



April 2002

TREASURY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

Inside this Newsletter...

- **Special savings to members on THA holiday ornaments.** THA is offering its members special savings on the purchase of its commemorative ornaments through May 31, 2002, subject to stock on hand.
- **Treasury's Past Role as Temporary White House.** During World War II years, the Treasury Building served as the emergency bunker for FDR in the event of enemy attacks on Washington city or the White House.

New THA Board and Officers Elected

The Nominating Committee presented to the members of THA who attended the open board meeting and lecture on December 5 a slate of 14 nominees for the 2002-2003 Board of Directors of the Association. Votes were tendered at this meeting by all in attendance.

From the newly-elected Board members, officers were elected by a separate ballot and vote. Officers for the current two-year term are: Michael D. Serlin, President; Marcus W. Page, Secretary; and, David J. Monroe, Treasurer. The post of Chairman of the Board is filled by Thomas P. O'Malley. The position of Vice President remains vacant at this time.

The 15th authorized position on the Board of Directors was filled by vote of the remaining directors in mid-March. In addition to the above-listed officers, the other directors include several continuing members and three new members: Donald C. Alexander; Dorothy Roper Daly; William F. Falls; John F. Flood, Jr.; Abby L. Gilbert; Barbara E. Holloway (new director); Paula A. Mohr; Clifford R. Northup; Charles H. Powers; Maggie K. Rindler (new director); and, Mary Ellen Withrow (new director).

The THA Board meets quarterly to vote on new initiatives and policy and program decisions, with intervening voting conducted by e-mail. Day-to-day operations of THA are managed by the officers and established committees.

Treasury Re-Opens Restored Cash Room and North Wing

On January 28, 2002, the Department of the Treasury held its official ceremony to re-open the restored historic Cash Room. Of particular evidence of the restoration was the regilding of the ceiling, funded through a gift from the Treasury Historical Association. This event also marked the substantial completion of the North wing restoration and renovation project.

At the ceremony, THA Chairman Tom O'Malley was invited to present a few remarks about the Association's efforts to raise private contributions to restore the gilded ceiling with new application of 24-karat gold leaf. Prior to these remarks, Secretary of the Treasury Paul H. O'Neill opened the ceremony with his comments on the historical importance of the Cash Room and of the National Historic Landmark Treasury Building. Secretary O'Neill was very gracious in recognizing the role that THA played in assisting the Department in the restoration of the Cash Room, as it has helped in many other ways over the years.

Treasury organizations began moving back into the restored and renovated areas of the North Wing in January. This wing will become the primary entrance to the Building in late May or June for some duration, as work on the second phase of renovation and restoration will close down the East Wing (15th Street) entry and the current Visitors Appointment Center. Offices in the East and Center wings will be vacated to permit the Phase 2 work of the Treasury Building Renovation and Restoration (TBARR) project to be performed by contractor personnel. These two wings are the oldest sections of the Treasury Building, having been constructed between 1836 and 1842 under the design and supervision of Robert Mills, the Supervising Architect of the Treasury who designed the Washington Monument obelisk.

On the evening of April 29, THA will be holding its appreciation reception in the Cash Room for donors to the Association's Special Restoration Campaign for restoring the ceiling of that room. Donors participating in this effort included individuals, as well as corporations and nonprofit foundations and other organizations.

Work Begins on THA History Book on Treasury Building and the Department's Organization

The Association has entered into a contract with Pamela Scott to perform research and to write a history book on the Treasury Building, as well as the Department of the Treasury. Ms. Scott is an architectural historian, with Art History degrees from the Universities of Delaware and Wisconsin. She is the author of a number of books and articles on historic structures, one of which is *Temple of Liberty, Building the Capitol for a New Nation* (The Oxford University Press, 1995).

This Treasury history book been a long-term goal of THA, with plans having been developed over the past ten years. The Association's Publications Committee developed a statement of work for the contract, describing the book as having a primary and secondary focus. First, the design, construction and history of the Treasury Building, with its historical and architectural significance in the context of the history of American architecture and construction technology. The secondary focus includes the people and bureaus, divisions and branches of Treasury that have played a role in the creation and development of the Department as an agency and its crucial functions in the Federal government of the United States.

