



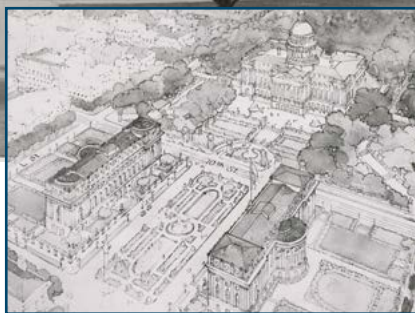
CALIFORNIA
STATE LIBRARY

HISTORIC TOUR

STANLEY MOSK
LIBRARY AND
COURTS BUILDING



ABOUT THE LIBRARY



Above: Library and Courts Building, 1938. **Right:** 1920s architectural drawing of Capitol Mall between 9th and 10th streets.

The California State Library was established in 1849 with a gift by Colonel John Drake Stevenson of the New York Volunteers. The gift, a 26 volume set, was "The Natural History of New York," 1842-1847.

It was followed by donations from State Senator Thomas Jefferson Green and John C. Fremont. On December 28, 1849, the Senate appropriated money to purchase a bookcase for the donated books. The Legislature met in San Jose and formally established the State Library on January 24, 1850, even though California did not become a state until September 9, 1850.

Near the entrance to the Library and Courts Building is the California Peace Officers' Memorial, sculpted by Victor D. Riesau, which pays tribute to the over 1,500 officers who have died in the line of duty since California statehood in 1850. The Memorial, dedicated in 1988, depicts three officers representing the evolution of California law enforcement through the decades.

Stop #1

FRONT ENTRANCE & FAÇADE

Architectural Style

Constructed between 1922 and 1928, the Stanley Mosk Library and the Jesse M. Unruh State Office Building are an adaptation of the Classical Greek architectural style, popular during the 1920s. Both buildings were designed by the prestigious San Francisco firm of Weeks and Day.

Façade

The front steps, first floor, the pillars for the portico, and pilasters are carved Sierra white granite from the McGilvray Granite Company in Madera County, California. The cladding for the second floor to the top cornice is "granitex" terra cotta from Gladding, McBean of Lincoln, California.

Statues, Plaques, and Pediment

Sculptor Edward Field Sanford, Jr. (1886-1951) carved the two Georgian marble statues at the entranceway to the library. The male figure is called "Romantic Wealth" and the female figure "Floral Wealth." The pediment was carved in granite by the McGilvray Company in 1925 based on the models created by Sanford and is inscribed "Into the Highlands of the Mind Let Me Go." Ten marble plaques of classical themes adorn the front and side entranceways.



Stop #2

ENTERING THE LIBRARY

Entrance Vestibule

Opening the outer doors, you enter the Entrance Vestibule, which has stone urns at each extremity. Three chandeliers resemble ancient oil lamps.

On the interior walls of the building's outer vestibule the designers Charles Peter Weeks and William P. Day signed their building with a bronze tablet.



