

HISTORIC

STANLEY MOSK LIBRARY
AND COURTS BUILDING

TOUR



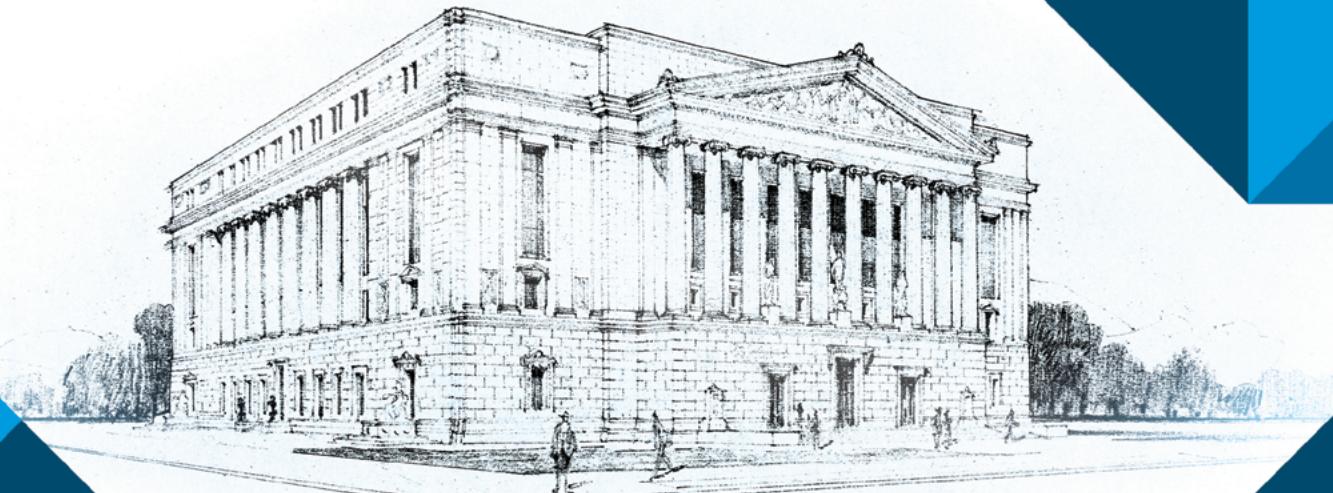
The California State Library was established in 1849 with a gift by Colonel Jonathan Drake Stevenson of the New York Volunteers. The gift, a 26 volume set, was "The Natural History of New York," 1842-1847.

The first printed book catalog, "The Catalogue of the California State Library, January 1, 1855," was published by the Secretary of State in 1855.

The California State Library was located in the California State Capitol Building in the Apse portion between the Senate and Assembly Chambers beginning in the 1860s. By 1910 it had run out of space.

The present State Library broke ground in 1922 and was completed in 1928. Maynard Dixon painted his mural "A Pageant of Traditions" after the library was opened to the public, completing it also in 1928.

The Library and Courts Building was named after Stanley Mosk in 2002. Mosk served as an associate justice of the California Supreme Court (1964-2001) for thirty-seven years and was the State Attorney General of California from 1958 until his appointment to the Supreme Court.



Stop |

The Front Entrance & Façade

Architectural Style

The Capitol Extension Buildings are an adaptation of Classical Greek architectural style, popular during the 1920s. The Stanley Mosk Library and Courts Building and the Jesse Unruh Building were both designed by the prestigious San Francisco firm of Weeks and Day.

Façade

The façade of the building on all four sides is a combination of Sierra white granite from the McGilvary Granite Company in Madera County, California, and “granitex” terra cotta from Glad-ding, McBean of Lincoln, California. The front steps, first floor, the pillars for the portico, and pilasters are carved granite. The cladding for the second floor to the top cornice is “granitex.”

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 McGilvary 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 entranceway. Also designed by Sanford, the favorite of these for visitors is the Buddha whose belly people like to rub for good luck on the way to the courtroom.