Planned to be in "coffee table" book format, the Treasury history will be heavily illustrated with black and white, as well as color, images. Research and writing will be conducted over the next 18-24 months. THA expects to begin marketing the book, through its publisher, in the Summer of 2004.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Treasury Was Prepared as Presidential Bunker During World War II

A great many people are aware that the Treasury Building served as the temporary White House for President Andrew Johnson immediately following the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln. While Mary Todd Lincoln was permitted to settle her personal affairs and to deal with her personal grief in the White House for several weeks, the Secretary of the Treasury provided an office to the new President. In this room, currently the reception room for the Under Secretary for International Affairs, the state funeral arrangements for President Lincoln were developed, the warrant for the arrest of President of the Confederacy Jefferson Davis was prepared and the amnesty document that permitted the men of the Southern states to rejoin the Union as citizens without prejudice for their fighting against the Federal government was issued.

While the Johnson temporary White House in the Treasury Building is well know, not many are aware of the arrangements that were made to provide temporary White House office space in the Treasury Building for President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. In the early days of World War II, there were great fears that there might be enemy air attacks on the city of Washington, particularly on the White House and other governmental buildings. The Secret Service doubled the size of its White House protective forces and the iron fence surrounding the President's House was constructed.

During this time, a permanent White House bomb shelter was seen as a necessity to protect the President of the United States. During the construction of the bomb shelter under the White House, which would take several months, the Secret Service decided that a temporary shelter was urgently needed.

Continued in middle of next column

Special Offer on Ornaments for THA Members Only

The annual THA "members only" special sale of commemorative holiday ornaments is being conducted through May 31, 2002. There is a special flyer enclosed with this newsletter that lists the items available in this sale at 50% below the standard non-member price, plus shipping and handling. This offer is subject to supplies of each product in stock.

This sale offers a great opportunity to purchase the ornaments that are missing in your set of Treasury commemoratives before the supplies are exhausted. No additional production runs will be ordered by THA from the manufacturer.

Presidential Bunker (Continued)

In the basement of the Treasury Building is a group of 10 large vaults, each about 1,100 square feet, all protected by an enormous vault door two stories beneath the Cash Room in the North Wing. One of these vaults was outfitted as the President's bedroom and office. A command center for his staff was also established there, consisting 12 desks that converted to beds and 12 telephone. Carpeting and wall drapes were installed to make the vault a bit more habitable, and food and water supplies were stockpiled for the President's and his staff's use. Fortunately, the bunker never needed to be used.

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August 2002

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- **Personalities from Treasury's Past.** In this issue, THA begins a new series of articles on people who have shaped the Treasury Department's history over the past two hundred years.
- **Special savings to members on THA holiday cards.** THA is once again offering its members special savings on the purchase of its snow scene holiday greeting cards, through October 31, subject to stock on hand.

THA Reception for Cash Room Ceiling Restoration Donors

On April 29, 2002, THA hosted an appreciation reception for the individuals, corporations and foundations that contributed to the Special Restoration Campaign that funded the re-gilding of the Cash Room ceiling. The two-hour evening social event was held in the restored Cash Room, in the North Wing of the Treasury Building, offering an opportunity for all to enjoy the brilliance of the 24-karat gold-leaf restoration. Approximately 80 were in attendance at the event at which Secretary of the Treasury Paul H. O'Neill presented welcoming and appreciation comments. Several other senior Treasury officials were also in attendance.

THA Board Member and Chairman of the Programs Committee Clifford R. Northup served as master of ceremonies at the event, and brief comments were delivered to the audience by THA President and Chairman of the Special Restoration Fundraising Committee Michael D. Serlin, as well as by Board Chairman Thomas P. O'Malley.

The Office of the Curator and its cadre of volunteer docents offered brief tours to several other restored rooms of the Building for the attendees. Special guests included former Secretary G. William Miller and THA's co-founder and first president, Robert R. Fredlund. Also, two former Treasurers of the United States were in attendance, Kathryn D. Ortega and Mary Ellen Withrow.

