

THE POLITICS OF BUSINESS
IN THE CAREER OF AN AMERICAN ARCHITECT:
CASS GILBERT - 1878-1905

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INTRODUCTION

The period between the Civil War and the end of the nineteenth century has been described by many twentieth century historians as a time when business enterprise dominated all aspects of American culture. Thomas C. Cochran and William Miller, among others, argue that even from its inception, America has been settled "mainly by enterprising immigrants seeking economic opportunities and economic freedom," and that this quest "has been most powerful in determining the nature of [American] culture."¹ Recognizing the thread of economic development from America's beginning has led many historians to interpret our history in economic terms solely, but as Cochran and Miller point out, these same historians fail to do justice to our cultural history by not making business itself the "kernel" of their discussions. In so doing,

[The economic historians] have ignored the most dramatic story in our history, the story of business enterprise itself, the story of its institutions and their impact upon American society.²

Not only have historians ignored the history of business enterprise, but various aspects of business have also yet to be studied, including the relation of business to religion, education, ethics, and the creative arts. Hopefully, the following essay will contribute to a further understanding of American business between the closing decades of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth in at least two of these areas. By focusing upon

the business practices of a single American architect and his associates within their cultural milieu, this study may shed new light on the relation between business and ethics as well as between business and the creative arts in America.

The accelerated growth of American industry following the Civil War reached phenomenal proportions by 1900. By 1893, New England alone was producing goods more valuable per capita than those of any country in the world. The manufacturing of timber, steel, crude oil, meat packing, and the extraction of gold, silver, coal, and iron exceeded all world competitors. America had more telephones, incandescent lighting, and electric traction, and more miles of telegraph wires than any other nation. Following the pattern of its pre-war leadership, America led the world in the manufacturing of hardware, machine tools, arms, and ammunition.³

During the same period of manufacturing expansion, the nation changed from a dominantly rural to an urban one. Between 1885 and 1913, the urban-rural economic balance had shifted so that agricultural valuations, accounting for a third of the national wealth in 1880, had moved to one-fourth by 1912. A quarter of the national population had lived in cities in 1880; by 1910 it was nearly one-half. Between 1880 and 1890, Chicago's population doubled; Minneapolis and St. Paul trebled; and Detroit, Milwaukee, and Cleveland grew by 60 to 70 per cent.⁴

As a result of the rapid expansion of industry and the

simultaneous shift from a rural-centered society to an urban one, it is not surprising to discover how all-pervasive business enterprise had become by the late nineteenth century. In the words of one critic,

. . . As time passed [Americans] spent their profits, wages, and commissions on goods announced for sale in newspapers supported by business advertisements and friendly to business objectives⁵

All aspects of American culture were touched by business: literature was issued by publishers engaged in business enterprise, amusements were staged for profit, colleges (often the servants of business) became devoted to science, and public architecture concerned itself with banks, insurance offices, hotels --all constructed for the service of commerce.⁶ So all-embracing was the influence of business enterprise that the financier, Richard Croker, when interviewed by Lincoln Steffens, stated:

Ever heard that business is business? Well, so is politics business, and reporting --journalism, doctoring-- all professions, arts, sports --everything is business.⁷

The ascendance of business enterprise following the Civil War reveals not only a period of accelerated economic growth and the incursion of business into all aspects of American culture, but also a time of general decline in the moral character of our culture as a result of the emphasis upon material growth. Because of the invention and use of the machinery of war and the continued growth in the manufacturing of machines for peaceful use, America entered a period when traditional standards of conduct no longer applied. As Cochran and Miller point out, the new business leaders

of the post-Civil War era established rules and procedures that set aside the moral standards of pre-war America.

In place of the old canons [the post-war business leaders] imposed the rule of the jungle upon a willing people who worshipped at the altar of 'Progress.' Remorselessly they exploited precious resources, stripping incomparable forests, leaving gaping holes in mountain sides to mark exhausted mines, dotting with abandoned derricks oil fields drained of petroleum and natural gas. In reckless haste, they constructed railroads through the wilderness, and immense factories to supply the needs of millions yet unborn. They promoted many similar projects simply to mulct a nation of speculators for the private benefit of the 'Fittest.'⁸

It was not surprising, then, that as business and industry grew, the moral character of American society suffered. Richard Hofstadter, pointing to the "remarkable burst of material development" from 1865 to 1900, states that during the period when the "physical energies" of the American people had been mobilized, their "moral energies had lain relatively dormant," and that "certain moral facets of the American character had become all but invisible."⁹ Citing the controversy over slavery, the war, and Reconstruction as factors which exhausted the "moral and political capacities of the people," Hofstadter goes on to argue that the American people had been relieved to "abandon crusades and reforms and to plunge instead into the rewarding tasks of material achievement."¹⁰

Seeking a term to describe the 1865-1900 era, Cochran calls it an "age of corruption,"¹¹ a label applying to almost all aspects of American society, but stemming for the most part from the

untrammelled forces of business enterprise cited by Hofstadter. Let us look at three institutions within this "age of corruption" that relate to the study below.

As a specific example of corruption, Cochran, re-enforced by other historians including Matthew Josephson, excoriates the practices of the railroads in the late nineteenth century. The Union Pacific, for example, handed out \$400,000 in graft between 1866 and 1872. The Central Pacific, between 1875 and 1885, distributed \$500,000 annually to fight water competition, to win rich mail contracts, and "to riddle with restrictions and objections bills for river and harbor improvements."¹² So powerful were the railroad lobbyists that by 1893 the United States Government had granted the railroad companies one-fourth of the whole area of Minnesota and Washington; one-fifth of Wisconsin, Iowa, Kansas, North Dakota, and Montana; one-seventh of Nebraska, one-eighth of California, and one-ninth of Louisiana.¹³

The politicians who made these lands available to the railroads worked within --and contributed to-- the context of corruption as well. As Josephson demonstrates, between 1887 and 1890 the average Representative in the United States Congress was under the close supervision of the Senator-boss or corporation lawyer who headed his state party.¹⁴ When Robert LaFollette took his seat in Congress, for example, he was cautioned by Senator Philetus Sawyer, a millionaire lumberman, not to oppose bills demanded by the St. Paul Railroad or the Chicago and Northwestern. "Those are your home corporations," LaFollette

was warned.¹⁵ When LaFollette urged a colleague from Wisconsin to resist the influence of the railroad lobbyists, he was told, "Sawyer. . .insists on my voting for the bill. . . . He has loaned me money; he has a mortgage on everything I possess."¹⁶ When Sawyer attempted to bribe LaFollette directly, and the young Representative exposed the offer, it was LaFollette's --not Sawyer's-- career that suffered. According to Josephson:

[LaFollette's] political friends at once abandoned him, because he had broken an unwritten code and ignored the 'good of the party.' For long years the brilliant LaFollette was relegated to the private practice of law in Wisconsin, while the sordid Sawyer continued to sit in the Senate.¹⁷

Not only railroad promoters and Congressmen, but public officials in state government as well, were involved in the corruption that marked American society at the end of the nineteenth century. In 1895, for example, certain members of the State Capitol Commission of Montana made a secret agreement with a Helena architect, John C. Paulsen, whereby Paulsen would prepare plans and specifications for a new capitol building costing \$5,000,000.¹⁸ Following the terms of the private agreement, Paulsen said he would present his plans but after the construction contract was let he would change the plans without any apparent change in the original appearance of the building. By substituting cement, terra cotta, and other cheap materials in the place of the specified cut stone, bronze and copper, the Commission planned to pocket \$3,000,000.¹⁹ After implicating another architect who offered to make even more money for the

Commissioners, the graft was eventually exposed during a grand jury investigation, but not before the unfortunate Paulsen had taken his life.²⁰ Similar cases occurred during the 1890's. As the following study shows, the construction of the Minnesota Capitol was touched by attempted bribery at one point and by questionable business practices throughout.

The rise of business enterprise was strengthened by several philosophical ideals present within the American culture of the late nineteenth century. Pointing out the major ideals of the period, and showing how they related to Gilbert and his associates, helps us to understand the forces that shaped these men for the careers they pursued.

The most pervasive ideal of the period was a belief in hard work as the key to material success; and, as its corollary, the belief that the individual has a right to reap the fruits of his hard-earned success. Perhaps in no other period of American history did the Protestant work ethic hold such power over the minds and wills of men, nor were the material results of that belief so profitable for those who applied it. In the quest for success, and the stress on the individual's right to achieve it, the late nineteenth century bears no comparison to previous or later periods of history.²¹

In industrial America, according to Samuel P. Hays, "material success became the predominant measure of human achievement,

[and] the very term 'success' implied material [as opposed to spiritual] prosperity."²² Businessmen rather than politicians and theologians commanded primary prestige. It was a period when the public absorbed the philosophy of success as put forth by Horatio Alger.²³ Orison Swett Marsden argued in Pushing to the Front (1894) that the major element in the search for success was the will to succeed. His book went through two hundred and fifty editions. In 1897, Marsden, who had lost his first fortune in the depression of 1893, began to publish a magazine called Success, which helped to bring him even greater wealth and fame.²⁴

In order to achieve material success, the businessman of the 1880's and 1890's gave over every waking hour to it. A critic, writing about Gilbert in 1934, quoted the architect as saying:

. . .To become an architect in the right sense of the word means that a man shall give his life to it and nothing else. . .and content himself with nothing less than complete success.²⁵

Sixty years after his association with Gilbert ended, Edwin H. Lundie, a student-draftsman in Gilbert's office at the turn of the century, and now a prominent architect in St. Paul, stated:

Application and lots of hard work in anything that you do --that I believe, is the most profound influence [Gilbert] had on me and [his influence was] so strong that it is still with me to this day. It shaped my attitude and my entire outlook toward my work. . .We worked in those days until noon on Saturdays [and weekends were spent watercoloring].²⁶

When Gilbert was about to open his New York office in 1899 to begin a career that was to make him a national reputation, a schedule that he recorded suggests the pace at which a businessman

moved in order to fulfill his quest for material success. During a single two-day period, Gilbert met the first day with a politician, the Secretary of the Treasury, and his former partner in three separate meetings. That night, Gilbert took a train for St. Paul, which stopped at Zanesville, Ohio, to pick up a man Gilbert wanted to talk to about Tennessee timberlands and materials for a project then in progress in New York City. In order to finish their business transactions, the two men travelled together as far as Newark, Ohio. When Gilbert arrived in Chicago, he was met by yet another man who wanted to talk about another project the architect had in the works.²⁷

The memorandum from which this account is taken is filled with other daily schedules similar to the one quoted from above; and the hundreds of other documents from Gilbert's files demonstrates the pace, as well as the dedication to hard work, at which the architect and other success-oriented businessmen held themselves during the late nineteenth century.

By 1905, when Gilbert (at the age of forty-six) was commissioned to design the Woolworth Building,²⁸ the amount of hard work and the pace at which he had pursued success paid off handsomely. At his own estimation, Gilbert had designed and built \$20,000,000 worth of buildings;²⁹ and twenty-nine years of active practice, including numerous major projects, were still ahead of him. By the time of his death in 1934,³⁰ awards attesting to Gilbert's success had made him one of the most prestigious architects of the twentieth century. Among these honors were: Presi-

dency of the National Academy of Design; President of the American Institute of Architects; the Legion of Honour of France; President of the American Institute of Arts and Letters; Chairman of the Council of Fine Arts; Charter Member of the American Academy in Rome; Honorary member of the Royal Institute of Canadian Architects; Chevalier of the Legion of Honor. Besides these honors, Gilbert was also awarded the Order of King Albert of Belgium; Exposition gold medals from Paris, San Francisco, St. Louis, and Leipzig; and honorary degrees from New York University, Columbia, Michigan, Oberlin College, and Princeton University.³¹

What the following study implies are the limitations of the success-oriented philosophy. In preparing my study, I have kept in mind what I consider to be the shortcomings of the business ethos of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. If Gilbert himself was not directly responsible for the destruction of natural resources cited by Cochran and Miller --although one does wonder about the once-mentioned Tennessee timberlands-- Gilbert's associates, Henry Villard and James J. Hill, most certainly were. And two other aspects of success-orientation are relevant here as well. One would have to be the blindness to the problems of society implied by the individual's pursuit of wealth, and the other, the lack of adherence to, or a twisting of, an acceptable code of ethical behavior.

In the case of Gilbert's blindness to the problems of society, a study of his papers reveals how far removed and uncaring he was of the problems that plagued the end of the nineteenth century. In thousands of letters from the papers there are --with one exception-- no references to the problems of labor, the Negro, slums, or related issues.³² In the one letter where Gilbert does refer to the problems of society, he shows an extremely negative attitude. Answering a friend who had proposed socialistic or anarchistic solutions to the problems then confronting America, Gilbert said:

The reason that the poor live in the cities [is] because they are too lazy to make a living in the country, or too fond of the excitements and squalid pleasures of city life. . . .³³

Proposing an alternative to his friend's views, Gilbert refers to the merits of practicing the Protestant work ethic. He says that a man can buy ten acres of the "finest land in the world" for \$12.50, and by gardening and farming support himself in "comfort and independence;" for \$125.00 he can buy one hundred acres and in ten years become "absolutely independent of capitalists."³⁴ The final note in this letter, however, reveals more truth about the period than what precedes it. Telling his friend to visit him in St. Paul, Gilbert says:

I have my own house (still by the way largely owned by the mortgager) to whom I am cheerfully paying interest and who's [sic] ownership I am reducing my payments whenever I can.³⁵

If Gilbert represents the philosophy of success and material achievement as it was practiced and believed in by the entrepreneur

of the late nineteenth century, his ethical code --or lack of same-- is the extension of that ideal. A large part of the study below concerns itself with the split between what an American businessman believed was the ethical standard of his profession and what he actually practiced from day to day. In the case of the competition for the Minnesota Capitol, as one example, there is a gap between the stated rules of competition, which called for an impartial award, and the fact that the eventual winner had acted for a period of two years as advisor to the same group that stipulated the rules of competition.

Throughout the careers of Gilbert and his associates one may observe a similar separation between professed ethical standards and actual business practice. In fact, the split occurs so often and with such apparent abandon on the part of the participants, that one continually asks whether the protagonists realized the existence of the gap. Gilbert's blindness to the gap between theory and practice is summarized in a letter to a woman whose son was contemplating an architectural career. Three years after Gilbert had recorded \$20,000,000 of business, he told the woman that architecture is a "very difficult and arduous" profession.

Unless a man is willing to devote his life to the work and to realize in advance that it is not a money-making profession and that he goes into it because of special adaptability and love for the work, he had better keep out. The student of architecture must have the habit of application, self-sacrifice and industry. . . .He must have the temperament of an artist and the training of an engineer. If he can fulfill these conditions there is a chance for success in the finest professional life in the world.³⁶

The following essay is a study of the career of one of the most successful architect-businessmen in America, Cass Gilbert, 1859-1934. Because of the sizeable bulk of existing primary source material, I have limited my essay to the early years of Gilbert's career, 1878-1905. This period includes: Gilbert's training at M.I.T. (1878-1879); his European wanderyear (1880); his apprenticeship with McKim, Mead, and White in New York and Baltimore (1880-1882); his position as superintendent of construction and architectural work for Henry Villard's Northern Pacific Railroad in the West under the sponsorship of McKim, Mead, and White (1883); Gilbert's partnership with James Knox Taylor (1884-1891); the winning of the competition and the superintendence of construction for the Minnesota State Capitol (1895-1905); and the winning of the competition for the New York Custom House (1899).