Stop 2

Entrance Vestibule

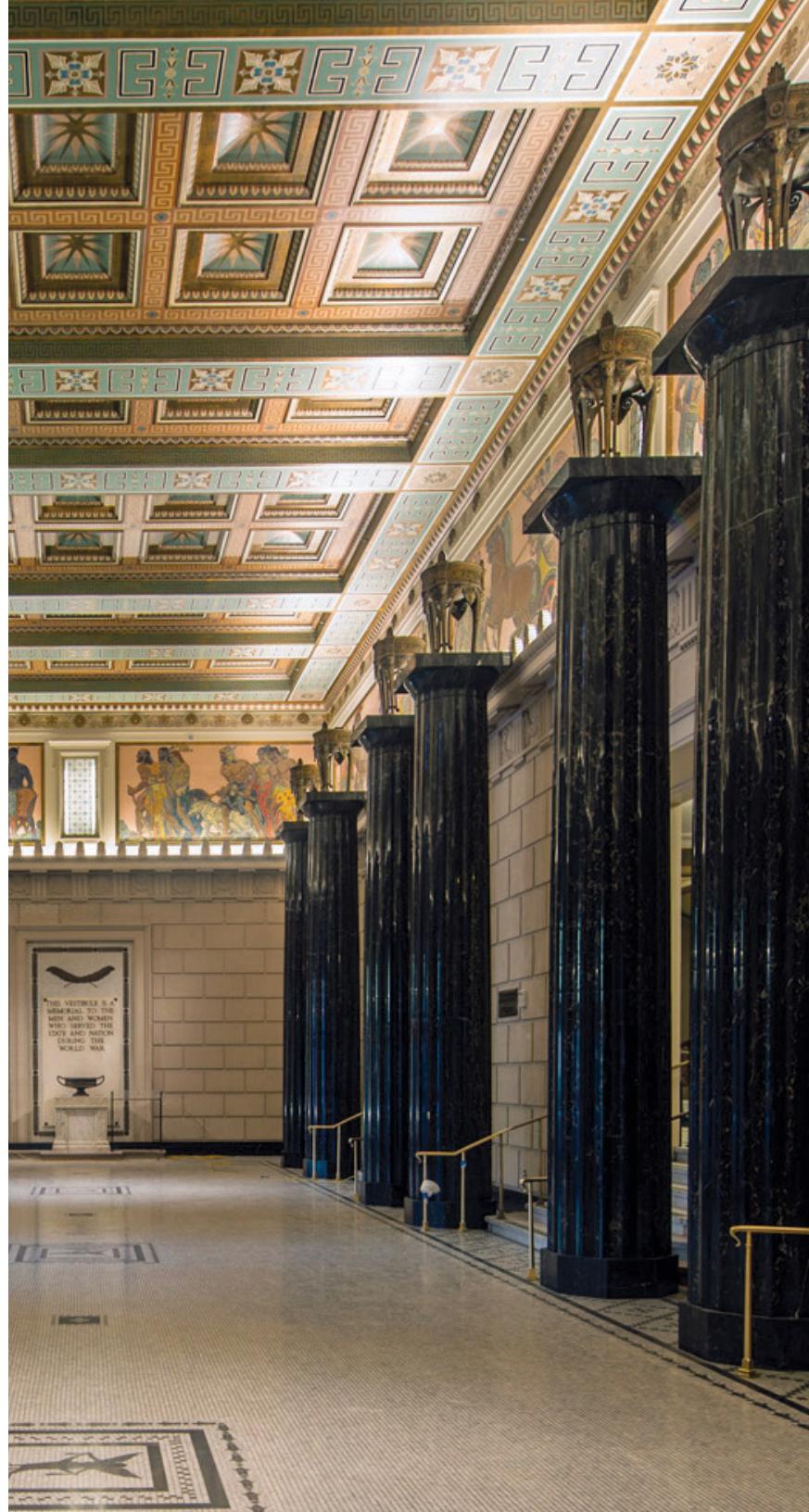
Opening the outer doors you enter the Entrance Vestibule which has two stone urns at each extremity. Three chandeliers resemble ancient oil lamps. On the interior walls of the building's outer vestibule the designers Charles Peter Weeks and William Peyton Day signed their building with a bronze tablet.