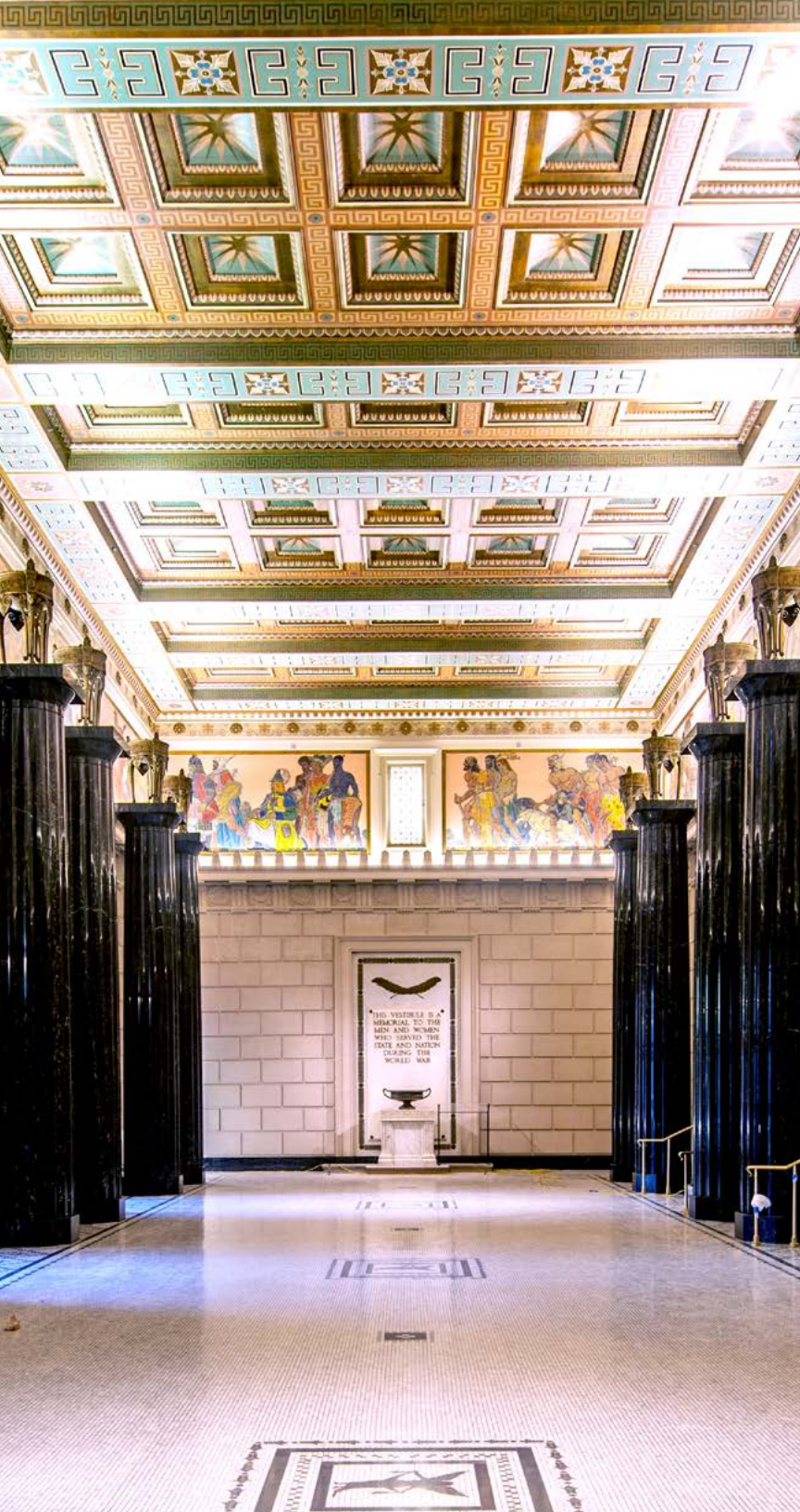
Memorial Vestibule

This hushed two-story expanse was dedicated to honor Californians who served in World War I. Sixteen black and gold marble columns surround the vestibule.

Quarried from the Italian island of Tino in the Bay of Spezia, the columns measure 3'8" in diameter and 18' in height. Urns were placed at the top of the columns and once contained lighting fixtures. During the restoration, the columns were seismically secured and no longer provide lighting in the vestibule. At each end of the vestibule is a marble tablet with appropriate bronze inscription to honor California veterans. In front of each tablet is a carved, white marble base with a bronze urn intended for floral arrangements. Each tablet is flanked by a pair of exquisitely designed bronze, torch-like lamps, original to the building's design.

Murals

Frank Van Sloun (1879-1938) of San Francisco won the competitive bid to paint 12 oil-on-canvas murals depicting a chronological history of warfare from the Stone Age through World War I. State Librarian Milton Ferguson selected the theme, titled "War through the Ages." Van Sloun painted his murals at his San Francisco studio and brought them to Sacramento for installation.



THE VESTIBULE IS A
MEMORIAL TO THE
MEN AND WOMEN
WHO SERVED THE
STATE AND NATION
DURING THE
WORLD WAR



Stop #3

STAIRS, COURTS & ELEVATORS



Grand Stairway

Ascending the left steps from the Memorial Vestibule is the Grand Stairway. The impressive monumental semi-circular stairway is enclosed by a curved wall with windows which brighten the curves with natural light admitted through the light well. The wide treads and risers are elegant white Columbia marble. The balustrades, a combination of anthemion (floral) and clathri (lattice) motifs, are said to be bronze, but are now disguised under a coating of copper gilt.

The Court Room

(May be included in tours depending on court schedule)

Leading up the short central steps past the Memorial Vestibule is the Court Room. Above the entrance the sign reads, "The Supreme Court Court of Appeals." The original plan for the Library and Courts Building included chambers, offices and a courtroom for the California Supreme Court on the fifth floor. However, Chief Justice William Waste refused the space, saying he would not meet in the "attic." So instead, an expensive reproduction of the fifth floor courtroom was made on the first floor.

The Elevators

To the right of the courtroom are two elevators. The doors have the familiar clathri motif and the interiors are beautifully paneled. They were once operated by vertical transportation engineers who are no longer needed today. The engineers also provided directions and other information to visitors.



Stop #4

SECOND FLOOR



Second Floor Murals

Spanning the walls of the second floor corridor are four mural panels by famed Western artist Maynard Dixon. These paintings were originally commissioned in 1912 by Anita Baldwin for her mansion in Arcadia, known as Anoakia. The Anoakia panels were a gift to the State Library in 1996 when the last owner of the property donated them before the mansion was demolished. The panels represent themes drawn on the nomadic Plains Indian culture and mythology.