By the time of the completion of the New York Custom House in 1903, Gilbert was at the threshold of an international reputation. The 1878-1905 period is important because it concerns the formation of Gilbert's career. Besides limiting my study to the early career, I have also concentrated on what I feel is the most important facet of Gilbert's career and personality, an analysis of the architect as a businessman, rather than exclusively as an artist. Since Gilbert changed from a young student with artistic ambitions to a businessman whose interest in winning competitions

†The manuscript collections utilized for this study are described in full in the headnote of the bibliography.

and making money eclipsed the earlier artistic aspirations, it is not difficult to interpret his career solely as that of a businessman.

In the following essay I have described Gilbert's rise into the business world as an "initiation," the process by which he learned to make use of business contacts, the social standing of his associates, and the influence of political figures to build a successful career. A large part of my study has to do with a detailed analysis of how this "initiation process" worked; an understanding of this process provides valuable (and, hopefully, original) insight into the social, political, and business atmosphere of late nineteenth and early twentieth century America.

The Student as Artist

Apprenticeship Years: 1878-1879

Cass Gilbert was born in Zanesville, Ohio, November 24, 1859.¹ He was the son of Samuel Augustus and Elizabeth Fulton Wheeler Gilbert.² When Gilbert was eight the family moved to St. Paul, Minnesota, where he continued his schooling. Very little is known about Gilbert's youthful career, the period preceding his admission to M.I.T. in the fall of 1878.³ His first professional experience may have been in the office of St. Paul architect Abraham M. Radcliff in 1876.⁴ In 1878, Gilbert worked as a surveyor in the engineer's office of the Hudson and River Fall Railroad, Hudson, Wisconsin.⁵ While serving in this post, he was approached to make repairs on the Good Templar's Lodge in Hudson, a job that he twice refused but eventually made a sketch for. There is a note of disparagement in Gilbert's description of this apparently simple drafting task. He tells his friend, Clarence Johnston:

I did not solicit this work: In fact I refused it twice before I made the sketch. Now they have got me into it, they can take the consequences.⁶

Perhaps one reason why Gilbert, at the age of twenty, felt himself above a drafting job was because he was more interested in art, or at least the artistic aspect of architectural drawing.

While attending M.I.T. he was a member of a portrait sketching club and divided his time between sketching and making copies of specifications.⁷ When writing Johnston about the work of his fellow students Gilbert was always critical about not only the architectural features of the drawings, but also about the rendering of background --the "picturesque" element of drawing. When describing a campanile drawn by a fellow student named Brandt, Gilbert praises the sky, but damns the structure:

[It was] bold, somber, windy, cold and gloomy; the clouds stretched away back in perspectiveAs a drawing of sky it was 'Brandt' in big letters all over it; as a campanile it was a failure.⁸

In his criticism of other students Gilbert often drew a distinction between the architect as artist and the architect as businessman. He was particularly severe in his criticism of James Knox Taylor, who, ironically, later became his partner.

My opinion of Jim [he tells Johnston] has changed very much since I came here and it is to my sorrow that I see him so much under the influence of frivolity and carelessness. . . .I was talking to him the other day about a picture in the art museum and also about Hunt's cartoons. . . .and the utter apathy of his countenance when I spoke enthusiastically of a sea, a sky, and a bit of starlight, made me think that his artistic soul was thinking of a fat position in a comfortable office rather than of artistic aspirations and delights. . . .⁹

Coupled with Gilbert's concern over the conflict between the "artistic soul" and the "fat position in a comfortable office" was his concern for the preservation of moral standards in a business career. In response to Johnston's news about conditions in Radcliff's office, Gilbert was extremely critical of one of

the draftsmen, W.W. Franklin:

. . .It is no longer a matter of wonder to me that Buffington and Bassford act and talk towards [Radcliff] as they do, for he deserves condemnation in every respect when he acts as he is now and puts himself under the guidance of so beautiful a moral character as Franklin is said to be. . . .Without letting anyone know what I was about I gently questioned a certain fellow from Cincinnati, who knows W.W. Franklin, and found out that he was notoriously loose in his habits and very dissolute. 'He is,' I have been told, 'keeping bar in a _____ house here in Boston' was the finishing sentence.¹⁰

Gilbert went on to say that while Franklin was a "rattling good draughtsman" he had "not the slightest scruples of honor in regard to leaving an architect in the midst of a busy time, to go off for weeks or months at a time on a 'big bust'."¹¹ A month later when Johnston wrote that he had left Radcliff's office and joined Bassford in an office in St. Paul, Gilbert warns him: ". . .Guard yourself, my dear fellow, Bassford is not a man to be the associate of young men."¹²

One of the recurring motifs in Gilbert's correspondence is the reference to competitions, and often fraudulent practices, among the architecture students at M.I.T. The view Gilbert presents is one of keen competition for class honors, not only among fellow students, but between friends as well. Gilbert recounts that one of Johnston's drawings had been presented for class discussion and voted upon in class competition. In passing on this news to Johnston, Gilbert says:

[Mr. Ware]¹³ gave you some credit and treated you very respectfully but sat on the design. The idea seeming to be mostly on account of its medieval

propensities which he criticized severely. Here I gave him a few words in your behalf and upheld the arrangement. He acknowledged the correction and asked for information as to your idea or 'motif.' I replied and gave a vigorous, not to say eloquent, defense of your design.¹⁴

One wonders how much of a favor Gilbert was actually doing for his old friend!

At the end of his year at M.I.T., Gilbert won a prize for a "Billiard Hall and Casino" design and first mention for a "Pompeian Restoration." His prize was fifty dollars worth of books given by the American Institute of Architects. Gilbert was honored by the prize, but hurt by the intimation "rumored in St. Paul" and passed on by Johnston, that the prize "was but an empty honor." With characteristic self-esteem, Gilbert informed Johnston:

I had to work very hard and I had to work a great deal. . .and I never purposely let slip the chance of helping another. I tried to do my duty to my class as well as to myself, and it was my constant desire to improve myself by trying to raise the standard of my class and the aspirations of its individual members. . . .I had to combat single-handed, bigotry, jealousy and fixed traditions, and often I was worsted, sometimes it seemed even held in contempt, but my final triumph but served to convince me I had acted true to myself and my friends.¹⁵

There were some students, however, according to Gilbert, who did not act "true to themselves." Gilbert told Johnston that "the most shameless resources have been adopted by many of the fellows to forge ahead." These resources included such practices as, in the case of Brandt, plagiarizing a drawing from another student and rubbing out that student's name and substituting his

own. Gilbert also cited Taylor as a member of the group, saying that his "every thought and every work has been. . .servilely [governed] by those around him." Gilbert also revealed that his role as critic of his fellow students' work had made enemies:

Because I have dared to praise or condemn, to express my opinion; because I have dared attempt what others have never accomplished, because my thought is as free now as it ever was out in the old office [Radcliff's] when I first entered it, to say, to do, to think; honest though my purpose was, I have made more enemies than friends; more opposers than helpers.¹⁶

This condemnation of dishonesty was characteristic of Gilbert's attitude toward his associates throughout his life. Although it may have been a justifiable charge in the case of cheating at M.I.T., one can see why Gilbert made enemies, for he was self-righteous and critical of both friends and enemies. This self-righteousness is shown in the moral lesson he drew from his experience with the cheating episode:

I have learned one invaluable lesson [he tells Johnston], one lesson that has been more than worth its cost: that is I have learned to combat for the right, I have learned to overcome opposition by quiet perseverance and this is more than I ever knew before.¹⁷

After completing his year at M.I.T., Gilbert left Boston in the summer of 1879 for a rest at Tisbury, Martha's Vineyard. During the winter he had been sick from working nineteen-hour days, and had "given over all pleasure, all society, all amusements to carry out [his] one idea of work, and hard work."¹⁸ While resting at Tisbury, Gilbert formed plans for a trip to England where he hoped to find work in the office of some prom-

inent London architect. Inviting Johnston to join him, Gilbert said "there are architects in London now, such as we may never see grouped in another generation of men," citing George Street, Alfred Waterhouse, Norman Shaw, and William Burges --names, Gilbert said, "which will belong as well to posterity as to the present age."¹⁹

In his description of the proposed trip, Gilbert romanticized the potential experience to a high degree:

My idea is to enter the office of one of these men as a student, giving my time, my labor, and my scanty merit for their instruction and friendship; taking my Saturday afternoons for sketching, my evenings for lectures at the South Kensington, and the Art Schools of the city.²⁰

Gilbert had mapped out London in his mind so as to envision himself walking past the architectural monuments of the city on his way to and from work:

Canterbury Cathedral is in easy walk of London, Westminster Abbey is on my way home to dinner, Windsor Castle but a Sunday afternoon's walk. . . .All England is accessible in a day's holiday, and I have at hand some of the finest architecture of Christendom.²¹

In his plan, Gilbert also saw himself working in a London architect's office, "studying and working and trying to get a knowledge of French," followed by a summer's wandering with "pluck and sketch-book" through France, Italy, and Greece. After a second year's apprenticeship in London, he imagined another summer's travelling in Holland, Belgium, Germany, and Russia. After that, Gilbert would return to America "fitted for a life of usefulness and with a sound foundation for ambition, with a

reasonable hope of success in life and a name in my profession." [!] ²²

To buttress his dream, Gilbert also noted that he had taken some practical steps to ensure his success in Europe. He also revealed that his reputation as a student at M.I.T. was such that his professors must have had confidence in his potential ability. Mr. Ware had been helpful in many ways: he corresponded with Englishmen in Gilbert's behalf; he invited Gilbert to a meeting of the A.I.A. and introduced him to Russell Sturgis, who promised letters of introduction to Waterhouse. George Tilden promised letters of introduction to the Atelier Vaudremer of the Ecole des Beaux Arts. Mr. Ware also said he would write to "some of the most noteworthy scientific men in Europe" who would enable Gilbert "to move in exceptionally good society." ²³

In order to raise money for the proposed European trip, Gilbert began work as an assistant surveyor to the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, a position he took in July, 1879, after his rest at Martha's Vineyard. He was paid \$45.00 a month and was stationed at Garrison's-on-the-Hudson and Cold Spring, New York. Gilbert's letters to Johnston during this period are filled with references to future possibilities for a career in architecture, including a proposed partnership with Johnston in St. Paul, as well as more talk of the coming European journey. Although Gilbert refers to his poor health, he seems to have been working very hard, for he tells his friend:

I am constantly at work. . .climbing mountains or

in the dusty roads or wading swamps and streams, sunburned, dirty, ragged, overworked, tired, poisoned with ivy and exposed to the bites of copperheads [and] rattlesnakes.²⁴

Juxtaposed with such descriptions of the tasks of surveying in hard terrain are long descriptive passages of the beauty of the Catskills:

. . . There were the Catskills, blue and cold, we could see their ridges and valleys, and their snow clad sides, and sixty miles away, shown out a bright yellow spot on the distant blue of the mountains. . . .²⁵

The tensions in Gilbert's mind suggested by his feelings about the work of surveying versus his rhapsodizing over the natural landscape are also reflected in his feelings about a future career in architecture. While still working as a surveyor, Gilbert revealed this tension to Johnston:

I am disgusted with myself. I find myself considering a man's academical training rather than his work, and my mind is cramped down to the narrow limits of style, correctness, usage, and tradition rather than beauty, truth, and love of art. I wish, Clarence, I could return to the time when, even though ignorantly, I had the common sense and honesty to declare for what I thought right rather than what I thought proper; the time will come someday when I will not only use my own Institute training but my brains also. I am afraid now the latter factor is out of the calculation and I feel and think like [that] abomination -- 'a classical architect'. . . .²⁶

The reference to that "abomination," the classical architect, is, of course, ironic in light of Gilbert's future work -- from the time of the designing of the Minnesota State Capitol (1895) to the end of his career. At this early stage of his career, however, Gilbert was taking Nature rather than Style as his model; and

while keeping one eye on the practical necessities of a future business career, he insisted on the importance of pure art.

Later, Johnston wrote to accuse Gilbert of "paying too much attention to the adjuncts of Art, rather than the main principles and material of the subject."²⁷ Gilbert agreed with the charge, but explained:

I sketch, I draw, I scrawl, I seldom think. My ideas become dulled from lack of use. . . .A cedar tree strikes my eye. I wish to sketch it. I sketch the trunk, the limbs. I invent or horribly distort; and the foliage, well, that I generally indicate. . . . How can I sketch architecture when there is none to sketch? How can I study design --shall it be from the products of the carpenter's bench! How am I to think of color and form when the sunset is my only example of color and the rocks and trees are the only beautiful forms. Beautiful they are, yet do they direct my mind to Art [?] No, I am forced to study Nature as such and not as Architecture. . . .²⁸

In the same vein, Gilbert described a theory of the use of stained glass taught by Dr. Ware -- a theory somewhat related to Louis Sullivan's feelings about the use of materials:

. . .Let all light possible pass through the glass, and trust as much as possible to prismatic effects; let the glass be glass and not a painting, use the lead not only as a necessary constructive bugbear[?] but as one of the principle features of the decorative design, and design your colors not as colors but as though you were designing sunlight. . . .²⁹

Although Gilbert talked of art in this original way, he ended the letter with a note that foreshadows his practice in later years. Among a group of drawings of finials which decorate a page of his letter, Gilbert noted: "[I] have a stock [of finials] in case of sudden necessity."³⁰

Sometime during the summer of 1879, Gilbert discovered that

he did not have the necessary funds to make the proposed trip to England, and he told Johnston that he was "driven to the wall" financially. Rather than travel to England, he would try for a position in H. H. Richardson's office, or, if that did not work out, perhaps he could work for Ware and Van Brunt or William R. Emerson.³¹ However, by October, he was again talking about the trip, after discovering that \$250.00 was available to him from his late father's war pension plus \$25.00 a month from the estate.³²

With the prospect of leaving for England again a reality, Gilbert began to make plans anew, although he now began to feel that perhaps he was not capable of meeting the social demands of a position abroad. He feared, that as an American, he would not be able to cope successfully with the social requirements of a society more complex than his own.