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 twelve 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 entitled, "War through the Ages." Van Sloun painted his murals at his San Francisco studio and brought them to Sacramento for installation.



Stop 3

Grand Stairway

Ascending the left steps from the Memorial Vestibule is the Grand Stairway. This monumental semi-circular stairway is impressive and 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 and clathri motifs, are said to be bronze, but are now disguised under a coating of copper gilt. The stairway was closed off for years to hide fire suppression and air conditioning equipment but as a result of the restoration, the light wells from the first to the fifth floor are now open.

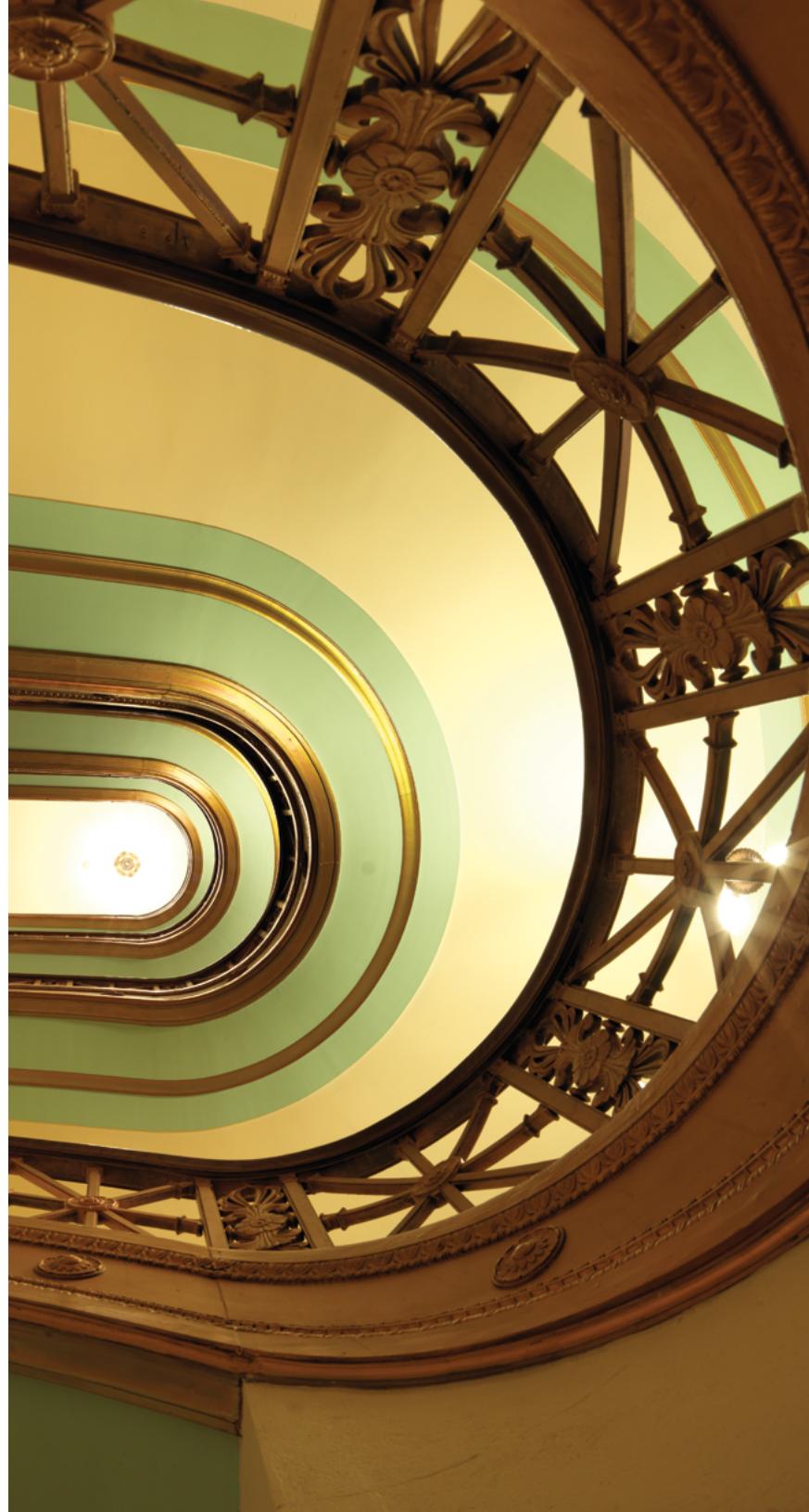
The Court Room

(Not open to the public, may be open on a tour 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 for Anita Baldwin McClaughry 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

