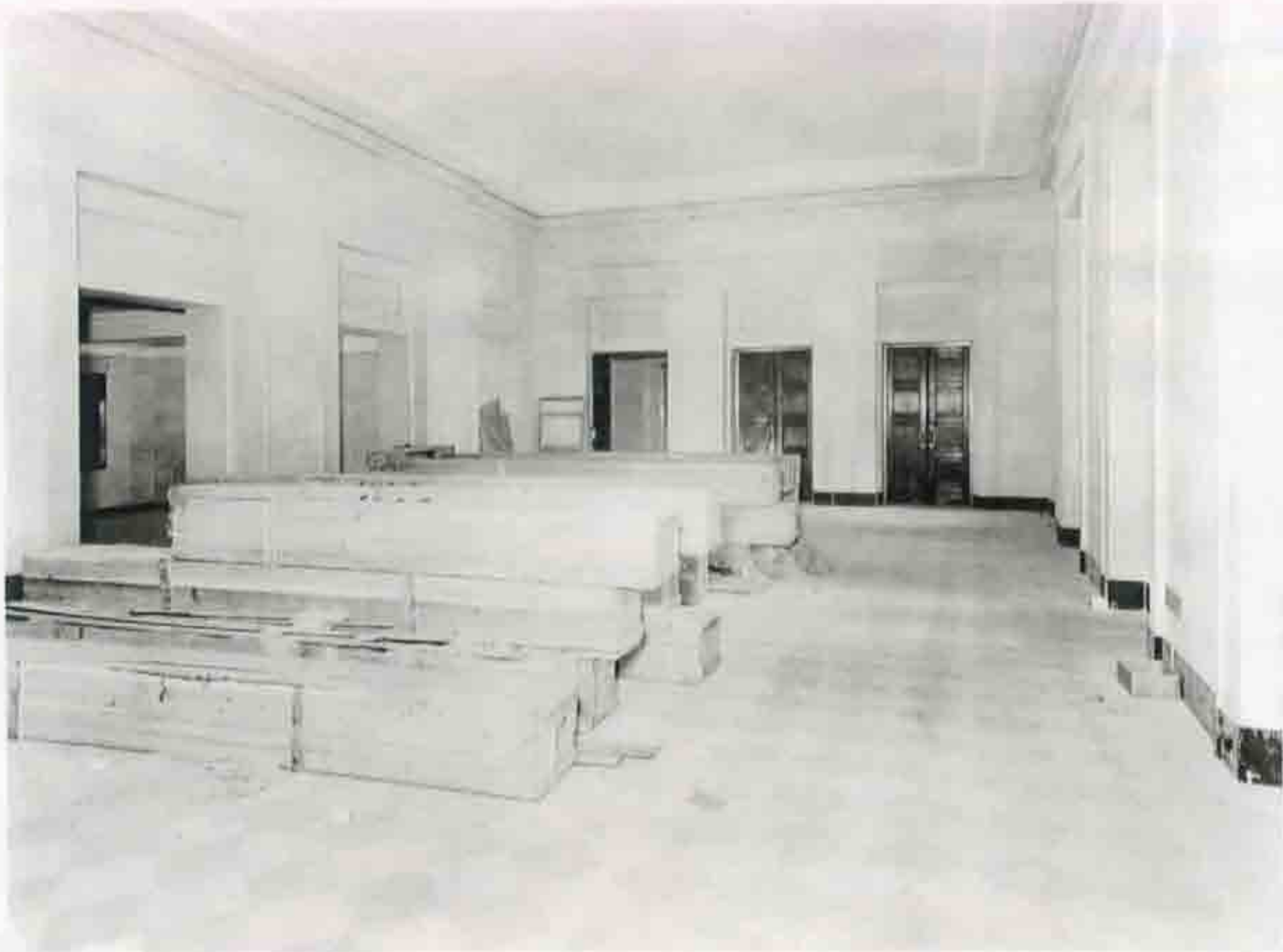
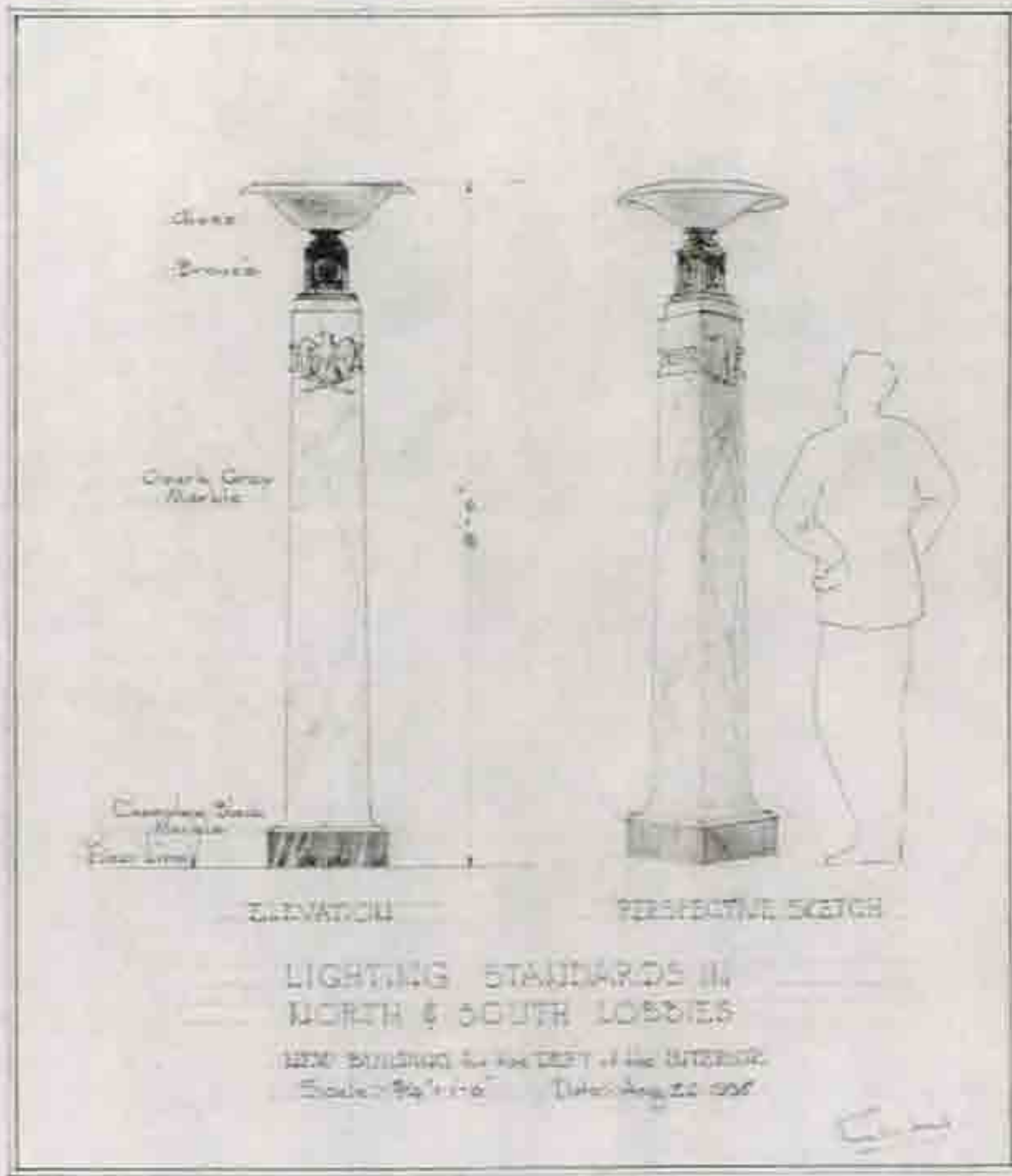