State Librarian's Office

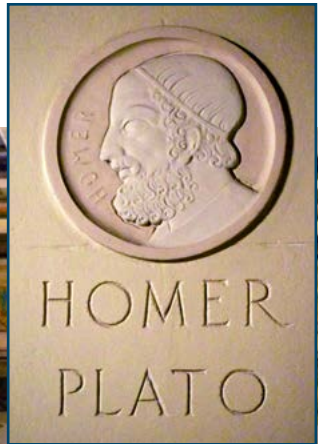
(Not open to the public)

On the north side of the east corridor is the door to the State Librarian's executive offices. The State Librarian's office is paneled in gum. With restoration, the original light fixtures from the 1920s were recreated. The original cork floor was restored. California landscape and portrait paintings decorate the walls. The outer office features molded ceiling panels and elegant window and door frames.

Stop #5

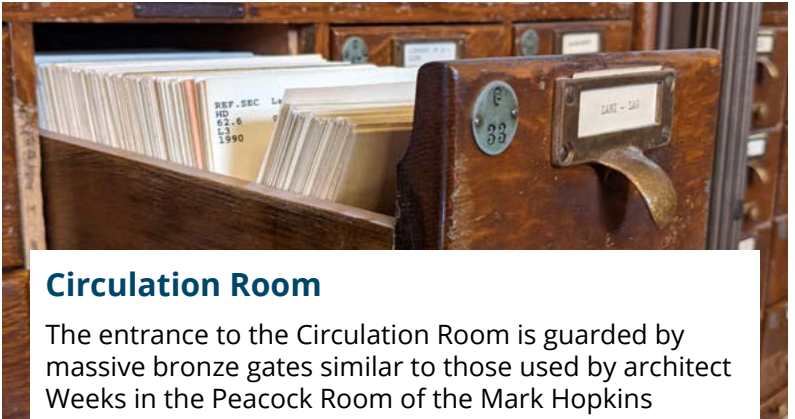
THIRD FLOOR CORRIDOR

The third floor corridor features an ornate coffered ceiling. The ornamental band near the ceiling is decorated with mythological figures, anthemion, Greek key, and rosettes. The ceiling decorations depict symbols of California's natural wealth. The walls are decorated with sixteen bas-relief cast plaques of noted world authors selected by Library staff in the late 1920s. Forty-eight authors are featured on the plaques.



Stop #6

THIRD FLOOR



Circulation Room

The entrance to the Circulation Room is guarded by massive bronze gates similar to those used by architect Weeks in the Peacock Room of the Mark Hopkins Hotel in San Francisco. On the interior of the entry is a stone pediment. Bronze and wood carved card catalog cabinets are recessed flush with the walls. The card catalogs represent a bygone era as the Library's catalogs are now maintained online.

Since 2014, the Circulation Room has been used to display a rotating series of exhibits that highlight the diverse holdings of the Library's collections.

The bronze statues "Inspiration" (female) and "Wisdom" (male) were created by Edward Field Sanford, Jr. of New York. When Sanford exhibited a model of Inspiration at New York's National Academy of Design, Eastern newspapers carried articles attacking her nudity as inappropriate for a library. Despite the sensationalism, Sanford defended his work as the most beautiful representation of the female form. Because of the interest generated, the bronze gates were installed in 1928 so the public could view the room when the Library itself was closed.

The windows are delicately leaded in Grecian motifs and serve as a backdrop for the statues. The original bronze chandelier hangs from the ceiling over the center of the room. Not only it is beautiful but it has an eye-catching snake twisted around the bottom circle.

The floor is highlighted by a classical mosaic centerpiece interpreting the anthemion motif.



Stop #7

THIRD FLOOR

Gillis Hall

Named in honor of State Librarian James L. Gillis, this grand reading room serves as the primary general information point for the library. Gillis served as State Librarian from 1899 to 1917, opened the Library to the general public, founded the county library system, initiated service to the visually impaired, and spearheaded the drive for the Capitol Extension Group.