I will never forget, Clarence, when I deal with Englishmen, that I am dealing with a people who at very best are only our equals, whose praise may be regarded with serenity, whose rebuff may be regarded with complacency, and whose insult may be regarded with contempt. . . .In Art all men are brothers, only in "style" are they at enmity. With the men I will associate with I will not be to them an American but an artist. I will not carry with me national prejudice, but will never allow myself to forget national dignity. I will go to learn, to acquire, to achieve. . . .³³

By December, 1879, Gilbert had collected about \$500.00. With a letter of introduction to the Consul at Liverpool, he departed for Europe about New Year's Day, 1880.³⁴ Gilbert apparently decided to take his Grand Tour first, followed by job-hunting in London, rather than first looking for work as he had

planned. Before embarking for England, he visited Boston, Washington, and New York where he left for Liverpool, arriving "very much the worse for the passage and completely played out."³⁵

After leaving Liverpool, Gilbert began a tour of several months' duration during which he sketched buildings in England and France. His first stop after Liverpool was Chester, which he described as the "most curious and wonderful place I have ever seen." He spent a day there sketching and sight-seeing, a habit that set the pattern for the journey. From Chester, Gilbert left for London by way of Creive, Rugby, and Litchfield. During this journey to London, he was most impressed by old churches of the "Early English" style which he saw about the country-side.³⁶

In London he saw the major monuments --St. Paul's, Westminster, Parliament Houses, the Wren churches-- but was most impressed by a store front, sketched and described in detail in his letter to Johnston, which he called "simple in its arrangement of forms." Gilbert's note that the "simplicity of the design was a lesson to me" is important in relation to his future career, for although he applied this "lesson" in many cases to his domestic structures between 1883-1893, he later turned to the very styles he decried during the London tour.³⁷

The excitement of Gilbert's first months in Europe soon gave way to a different mood, however, and by April, 1880, a note of anxiety began to appear in his letters. What he discovered was that travelling in Europe was too expensive to be thoroughly enjoyed. He warned Johnston:

When anyone tells you living is cheap in some foreign place or country, don't believe it, or at least add 20 per cent to your informant's estimate. . . . [In England] you are lodged cheaply at 5 shillings a day and boarded too. I may add, and clap-boarded, stabbed, or planked.³⁸

During March and April, 1880, Gilbert continued travelling through France, but in letters from Montbrison, Moulins, Nevers, and Tours, the money problem became the major subject. In long letters of advice to Johnston, who was planning a similar journey, Gilbert warned of the traps confronting the foreign traveler:

Above all be discreet in your bargain with the land-lady. Don't be niggardly or let her see that you are trying to live cheaply. If you do, every price is doubled instantly with the expectation that they will be 'beat down.' In England don't hesitate to use the imperative: it always pays, as also in Italy. In France 'sil vous plais' is the only proper way to deal with people.³⁹

Even London, so enthusiastically described in January, was later called "the vilest place in the world."⁴⁰ What had happened, of course, was that Gilbert's experience in Europe had fallen far short of his earlier expectations --the mood of the previous summer when he had told Johnston excitedly about the coming years' plans. With his money running low, Gilbert still held on to the "strong hope [for] an opening in a first-class London office in Lincoln's Inn Fields,"⁴¹ but in July, 1880, writing from Bloomsbury, he told Johnston that he was running out of money and that

there is positively nothing for a draughtsman to do unless he is willing to go into an office and work and wait in its most literal sense.⁴²

In his last letter from England, he asked Johnston to find him work in Boston or New York. Soon after, Gilbert left England for home.

2. Draftsman for McKim, Mead, and White

Baltimore: 1880-1882

In September, 1880, Gilbert entered the office of McKim, Mead, and White as a draftsman in their Baltimore office.⁴³ Very little is known about his early years with the firm, for there is a lapse in his correspondence with Johnston between the end of the European tour, July, 1880, and August, 1882, when Gilbert had been with the firm for two years.

In 1881, Gilbert sketched a number of interiors of old New York houses, and these drawings appeared later in The Century Magazine in an article by Stanford White's father, Richard Grant White.⁴⁴ The content of the article indicates that it was a part of McKim, Mead, and White's continuing interest in colonial architecture which began with Charles McKim, William Mead, and Augustus Saint-Gaudens' famous tour of the New England seacoast in 1877.⁴⁵ Gilbert's contribution to the article were four drawings: Two of mantels, a newel post, and an interior scene showing a chair, clock, and door-trim called "colonial fragments."⁴⁶

By 1882, one observes a marked change in Gilbert's attitude toward life; references to romantic yearnings and aspirations become rarer, and descriptions of the workaday life of a draftsman more common. For example, he tells Johnston that his job entails problems with plumbers, the lightning rod man, and the heater man, whom he describes ironically:

. . .The heater man is another headstrong emissary of the evil one [Satan] and is linked with the plumber, the gas fitter and the lightening [sic] rod man in an unholy conspiracy to wreck the looks of the house. . . .Now [problems have begun] with the stair builder, the plasterer, and the electric bell man. Now the cabinet-maker --the stone cutter, the gardener. . . .⁴⁷

What Gilbert was experiencing, of course, was a change from the relatively relaxed life of a student to that of a draftsman and emerging architect, and he was also receiving his first training as a specialist --a person responsible for one aspect of a particular project.

During the summer of 1882, Gilbert worked on two projects for McKim, Mead, and White. One was James Gordon Bennett's yacht, Namouna, for which Gilbert designed at least a part of the craft's interior.⁴⁸ The second was the Garrett House in New York City which he worked on with Stanford White.⁴⁹ Gilbert told Johnston that the conservatory scheme of the Garrett House was mostly his, the picture gallery, White's. Two other draftsmen, Alfred Hamlin and a man named Hazlett, were also involved with the project, Gilbert said, and added, sarcastically:

. . .Hazlett's sick and Hamlin is pushing the thing along behind with the aid of his Ecole pony. . . .⁵⁰

It is apparent from Gilbert's letters that matters were going well with him at the firm. Although some of the earlier feelings of inferiority appear now and then in such remarks as

. . .My best work seems so poor to me. . . .I think my appreciation for the good has outgrown my ability to attempt it. . .and [I] find myself unable to do the things as I know they ought to be done. . . .⁵¹

he admits that most of his work has been done successfully and with a sense of confidence. In one rhetorical flight, for example, he defines his position as

. . .as a sort of Mogul-Architectural-Hireling draughtsman --bullying builders-- roping in clients and raising the hair (architecturally) on everybody's head. . . .⁵²

During his association with the firm, Gilbert worked closely with Stanford White, though in what capacity the letters do not exactly make clear. According to one writer, Gilbert was White's personal assistant on the Newport Casino, the Drayton House, and the Charles Barney House, and worked jointly with White on the Tiffany House in New York, the Ross Winans' House, Baltimore, and in collaboration with Joseph Morrel Wells on the Villard House in New York. Gilbert's letters, however, do not refer to all of these projects, and it is perhaps doubtful that Gilbert was White's "personal assistant."⁵³

The only projects that Gilbert himself mentions, besides the yacht and the Garrett House, are Ross Winans, the Villard House, and a vault in Greenwood Cemetery, New York City.⁵⁴ Gilbert's role in the design of the houses is not clear. He does refer to the Villard House as "Wells' masterpiece;" and although he had a definite responsibility to see that the Winans' House was finished by a certain date, nothing specific is said about that project except for the fountain.⁵⁵

Gilbert describes the Winans' fountain as constituting "three tremendous fish swimming down through the water and spouting into

the basin."⁵⁶ Apparently, the design was Gilbert's with the "idea of the water" taken from Saint-Gaudens' Farrugut piece,⁵⁷ though, according to Gilbert, the "treatment of the water is much freer and lighter and with more motion. . .and, in fact, intentionally [executed] in a different spirit" than Saint-Gaudens' fountain.⁵⁸ The one plan, seemingly, that was Gilbert's own was the Greenwood vault, although this, too, was done under White's supervision.⁵⁹

The Gilbert-Johnston correspondence indicates that Gilbert handled his work well for McKim, Mead, and White, but it must be stressed that it is difficult to assign specific architectural designs to the young draftsman or to credit Gilbert with any single project which could be called his own. Hence, one cannot say much about Gilbert's "style" during this period, nor what influence he may have had on the firm's work, if any. That he was a responsible worker and had White's respect seems to be a fact if we take Gilbert's word for it.⁶⁰

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of Gilbert's career with McKim, Mead, and White was his relationship with his fellow draftsmen, with Augustus Saint-Gaudens, and with Stanford White. Commenting on the draftsmen, Gilbert said that at one point the office had "lost its spirit" for it used to be:

. . .a sort of mutual admiration society. . .but now. . .every man is trying to out do everybody else --and the jealousy of which I have often been guilty myself seems to be the grand passion. . .⁶¹

Gilbert also describes a dinner at which a draftsman named DuNord

or DeNore (Gilbert was not sure of the correct spelling) caught Gilbert's fellow draftsman and friend, Hazlitt, in a lie.⁶² Apparently, Hazlitt had told DuNord that he (Hazlitt) had designed the interior of Bennett's yacht. At the dinner, which was attended by all three men, DuNord discovered that Gilbert was the true designer.⁶³ The temper of the office at this time, it seems, was reminiscent of Gilbert's student days.

Gilbert met Augustus Saint-Gaudens in 1882. In September, Saint-Gaudens asked Gilbert to do some arabesques for him for the Vanderbilt House, but Gilbert declined.⁶⁴ Gilbert describes Saint-Gaudens as "picturesque," dressed

. . .in a long linen ulster close fitting and buttoned to the neck --his reddish beard-- brown hair and fine artistic face-- his hands covered with clay and his tools about him -- he has a business air one must respect.⁶⁵

Gilbert, however, is rather critical of the sculptor's work. Although he describes the caryatids Saint-Gaudens was modelling for Vanderbilt as "very beautiful," he adds that they are "hardly good for their purpose. St. Gaudens seems to be studying Greek drapery in them and has almost caught the effect."⁶⁶ Gilbert concludes his analysis:

. . .I saw nothing in his studio half so good as his Farragut bas reliefs --they are of a nobler type than his other work. I wish he would do some more like them. I think they are in the grand style. . . .⁶⁷

Gilbert's relationship with Stanford White was ambivalent. He seemed to be drawn to White because of the man's obviously fine talent, but at the same time repelled by his reputation.

Gilbert admits that when he and White went out together to buy furnishings for a certain project, Gilbert "felt the advantage of [White's] good taste in learning to buy," but that the architect's character was another matter.

. . . Mr. White [he tells Johnston] is a man to be admired for his ability, we both understand that; but in the last few months I have heard things and observed things in his private character that make me respect him none the more. I believe he is my friend at the moment --and I have a hearty admiration for his good qualities (and they predominate) but I am getting a little sick of his arrogance --and his claiming all the credit for everything done in his office. A man likes to have a little of the praise his work receives, for himself, and not given to others, and I believe if Mr. White thought any of the fellows were getting glory out of the work he'd be down on them at once.⁶⁸

Throughout his career, Gilbert was highly critical of associates who did not live up to his model of character. The reference to White's "private character," like the attacks made earlier on fellow M.I.T. students, shows how critical Gilbert was of his contemporaries.

In the fall of 1882 another change in Gilbert's career began. In September, Clarence Johnston wrote that he was planning a European tour and asked Gilbert if he would consider running Johnston's St. Paul office during his absence.⁶⁹ Gilbert's initial response indicates that the offer was tempting, for it "would set me well on my feet out there," but that he had doubts as to whether or not the arrangement would strain their friendship.

Suppose for instance [he tells Johnston] that your clients should become dissatisfied with my administration of affairs and you should see much reason

for their dissatisfaction --or suppose on the contrary that they should be so well pleased that when you returned, they would desert you to follow me. Either case is not an impossible one --And among the generality of men either case could be sufficient to break up their friendships.⁷⁰

The letter also reveals that Gilbert had some apprehension about leaving McKim, Mead, and White, for the Ross Winans' House was still under construction and the firm had "put the work into [Gilbert's] hands in such a way as to make it imperative that [he] should see it through."⁷¹ Gilbert concludes that even if he had some doubts about an arrangement with Johnston, he would notify Mead, who was then away on business, of his intention of leaving, and hopes that Johnston would "lose nothing by putting the work in [Gilbert's] hands."⁷² The tone of this letter reveals some hesitation on Gilbert's part, both as to Johnston's offer and to the prospect of leaving the firm. If he did leave McKim, Mead, and White he wanted to be assured of success in the West, but wondered if entering Johnston's office would be the best way of doing it. The "strain of friendship" argument seems to be less of a factor --though it is the consciously expressed reason-- than the desire on Gilbert's part to place himself professionally just as advantageously as possible without losing the benefits of possible connections with either Johnston or the Eastern firm.

A few days later Gilbert expressed more doubts about a possible connection (now called an "experiment") with Johnston in St. Paul.⁷³ What Gilbert had in mind was another project for

McKim, Mead, and White which had materialized since his last letter from Johnston. On October 5, Gilbert told Johnston:

Mr. White told me about ten days ago that the commission for the new [second] Bennett yacht had been definitely put into their hands, as though he wished me to infer that I was to take hold of it, and as I am the only one in the office that has had practical experience in the yacht line they probably intend me to go on that work as soon as [the Ross Winans' House] is done.⁷⁴

Gilbert also told Johnston that White was planning a trip to Europe in the spring of 1883, and

. . .As he seems to give me his fullest confidence, as far as the work goes, and seems disposed to take me into account in arranging it, it is only fair for me to return the same treatment as far as possible so that he may make his arrangements without counting on me.⁷⁵

On October 20, the whole affair changed directions again, for Johnston, without making any further commitment to Gilbert, wrote that he was leaving for Europe.⁷⁶ Johnston did not reveal whether Gilbert's talk of possible future work with McKim, Mead, and White had anything to do with his decision, but the offer to take over the office was terminated in such a way as to indicate Johnston's displeasure.⁷⁷ Gilbert's response shows that he had been hurt by this turn of events, and that he had counted on Johnston's offer perhaps without even realizing it.