Figure 2. North Lobby, looking west, during construction of the building. Progress photograph no. 166, December 29, 1936, Commercial Photo Co. for George A. Fuller Co., Builders. Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, entry 5510.



Figure 3. Elevation and perspective sketch of "Lighting Standards in North & South Lobbies/New Building for the Department of the Interior," unsigned, dated August 26, 1935. Original drawing in National Archives, Cartographic and Architectural Branch, Alexandria, VA: RG 121, Public Buildings Service, District of Columbia, Department of the Interior/ DC0020ZZ/ ANGS-0010 3/ 06-AR-0233.



RETURN TO ROOM 411

Figure 4. Washington Ornamental Company's plaster model No. 326, Type "E" lighting fixture for lobbies of the new Interior Building. From a photograph, approved November 5, 1936. National Archives, Still Pictures Branch, RG 121, photograph no. 121-BS-102D-10.

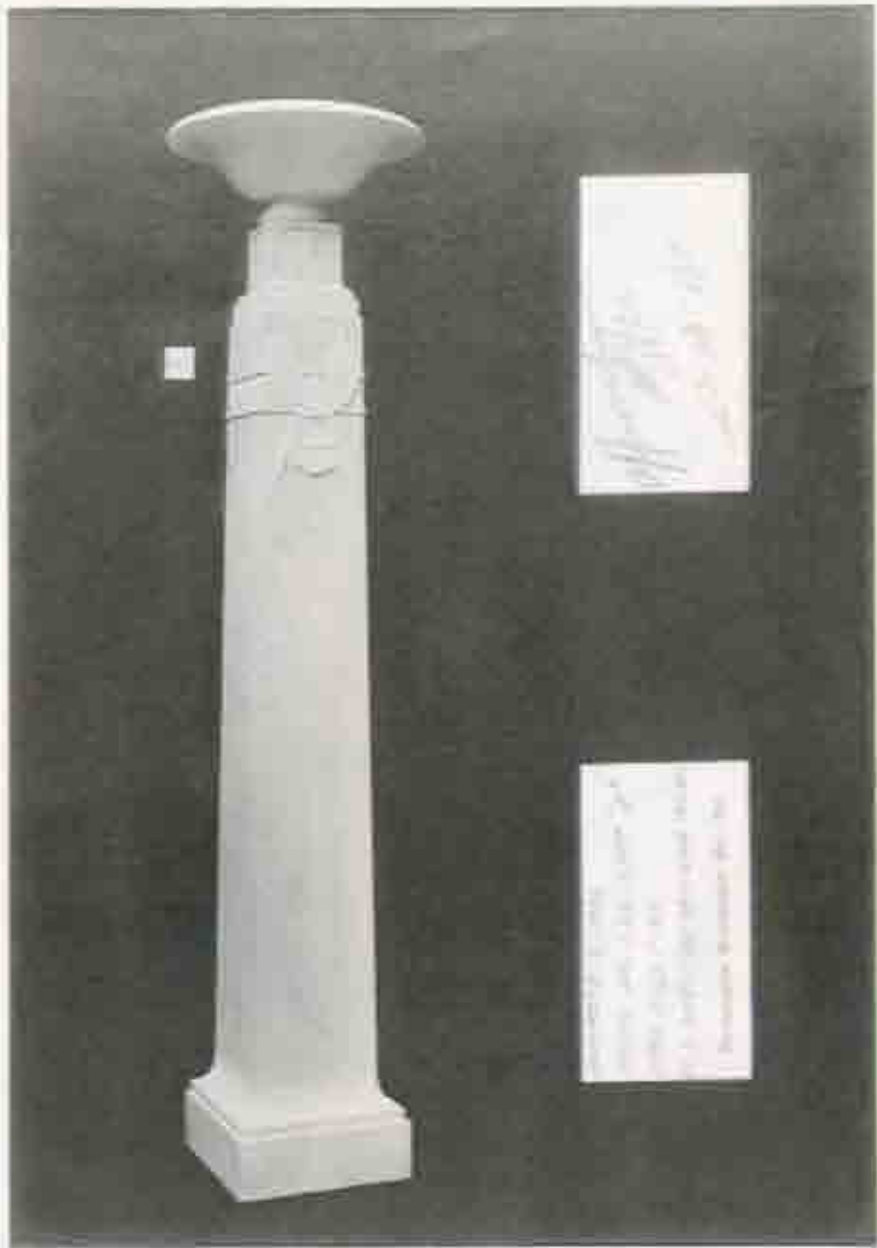


Figure 5. South Lobby, with marble and bronze light standards in place but still lacking their alabaster bowl reflectors. Progress photograph no. [?], March 11, 1937, Commercial Photo Co. for George A. Fuller Co., Builders. National Archives, Washington, DC, Still Pictures Branch, RG 121, Public Buildings Service, 121-BCP-136A-12.