North Entrance of Treasury Re-Opened After 25 Years

On June 28, 2002, Secretary Paul O'Neill officiated at the ribbon-cutting ceremony to mark the re-opening of the Pennsylvania Avenue entrance in the North Wing of the Treasury Building. This entrance had been closed since 1976. Beginning July 1, this will be the primary entry to the Building, since the Visitors Appointment Center and the entire East Wing will be closed for major renovation work.

For the ceremony, THA helped provide some of the historical facts that became part of a Treasury Department News webpage on the North Entrance vicinity, which is excerpted below:

The North Entrance and Lobby were first opened in 1869. Architect Alfred Mullett designed the Cash Room and North Lobby to be the most opulent spaces in the Treasury Building and decorated in a sumptuous manner with gold gilding. In 1927 the Cash Room was renovated and the present bronze doors were added. The Cash Room and Lobby were closed in 1976, and were restored between 1985 and 1987. In 2001, THA funded the re-gilding of the Cash Room ceiling.

15 vaults lay under the North Lobby for over 100 years. They varied in size from 10 feet by 16 feet to 50 feet by 90 feet. In the 1970s they were converted into Treasury's main computer command center. Among the documents stored in these vaults was the checkbook used in the 1870s by the Comptroller of the Currency to pay the depositors of the failed Freedman's Savings and Trust Bank, whose main office was just opposite the North entrance on the site of the Treasury Annex. Below the vaults are the catacombs, special vaults used to shore up the Cash Room. The catacombs are so cool that Woodrow Wilson's administration stored flour in them during World War I.

In 1949 the Albert Gallatin statue replaced the fountain (originally installed in 1869) in the North Plaza. The statue was designed by James Earl Fraser, the American sculptor who designed the Buffalo nickel. Fraser attended the dedication. Secretary John Snyder (later a THA member) officiated. The dedication was one of the first Treasury events to appear on television news.

THA Repeats Special Offer on Holiday Cards for Members

THA is once again offering its members a special savings on its holiday cards of the Treasury Building through October 31, subject to stock on hand. The cards show the Treasury Building from a Southwest view, in a full-color snow setting, with the Treasury Annex Building in the distance. This image, from a watercolor by local artist Ken Frye, may be seen on THA's website.

The THA holiday cards are packed 10 to a box, and come in a choice of inside printings (see below). To order, cut out or photocopy this column, add your name and address, and mail it with your check to the address in the right column by October 31.

THA member special pricing is \$7 per box (usually \$8), plus members get a free box for every two purchased. Inside printing types may be mixed.

Order for Treasury Building Cards

**SPECIAL MEMBER-ONLY OFFER
EXPIRES OCTOBER 31, 2002**

__ Box(es) Holiday Cards @ \$7, with inside inscription as follows:

- () "Merry Christmas and Best Wishes for the New Year"
- () "Seasons Greetings and Best Wishes for the New Year"
- () Blank inside for your message

TOTAL OF ORDER: \$ _____

Plus Free Boxes of cards, 1 box free for every 2 boxes purchased:

- () **Merry Christmas;**
- () **Seasons Greetings;**
- () **Blank**

Name: _____

Address: _____

Personalities from Treasury's Past —

Robert Mills — Architect of the "New Treasury Building"

Following the arsonist fire in the Treasury Building in 1833, Secretary of the Treasury Louis McLane commissioned a report assessing the damage to the building and called upon Robert Mills—the architect most experienced with fireproof construction in the country. Mills had gained considerable fame for his practical, yet aesthetically refined, fireproof buildings which he designed for the state of South Carolina. The federal government, after suffering from a series of disastrous fires, was intensely interested in Mills' technical expertise in fireproof construction.

Mills was born in Charleston, SC, in 1781. While the facts about his early training as an architect are clouded, Mills stated that he was "the first American who has passed through a regular course of study in architecture in his own country." Mills took great pride in this claim and encouraged others to pursue a uniquely American taste in architecture. As a young adult, Mills was apprenticed to White House architect James Hoban and, afterwards, Thomas Jefferson employed Mills as a draftsman at Monticello. In addition to the architectural training Mills received from Jefferson, he was afforded access to Jefferson's library, which was the largest architectural collection in America at the time. Mills other important mentor was Benjamin Latrobe who introduced him to the technology of fireproof construction as practiced in England. Following his apprenticeship with Latrobe, Mills began his own practice in Philadelphia.