But you go too far if you think I absolutely depended on your offer [Gilbert says] --of course I counted on it, but not to such an extent as to let it effect my plans in the main. . . .Understand me, My boy, it's not the amount you named but the fact of your naming the matter at all. Now please don't mention our having touched upon this point when you write. For I know you only made the offer in a kindly spirit not dreaming

I would take it this way. But you see how it is. If I say more I'll only make a mess of it.⁷⁸

Realizing that he was probably saying things in a flash of anger, and that he would undoubtedly regret his words, Gilbert held the letter for ten days.⁷⁹ In the meantime, another letter from Johnston arrived, the content of which must have implied that Johnston felt that Gilbert was trying to take his clients away from him under the guise of running the office while the boss was gone.⁸⁰ After receiving Johnston's letter, Gilbert finished and mailed the letter which he had started on October 20, adding:

. . .Now I am going to shame you. After reading what I wrote ten days ago, don't you feel sorry for suspecting me of anxiously waiting your departure --eager to pounce on the unsuspecting clients --intent to devour them blood raw without salt. Don't you feel sorry that you didn't go off in spite of [them?] and me, and the blank blank rest of it. Blank it all to Blank.⁸¹

The letter ends, however, on a calmer note, for Gilbert says that he planned to leave Baltimore for St. Paul in early December --not mentioning any future relationship with McKim, Mead, and White-- and he asks Johnston if he can have space to work in Johnston's office. The letter ends amicably, "I'll pitch in and help you as soon as I get out there and we two will see if we can't lift a little of it off and set it where it belongs."⁸²

3 McKim, Mead, and White's Man in the West

1883-1885

All through the early years of the 1880's, Henry Villard was building an empire in the West. The future railroad magnate began his career as an agent for German bondholders who had steamship and railway interests in Oregon. While visiting Oregon on business for his clients, Villard realized the area's potential as a mineral and timber empire and he saw that Oregon's major future development depended upon the railroad. By seizing important lands in Oregon and Washington that would eventually be needed to link up the westward-moving Northern Pacific, by secretly purchasing Northern Pacific stock, and by various other more questionable practices such as pooling, Villard came into control of the Northern Pacific in September, 1881. By 1883, Villard had completed the main line to the Pacific, and, as Matthew Josephson tells us, at about the same time the Golden Spike was driven, six houses were being torn down on Madison Avenue "to make way for the palace of the railroad 'magnate.'"⁸³

Although it was soon obvious to Villard that he had over-extended himself too much and too fast and that he was headed for bankruptcy, he nevertheless went ahead and commissioned McKim, Mead, and White to build for himself and four friends a complex of five town houses, a group that Wayne Andrews calls "the greatest private residence ever erected in Manhattan."⁸⁴ By the time of the completion of his "Renaissance" mansion in 1885, Villard's over-

extension of properties and his methods of financing them brought about his downfall, forcing him out of the management of the Northern Pacific. Josephson portrays Villard's collapse in this way:

Among promoters of 'large railway combination,' Villard was long the butt of public anger and the popular press pointed bitterly to the luxurious mansion on Madison Avenue in which he still continued to live after his reverses. Here Villard dwelt amid so much costly and empty splendor because he had 'no other city home' and 'for reasons of economy,' while pondering new magic for the future.⁸⁵

At the time of Villard's collapse, other business careers were on the rise --each depending in some way upon the initial success of the railroad baron. Profiting the most was the firm of McKim, Mead, and White, and to some extent, Gilbert's fellow M.I.T. classmate, Joseph M. Wells, the major draftsman of the Villard group and the man who according to some critics was responsible for the reorientation of the firm toward Renaissance forms⁸⁶ -- the first example of which can be seen in the Villard mansion. Upon completion of the Villard group, Wayne Andrews says,

. . .McKim, Mead, and White had every reason to be delighted in their creation. They had arrived; they knew it; enlightened New Yorkers knew it; in fact everyone knew it who was worth cultivating, and when the contract was let early in 1887 for the new Boston Public Library, they were inevitably awarded the prize.⁸⁷

Cass Gilbert's career was also launched by Villard's initial success with his Northern Pacific railroad and the emergence of the reputation of McKim, Mead, and White. At the time Gilbert was planning to return to St. Paul in December, 1882, Villard was

but a few months away from completion of the main line to the Pacific. Through their connections with Villard, McKim, Mead, and White were commissioned to design and construct Northern Pacific buildings, including boarding houses and hospitals for railway workers, along the route from St. Paul to Helena, Montana, beginning in 1883. To oversee this work, the firm, under the direction of William Mead, sent Gilbert to St. Paul as superintendent of construction and architectural work for all Northern Pacific work sought by Villard.⁸⁸

The correspondence during this period is not clear as to why Gilbert was given the position in the West, although it is safe to assume that he had probably discussed his plans to leave the firm with one of the partners and it was suggested that he take over the Northern Pacific project and stay with the firm in that capacity. Gilbert's desire to locate in St. Paul because of his earlier association with the city was probably a factor in his selection as well. In June, 1883, the firm wrote General Herman Haupt⁸⁹ that plans for a hospital in Brainerd, Minnesota, for the Beneficial Association of the Northern Pacific had been sent to Gilbert's office at 49 Gilfillan Block, St. Paul, adding that

Mr. Gilbert is a young man who was some years in our office, and who has now opened an office in St. Paul. . . . You will find him a very capable man --and one whom we have every confidence in to carry out our ideas and instructions. . . .⁹⁰

From June, 1883, to about January, 1884, when Villard's collapse, and hence the termination of McKim, Mead, and White's association with Villard, became apparent, Gilbert carried on work

for the firm from St. Paul, although very few projects actually passed through his hands. In June, 1883, Mead told Gilbert to make a plan for a boarding house --presumably along lines suggested by a rough draft made by the firm-- and that it should be "plain as a pikestaff."

As to the boarding house --Don't attempt to make it too architectural-- or to give [it] inside details. If you remember the houses on N.P.R.R. at water stations --[Villard?] wants it to be something like those. A little use of shingles on perpendicular sides is about all you can do. Corporations won't pay for architectural effect on the plans. . . .⁹¹

Here, as in later projects for the Northern Pacific, Mead stressed the need for economy, which suggests that the Western operation was not always profitable for the firm. It is possible, too, that Mead knew of Villard's habit of over-extending his operations and could foresee the collapse, and that he did not want the firm to lose money on any Northern Pacific project.

Sometime earlier, Gilbert had suggested to Mead that the firm might do well to set up a branch in St. Paul, presumably with Gilbert in charge. In the letter quoted from above, Mead refers to Gilbert's proposal, but says:

I am not able to get up much enthusiasm on the subject in the office --The expenses of different offices must necessarily eat into the profits-- and with the class of work sent you the \$35 a week for two draughtsmen --not counting expenses on your services-- will soon exceed the amount of the commission. . . .⁹²

Mead warned Gilbert to go slowly and [wait] for some big job before setting full sail. "Get along as best you can on these two jobs," he said, adding that the firm would uphold Gilbert in any-

thing he did.⁹³ A few days later, Mead told Gilbert that his plans for the boarding house were "very satisfactory." Mead also warned Gilbert to keep up good relations with the railroad personnel, especially General Haupt.

You want to familiarize yourself [Mead says] with their [N.P.] style of doing things --for there is always a lot of red tape about corporations. I am rather anxious to know what interviews you have with Gen. Haupt. . . .⁹⁴

On June 18, 1883, plans were being drawn for a hotel in Helena, Montana. Gilbert informed Mead that the site had not been chosen, and that the Northern Pacific and the town differed as to the use of the building: the N.P. wanting it to be exclusively a hotel, the townspeople wanting stores on the first floor.⁹⁵ The lack of any real architectural quality for this building, as well as the others, is suggested by Mead's comment that he would "get up a scheme for a hotel on an imaginary lot"⁹⁶ --a type of planning all too common in suburban housing developments today.

Talk of the proposed St. Paul branch office was resumed on June 29, probably because of the talk of the proposed Helena hotel commission. Mead placed the problem of organizing an office in Gilbert's hands by asking Gilbert what position he would like to be in "if [McKim, Mead, and White] should think best to develop a St. Paul office to its full capacity."⁹⁷ Mead also said that the firm would want to retain its name, but would give recognition to anything Gilbert planned. If Gilbert and the firm could come to any agreement as to the branch office, Mead promised that a member of the firm would come to St. Paul to discuss arrangements person-

ally --a trip that was presumably made by Mead about July, 1883.⁹⁸

Gilbert's reply to Mead on July 2, 1883, concerning the office is most ambiguous, and implies that Gilbert was holding out for an arrangement that would profit him the most. The earlier letter from Mead had asked that Gilbert work out the details, but Gilbert's response threw the problem back into Mead's lap:

. . . Since you do not make me a proposition, I am in some doubt about what to say in reply. You know my prospects here, what work I have in hand and what I am making sketches for. Besides this there is a good deal in prospect not considering only the work which is reasonably sure of going through. I can safely say my practice will net me, above expenses, some \$3000.00 per year. The N.P. work seriously interferes with this. It will necessarily have to take precedence over my private practice. . . .⁹⁹

Since there is no evidence that Gilbert was doing anything in the way of building at that time, it is quite possible that he was exaggerating his prospects to an extent. The reference to the Northern Pacific work interfering with his private practice is a new twist, too, as well as being contradictory to the tone of his past relationship to McKim, Mead, and White.

As proof of the growing practice (and as the probable basis of Gilbert's hopes) he mentions a "big job" in St. Paul "which may have its influence on [Mead's] decision." According to Gilbert, he had been stopped on the street by Ramsey Ninenger, Senator Alexander Ramsey's nephew, who told Gilbert about the future of a valuable piece of land in downtown St. Paul where banks, clubs, and a courthouse would eventually be built as part of a

\$200,000 development.¹⁰⁰ Apparently, Ninenger had already mentioned Gilbert as a possible architect for the development to the land's owner, and Ninenger told Gilbert that he thought his chances were "first rate."¹⁰¹ In relating this story to Mead, Gilbert pointedly refers to the social prominence of his contacts --an indication of his awareness of the importance of cultivating "important" clients.¹⁰²

Since Gilbert's private practice was coming along so well --at least as he projected it-- he proposed two alternative plans to Mead concerning his possible future with the firm. The first, that Gilbert would look after work obtained by McKim, Mead, and White without Gilbert's assistance, a plan that would allow him to pursue his own business. The second, that Gilbert would place his own work in the hands of the firm, giving up his own practice, but having his name acknowledged for anything he designed for McKim, Mead, and White.¹⁰³

No answer to Gilbert's proposal exists, but by the end of 1883 it was becoming apparent that Gilbert's association with McKim, Mead, and White was coming to a close. Several factors brought about Gilbert's separation from the firm. In September, Gilbert lost the three draftsmen who had been assisting him on the Northern Pacific projects. Gilbert told Mead that a Mr. Waterfield "who was beginning to be of much assistance, has left me to go to the Institute of Technology."¹⁰⁴ The other two men, who were later to form a famous partnership, left at about the same time. As Gilbert relates it:

Mr. [Christopher] LaFarge has recently told me that his father wishes to have him come home and enter his establishment --and Mr. [George L.] Heins, who has proved himself invaluable to me in every way is unwilling to stay in the West without LaFarge (they being very warm friends) will return to his home in Philadelphia, or to New York, as soon as I can let them go.¹⁰⁵

Sometime in the fall of 1883, Stanford White informed Gilbert that the Helena hotel commission was in the process of falling through, and that he could "hardly see any use of [Gilbert's] coming in at present."¹⁰⁶ The "coming in" refers undoubtedly to the proposed St. Paul office. In the same letter, White's reference to Villard being "busy over his stocks" suggests the eventual collapse of the railroadman's fortune, and, in turn, the eventual closing of McKim, Mead, and White's interests in the West.¹⁰⁷

When his contact with McKim, Mead, and White began to slip away in January, 1884, Gilbert wrote a friend describing his relationship with the firm:

McKim, Mead, and White have been doing all the important works along the line of the Northern Pacific Railway, and backed by Mr. Villard were on the top wave. . . . Last June [July?] Mr. Mead came out to St. Paul and asked me to look after work for them at St. Paul and as far West as Helena, Montana. This for a time made my little office quite an important affair with three draughtsmen in my employ and resources of a large concern behind me, but since the great change in Northern Pacific affairs and the resignation of Mr. Villard from the presidency of the five corporations a considerable change has been made and I am in doubt as to whether the result will be favorable for us. Probably no.¹⁰⁸

Just prior to Villard's collapse in January, Gilbert attempted once more to obtain a commitment from McKim, Mead, and White. Gilbert told Mead that he had received an invitation to

meet with the commissioners who were in charge of plans for the new courthouse in St. Paul so as to talk about an impending competition for the design of the building:

I command, I am sure, a good deal of influence among the wealthy men here, some of whom are politicians. The fact of my being one of the four men invited to go into the Chamber of Commerce will be in my favor, and that I stand very well with the City Council. . .all of these are good points. I am afraid that my youth [twenty-four] will be a reason for an adverse decision.¹⁰⁹

At this point Gilbert's business career began. The references to "influence among wealthy men," to politicians, and to his standing within the community become the keynote of Gilbert's future career. The statement made at age twenty-four could easily have been made at any time during Gilbert's life, as shall be seen.

II

The Initiation of a Businessman

1884-1892

Following his break with McKim, Mead, and White, and the short period during which he worked alone, Gilbert formed a partnership with James Knox Taylor that led to a successful career in the Middle West. During that period, Gilbert became much less the romantic who belittled a "fat position in a comfortable office," and more the kind of man who was proud of possessing "a good deal of influence among wealthy men."

Tracing what I call Gilbert's "initiation" throws light on his continuing career. Understanding the initiation also reveals Gilbert's reasons for joining with Taylor in partnership, their accomplishments, and where they stood in relation to the economic and social milieu of St. Paul and White Bear Lake during the 1880's and 1890's. Together with Taylor, Gilbert became financially and socially successful as a designer and builder of fashionable homes and churches for wealthy clients who, along with the architects, were enjoying the relatively booming period of economic growth that St. Paul and the Middle West experienced in the 1880's.

By 1892, when Gilbert and Taylor severed their relationship, Gilbert had been initiated into the intricacies of "businessmanship." Because of several unsuccessful ventures, including the failure to obtain commissions to build the Cathedral of St. Paul and the New York Life Insurance Building (St. Paul), as well as the loss of a chance to become the partner of Daniel Burnham,

Gilbert had gained the knowledge that made him successful as a competitor for the Minnesota State Capitol in 1895.

Gilbert's initiation began in the spring of 1884 with the formation of the partnership with Taylor. Gilbert and Taylor were educated in the St. Paul schools where they had been boyhood friends. Taylor attended M.I.T. from 1877 to 1879, leaving at about the time Gilbert began his year of study there. During the years of Gilbert's apprenticeship with McKim, Mead, and White, Taylor had worked as a draftsman in New York in the office of Bruce Price. Taylor went to St. Paul to practice in an office of his own in 1882, a position that he retained until the year of partnership.¹

It is not known why Gilbert and Taylor joined offices in 1884, and the partnership is somewhat ironic in light of Gilbert's remark at M.I.T. about Taylor's lack of "artistic aspirations," but it is safe to assume that one reason why a partnership was formed was the huge volume of building work being done in St. Paul at that time. According to a correspondent for Northwest Magazine, a St. Paul business publication, 3,000 buildings at a cost of \$8,790,000 were erected during 1882, a year when Gilbert and Taylor were working independently. From January to April, 1883, 680 buildings were put up with a demand "far [outrunning] the supply."² The St. Paul Pioneer Press reported that St. Paul architects, at the end of 1883, had all the work they could handle. One architect had five business blocks in the works, and another said he was doing \$500,000 worth of business a year.³ Because of

this building boom, it can be assumed that a partnership would have been quite promising.

Gilbert himself revealed other reasons for the partnership. He told Edward Spiers, a draftsman with McKim, Mead, and White, for example, that Taylor was an expert in "matters of contracts, superintendence, and general conduct of affairs," and that he carried out the firm's design work.⁴ Gilbert also mentioned that Taylor was a man "whose integrity is above question, and one in whose character you could put thorough confidence."⁵ Gilbert told another friend that his own "comparative youth" was a factor in needing a partner, though Taylor was but two years his senior!⁶

A more significant reason for Gilbert's selection of Taylor as a partner was his need for social connections, a theme that runs through this period of his career and beyond. Gilbert told Spiers that Taylor had relatives and friends in St. Paul of "no small influence," a possible reference to Taylor's father who held a prominent name in real estate.⁷

Even with the need for "proper social connections" apparently provided by Taylor, Gilbert again insisted on his own ability to form connections with prominent people. As we have seen, Gilbert was proud of his "influence among wealthy men" even prior to his association with Taylor. After the partnership, Gilbert continued this theme by mentioning that his own friends were counted among

. . .some of the most important men in Minnesota. I find that in my present practice I am getting most of my work through my social connections, and from a certain class of 'fashionable people.'⁸

At this stage of his career, Gilbert was seemingly caught between wanting to handle the designing end of the firm and knowing that efficient handling of business matters was of first importance. Coupled with this knowledge was his feeling that social connections, either his own or Taylor's, would be needed to produce a successful career.