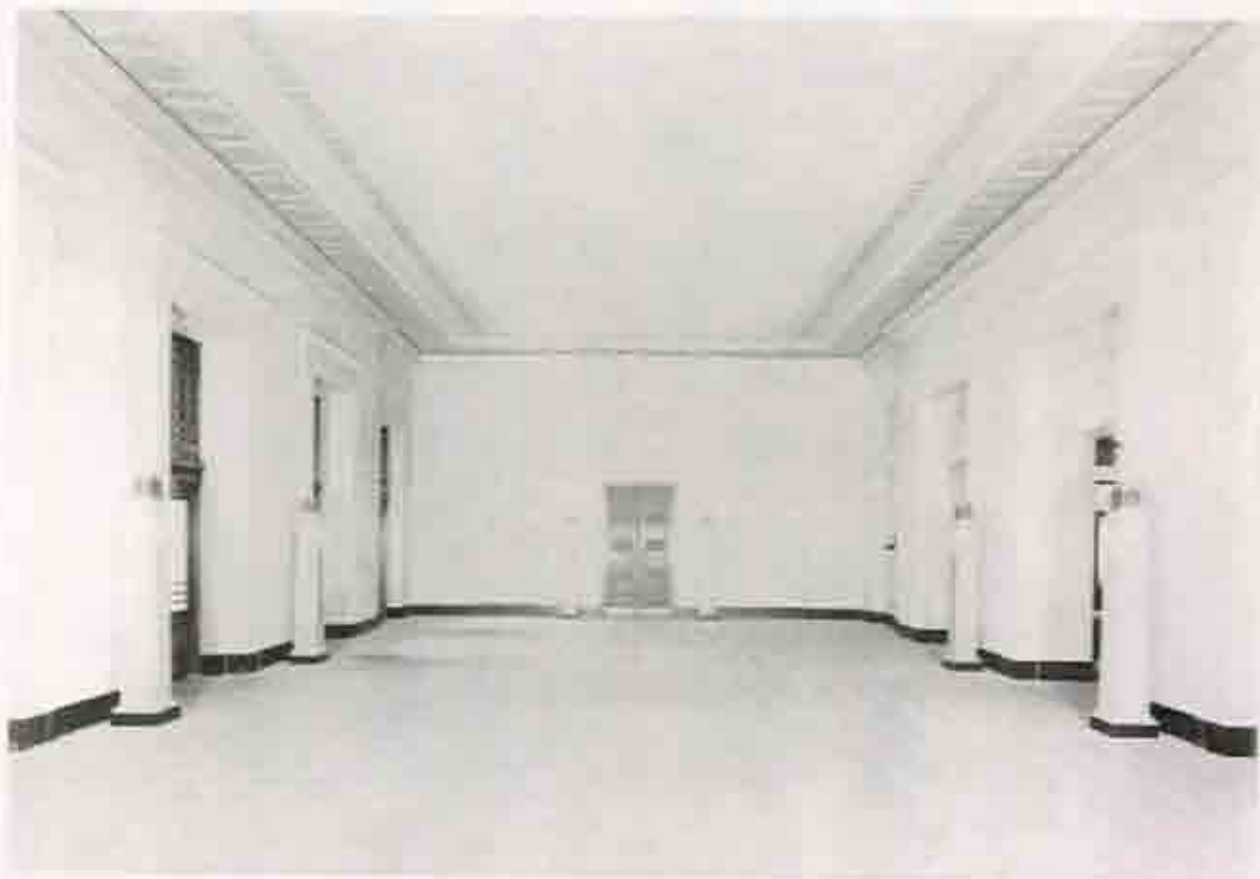


Figure 6. South Lobby, looking southeast toward C Street vestibule. Photograph dated May 25, 1937, by Andrew T. Kelley and George A. Grant, National Park Service. National Park Service Historic Collection, Harpers Ferry Center.



Figure 7. South Lobby, looking toward northwest corner and South Foyer. Photograph dated May 25, 1937, by Kelley and Grant. National Park Service Historic Collection, Harpers Ferry Center.



Figure 8. North Lobby, looking northwest toward E Street vestibule. Photograph dated May 25, 1937, by Kelley and Grant. National Park Service Historic Collection, Harpers Ferry Center.



Figure 9. North Lobby, looking toward southeast corner and North Foyer. Photograph dated May 25, 1937 by Kelley and Grant. National Park Service Historic Collection, Harpers Ferry Center.



Figure 10. South Vestibule. Photograph dated May 25, 1937 by Kelley and Grant. National Park Service Historic Collection, Harpers Ferry Center.



Figure 11. North Vestibule. Photograph dated May 25, 1937, by Kelley and Grant. National Park Service, Harpers Ferry Center.



Figure 12. South Lobby, looking east toward Auditorium, 1976.
Historic American Buildings Survey [HABS] photograph no. DC-410-26. Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, HABS/DC/Washington/528-26.



