

“A Reference Library in Stone”

(In 1926, the Section of United States National Museum devoted to an exhibition of building and ornamental stones, today housed at the Smithsonian Institution)

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A Reference Library in Stone

By H. S. BRYANT

THE members of the American Granite Association who were fortunate enough to attend the convention held in Washington, D. C. in December, had the opportunity, which many embraced, of inspecting one of the most unique collections in the world which has a special appeal to all persons interested in ornamental or building stone, whether they be

building and ornamental stone produced in this country, and many typical examples from abroad.

The larger portion of the collection is installed in specially designed cases so arranged that both sides and one end are visible, the ends of the alcoves formed between the cases being utilized to good advantage for the display of large or particularly striking specimens.

The material in the cases is mostly in the form of four inch cubes, arranged on shelves, the several kinds being grouped under the states in which they are produced, the latter being arranged in alphabetical order so that the representative kinds of granite or marble or limestone of all producing states may be readily compared. Each specimen is accompanied by a printed label giving its common or trade name, the geologic age which it represents, its color, texture, the locality from which it was obtained, the name of the donor or collector and, frequently, a brief statement of its principal uses, weathering qualities, etc. In the matter of dressing the specimens the practical use of the collection has been kept in mind and each face of the cubes has been given a different finish so that the appearance of the stone under any desired finish may be seen.

One of the most striking features of the exhibit consists of a number of large pedestals or bases arranged along the center of the hall, on which, incidentally, are exhibited larger specimens of materials than can be well displayed in the cases. The panels and



Section in United States National Museum Devoted to an Exhibition of Building and Ornamental Stones, the Most Extensive Collection of its kind in the world.

quarrymen, architects, builders, sculptors or merely laymen temporarily interested in building a new home or other edifice.

In the United States National Museum in Washington, there is installed in the geological department the most extensive collection of building and ornamental stones to be found in this country which, by reason of the excellence of its arrangement and the manner of its installation, not only forms a most attractive and instructive exhibit to the casual visitor, but affords also a practical reference library of specimens showing a wealth of material that is of invaluable assistance to those specially interested.

The collection is under the direct supervision of Dr. George P. Merrill, Head Curator of Geology in the Museum, a recognized expert on stone for building and ornamentation, and author of a standard work on the subject. As the result of his systematic endeavor to increase and keep the collection up to date, there are now on exhibition approximately twenty-seven hundred different specimens comprising practically every worked or workable kind of



Exhibits in the Stone Library of the National Museum Showing Method of Display to Enable Visitors to See All Sides of Specimens.

(photo captions) (top) "Section of United States National Museum devoted to an exhibition of building and ornamental stones, the most extensive collection of its kind in the world." & (bottom) "Exhibits in the stone library of the National Museum showing method of display to enable visitors to see all sides of specimens."

tops of the pedestals are slabs of different kinds of marble that have been presented for this purpose by various quarries, the tops being 32" x 32" x 3", polished on top and edges, while the panels are 12" x 24" x 1½", polished on the exposed face. On each specimen the name of the donor and the quarry producing it are always conspicuously displayed.

The wealth and variety of color exhibited by the collection is beyond description. Practically every hue and shade is represented from the pure white of the Colorado Yule and Gnat's marbles through successively darker stages to the almost dead black of some of the slates and granites. There are plain reds, pinks, blues, stripes and bandings. Some of the specimens are iridescent, others translucent and still others exhibit beautiful mottled effects in tan and black, pink and bright green, red and gray, etc., in short, the collection contains almost every conceivable and inconceivable color effect that may be desired in the working out of any artistic or architectural scheme. The granites are particularly numerous, while of the more decorative marbles, limestones and serpentines there is a wonderful variety. A fine exhibit of onyx

was exhibited in the National Museum. The firm was not aware that such a sample was in the collection, but when the quarry superintendent visited Washington in connection with the competition for the Lincoln Memorial, he went to the Museum and found that the sample referred to was a piece that had been presented by a firm of architects. He made a thorough inspection of the collection and later, in transmitting a larger specimen, paid glowing tribute to its comprehensive scope and utility.

A careful inspection of the collection before deciding on the stone for any large building operation would materially assist in the selection of the proper and most suitable kinds.

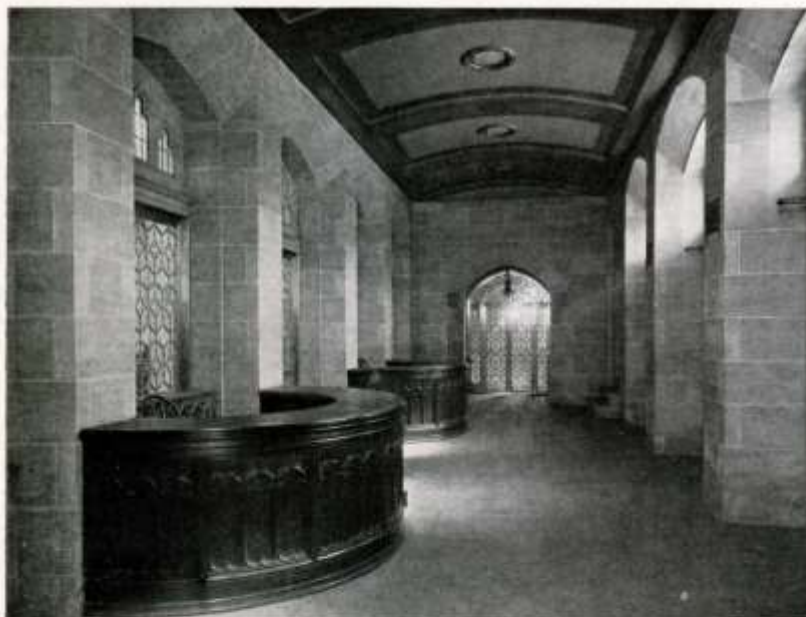
Architectural League Exhibition

The forty-first annual exhibition of the Architectural League of New York will be held from January 31 to February 28, inclusive, in the Fine Arts Building, 215 West Fifty-seventh Street, New York. The exhibition will be illustrative of architecture and the allied arts. It will consist of drawing and models of proposed or

executed work in structural, decorative and landscape architecture; sketches and finished examples of decorative painting; sketches, models and finished examples of decorative and monumental sculpture, drawings, models and executed work in the decorative arts, and photographs of executed work in any of the above branches.

Work of architecture and landscape architecture to be eligible for an award must be adequately presented by means of drawings, photographs or models of executed work. Those in decorative painting and sculpture to be eligible must consist of the actual works themselves. Works of native industrial art to be eligible for an award may be in any of the crafts. Such works must be actual objects and of recent production, but they may be accompanied by photographs of the exhibitor's work in the same craft.

The annual exhibition of the Architectural League of New York has for many years furnished a record of architectural development; and comprising, as it does, not only works of architecture, but of the allied arts, has served to emphasize the close relation between the architect and members of the related professions. Last year's exhibition was shown in conjunction with that of the American Institute of Architects at the Exposition of Architecture and the Allied Arts in the Grand Central Palace.



Section of Interior of St. Thomas Aquinas Church, Chicago. Finished in Napoleon Gray Marble. Enterprise Marble Co., Marble Contractors. K. M. Vitzhum Company, Architects.

marbles is also included. Architects, builders, building committees, or persons otherwise interested in stone, will find here many desirable materials not now in general use that are capable of a wide variety of uses.

That a study of the collection by the layman or casual visitor may also be fruitful of results is evidenced by the experience of a prominent quarrying firm which received a contract for a church with the stipulation that the stone be like the sample on exhibi-