Many neighborhoods in St. Paul in the late nineteenth century were physically and socially receptive to an architectural firm that catered to "a certain class of fashionable people." A reporter for Northwest magazine described Summit Avenue of the 1880's as

. . . getting on pretty fast with its procession of palaces; and it seems as though every new edifice started had distinctly in view the one object of surpassing all predecessors in cost and splendor. I have observed that lavish interior decoration is the rule, and some residences are fairly a museum of manual art in wood sculpture and engraving. I heard one of our wealthy citizens tell . . . his architect that he had succeeded in expending \$600 on the mosaics of a chamber floor, and I happen to know that imported wood carvers have labored two years or more on the interior of that mansion.⁹

After a trip in 1891, the most astute architectural critic of the nineteenth century, Montgomery Schuyler, commented on the physical beauty of St. Paul:

. . . The fashionable quarter of St. Paul is distinctly marked out by nature. It could not have been established anywhere else but at the edge of the bluff overhanging the town and commanding the Mississippi And now the 'noble residences' have come to crown the hillside, and really noble residences many of them are. . . . There is nothing to be compared with the massing of the handsome houses of St. Paul upon the ridge above the river.¹⁰

Singling out Summit Avenue in particular for special merit,

Schuyler continued:

Indeed, there are very few streets in the United States that give in as high a degree as Summit Avenue the sense of an expenditure liberal without ostentation, directed by skill, and restrained by taste. What mainly strikes a pilgrim from the East is not so much the merit of the best of these houses, as the fact that there are no bad ones; none, at least, so bad as to disturb the general impression of richness and refinement, and none that make the crude display of 'new money' that is to be seen in the fashionable quarters of cities even richer and far older.¹¹

During their years of partnership, Gilbert and Taylor received several commissions from clients who lived in the exclusive areas of St. Paul. In 1884, they built on Crocus Hill a three-story, double-turreted home in the shingle style manner for John Q. Adams, president of the Northern Pacific Elevator Company.¹² In 1885, they designed a home for a St. Paul physician, Charles E. Riggs, who best represents, perhaps, the kind of client to whom Gilbert and Taylor catered. Riggs did post-graduate work in New York, Edinburgh, and London and was a professor of nervous and mental diseases at the University of Minnesota. In keeping with the style of his social class, Riggs belonged to the Minnesota Club, Town and Country Club, St. Paul, and to a yacht club in New York state.¹³

Several other commissions in St. Paul were carried out in the 1880's by Gilbert and Taylor. I have been able to locate at least ten residences, all of them homes of wealthy people located within the Summit Avenue, Crocus Hill area. Gilbert and Taylor undoubtedly designed a number of smaller houses, although only the show-

pieces can be identified because they appeared in the fashionable pictorial publications of the 1880's and 1890's.

Two publications in particular --Picturesque St. Paul and The Northwestern Builder, Decorator, and Furnisher-- provide illustrations of Gilbert and Taylor houses which also indicate the clientele of the firm during the years of partnership. Homes and clients mentioned are: George S. Squires, lawyer¹⁴; R. B. C. Bement, president of the board of water commissioners and later major of engineers in the Spanish-American War¹⁵; C. P. Noyes, president of the State Savings Bank, St. Paul¹⁶; E. H. Bailey, president of the First National Bank of St. Paul¹⁷; A. P. Warren, lawyer and wholesale manufacturer¹⁸; W. H. Lightner, lawyer and president of the Minnesota Historical Society.¹⁹ A Chicago publication, Architectural Reviewer, also illustrates homes of John W. White, a St. Paul attorney²⁰; Emerson Hadley, a lawyer trained at Harvard and Columbia and assistant general council of the Northern Pacific Railroad²¹; and G. W. Freeman, president of C. Gotzian and Company, St. Paul.²²

White Bear Lake, a summer resort for well-to-do St. Paul people, was another area that was attractive and fashionable for local architects. The Northwest described White Bear Lake in the 1880's as

. . . a very picturesque, cool and cozy summer retreat. . . . The water edge is studded all along with charming little cottages where live the best families of St. Paul through the hot summer months.²³

Underscoring the "fashionableness" of White Bear Lake, another writer described the region in 1881:

On its western and southern banks are to be found large and well kept hotels, each with its modest cottages and handsome villas for the use of guests. On its western bank area are a large number of elegant villas, owned by wealthy business men of St. Paul, who send their families here to reside in the summer and join them each evening after the close of business.²⁴

And in 1882 after his visit to White Bear Lake, Samuel Clemens wrote:

White Bear Lake. . . is a lovely sheet of water, and is being utilized as a summer resort by the wealth and fashion of the State. It has its club-house, and its hotel, with the modern improvements and conveniences; its fine summer residences; and plenty of fishing, hunting, and pleasant drives. There are a dozen minor summer resorts around St. Paul and Minneapolis, but White Bear Lake is the resort.²⁵

Gilbert and Taylor built at least four cottages and homes at White Bear Lake, and Gilbert built another in 1894 after the termination of the partnership. These cottages and homes were: a home for A. K. Barnum described by a Northwest correspondent as "one of St. Paul's best known citizens"²⁶; a house at Acorn Point, Manitou Island²⁷; and two cottages, one for Walter S. Morton,²⁸ the other for J. B. Tarbox.²⁹

The first commercial structure built by Gilbert and Taylor was the Duluth Board of Trade, 1885.³⁰ This building, along with a house for Judge D. Watson Rowe in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, of the same year,³¹ was the first project completed outside of the St. Paul-White Bear Lake area, which suggests that the firm was attempting to broaden its base of operation. The reputation of the firm may well have been enhanced by the visit of representatives from all the prominent exchanges in the United States who

arrived on special trains for the dedication ceremony of the Board of Trade building on January 6, 1886.³²

In 1887, Gilbert and Taylor attempted without success to obtain a major St. Paul commission: the New York Life Insurance Building. The methods used by the parties involved reveal the way in which important commissions were often procured, and also prefigure the manipulations that became so pronounced during the period of the building of the Minnesota State Capitol. In March, 1887, William Mead wrote Gilbert informing him that a St. Paul contractor wanted the contract for the proposed insurance building, but that New York Life was afraid of him because he was known to take kickbacks from the builder.³³ According to Mead, the insurance company liked McKim, Mead, and White's plans and elevations, but refused to take on additional work from the firm because McKim, Mead, and White was already over-loaded with work for them. To keep the work out of the hands of the notorious contractor, Mead suggested to New York Life that they give the work to Gilbert and Taylor and that McKim, Mead, and White be retained as consulting architects. Mead said that a representative from the insurance company was on his way to St. Paul, but warned:

. . . Present as strong a front as possible. He is a little Presbyterianish but a good friend to have. Don't let him know that I have written you, but telegraph me of the receipt of this [letter]. Everything depends on your making a good impression on him.³⁴

A month later, Mead wrote Gilbert that Babb, Cook, and Willard were going to receive the commission for the New York Life

building and added that he did not know this fact earlier or "I should have stepped gracefully aside."³⁵ The reason given for this seemingly generous act, however, was based less on a gentleman's agreement between architectural firms --a rare practice indeed-- but rather upon the fact that McKim, Mead, and White had "so effectually cleaned" Babb, Cook, and Willard in Kansas City and Omaha that "we could not push ourselves into this [commission]."³⁶ Mead also suggested that perhaps Gilbert could make an independent arrangement with Babb, Cook, and Willard; an arrangement that was settled when Gilbert became one of the consulting architects and superintendents of construction of the New York Life building in 1887.³⁷

Another attempt at forming a business proposition between two firms occurred in 1890 and concerned the commission for the Cathedral of St. Paul. In 1890, George Heins, Gilbert's former draftsman, who joined with Christopher LaFarge to form the New York partnership in 1886, stopped in St. Paul on his way West to ask Gilbert if there was "any plan of campaign that we could arrange for the Irish Cathedral? I will do all I can at our end of the line and you do the same here. . . ."³⁸ Heins later wrote Gilbert to say that LaFarge had written Bishop John Ireland and that LaFarge "has started some friends to write for him in our behalf."³⁹

In the cases of both the New York Life Insurance Building and the Cathedral of St. Paul one sees the extent to which secret arrangements were pursued in the attempt to lay the groundwork

for landing a commission. By this point in his career, Gilbert was becoming more dependent upon such "contacts" and private negotiations --procedures that made him less the designer and more the businessman.

By 1890, Gilbert was beginning to make plans to extend his business beyond the boundaries of Minnesota, or even to make a permanent move away from St. Paul. A move elsewhere would have been possible given the opportunity, for his reputation was beginning to be known across the country. As early as 1885, the editors of American Architect and Building News referred to him as a "gentleman well known to the younger generation of our architects,"⁴⁰ a reputation that was probably based partly on the published designs in the architectural magazines as well as his connections with McKim, Mead, and White. In 1890, C. H. Blackall, president of the Boston Architectural Club, wrote Gilbert asking for drawings to be included in the Club's publication, saying that "contributions are promised from many of the leading men of the country and abroad."⁴¹ During the same year, John W. Root asked Gilbert for pictures of his St. Paul residences for an article on Western houses that Root was writing for Scribner's.⁴² And Thomas Hastings of the New York firm of Carrere & Hastings, told Gilbert: "I shall always look with great interest for your work and count upon you to awaken them in the West."⁴³

Perhaps stirred by these accolades, or hurt by the loss of the two important commissions, Gilbert complained to Mead in December, 1890, that "times were dull" in St. Paul and asked if

he could be of any service to McKim, Mead, and White for the Chicago Exposition.⁴⁴ Mead answered that no arrangements had been made with the "Chicago people," though the firm had been consulted and would probably have some role in the Fair.

. . .In any event [Mead told Gilbert] we shall not do any superintending of construction as it is all to be done by Burnham of Chicago --If we can serve you in any way we shall be only too glad to do so and shall be on the lookout for an opportunity to [do it].⁴⁵

Mead also suggested that Gilbert should "abandon the West and settle in New York," or "if you can stand it, Chicago, as everything worth having in the way of business comes to the biggest cities."⁴⁶

For a brief time early in 1891, Gilbert came close to finding a business opportunity outside of St. Paul. In January, 1891, John Root died, and Gilbert was considered as a possible successor in the Burnham office. An analysis of the business relations between Gilbert and Burnham, with Mead acting as mediator for the proposed partnership, further reveals the importance of connections in the business community of the late nineteenth century.

On January 19, 1891, Mead wrote Gilbert that he had just returned from Chicago where he had learned of Root's death.

It immediately occurred to me [Mead said] that as Root was the designer, Burnham would have to hunt up [!] a new partner and I thought of you in connection with him --Burnham is a great organizer, but it is hard to say if anybody but Root could get along with him. They had a great affection for each other. . . .[I] should be glad to do anything I could for you in that direction.⁴⁷

In reply, Gilbert explained that he had written a letter of con-

dolence to Burnham a few days prior to Mead's letter, and that he had been thinking over Mead's suggestion carefully, but that he felt some "delicacy" about "working the thing up" because of the letter of condolence which he was unwilling to have interpreted as having "any motive but one of sympathy."⁴⁸ Gilbert added that he had met Burnham and Root several times on trips to Chicago and that at one time Burnham had written a complimentary letter concerning Gilbert's work. He went on to say:

I do not for a moment suppose that I could fill Mr. Root's place in that office, for he had peculiar qualifications of a personal as well as professional kind which especially fitted the place and the work; but if this was fully understood by Mr. Burnham I should be very glad to be brought in contact with him with a view to a partnership. This is of course to be considered quite confidential except in so far as you see fit to mention it to Mr. Burnham, if on thinking the matter over you consider it at all likely to come to anything and are willing to broach the matter to him for me.⁴⁹

On January 31, Mead again wrote Gilbert informing him that since their last correspondence, he had learned that Frank Sickels, a McKim, Mead, and White draftsman and former Burnham and Root staff member, had written Burnham without Mead's knowledge to press Gilbert's case. Mead also enclosed copies of Burnham's response to Sickels as well as a letter from Burnham to Mead.⁵⁰ Burnham had told Sickels that if Mead thought Gilbert would like to consider something in Chicago, he would be "very ready to hear from [Gilbert] on the subject," and would give it "respectful consideration," although he warned that Root's death had "left a hole into which not one, but several, strong men

must be flung, to even approximately level it up again."⁵¹

Mead interpreted Burnham's letter as merely a "strong expression of his admiration for Root's genius," and assured Gilbert that he could "carry the designing end of the establishment."⁵² Mead also said that on the strength of the Burnham letters, he had written Burnham that Gilbert "might be of assistance to him" and that if Burnham so desired, Gilbert would be glad to meet him in Chicago.⁵³

Following Mead's lead, Gilbert wrote Burnham a few days later saying that he was flattered by Mead's suggestion of a possible partnership, and that he would be "highly honored in such a connection." Gilbert added that

. . . While I have an excellent practice here I have felt for some time that the field was comparatively limited and I have been seriously considering a move to New York. It was in correspondence with Mr. Mead on this subject that he made the suggestion to me.⁵⁴

Gilbert also informed Burnham that Taylor knew about their correspondence, and that with the exception of Mead, the matter had been kept confidential. Burnham's response implied that he was thinking over the problem carefully:

While I have not determined to make any new arrangement, and may conclude to fight it out alone, I know your high standing and character and will be glad of the chance of conferring with you if you will visit me. There will be nothing lost by our meeting, and I will take pleasure in having a chance to talk matters [over] anyway.⁵⁵

On February 5, Gilbert told Mead that he had written Burnham, and added that a week earlier Gilbert and Taylor had received a

commission to build a \$300,000 building in Winnipeg, and that another half million dollar project "seems to be drifting our way."⁵⁶ Gilbert also said that should nothing come of the "Chicago matter," these projects would "keep the wolf from the door."⁵⁷

Sometime in early February, 1891, Gilbert and Burnham met in Chicago to discuss the possibility of partnership. There is no existing record of the meeting, although later developments indicate the tone of their negotiations. In his first letter to Burnham after returning to St. Paul, Gilbert reveals a forwardness, not to say arrogance, in regard to the partnership, although it is quite possible that Burnham left many of the decisions to Gilbert which would partly explain the aggressiveness that he began to show. For example, a week after the Chicago meeting, Gilbert told Burnham that he had some doubts about leaving St. Paul where he had

. . .A now excellent practice. . .together with many strong ties of a business nature and otherwise, the loss of which could not be compensated; for if the Chicago move proved unsuccessful, I feel that it would be assuming a larger proportion of risk upon my side than upon yours; and that the risk must be reasonably provided for.[!]⁵⁸

Keeping in mind that Burnham was thirteen years Gilbert's senior, and that Gilbert was but thirteen years old when Burnham and Root formed their partnership, the "risk" seems somewhat exaggerated.