Figure 13. North Lobby, looking east, 1976. HABS photograph no. DC-410-83. Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, HABS/DC/Washington/528-83.



Figure 14. South Lobby, looking east, 1991.



Figure 15. South Lobby, looking west, 1991.



Figure 16. North Lobby, looking east, 1991.



Figure 17. North Lobby, looking west, 1991.



Figure 18. Sand jar in elevator lobby, 1937. Detail from photograph taken August 31, 1937, by W. Mead, National Park Service. National Park Service Historic Collection, Harpers Ferry Center.



Figure 19. Alaskan totem pole purchased by the Department of the Interior from Mr. James E. Clark, White Oaks, Maryland. From a photograph attached to January 17, 1940, memorandum of Harry L. Rauls, Museum Curator, Interior Museum, to E.K. Burlew, First Assistant Secretary of the Interior. National Archives, Washington, DC, RG 48, Central Classified Files, I-46, Interior Museum and Art Gallery, box 2494.



Figure 20. Totem pole as displayed in the cafeteria courtyard, Interior Building, 1940-1989. Photographed in 1976 by Brooks Photographers, Bethesda, Maryland for Historic American Buildings Survey. Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, HABS photograph no. DC-410-S.



Figure 21. Dedication of totem pole as installed in South Lobby, Interior Building, February 6, 1991. Secretary of the Interior Manuel Lujan, Jr. (in front of totem pole) presiding.



APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

CORRESPONDENCE AND OTHER RECORDS RELATING TO CONSTRUCTION AND INSTALLATION OF SPECIAL LIGHTING FIXTURES FOR THE LOBBIES OF THE NEW INTERIOR BUILDING, 1935-1937

August 26, 1935. Elevation and perspective sketch of Type E "Lighting Standards in North & South Lobbies, New Building for the Dep't. of the Interior"; see fig. 3. [*National Archives, Cartographic and Architectural Records Branch Alexandria, VA: RG 121, Public Buildings Service, District of Columbia/ Interior Dep't/ DC0020ZZ/ ANGS-0010 3/ 06-AR-0233*].

Sept. 17, 1936. Arthur L. Blakeslee, Chief Architect, and W.H. Saalfield, Senior Electrical Engineer, to W.E. Reynolds, Assistant Director of Procurements, Public Buildings Branch, Treasury Department, regarding their Chicago field trip to check out Mutual Metal Manufacturing Co., low bidder on contract for special lighting fixtures. In reference to Type E fixture for lobbies, Mutual said they would provide

either alabaster glass bowls or genuine alabaster bowls...in either case the bowls to be made in one piece with profiles and sizes as required by the proposed contract.

There would be no extra charge for genuine alabaster. [*National Archives and Records Center [NARC], Suitland, MD: RG 121, Public Bldgs Service, General Correspondence & Related Records, 1934-39, Interior Dept. Office, 1936, Box 2973*].

Sept. 19, 1936. Jno. A. Weber and W.H. Saalfield, memo to Board of Award, states:

the 24" diameter alabaster glass bowls for the 16 lobby standards can be supplied by the Gleason-Tiebout Glass Company but...Mutual Metal will, if desired, substitute genuine alabaster bowls at no extra charge, although specifications, paragraphs 96 and 98, do not call for genuine alabaster. [*Ibid., Box 2973*].

Sept. 22, 1936. On this date contract T 1-PB-736 was signed, for Mutual Metal Manufacturing Company to provide special lighting fixtures, including 16 of Type E for lobbies. [*Ibid.*, Box 2973]. The contract itself is not in RG 121, Civil Reference Branch, National Archives, informed me that contracts are held only for 6 1/2 years, so contract specifications appear to be unavailable.

Nov. 3-5, 1936. Photograph of model no. 326, type E, Special Lighting Fixture for lobbies, new Interior Building, prepared by Washington Ornamental Co., approved Nov. 5, 1936; see fig. 4. [*National Archives, Washington, Still Pictures Branch, RG 121, photograph no. 121-BS-102D-10*].

Nov. 3, 1936. Mutual Metal submits samples of marble from Gray-Knox Marble Co., Knoxville, TN, for Type E fixtures: "McMullen (Special) Grey Sand Rubbed Finish" and "Imperial Black Polished"; Gray-Knox to furnish the marble, do the carving, and set in place. [*NARC, Suitland: RG 121, Gen. Corr. 1934-39, Interior Office 1936, Box 2972*].

Nov. 3, 1936. Mutual Metal submits samples of alabaster for Type E fixtures, with inner surface polished; asks if outer surface is to be polished or satin finish. [*Ibid.*]

Nov. 4, 1936. Superintendent of Project Management to Mutual Metal, telegram:

Samples Imperial Black and Special Gray marbles furnished Gray-Knox Marble Company and Alabaster furnished Deprado Statuary Company satisfactory. Alabaster to have satin finish on exposed side. [*Ibid.*]

Nov. 14, 1936. Office Manager, George A. Fuller Co., to Washington Ornamental Co., informing them that the Mutual Metal Manufacturing Co. wants "the marble portion of model No. 326" [lobby lighting fixture] to be shipped to Gray-Knox Marble Co., Knoxville, Tenn. [*Ibid.*, Box 2971]. Bill of lading T-394614 indicates model for marble base was shipped to Gray-Knox on Nov. 13 [*Ibid.*]

Nov. 7, 1936. Mutual Metal acknowledges receipt of model of metal portion of Type E standard [*Ibid.*].

Nov. 14, 1936. Mutual Metal submits sample of Medium Statuary Bronze finish for Type E standard. This was unsatisfactory. On Dec. 24, they submitted a new sample which was accepted on January 5, 1937 [*Ibid.*].

Nov. 20, 1936. Mutual Metal proposed to change finish on marble shaft (except carved areas) from sand-rubbed to polished. Docketed "satisfactory"; confirmed by telegram Dec. 8 [*Ibid.*].