Mills spent the decade of the 1820s working in his native South Carolina, but uncertainties about his continued employment in the state led him to Washington, DC in 1830. Working as a draftsman in the Land Office (part of the Treasury) and

later responsible for renovations in the Capitol Building and the White House, Mills was well positioned, professionally and politically, to assist Treasury in the aftermath of the 1833 fire. Three years after submitting his report on the fire damaged building to Secretary McLane, President Andrew Jackson named Mills "Architect of Public Buildings" and put him in charge of the construction of the New Treasury and a new Patent Office. During the 1830s, Mills also designed a number of customs houses for New England ports. These significant federal commissions put Mills in an enviable position as the leading designer of public buildings and made him a lightning rod for jealous colleagues who wanted the work for themselves.

Mills completed his work on the New Treasury Building in 1842 but continued in his federal position as "Architect of Public Buildings" until his dismissal in 1851. He died at his home in Washington in March 1855. His practical and classically refined designs continued to influence the direction of federal architecture well into the twentieth century, as evidenced by the buildings within the Federal Triangle. Mills' legacy is the extraordinary collection of buildings which expressed architecturally the hopes and aspirations of a young Nation.

(This article is the first in a series on the people who have shaped Treasury's history. See future THA Newsletters for other installments.)

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- **Personalities from Treasury's Past.** THA continues its series of articles on people who have shaped Treasury history over the past two hundred years.
- **Treasury Building Holiday Sale.** Mark your calendar for December 10!

Oldest Elements of Treasury Building Are Prehistoric

In the Treasury Building, begun in 1842 in the Nation's Capital that was established in 1800, there are elements of the Building that are much older than one might imagine.

"Think of it as walking on the floor of the Ocean," observed Dr. Raymond Rye, a paleo-biologist with the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History, commenting upon what it was like to walk across the beautiful fossils found in the historic Treasury Building's marble floor tiles. The pinwheel fossils traced in the material of the black marble floor are ancient snails. Those fossils – now stone – were sliced in two when the marble was cut to form the square slabs used for Treasury's flooring. The slabs divulge symmetrical (clockwise) patterns.

When you walk through Treasury's South, West and North wings where the original marble flooring remains, it is easy to locate these marble floor tiles. The white marble comes from the Baltimore region. The dark marble is from Vermont. Long ago – 430 to 440 million years ago – clay sediment, very fine in texture, was laid down on the floor of an ancient sea. As that sediment built up, pressure was brought to bear on the soil which lithified it, turning it to stone that we know of as mudstone or shale.

With the passage of time and the application of greater magnitudes of pressure, the shale metamorphosed into a harder form of rock: marble. Depending on the chemical composition of the rock involved, the resultant marble would be colored lighter or darker — hence, marble of two kinds, differing in color from different locations. Also, depending on

the presence of marine life, fossils would be preserved first in the mudstone or shale and then in the marble. The metamorphosis was not cataclysmic enough for the fossils to lose their integrity.

Main Treasury's black marble fossils are ***Maclurites magna***. They were snails – or escargot — that would sit on the clay floor of the ancient ocean in what was probably a very rich environment of seaweed-like algae. Food would come to the snail – rather than the opposite – as with other members of the ***mollusk*** phylum. These ***Maclurites*** were given the name ***magna*** because of their great size compared with other snails. They range up to 6 inches across, which means the original snail was relatively large in the scheme of snails.

Paleo-biologists, such as Dr. Rye, depend upon the rock in which fossils are found to accurately date the fossil. Dr. Rye indicated that these fossils are of the Ordovician period, and that this marble is a prolific fossiliferous rock. He suggested a visit to the Arts and Industry Building of the Smithsonian (constructed in the early 1870's) or to the Old Post Office Pavilion (constructed between 1892-1899) to see more of these ***Maclurites magna*** in their marble tiles.