It is quite possible that at their meeting, Burnham had requested Gilbert to draw up proposed terms of partnership, and that Gilbert, reenforced by the new business coming into the St. Paul office, had made exorbitant terms. Whatever the case may

be, Gilbert recommended being given a salary for the first year, together with 1/8 of the net proceeds of the business; that his name be recognized in all business of the firm as Associate Architect; and, that at the end of the first year, his name and salary be retained with an increase of the percentage of net proceeds. Should a two-year trial period prove satisfactory, Gilbert further recommended that a "definite partnership be formed giving [Gilbert] full membership in the firm."⁵⁹ Having proposed these terms, Gilbert added:

It seems to me that an arrangement of this kind is at once practicable and fair. . . .It would leave you in practically the position suggested when I was in Chicago, and at the same time give me that measure of recognition without which I should be quite unwilling to make any change. The present firm name of Burnham and Root could be kept for such time as you thought proper, say for two years, and it would appear to me desirable for many reasons to keep it.⁶⁰

On March 5, Burnham responded:

I have maturely considered the matter. I want you and hope you may become a permanent partner, but I will not agree to actual partnership till we have been long enough in harness together for me to know you, and what is more important for you to know me and feel sure you would like to live with me. I offer you a salary for two years and leave you free to make the profits from whatever work you yourself bring in, and which should be carried out under your own name of course. When this time is up we can see our way clearly. We cannot now. Meanwhile I will not consider any other connection and leave the field open for a partnership between us should it come about.⁶¹

In the margin of this letter Gilbert wrote: "My interpretation of this letter was at first obscure and it was considered peremptory and offensive. A later reading after seeing Burnham

gave it the meaning indicated by interlineations."⁶² The interlineations made on the sentence italicized above now made it read: "Meanwhile [during the trial period] I will not consider any other connection [with any one else] and leave the field open [i.e., negotiate with or consider no one else] for a partnership between us should it come about."⁶³ After the meeting in Chicago, where this letter was discussed and the interlineations made, Gilbert said he declined the offer at first in light of Burnham's terms, but that after further discussion, Burnham accepted his terms as they were presented in Gilbert's letter of February 18. In his marginal notes, Gilbert wrote:

It was agreed (verbally) that papers should be drawn up at once, and I in the meanwhile to make arrangements to come to Chicago in about six weeks.⁶⁴

The correspondence between Gilbert and Burnham after their Chicago meeting is missing, but a memorandum in Gilbert's handwriting suggests that Gilbert had had second thoughts about a partnership and had drawn up new terms. In the memorandum Gilbert listed works in progress in Minnesota, Winnipeg, and Helena, and proposed that during the trial year Gilbert would retain a one-half interest in the Gilbert-Taylor partnership.⁶⁵ It is not known whether these terms were ever submitted, although a letter from Burnham indicates they were:

I am sorry to say that we must give up our hoped for connection. My old connections are causing a trying condition to exist which bids fair to drag along indefinitely, and there is no chance of being clear enough to make a proposition. . . .Till I am in position therefore, I must let the matter drop.⁶⁶

In writing Charles McKim a few days later, Gilbert revealed the extent of his disappointment. "You can judge of my surprise. . . which of course ends the matter [though] Mr. Burnham has acted most courteously and generously in it. . . ." ⁶⁷

A month later, Daniel Willard said he did not know if Gilbert should be congratulated or not.

It was just one of those things that a man would have felt a great mistake not to have accepted and a great mistake to have accepted. I know very well that had it been offered to me I should have felt obliged to accept. . .but I should have stewed over it and hated to do it and wished it had never been offered [Willard said]. ⁶⁸

Gilbert's search for success is dramatically underlined by a statement made just after the closing of the Burnham affair. In a letter to one of his former draftsmen then in search of work in the East, Gilbert said:

. . .The way to success lies through one's own self, and not by the contact with some other person who has attained it. Too great an adoration of a limited set of men will be a source of weakness in the long run, and will certainly engender a spirit of servility toward them. . . . ⁶⁹

It is clear that the 1884-1894 period was an "initiation" for Gilbert. During that time, several ventures, both successful and unsuccessful, taught him how to make use of the intricacies of "businessmanship." During the following half-decade, Gilbert remained in St. Paul where he carried on an active practice after severing relations with Taylor in 1892. ⁷⁰ In that year, James J. Hill appointed Gilbert architect for the Great Northern Railroad

and for the Hill Seminary in St. Paul.⁷¹ In 1895, Gilbert won the competition for the Minnesota State Capitol. The following chapters describe and analyze the personal and political problems surrounding the winning of the competition, the choice of stone, and the selection of artists for the Minnesota Capitol.

III

The Rewards of "Businessmanship"

1893 - 1895

When Cass Gilbert won the competition for the Minnesota State Capitol in 1895, his "initiation" period ended and his highly successful business career began. By 1893, Gilbert had mastered the ground rules of "businessmanship," and his career moved forward in an upward spiral. This chapter analytically traces the social and political events from 1891 to 1895 leading up to and surrounding the capitol competition, and shows Gilbert's place within this milieu. During this period several major events occurred that are important to an understanding of Gilbert's continuing career. The first concerns the fight to remove the capital city from St. Paul, an issue that began as early as the Territorial era, and ended only after ground was broken for the capitol building in 1896. The factions in this conflict included rural legislators who wanted the capital located outside of Minnesota's two major cities, and Minneapolis legislators and citizens who fought to displace St. Paul as the capital city. A second event has to do with agitation by the Minnesota chapter of the American Institute of Architects, which influenced the legislature to form rules for the competition that would be advantageous to local architects. The A.I.A., with Gilbert as president, was successful in getting architects to boycott the competition and forcing the Board of Capitol Commissioners to

throw out the first contest and to initiate a second one. During the time of the A.I.A. activity, Gilbert himself was appointed an "expert" to the Board, a job that put him in a most advantageous position to win the second competition. The ethical implications of Gilbert's relationship to Channing Seabury, vice-president of the Board, as well as to the competition itself, constitute the final event of the 1891-1895 period.

One of the most important conflicts in Minnesota's social history concerns the agitation by legislators and citizens to remove the seat of government from St. Paul and relocate it elsewhere in the state. The origin of the dispute arose from an interpretation of the Territorial Act of 1849 and the State Constitution of 1857, documents which state that the temporary seat of government shall be at St. Paul, but that "the legislature, at their first or any future session, may provide by law for a change of the seat of government by a vote of the people. . . ." ¹ The subsequent argument for removal of the capitol site most often centered upon the phrase "vote of the people" --an interpretation of which allowed legislators, presumably speaking for the people, to insist that St. Paul should not necessarily have to be the permanent location of the state government. ²

During the first session of the Territorial legislature, 1849, the question that concerned the legislators most was the

location of the capital city. The first Territorial meeting was held in the Central House hotel in St. Paul, which later became the Territorial capitol building, a site described at the time as "affording an extensive view of the valley of the Mississippi, and one of most surpassing beauty." During that session, discussions arose as to where the permanent capitol should be built, and resolutions were made suggesting as sites both St. Anthony and Sauk Rapids as well as St. Paul. By the end of the first session, no progress had been made as to the location for the permanent seat of government.³

During the second legislative session, 1851, bills were authorized to locate the capitol building in St. Paul, the prison at Stillwater, and the University at St. Anthony. The bills citing the locations of the University and the prison have never been questioned, although the bill authorizing the location of the capitol precipitated the conflict that ended only with the construction of the present capitol building. Notwithstanding opposition, plans were made during the second session to construct a building in St. Paul, and in 1851, using funds from the U.S. Treasury marked solely for a permanent seat of government, a capitol building was constructed at an initial cost of \$33,000 in Bazilles' addition in St. Paul. The new capitol building in Greek temple form was first used by the fifth legislative session meeting in 1854.⁴

No further attempts to remove the capitol from St. Paul occurred until 1857 when a group called the St. Peter Company,

anticipating a move to that city, went ahead to build temporary buildings promising structures equal or superior to the one in St. Paul should the capitol be removed to St. Peter. Several days of stormy sessions in the legislature followed during which the St. Peter faction was nearly successful in removing the site from St. Paul, but the resolution for removal was defeated for that session. The question arose again, however, the following year when both Nicollet Island and Kandiyohi county contended for the site, the latter having representatives who offered 6,400 acres of land for the building site.⁵

The Kandiyohi offer and the interests representing that site show the beginning of the rural-city conflict --a dominant theme in Minnesota history. By 1859, Minnesota had become a state, and the Constitution (following the wording of the Territorial act with its provision to put the issue of a permanent site to a vote of the people) was having its effect. A bill to make the Kandiyohi lands the permanent site passed the House of Representatives in 1861, but no further action was taken on the matter until 1869 when rural legislators, combined with representatives from Winona, Stillwater, Minneapolis, and St. Anthony, attempted to make Kandiyohi the permanent capitol. Both houses passed a bill authorizing such an action, but it was vetoed by Governor Marshall on grounds that public opinion was against removal and the question had not gone before the people in the last election. The Kandiyohi location, however, was an issue that arose time and again into the middle 1890's.⁶

In 1881, the original capitol, which had been used for both the Territorial and then the State government, burned down. For a brief period of time, the government was housed in the newly constructed market house in St. Paul --a temporary move that came two days short of the end of the legislative session of 1881, thus avoiding the problem of raising the issue of capitol removal for the time being.⁷ The new capitol, for which \$275,000 was raised, was first occupied in 1883. Before an appropriation was made, however, "great inducements" were offered to members of the legislature to again consider the proposition of moving the capitol from St. Paul. According to W. B. Dean, Governor Pillsbury was "inflexible in his refusal to entertain any consideration of the question [of removal]. . .and an honorable sense of fairness with a majority of the members caused the leaders to desist from their attempt. . . ."8

No attempt was made to move the capital during the years 1883 to 1891, although, according to Dean, the issue was used to advantage by legislators who wanted assistance in their legislative business from the Ramsey county delegation.⁹ The new capitol, however, soon proved to be practically useless for the business of government, a problem that again raised the capital removal question. By 1891, legislators were complaining of the lack of proper ventilation, the lack of a sufficient number of committee rooms, and the need for more storage space. Many legislators moved their offices to business blocks some distance from the capitol, and members were often absent because of illness caused by poorly circu-

lated air. After the secretary of the State Board of Health pronounced the air "utterly unfit for human beings to breathe," plans were initiated to form a committee to look into the possibilities of raising money for a new capitol building. Plans for appointing a committee were hardly begun when Senator Dodge, Chisago county, offered a resolution to form another committee made up of members of both houses to confer with the owners of the Minneapolis Exposition Building in order to secure that structure as a "permanent state capitol." Simultaneously, Senator Glader of Kandiyohi introduced a bill calling for

. . .the sale of lots in the city of Mennetaga on the state capitol lands in Kandiyohi county, and the erection of buildings thereat and the removal of the state capitol thereto.¹⁰

During the same legislative session, Senator F. G. McMillan, Hennepin county legislator, submitted a resolution to his Ramsey county colleague, W. B. Dean, calling for the appointment of a committee of three that would investigate and report to the 1893 legislature concerning the feasibility of constructing a new capitol "commensurate with the dignity of a great and prosperous state." In his resolution, McMillan proposed that the committee look into the matter of site, obtain information as to "size, style, material used, and cost of capitol buildings of other states," and proceed after gathering this information to appoint a commission to contract for a building "complete in every respect to be built in a reasonable length of time, and for a definite sum of money. . . ready for occupancy. . .within the limits of the amount appropri-

ated for that purpose."¹¹

Senator Dean's response to McMillan's resolution typified the kind of tensions that beset the proposal for the building of a new capitol from the beginning, for Dean interpreted the resolution as a "gift from Greeks," meaning that the proposal coming from a Hennepin county representative might reopen the old question of removing the capital site from Ramsey county. Even though Dean refused to consider McMillan's resolution, remarking that it was "not then practicable," McMillan submitted it for debate to the Senate and a committee composed of McMillan, Dean, Jay LaDue of Luverne, Oscar Ayers of Austin, and Henry Keller, Sauk Center, was appointed to look into the question of building a new state capitol.¹²

The first meeting of the McMillan committee was held on November 4, 1891. At that meeting all members agreed that a new structure was needed, that the building should cost no less than 2 million nor more than 3 million, and that Minnesota stone should be used, as much as possible, throughout the structure. With the exception of chairman McMillan, it was also agreed that the capitol site should remain in St. Paul.¹³ Before the re-convening of the 1893 legislature, the committee visited the Iowa state capitol and several Minnesota quarries prior to making a report to the Senate. In their report the committee, with McMillan filing a minority report, recommended the measures agreed upon in their meeting as to the necessity of a new building, cost, and stone, and agreed further that the site should remain in St. Paul.

The capitol is essentially designed for the convenient dispatch of the public business. This end can only be reached by its location as nearly as may be at the center of population, not only of the state, but of the capital city, convenient of immediate access and within easy reach of the best hotel and railroad facilities.¹⁴

The report also made specific recommendations regarding the future source of revenue for the proposed building, laying the foundation for what later became a contentious matter for all parties involved, including the architect, legislators, and citizens of the state who were responsible for providing the revenue. The original plan as outlined in the committee report called for \$5000 to be set aside in 1893 and 1894 for the purpose of finding an architect and selecting plans for the new building. Funding after 1894 would come from levying a tax of 2/10 of one mil upon the assessed valuation of all state property --an amount, the committee showed, equal to ten cents for every 80-acre farm in the state. This method of funding, as well as the negligible cost to the individual taxpayer, seems ingenious to a person viewing the proposal today; although, as we shall see, the original estimate, as well as the method of taxation, fell far short of the revenue needed to carry on the construction of the capitol from 1896 to 1905.¹⁵

In his minority report, Senator McMillan proposed that the question of site be left open; that building the capitol 3/4 of a mile from the present capitol, as the majority report recommended, was too restrictive, and that land should be sought that was at some distance from the business district of the city in which it

would be built. The site, he argued, should be ". . . easy of access, commanding in view, with the grounds. . . suitable to the future wants of this great state. . . ."16 McMillan also recommended that only Minnesota architects should be allowed to compete for the capitol, a proposal that became a major issue during both competitions for selection of the building's architect.¹⁷

The implication of the minority report was that the city referred to by McMillan might not necessarily have to be St. Paul --and that was the way Senator Dean interpreted it. Dean's views were shared by the St. Paul Pioneer Press, which added to its coverage the accusation that

[McMillan's] minority report amounts merely to a declaration that the question of location should be left open for deals and trades in the new commission [the Board of Capitol Commissioners] and that it be decided finally on the speculative plan fixing the new capitol somewhere in the middle of a big field, without reference to the convenience of those who have to use it. . . .¹⁸

According to the Pioneer Press, both McMillan and the Minneapolis Tribune, which had taken a stand against building a new capitol,¹⁹ were not "entirely candid," and the Pioneer Press further implied that the motive stemmed from the desire to see the capitol built in Minneapolis. The St. Paul newspaper also took a more cosmopolitan view of the problem of selecting an architect than did McMillan, arguing that it was a mistake to seek Minnesota architects solely when the state should have the advantage of the "best ability wherever it could be found."²⁰

Senator Dean introduced a bill for the construction of a new capitol the day the committee reports were presented. According

to Dean's later account, the bill was introduced with "considerable trepidation," for he was a Democrat and the Republicans were in control of the Senate and had won the previous election "upon a widely heralded platform of economy and reform."²¹ Besides this problem, no sum of money equaling two million had ever been appropriated by the Minnesota state legislature. Dean's final concern had to do with again raising the "burning question" of capitol location.²²

On the same day that Dean introduced his bill in the Senate, Hiler H. Horton, a St. Paul representative, filed a similar bill in the House.²³ The debate that followed there enlivened the question of capitol site and helped to retrench the forces representing city and country as well as those speaking for Minneapolis and St. Paul. The leading spokesman for the House bill was Winona representative Samuel Van Sant, later a Minnesota governor, who, in arguing for the St. Paul site, likened the city to Rome.