Nov. 25, 1936. Mutual Metal points out that the model of the marble shaft shows eagle carving on both front and back, while specifications call for eagle on front and "ornamented band in carved detail on the sides and back of the shaft." Since eagle on back would not be visible and Gray-Knox will charge extra for it, Mutual Metal requests clarification.

A pencilled note on the back of this letter reads: "Eagle to be carved on front of shaft only, with floral bands on other three sides as shown on drawings. J B C 11/30/36." This was confirmed by telegram on Dec. 8 [*Ibid.*].

January 5, 1937. Procurement approves Mutual Metal's second sample of Medium Statuary Bronze finish, submitted on December 24, 1936 [*Ibid.*].

March 5, 1937. Major portion of special lighting fixtures installed by O.R. Evans & Bro., of Washington, DC. [*Mutual Metal Mfg. Co. to Procurement Division, April 14, 1938. Ibid., Box 2965*].

March 26, 1937. Construction Engineer Darnall to Supervisory Engineer, re marble samples for lobby: McMullen Gray, for floor and walls, Regal Blue for floor tile and border, Imperial Black for base. [The gray and black were approved, the blue disapproved, by letter April 6.] Since "the quarry from which McMullen Gray is obtained is closed down, and there is only enough material available in stock to complete the lobby," Special Gray marble will have to be used in the Exhibit Gallery. [A letter from Peterson Co. to Darnall, 3/20/37, states that "This Special Gray is the same kind of marble that was used for the lamp standards in the Main Lobby." [*Ibid., Box 2969*].

March 17, 1937. Telegram, District Engineer, NY, to Inspection Engineer Larkin, informing him that "18 alabaster bowls" had been shipped from Leghorn, Italy, on March 16 and were due in New York on March 31 [*Ibid., Box 2969*]. By letter of March 27, 1937, the General Shipping & Trading Co., New York, informed the Procurement Division that a shipment of "5 cases of marble bowls" from Daprato Statuary Co. was due in New York on April 1 and suggests that a customs release be forwarded to save time when they arrive. [*Ibid.*].

April 5, 1937. Inspection Engineer, Public Bldgs. Branch, Procurement Div., Treasury Dept., Progress Report No. 4 on new Interior Building [*National Archives, Washington: RG 121, Public Buildings Service, Entry 92, Miscellaneous Operating and Fiscal Records, Inspection File 1935-1940, Box 7 Del.-Ill.*]:

Although the Secretary and staff have moved into the new building over the weekend, a number of the special electric fixtures are still missing. The alabaster bowls arrived in New York from Leghorn on the 31st of March, and were due in Washington not later than April 3....We were advised at noontime that the truck had been loaded and the bowls were on the way to Washington.

April 9, 1937. [Ickes, *Secret Diary*, p. 113]: "The new chandeliers are here and they will be hung during my absence next week." This refers to the two chandeliers in the Secretary's office, but presumably the other 16 alabaster bowls for the lobby fixtures were also there by this time.

May 17, 1937. From the Construction Engineer's "final report" of February 24, 1938, on Mutual Metal's contract for special lighting fixtures [*NARC, General Correspondence, 1934-39, Interior Dep't Office, 1938, Box 2965*]:

This contract was substantially completed the first part of May, 1937.... The contractors were also delayed due to trouble experienced in obtaining alabaster bowls for certain fixtures (possibly those for the Secretary's office). When they did arrive on the job several of them were broken and had to be reordered.

Reference is made to the final report dated May 17, 1937 submitted by Herman J. Bounds, Mechanical Engineer, to Mr. H.S. McAllister, District Engineer, in which he states that all work had been satisfactorily completed, except that alabaster bowls had been used on certain bowls instead of alabaster glass. This change was authorized by office letter dated January 27, 1937, addressed to the contractors and signed by the Director of Procurement.

The May 17, 1937 "final report" is not in the file. The change authorized in January 1937 concerned the bowls for five Type S fixtures in the Secretary's Office [*Ibid.*, Box 2970]. Nothing in the files documents the switch from glass to alabaster for the lobby fixtures.

May 25, 1937. When Kelley and Grant photographed the lobbies (figs. 6-9), the alabaster bowls were in place on top of the light standards in both lobbies. Although the file prints bear the May 25 date, it seems likely that the photographs were taken in April (see p. 15).

APPENDIX B

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESS,
APRIL 8, 1937 CONCERNING THE INDIAN DESIGNERS OF THE
RUBBER MATS IN THE LOBBIES OF THE NEW INTERIOR BUILDING.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESS

FOR RELEASE APRIL 8, 1937.

Pictures Available

The Indian designers of the gay rubber mats, which are placed at each entrance of the New Interior Department Building, are nine young girls, representing eight tribes but all students at Haskell Institute, Lawrence, Kansas.

They are Clara Keezer, Winifred Sands, Lenora Spooner, Dorothy Hill, Beulah Snell, Marno Heffelman, Ethel Crane, Marie Beane, and Louise Wamego. Some of them have grown up with grandparents who observe Indian customs and take part in tribal ceremonies, others have spent most of their time at Government boarding schools, and still others have lived with sisters in cities. To some of them, Indian arts and crafts were discovered in the schoolroom as new to them as they would be to eastern finishing school students; to others, they were well-remembered symbols of Indian stories and traditions.

Sixty-four mat designs were submitted to Secretary Ickes by students in seven Indian schools. The Secretary did not know who had designed them, what tribes or what schools were represented. Quite by accident, he selected nine from Haskell Institute, Lawrence, Kansas, all designed by girls.

Haskell Institute, a non-reservation boarding school and one of the most famous Indian schools in the country, draws boys and girls from all tribes. It has an enrollment of 650 students, coming principally from the Plains area and the Lake states. Arts and crafts classes at Haskell average a hundred students each semester from the ninth and tenth grade groups. There is also a two-year course, commencing in the third year of study at the Institute.