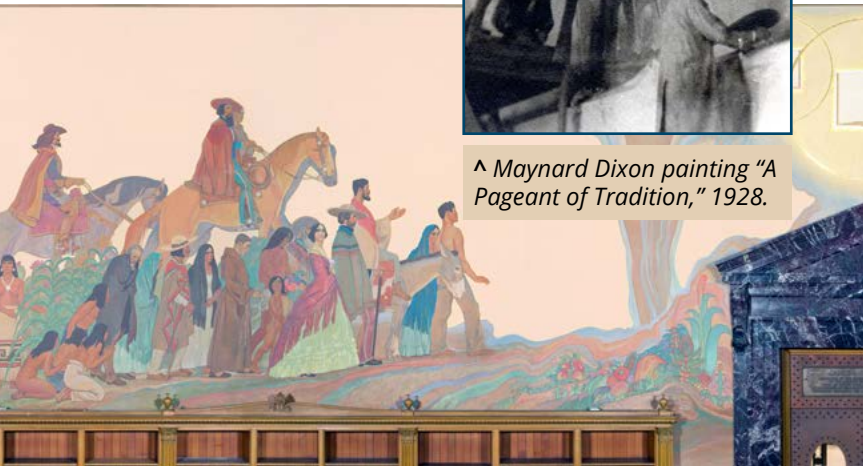
Gillis Hall stretches the full length of the building on the north facing side and stands two stories high. The leather-covered double doors hang in a classic pediment entry of Levanto marble. One of the problems in the restoration was finding a cowhide large enough to cover the doors, but the restoration team was successful. A bronze map of California in relief proclaims the dedication of the room to Gillis in 1931.

One of the highlights of this room is a 69' x 14' mural painted by California Western Artist Maynard Dixon (1876-1946), titled "A Pageant of Traditions." It flanks the central entranceway of the room. Developing his design at his studio in San Francisco, he began painting his mural after the library was open to the public in 1928. He completed his work in three and a half months.

The mural depicts symbolically the great influences on the culture



^ Maynard Dixon painting "A Pageant of Tradition," 1928.





of California — on the left side, the Spanish, and on the right side, the Eastern US. Over the entranceway, Dixon has included a male figure depicting Power and a female figure depicting Beauty.



^ Workers hang panels of "California Remix," 2022.

In 2022, almost a century after Dixon painted "A Pageant of Tradition," a second mural was installed in Gillis Hall. The mural, "California Remix," was created on 29 canvas panels by artist Forest Stearns and hangs on both ends of the hall. California State Librarian Greg Lucas worked in collaboration with the California Arts Council, or CAC, to find an artist who could fill Gillis Hall with depictions of the diversity, fullness and life of modern California.

Suspended from the colorful ceiling are the original five large and four smaller bronze chandeliers. The chandeliers have all been refurbished and include





energy-efficient lighting. The square lighting fixtures were added later.

A new cork floor has been installed. Notice the clathri backed chairs, and anthemion topped bookcases of Southern gum against the mural. The decorative columns that flank the windows and support the beams at each end are Roman Ionic.

Witkin Law Library and Government Publications Reading Rooms

Located on the same floor as the Circulation Room and Gillis Hall, the Witkin Law Library and Government Publications Reading Rooms offer the public access to maps, law books, military training manuals, the papers of the presidents, and more.



Stop #8

FIFTH FLOOR



State Library Meeting Room

(If not in use at time of tour)

The California State Library Meeting Room was originally designed as the courtroom for the California Supreme Court. The room has several attractive features. The Supreme Court, however, refused to meet in the "attic" and a new courtroom was constructed on the first floor (See Stop 3).

After the court relocated to the first floor, the domed ceiling in this room was painted in gold and other colors by the Heinsbergen Decorating Company with historical themes selected by Eudora Garoutte, head of the Library's California History Department at the time.

In the center is the Great Seal of the State of California. This seal is the only known example of the bear eating grapes. Four portraits of famous Californians at the time decorate the ceiling. They include pioneer Captain John Sutter, author Francis Bret Harte, historian Hubert Howe Bancroft, and landscape artist William Keith.

The original bronze chandelier was removed in the 1950s, never to be seen again. An exact replica is in its place. The exquisite wall paneling is of gum, and with the restoration, the light wells opened. Pilasters (rectangular columns) with decorative tops known as Corinthian capitals decorate the walls along with bronze light fixtures.

Across the corridor is the Robert K. Puglia Law Library that serves the Third District Court of Appeal.

Why the State Library and Courts Building Came to Be

The State Library was housed in the State Capitol Building in the Apse portion between the Senate and the Assembly Chambers beginning in the 1860s. By the 1910s, it had run out of space. In addition, state agencies were leaving Sacramento for San Francisco. Sacramento was worried it would lose the Capitol. With state bonds and city funding, the project broke ground in 1922. It was completed in 1928.

Who was Stanley Mosk?

The Library and Courts Building is named in honor of Stanley Mosk (1912-2001). He served as California's Attorney General from 1959-1964 and as an associate justice of the California Supreme Court from 1964-2001, a record for California.

Where to Find Us

Stanley Mosk Library and Courts Building
914 Capitol Mall
Sacramento, CA 95814

(916) 323-9843 | www.library.ca.gov

Open 9:30 AM - 4:00 PM Monday through Friday
(except holidays)