. . . Like Rome of old, all roads lead to St. Paul. It is only a few minutes ride to Minneapolis, our great metropolis, now so large and growing so fast that she has no rival. . . .²⁴

Representative William A. Fleming of Crow Wing county, taking the rural legislators' point of view, said that he did not blame St. Paul for wanting a new capitol building, but he believed that the

. . . rural districts do not want the bill to pass, nor does the present troubled financial condition of the country warrant the expenditure at the present time. . . .²⁵

Fleming noted that before he would vote for such a bill he wanted

the "millionaires of St. Paul" to give a bond so as to ensure that the new capitol would not cost more than the amount appropriated. Fleming also drew support from Representative Loren Fletcher of Hennepin County who tried to kill the bill because of the proposed St. Paul location, using as an argument the fact that the Minneapolis Courthouse had run one million dollars over its original estimate. Fletcher added that the state might get along with "a little crowding and inconvenience for many [more] years" before a new capitol would be needed.²⁶ Although the debate was extremely heated, Horton's bill passed the House 68 to 41 on March 17.²⁷ Just prior to the bill's passage, the Pioneer Press reported that "the usual effort was made to array the country members against the city members," but noted that after considerable debate the "farmer members took a broad-gauge view of the question."

Every effort was used by the opponents of the bill to cripple or kill it in the committee of the whole, and for the purpose of creating a feeling of antagonistic sentiment against the measure all manner of tactics, parliamentary and unparliamentary, were resorted to. Efforts were made to stir up sectional feeling between the cities and the country, but the attempt fell flat.²⁸

The Senate debate took a similar course, although as Dean recounts, the Ramsey county delegation took aggressive action to stave off defeat and the bill was passed by a 34 to 20 margin on April 6, 1893.²⁹ On the following day Governor Knute Nelson signed the Capitol Act into law.³⁰ With the passage of the bill, the Pioneer Press felt that the "capitol question that has returned to plague every legislature for more than ten years past" was

settled forever,³¹ but as we shall see, the issue of the capitol site, as well as the conflict between the warring factions, re-
curred during each succeeding legislative session, and the ques-
tion of site was not finally settled until ground was broken for
the new capitol in 1896.

While Senator Dean was preparing his bill for submission to
the Senate, other interested parties were at work attempting to
ensure passage of a capitol bill advantageous to them. On Feb-
ruary 7, 1893, four days after Dean filed his bill in the Senate,
Cass Gilbert, president of the Minnesota chapter of the American
Institute of Architects, read and discussed a copy of the Senate
bill at a meeting of the Minnesota chapter of the A.I.A.³²

The actions of the A.I.A. during the period from the intro-
duction of Dean's bill on February 3, 1893, to the time of the
second competition for the Capitol in October, 1895, show that the
organization was lobbying in the legislature and at the same time
advising the Board of Capitol Commissioners. Since Gilbert himself
was appointed one of two experts to advise the Commissioners, it
is clear that he was in on the ground floor as early as February,
1893.³³ The existing papers show that the Minnesota architects
took an aggressive stand in securing an advantageous position
throughout the planning stages for the Minnesota Capitol. (Lobby-
ing, of course, does not necessarily involve questionable ethical
practices, but it is ironic when the same architects enter a com-

petition for which they have helped to lay down the ground rules. Given the supposedly "blind" approach to the selection of a winner, it is doubly ironic that the Board's "expert" should finish in first place!).

During their meetings of February 7 and 9, the legislative committee of the A.I.A., Gilbert presiding, discussed several matters concerning Dean's bill. Since the bill had just been presented to the Senate and was then in committee at the time of the first A.I.A. meeting on February 7, the recommendations made suggest that the A.I.A. was initiating its work at a most early date. The architects were concerned about the following matters: the rules governing the impending competition, the cost of the Capitol as provided for by Dean's bill, and the 2 1/2 percent fee stipulated by the Capitol Act, a sum the A.I.A. felt was too low to draw capable designers.³⁴ At Gilbert's suggestion, the A.I.A. recommended that the rules for competition include a provision that would restrict the competition to ten architects "of known professional ability. . . six of whom shall be residents of Minnesota."³⁵ The most important recommendation that came out of the A.I.A. meetings, again at Gilbert's suggestion, was the proposal to label the competitive drawings with the name and address of the architect or firm "distinctly printed on each sheet."³⁶

Gilbert's personal interest in the impending capitol competition is most fully revealed in a letter written to Governor Knute Nelson from Joseph A. Wheelock, editor of the Pioneer Press. In early March, Gilbert had met with Wheelock to discuss the pro-

visions of the bill having to do with the rules of the competition. Apparently impressed by Gilbert's opinions, Wheelock wrote Nelson to ask if he would be interested in hearing Gilbert's views:

As [Gilbert] is a practical Architect of such experience and holds a high rank in his profession, I thought you might be interested in his views and have asked him to state them to you. . . .What architects think of his qualifications is shown by the fact that he has been recently appointed one of the Board of Judges of Architecture at the World's Fair. He is besides a thoroughly conscientiously [sic] man."³⁷

It is not known whether Gilbert and Nelson ever personally conferred on the competition, but it is interesting to note that several months after Wheelock contacted Nelson, Channing Seabury, vice president of the Board of Capitol Commissioners, sent a memorandum to Gilbert asking him to set up a time to "talk capitol building."³⁸ Besides Seabury, who, along with Gilbert, became the most important figure in the controversies surrounding the competition and construction of the Capitol, Governor Nelson also appointed as commissioners: H. W. Lamberton, Winona; George A. DuToit, Chaska; John De Laittre, Minneapolis; Col. C. H. Graves, Duluth; E. E. Corliss, Fergus Falls; and James McHench, Mankato. Edgar Weaver, Mankato, replaced McHench who died soon after the commission was formed.³⁹

Beginning in 1894, six months before the first competition, a series of meetings took place between the Board of Capitol Commissioners and the Minnesota Chapter of the A.I.A.⁴⁰ The 1894 meetings were a continuation of the earlier attempts by the A.I.A. to lay the groundwork for the rules of competition. Presumably after meeting with Gilbert to "talk Capitol," Seabury wrote Attor-

ney General Henry W. Childs, informing him that the 2 1/2 percent compensation for designing and superintending the Capitol as stipulated by the Capitol Act of 1893 was not a high enough figure to draw architects of high calibre.⁴¹ Seabury told Childs that he had corresponded with several architects, both resident and non-resident, who claimed that they would not be able to afford to enter the Minnesota competition. Seabury informed Childs that

. . .Such architects as McKim, Mead, and White of New York, who constructed the Agriculture Building of Chicago last year, cannot afford to compete for our building, if they should be required to both prepare plans, and detailed working drawings, and also superintend the construction, during the period of 10 years, for 2 1/2 percent, and it is just such talent as they possess --the best-- that we wish to enlist in the competition, for it would be both unwise and unsafe to trust so great a responsibility to inexperienced and incompetent architects. . . .⁴²

At issue was not only the low figure of 2 1/2 percent, but the fact that the state expected the winning designer to provide detailed plans for the building and to superintend the construction for a figure below the five percent usually allowed for major projects. In supporting the Minnesota architects, Seabury told Childs that the designs for the U.S. Post Office and Custom House had been drawn in Washington, D.C., and that Cass Gilbert as superintendent of construction had all he could do to handle that one aspect of the project.⁴³ In responding to Seabury's letter, Childs indicated that the state was attempting to save as much money as possible, and that the Capitol Act called for free designs and a 2 1/2 percent compensation for superintendence; and that the winning architect would get nothing for his designs unless

he was also chosen superintendent of construction.⁴⁴

In May, 1894, the A.I.A. submitted a sixteen-page memorandum as a "public duty" to the Commissioners.⁴⁵ Underlying the memorandum's recommendations one detects the feeling that the A.I.A. felt that it was perhaps over-stepping ethical bounds. Did the A.I.A. have a right to voice its opinions when so many of its members were also interested in entering the impending competition? The A.I.A. overtly stated that the memorandum was tendered to the Board as a "public duty" which would "aid the Commission in obtaining a high standard of excellance [sic.] . . .and will thus conduce to the public good," but added with a sense of uneasiness:

We do not pretend that our efforts are entirely disinterested, for we believe that the 'laborer is worthy of his hire,' and, as business men, you will agree with us that high professional skill should properly command a fair and reasonable compensation. . .it is also one which involves large responsibilities, covering a long period of years, with very arduous labor, constant attention, the interference with other business . . .so that the matter must be looked at simply and deliberately as a plain business proposition. . . .⁴⁶

As if the point had not been made clearly enough, the A.I.A. added that it hoped the Board would consider its recommendations solely from a "business point of view."

We have not elaborated upon the service of an architect as an artist. We have treated the matter as though he were a merchant, a contractor, or a manufacturer. We leave it to your intelligence to consider the matter from this other [artistic] point of view. . . .⁴⁷

The dichotomy between art and business, as well as the one between artist and businessman, as shown in the quotation above,

suggests the degree to which the A.I.A. was willing to bend its esthetic (if not ethical) standards to land an important commission. Since the memorandum's interlineations are in Gilbert's hand, one can also sense the change in point of view from the architect's student days to this point of his career.

The day following the preparation of the memorandum, members of the A.I.A. met in the first of two consecutive all-day sessions with the Board of Capitol Commissioners. On May 30, 1894, the two organizations, along with Milwaukee architect H. C. Koch, the Board's second "expert," gathered to discuss specifications for the new Capitol. The Pioneer Press reported that the ". . .most minute details of every part of the new capitol's construction were taken up and considered systematically" so as to enable the Board to prepare preliminary specifications to be sent out to competing architects. According to the newspaper, Koch had been hired by the Board to advise them as an impartial expert, a move that set up immediate tension between the A.I.A. members and the Milwaukee architect, for Koch argued in favor of the 2 1/2 percent figure using as a basis his own work in Milwaukee. Koch insisted that a building could be designed and supervised at the lower rate; the Minnesota architects, of course, did not agree.⁴⁸

During the May 31 meeting, a vote was taken by the Board on a motion recommending that the A.I.A. memorandum be sent to the attorney general in the attempt to show him the architects' point of view. This motion was defeated, although the Board was divided with Seabury, Graves, and McHench favoring the five percent fig-

ure.⁴⁹ On the same day, the Board voted to send out advertisements for the capitol competition, setting the date of decision for the following September.⁵⁰

The capitol competition was beset with new problems from the beginning. In the summer of 1894, Seabury commented on the problems that already had taken place with the A.I.A.; problems, he felt, that would unfortunately set the tone for the future. Writing Ernest Flagg, winner of the Washington state capitol competition, Seabury apologized for not having asked Flagg's advice when the rules for competition had been drawn up. Seabury's scornful comments on the A.I.A. reveal some of the tensions that had already built up during the spring. He told Flagg:

. . . Had it not been for the meddlesome interference of some of our local architects, when the [Capitol] law was in course of preparation . . . the [Board] should have been a little more free to do the business [of the competition] upon something like business principles.⁵¹

Seabury's comments suggest the degree to which the A.I.A. had been successful in helping to shape the rules of competition during the time of the discussion of the Capitol Bill in the legislature, and he underscores the tension between the Board and the local architects that had followed. However much the local architects had influenced the proceedings to date, Seabury said that the Board was stuck with the rules, but hoped that Flagg would enter the competition nevertheless.⁵²

The response to the stipulations of the competition was

immediate and for the most part negative. During July and August, Seabury received comments from both local and out-of-state architects complaining about the small compensation offered by the Capitol Act. Will S. Aldrich of Somerville, Mass., for example, returned the Instructions, claiming that

The terms are such that I do not care to compete nor do I think any architect of reputation or training will do so. The requirements are bad and then to properly prepare the drawings would, if they received the study and care such a building ought to have, cost more than the commission promised.⁵³

The architectural firm of Long and Kees, Minneapolis, agreeing with a similar argument from Bertrand and Keith of the same city, said:

. . . On account of the small inducement offered to architects we can not afford to go into the competition, nor can any responsible and trust-worthy architect undertake to do the work at the price named. Public buildings go slow and there are so many to please any honest and capable architect who undertakes your work will earn his money at double the price you are at liberty to give.⁵⁴

In a letter to Gilbert, Clarence Johnston, speaking as secretary of the Minnesota A.I.A. chapter, summed up the feeling of the local architects. Johnston said that the Northwest architects had generally "repudiated the conditions of the competition and do not propose to offer drawings." He added that "reputable members of the profession elsewhere have assumed the same attitude." Johnston hoped that the architects' feelings about the 2 1/2 compensation would make the competition "abortive" and force the legislature of 1895 to amend the Capitol Act along "better lines."⁵⁵ During the summer of 1894, Johnston's hope was fulfilled, for the A.I.A.

formally repudiated the terms of the competition and agreed to boycott it altogether.⁵⁶

While Johnston and the A.I.A. membership were talking about condemning the competition, Seabury began to look around for prominent architects to serve as judges. He asked Johnston for a list of names (revealing the Board's need for advice regardless of the strain between the two groups) and by September, twelve leading architects had been contacted.⁵⁷ In a memorandum to the Board, Seabury commented ironically on the lack of local names on Johnston's list, saying that ". . .it may seem strange that we pass by our local architects and seek advice so far away," but added that he did not feel that Minnesota architects would be "unprejudiced and wholly fair" because they had passed resolutions condemning the competition.⁵⁸ Seabury noted that

[The local architects] have almost unanimously decided not to submit designs; they hope and expect that this competition will result in a failure to select a suitable design and architect, and they will then expect to see the Act amended, the coming winter, so that we can pay a proper compensation, in which event they are anxious to compete. . . .⁵⁹