As the majority of students are from the central section of the United States, they study the culture of the plains, plateau, and woodland tribes. New designs are created from the symbols of these various groups. Mere copying of old designs would not develop a student's creative ability, so

original adaptation of old symbols is stressed.

Stories are told by the traditional designs. Miss Hill's mat design is interesting, telling as it does of a brave deer hunt, showing mountain trails, deer tracks and arrow symbols, and Miss Wamego's design interprets the religious ceremonies on the dancing ground, seasonal meetings to insure the peace the Indians desire. Arrows pointing outward suggest peace, while arrows pointing inward suggest war. The meeting ground, the singers with their drums, the food of the feast, the dancers, and the home of the chief are indicated in the design.

The background of Miss Snell's design is gray, that of the other eight is white, and the principal colors in the designs are reds, orange, and blues, with some browns, greens, and black used. The young designers used block paper and crayons to work out their patterns.

The nine young winners come from very different families and backgrounds. At Haskell, students possess varying degrees of Indian blood. Many come from homes that have lost all of their Indian ways in the last two generations. The majority of the nine winners have had some home life and all have had boarding school life.

The girls who probably know most of Indian traditions and culture are Lenora Spooner, Marie Beane, Louise Wamego, and Winifred Sand.

Lenora's mother is a fullblood Kickapoo and her father, part Muncie. They take part in Indian ceremonials and dances at their home in Progress, Oklahoma.

Marie Beane comes from Odana, Wisconsin, the Great Lakes Reservation, and has lived with her grandparents, her uncle and aunt on their farm, and now makes her home with her mother. She knows how to hunt, shoot and set snares, to build a fire without matches, recognize various tracks and the cries of animals. She can skin a deer, a rabbit, or even the difficult porcupine, and knows how to smoke the meat. Her grandmother taught her the Chippewa language. Her father was a fullblood, her mother is part Indian.

Louise Wamego is a Potawatomie from Mayette, Kansas. She lives with her

grandparents who are fullbloods and observe Indian customs and ceremonies strictly.

Winifred Sand is a fullblood Sioux from the Cheyenne River Agency in the north central part of South Dakota. She has been in Indian boarding schools for 13 years and is now finishing a two-year course in arts and crafts and planning to return to her reservation to study her tribe's customs and art. When she first left the reservation for boarding school, she thought the Nation consisted of Sioux alone.

The other five girls had rather grown away from Indian customs before they came to Haskell.

Beulah Snell is a Cherokee from northeastern Oklahoma. She was born in a log cabin on her parents' farm and knew practically nothing of Indian customs. She now wants to teach arts and crafts.

Dorothy Hill comes from Browning, Montana, the Blackfoot Reservation. She spent her early life on her grandparents' ranch and school times with her parents. Her only knowledge of Indian customs came from her parents' making dried meat and pemmican for festive occasions.

Clara Keezer is a Chippewa like Marie Beane, but unlike Marie, she knew little of Indian crafts and art until she began her course at Haskell. She comes from the Chippewa reservation in northern Minnesota. Her parents are of mixed blood.

Ethel Crane is a fullblood of the southern Cheyenne tribe. She has always attended Government schools, staying in summer as well as winter, and has had very little home life. She has shown much talent and plans to continue her studies. She will spend this summer as camp counsellor at Camp Wasigan in New Jersey.

The ninth winner, Marno Heffelman, a Seneca from Grove, Oklahoma, has attended public schools. Haskell has taught her more about her race and its traditions in the last two years than she had ever known before.

The nine girls range from 18 to 21 years of age. In addition to their arts and crafts, they are interested in athletics, music and dancing. Marie