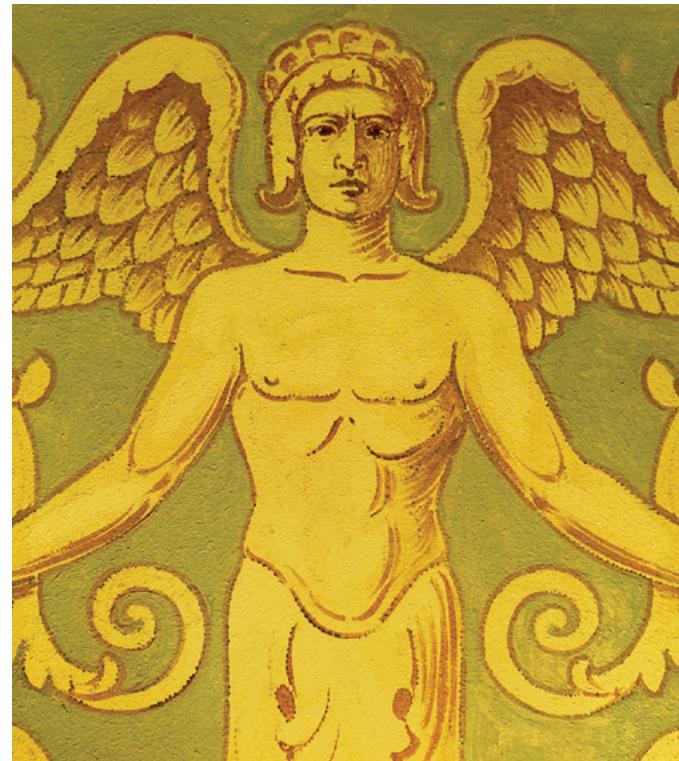
(Not open to the public)

On the north side of the east corridor is the door to the State Library'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 doorframes.

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. Library catalogs can now be accessed online.

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. But 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. Unfortunately, it was covered in 1954 by linoleum and an enlarged circulation desk. With the restoration, the full beauty of the floor may be seen.



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. The restoration team was successful. A bronze map of California in relief proclaims the dedication of the room to Gillis in 1931.

The highlight of this room is a 69x14 foot mural painted by California Western Artist Maynard Dixon (1876–1946) entitled “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 of California—on the left side the Spanish and on the right side the Eastern U.S. Over the entranceway, Dixon included a male figure depicting “Power” and a female figure depicting “Beauty.” Three books of knowledge also hover over the doorway—Philosophy, Science and Art.

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. Stepping over to one of the two-story tall northern windows one can see a full view of the Unruh Building and the fountain between, which together with the Library and Courts Building form the Capitol Extension Group.

Witkin Law Library and Government Publications Reading Rooms

Although not a part of the tour, these rooms are open to the public and are on the same floor as the Circulation Room and Gillis Hall. Please take a moment after the tour to take a look.



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.

In the center is the Great Seal of the State of California. It shows a grizzly bear eating grapes and may be the only known example. 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 were opened. Pilasters with Corinthian capitals decorate the walls along with bronze light fixtures.

(Not open for tours) Across the corridor is the Robert K. Puglia Law Library that serves the Third District Court of Appeal. The space originally served as the State Library’s museum room. Note the beautiful clerestory windows.



Why the State Library and Courts Building Came to Be?

The State Library was housed in the State Capitol Building in the Apse portions 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 1958–1964 and as an associate justice of the California Supreme Court from 1964–2001, a record for California.

Stanley Mosk Library and Courts Building
914 Capitol Mall
Sacramento, CA 95814
(916) 654-0261
www.library.ca.gov

To schedule a tour, call (916) 653-1440.

Library Hours:

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