THA Is Joined by Industry Partner for Product Marketing

THA and White House Gear, Inc. (WHG) have entered into an arrangement for WHG to sell THA products at its retail stores and its website, through the use of credit cards. This arrangement will enhance THA's exposure to customers beyond the Treasury Building and Treasury bureau staff, where we have been limited in the past.

White House Gear was established in 1994 by and for the White House Press Corps, initially marketing primarily Air Force One collectibles and other White House items. WHG is now expanding its scope to include other patriotic commemorative items. More information about WHG may be found on their website—www.whitehousegear.com. Over the next several weeks, THA will phase in WHG's involvement by modifying our website to link to WHG's site. Discounts will be offered to current members.

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The event is scheduled to be held from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., with the U.S. Mint, Bureau of Engraving and Printing, U.S. Secret Service Uniformed Division Benefit Association and Treasury Department Recreation Association participating in addition to THA. A wide variety of items will be available for purchase as holiday gifts.

Admission to the Treasury Building requires a Main Treasury or Treasury bureau building pass or identification.

Special Offer to Members on 2000 Holiday Ornament

THA is extending through the end of the year a special members-only sale on its final holiday ornament issued in 2000. This "buy-two, get-one-at-two-thirds-off" offer is available at membership price of \$15 each ornament or 3 for \$35, including shipping, but the supply is limited.

This ornament commemorated the Bicentennial of the District of Columbia as the National Capital and of the Treasury Department in Washington.

Order for Treasury 2000 Ornament

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EXPIRES DECEMBER 31, 2002
(Postmark Date)**

___ 2000 ornament(s) @ \$15 each or 3 for \$35 — a savings of \$10.

TOTAL OF ORDER: \$ _____

Name: _____
Address: _____

Personalities from Treasury's Past —

Thomas U. Walter, Master Architect of the "Treasury Extension"

Thomas U. Walter (1804-1887) is familiar to many readers as the architect of the current dome of the U.S. Capitol Building—one of Washington's most prominent landmarks — replacing the previous semi-spherical "Bulfinch dome." Yet, few people know of Walter's involvement in the design of the Treasury Building as it is today.

During two critical junctures in the Treasury Building's construction, this Philadelphia architect cast himself in the role of villain and later hero and, as a result, had a profound influence on the development of the overall design of the Building.

Walter, who had been born in Philadelphia to a builder, apprenticed with the architect William Strickland. After six years of training, Walter became a master mason—an occupation which he pursued for four years. After additional training in architecture and the fine arts, Walter again joined Strickland's office as a draftsman. Three years later, at age 27, Walter established his own architectural office. Early architectural commissions which won him acclaim include Girard College in Philadelphia and a number of churches in Richmond, Norfolk, and Petersburg, Virginia.

Walter first became involved in the Treasury Building during the period he was working to establish his own architectural practice. In 1838, in response to a myriad of criticisms of Robert Mills' design for the "New" Treasury Building (then under construction), President Martin Van Buren appointed Walter to study the Building and to prepare a report for the President and the Congress. Walter attacked Mills' Treasury Building for its location, as well as for its appearance (he de-

scribed the East colonnade of the Treasury Building as monotonous). Perhaps most alarming was Walter's charge that the Building was structurally unstable. After months of political wrangling, Congress voted on a bill which proposed demolishing Mills' unfinished Treasury Building. By a slim margin of three votes, the bill and Walter's advice were rejected, and Mills was allowed to complete the construction of what is today the East and Center Wings of Treasury.

Historians have noted that Walter's consulting work on this highly visible and politically charged Federal construction project may have been of help to him in gaining Government commissions for other public buildings. Indeed, in 1851 Walter was named Architect of the Capitol and the following year he was asked to propose designs for extending Robert Mills' Treasury Building—the very building he had recommended be demolished.

Walter's conceptual design for the Treasury Extension (today's South, West and North wings — completed in 1860, 1864 and 1869, respectively) determined the "figure eight" form the Building ultimately took in plan. Significantly, Walter also recommended that the Greek Revival style first established by Mills in the East and Center wings be continued in the Extension.

(This is the second in a series of articles on the people who have shaped Treasury's history.)

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