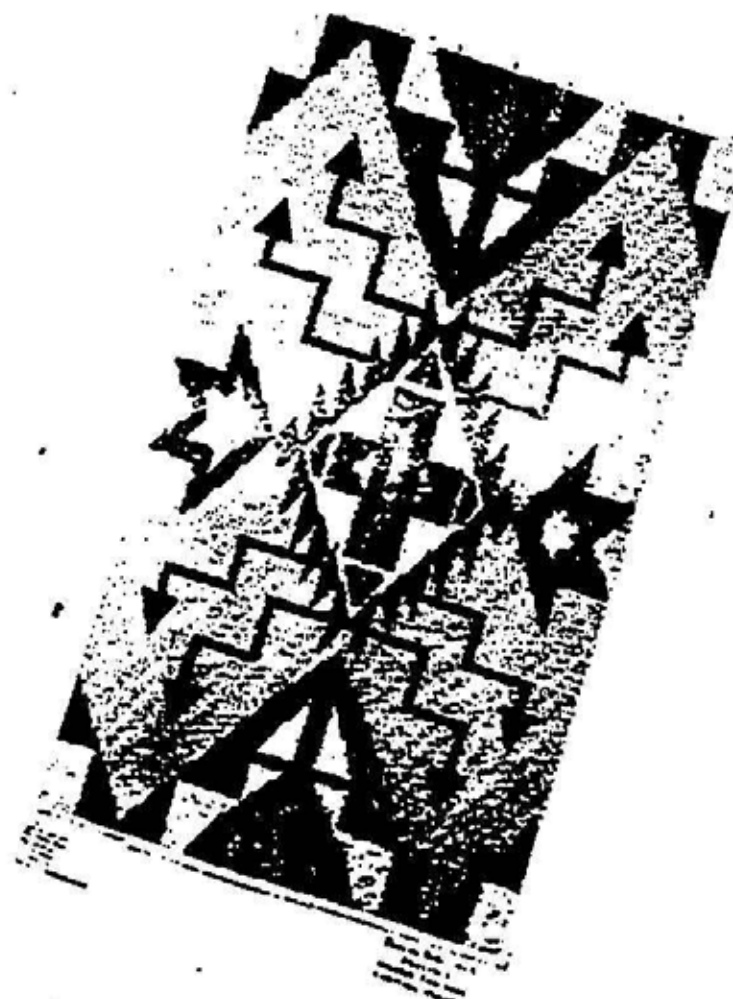
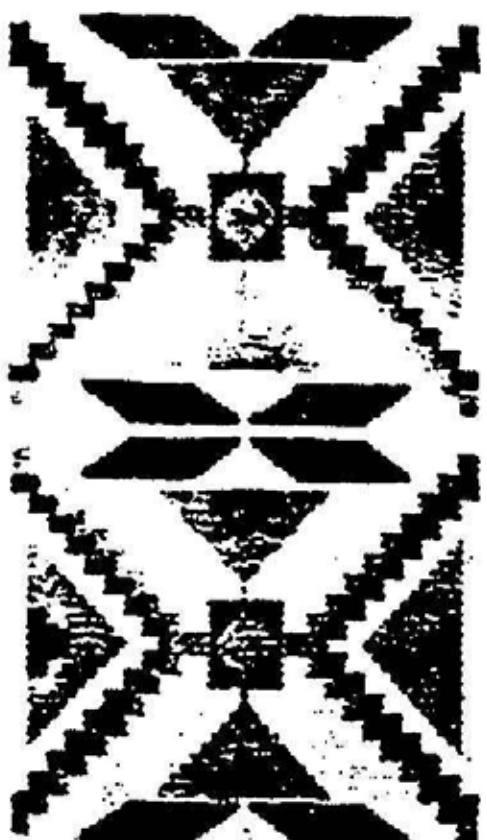
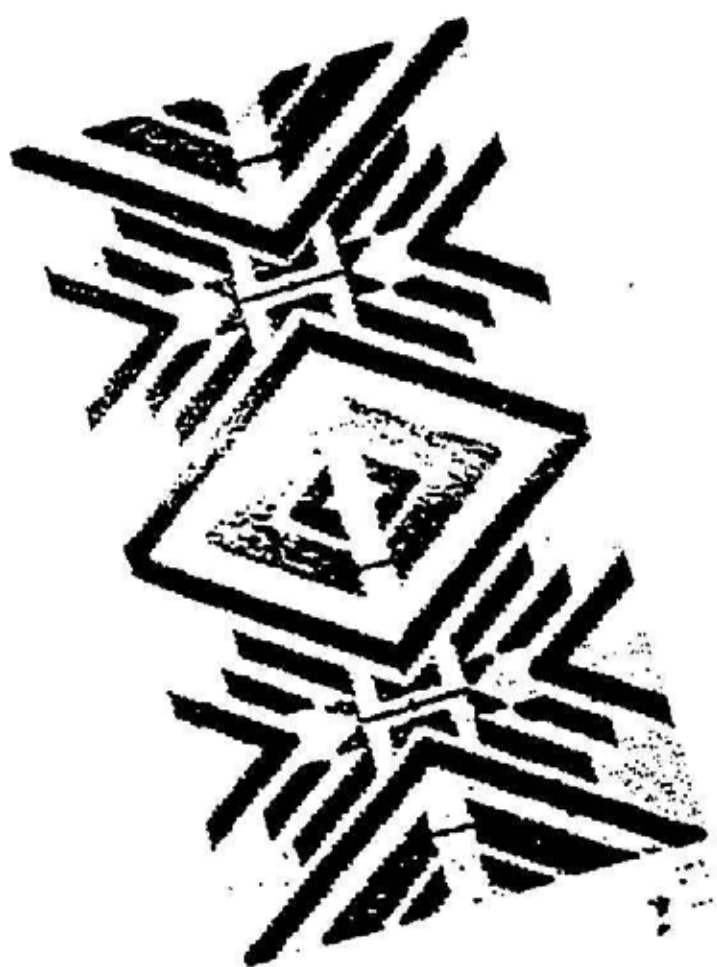
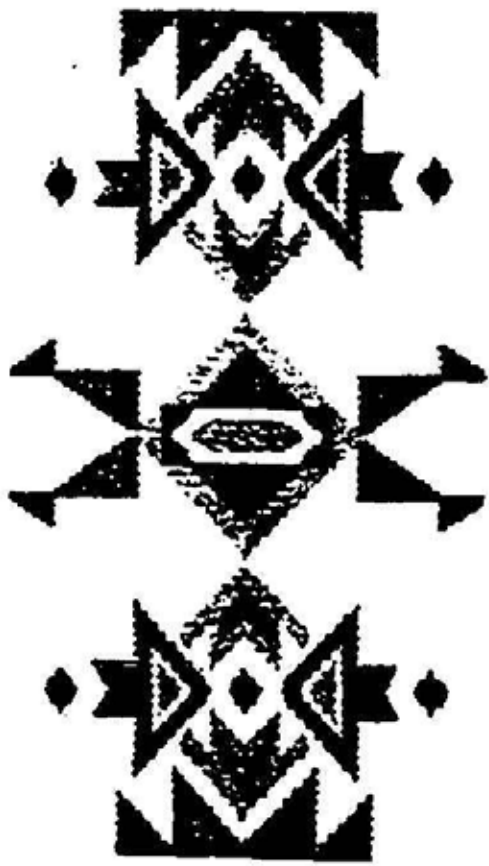
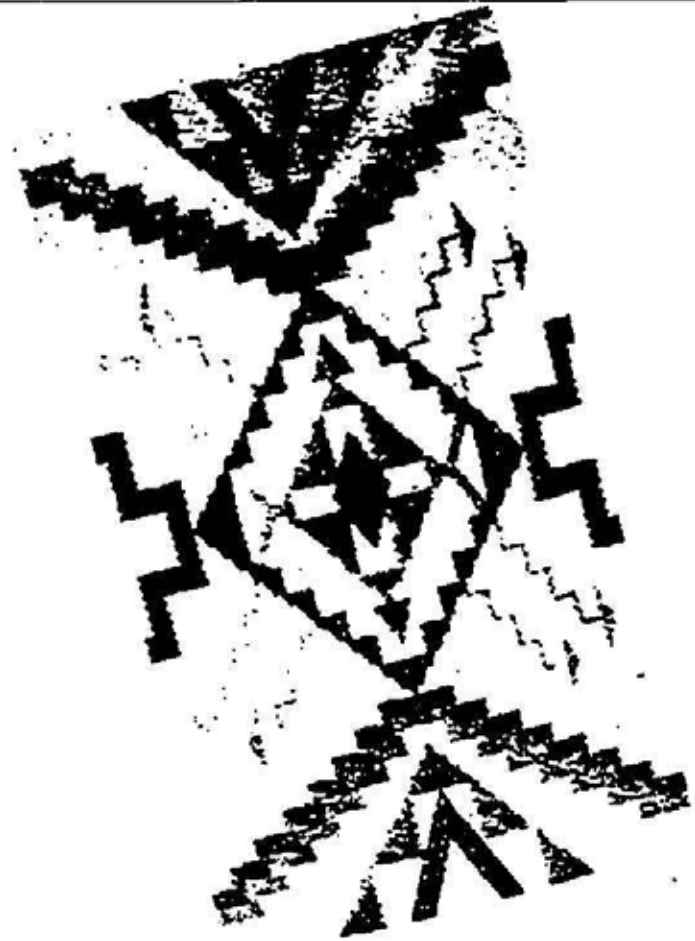
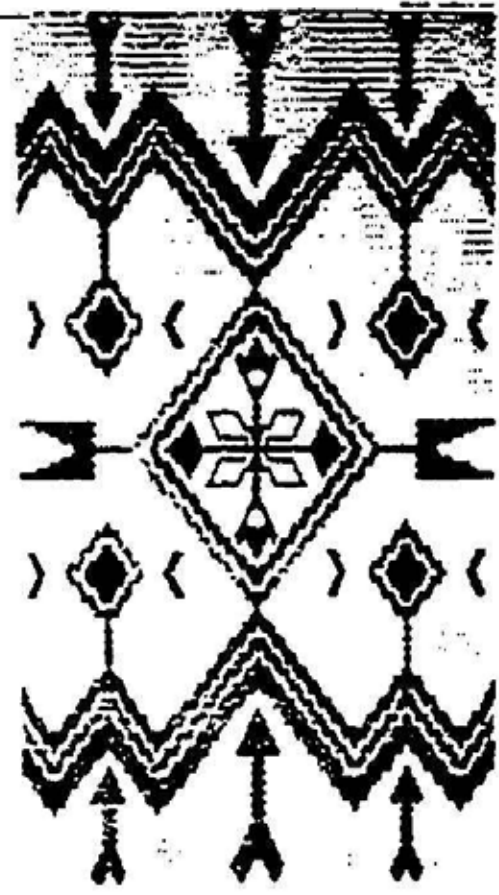
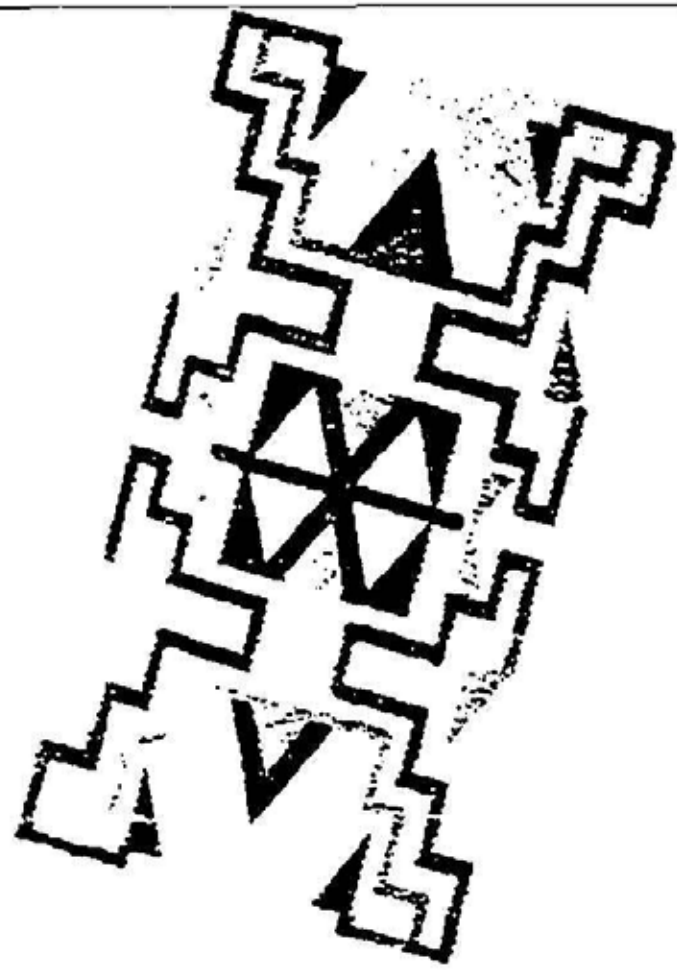
Beane is one of the puppeteers in the Indian marionettes at the school.

They will receive \$1 royalty on each mat bearing their designs sold by the American Mat Corporation of Toledo, Ohio, contractors handling the department's mat supply and sponsors of a contest throughout the Indian schools to find good Indian designs.

Haskell and its art teacher, Miss Sibyl Malm, are very proud of their charges.

* * *

P.N. 133862





As the nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural and cultural resources. This includes fostering wise use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places, and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to ensure that their development is in the best interests of all our people. The department also promotes the goals of the Take Pride in America campaign by encouraging stewardship and citizen responsibility for the public lands and promoting citizen participation in their care. The department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in island territories under U.S. administration.