While the A.I.A. was passing resolutions to condemn the competition, Gilbert apparently was trying another tack. In a letter to Gilbert from Robert D. Andrews of Jaques & Rantoul, Boston architects, Andrews reveals that he had been contacted by Gilbert who had provided him with full details of the competition.⁶⁰ Andrews' letter does not make it clear whether he asked Gilbert for information, or whether Gilbert had taken it upon himself to write Andrews; nor is it known if Gilbert had tried to discourage

Andrews (or other architects) from serving as judges, but it is interesting to note that Gilbert was corresponding with two of the prospective judges. Andrews said that he knew Peabody and Hunt had been contacted by Seabury and that they were asking \$250 a day for their services, and that he had asked the same amount "in order that there should be no appearances of underbidding." He told Gilbert, too, that

. . .there will be replies from individuals who will render their services for the distinction involved, so that I have no expectation of being called. . . .⁶¹

The judges who agreed to select the winners of the competition were Edmund M. Wheelwright, City Architect of Boston, and Chicago architect Henry Ives Cobb.⁶² Interestingly, Cobb and Gilbert were corresponding in September. Gilbert, in fact, had written Cobb asking for information about H. C. Koch, the "expert" hired by the Board of Commissioners.⁶³ Cobb informed Gilbert that Koch had beaten him out of the Milwaukee City Hall competition --an experience that had made Cobb leery of entering competitions.⁶⁴

By October 3, Seabury had received 423 applications for instructions from architects across the country. While reporting this information to the Pioneer Press, Seabury also made public the stance taken by the A.I.A. during the summer. He told the newspaper that

. . .The home architects --those of St. Paul and Minneapolis-- say that they cannot afford to undertake so responsible a building for the state at the compensation fixed by the law. We expect very few designs to come from citizens of the

state. One or two from St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Duluth are all we have any knowledge of at this time.⁶⁵

On October 22, the Pioneer Press announced that 56 designs had been submitted and were on public exhibit in St. Paul --an event, the newspaper claimed, that no other state had ever held. Curiously, the names of the competitors were revealed at the exhibit, although the judges, who were then in the process of making their report, still did not know the authors of the designs. Among the competitors the names of only four Minnesota architects appeared.⁶⁶

On the day after the public exhibition, O. G. Traphagen, a Duluth architect, wrote Gilbert, enclosing a copy of a letter he had written to the Pioneer Press signed "A Country Architect" in which Traphagen had humorously inquired why only 56 architects had competed for the Minnesota capitol when 158 designers had competed for "far off" Washington state. "The Country Architect" also wanted to know why "Messrs Cobb and Wheelwright" never entered competitions, and why there were "so very few prominent names in that list." More importantly, Traphagen questioned the absence of "principal architects" from Minnesota who "seemed so apathetic towards their [own] Capitol."⁶⁷ In his letter to Gilbert, Traphagen added that the "Country Architect's" letter should make

. . .a good opportunity for some of you down there to answer in your usual vigorous St. Paul style. If we want to interest the public and dampen the competition a little bit, now is the time to do it.⁶⁸

On November 10, 1894, Seabury received the experts' report, but told the local newspapers that the report would not be opened nor made public until the Board had had a chance to discuss it.

While explaining his reason for not immediately making the report public, Seabury warned the Pioneer Press and the Minneapolis Journal that by the rules of the Capitol Act the Board was not legally bound to accept the experts' counsel; and that if for any reason the Commissioners disagreed with Wheelwright and Cobb, the Board could legally select its own winners.⁶⁹ Underlying Seabury's official statement to the press was his personal disappointment over the low quality of the designs, a condition which he felt was caused by the dearth of talent represented in the competition.⁷⁰ The A.I.A., it would seem, had carried out a most successful campaign.

During the winter of 1894, the Board made no decisions concerning the outcome of the competition, presumably awaiting the re-convening of the legislature in January, 1895. On January 20, the Commissioners presented their first report to Governor Nelson, stating that they had been "greatly hampered by the restrictive provisions of the [Capitol] Act for securing plans and an architect," a reference to the 2 1/2 fee. The Board also told Nelson that the designs were still under consideration.⁷¹ At their January 24 meeting, the Commissioners resolved to postpone further action on the designs "in deference to the wishes of the citizens of St. Paul" so that remedial legislation could be sought to secure a higher compensation for the winning architect.⁷² (The "deference" notation is slightly ambiguous, but probably refers to the scarcity of local architects in the contest as well as the pressure on the Board by the A.I.A.)

The re-convening of the legislature brought new problems to the question of settling the competition. The legislators' immediate concern was why the results of the experts' report had not been made public, a question that led to the supposition that the Commission was trying to conceal the plans from the public.⁷³ According to the Pioneer Press account, there was "a good deal of foolish talk" among the legislators "about the [plans] being kept secret for some sinister purpose."⁷⁴ On the same day, the Pioneer Press reported that the Board was very disappointed with the designs and that it had asked the legislators to raise the 2 1/2 fee so as to draw more talented participants.⁷⁵ In its report to the Senate, the Board argued that

. . . only 56 plans had been submitted. Most of them were entirely worthless, either bearing the stamp of incompetency and professional ignorance or were for buildings whose cost was very largely beyond the limit of \$1,500,000. . . .⁷⁶

Because of the poor quality of the designs, Seabury hoped that the legislature would raise new legislation approving a second competition with a higher compensatory fee, and at the same time he also wanted to set aside the experts' report without making it public.⁷⁷ Unfortunately for Seabury, the legislature forced the Commissioners to make the report public, an action which Seabury described as having been "dragged out of us by a hostile legislative committee."⁷⁸ While Seabury continued to insist that the report was not binding and that the Board alone had the right to select the architect, the local newspapers, following the lead of the legislature, printed the names of the winners, pictures of

their designs, and the text of the experts' report.⁷⁹

The report gave first place to the Denver firm of Wendell and Humphreys. J. A. Schweinfurth, Boston; George R. Mann, St. Louis; G. DeGersdorff, Stockbridge, Mass.; and W. B. Dunnell, Minneapolis, took the other four prizes.⁸⁰ According to Wheelwright and Cobb, of the 56 submitted designs, twenty were "found worthy of detailed consideration" without figuring in the factor of cost. When the twenty designs were looked at with cost in mind, four were thrown out because they exceeded the 1.5 million dollar limit. After selecting the five winners, special mention awards were given to A. H. Granger, Cleveland, and to Boring, Tilton, and Hamilton of New York City.⁸¹

The Pioneer Press, which gave front page coverage to the winners, shared the views of the Board, but carried the attack against the designs even further, perhaps at the prompting of the Commissioners. An editorial writer proclaimed:

There is no mark of creative genius about any of this work. When the designs are not mediocre, they are conventional and full of plagiarisms. . . . For such a building as the people have asked and provided for, we should have a competition of the best talent among architects in the United States.⁸²

The brunt of the attack was leveled against the winning design. What the Pioneer Press writer discovered was that Wendell and Humphreys' plan closely resembled that of McKim, Mead, and White's Rhode Island capitol. "If the Denver design is not copied from the plan of the Rhode Island building. . . the coincidence is very remarkable," the writer argued.⁸³ And not only was the plan criti-

cized, but the architects as well:

. . .The Denver firm who furnished this design are young men unknown to architectural fame. The expert architects [Wheelwright and Cobb] had never heard of them. It would be clearly unwise to entrust the building of the state capitol to architects who have their reputation as leading architects yet to make and whose design gives evidence of having been largely borrowed from the work of more eminent architects.⁸⁴

(In light of later developments, the plagiarism charge is ironic indeed, since Gilbert's dome is a borrowing as well. In fact, the dome design was hailed at the time as being an exact replica of Michelangelo's dome for St. Peter's.)⁸⁵

While Seabury was stewing over the exposure of the experts' report and the press was hurling charges against it, many of the city legislators were making use of the unsettled condition of the competition to raise again the question of capital removal. During March, 1895, a large share of the legislative session was spent arguing the merits of Minneapolis as a capital site. The removal issue began anew with an offer by Representative August Anderson to donate the Minneapolis Exposition Building along with one million dollars to refurbish it.⁸⁶ Simultaneously, the Minneapolis delegates in the Senate offered Loring Park as a gift to the state if the capitol were built there.⁸⁷ For a short time, the Loring Park offer received impetus from prominent Minneapolis citizens who met at the Commercial Club to push for relocation. The movement lost much of its momentum at that meeting, however, when ex-governor John S. Pillsbury argued against it.⁸⁸ In declining to support the Minneapolis site, Pillsbury cited the fine treatment

accorded the University of Minnesota by four "St. Paul" governors and by other "warm friends" of Minneapolis in the legislature.⁸⁹

The Loring Park movement ended abruptly on March 29 when it was discovered that a \$750,000 mortgage was held on the park preventing Minneapolis from legally transferring the title to the state.⁹⁰

During this phase of the battle over relocation, Channing Seabury found himself caught between having to satisfy the disgruntled architects of the first competition and attempting to secure new legislation to allow more liberal terms for a second competition. In a letter to his friend Hastings H. Hart, secretary of the State Board of Corrections Charities, Seabury complained that "our enemies in the Legislature, prompted and assisted by many of the citizens of Minneapolis," had agitated in the legislature and among the competing architects to bring discredit to the Board. J. S. Schweinfurth, the second prize winner, in particular, had gone to such lengths as writing state officials, the Pioneer Press, and Edmund Wheelwright in order to protect his position in the competition. By the time that new legislation was forthcoming, Seabury had all he could take from the various factions involved. In his letter to Hart he again insisted that the Board would make the final decision in regard to selecting the winning architect.

. . . Our board alone has the right of selection of a plan and an architect. When Minneapolis has amused herself sufficiently, with her Exposition elephant, and her Loring Park scheme, etc., etc. our board will meet. . . coming to a definite decision about all the plans. . . I am too busy to be bothered with replying to every disgruntled and dissatisfied 'young architect' who has aspirations enough to enter this

competition, more than one of whom, like Mr. Schweinfurth himself, has but recently hung out his 'shingle.'⁹¹

The Minneapolis opposition did not, however, deter the legislature from passing curative legislation allowing for a more flexible and attractive competition. In April, Seabury was able to announce the winners of the first competition --citing choices made by the Board independently of the experts' report-- and to call for a new competition ending August 5, 1895.⁹² The Board agreed with Wheelwright and Cobb only on giving Wendell and Humphreys first prize and George Mann third. Herman Kretz, a St. Paul architect, was placed second in place of the troublesome Schweinfurth.⁹³ W. H. Dennis, Minneapolis, and Radcliff and Willoughby, Duluth, were presented with prizes four and five.⁹⁴ The sudden insertion of "local" names implies, perhaps, a nod to prospective Minnesota architects planning to enter the second competition as the first competition now held little more value than the prize money involved.

The new competition again called for a structure costing 1.5 million, a sum still below what Seabury requested, although the prize money was raised for second through fifth places. Most important, however, was the new sliding scale for compensating the winning architect-supervisor. Amending the Capitol Act of 1893, the legislature allowed five percent on the first \$500,000, four percent on the second \$500,000, two percent for the remaining cost, as well as a \$5000 reward-stipend to the architect if he could keep the cost of the building within the 1.5 million allowed

by the law.⁹⁵

In a letter to Daniel Burnham explaining the changes in the second competition, Seabury threw light on some of the problems he had had with his own board as well as with the Minnesota legislature. He told Burnham that the Board was split over the question of fee, and that he was always a "consistent and persistent advocate of liberal fees" to the point where some of his fellow board members called him "the five per cent man." In the legislature, the two percent faction had argued that times were depressed and that the "architectural fraternity" should conform to the existing conditions. After appearing personally in front of five legislative committees, Seabury was able to find a compromise by accepting a sliding scale of commissions. The amending bill was passed, Seabury said, "by no means unanimously" in both houses of the legislature.⁹⁶

The problems surrounding the first competition should have ended at this point, but at about the time the winning designs appeared in the newspapers, a most curious and complicated affair came to light that added to the already problematical first competition and laid the foundation for further tensions in the second.

To understand what happened during the period between the first and second competition, it is necessary to refer to an important letter written ten months earlier. On July 16, 1894, a Denver lumberman and investor, acting as a representative for an

unnamed member of a Denver architectural firm, wrote his brother-in-law, a Minneapolis businessman, asking him if he would consider making a deal for the architect with the Board of Capitol Commissioners in St. Paul.⁹⁷ The lumberman-investor, John Mouat, offered his brother-in-law, Otto Miller, \$18,000 if he would contact at least four members of the Board with the intent of bribing them to favor the Denver architect's competition designs.

I understand that there is going to be a State Capitol building erected in St. Paul [Mouat wrote]. . . . A firm of architects here [in Denver] think of preparing plans for the building, and want me to find out if there was any way that we could arrange to 'stand in' with the. . . [Commissioners], four of them can control the Board. If you could arrange the matter, I would see that you were paid for your trouble, and furnish you any money for expenses you might require, providing the expense was not more than the contract was worth. . . Amelia and the children are all well[!] ⁹⁸

On August 21, having not heard from Miller, Mouat wrote again urging him to reply to the initial inquiry: "What about the matter I wrote you about, three weeks ago. Time is the essence of contracts, you know."⁹⁹ Several more letters followed, including one that contained a penciled, two-page "program" outlining the steps to be taken when approaching the Commissioners, and another that cited three names --Seabury, John De Laittre, and Frederick Du Toit-- that might be useful in setting up the contract.¹⁰⁰

During the period from July, 1894, to sometime in early 1895, Mouat continued to push his brother-in-law into acting on the proposal, but Miller refused to acknowledge any of the letters.¹⁰¹ The matter could have ended at this point, but when Miller noticed the publication of the winning designs in April, 1895, and discov-

ered that a Denver firm had won first prize, he told his story to a friend, who in turn, related the incident to one of the competitors.¹⁰² This unknown competitor assumed without proof that Wendell and Humphreys were involved and turned over the information to Seabury and De Laittre. With the information in hand, De Laittre contacted Otto Miller advising him to have nothing more to do with the matter and to turn over the "Mouat correspondence" to the Commissioners.¹⁰³

Miller's story threw the Commissioners into a quandary. The prize winners had already been selected, and, besides Wendell and Humphreys, three other Denver firms were competitors, though not prize-winners. Had Miller and Seabury known the name of the architect who had engineered the scheme, the problem could have been solved at once, but because this was not known, the Commissioners, following the competitor's hunch, placed the blame on Wendell and Humphreys.¹⁰⁴

The scheme was unraveled after several weeks of investigation by the Commissioners. Following a lead that a similar attempt had been made to bribe commissioners during the competition for the capitol in Washington state a year before, Seabury wrote Washington commissioner Edmund Rice. By comparing the hand-writing on the penciled "program" with a similar one in Rice's possession, Seabury learned that a J. J. Huddart of Denver was the briber involved. According to Rice's description, Huddart had attempted a bribe in this fashion:

Someone came in here one day and stated that they were representing Huddart's plans. . . [Huddart]

was very nearly successful in involving this state [Washington] and the Commission in a disgraceful scandal such as I want your board steered clear of. He is one of the keenest men I have ever seen. He submitted a very well drawn plan, a little old fashioned in style, but admirably executed and thorough in detail. Having enlisted one member's services, long in advance of his plan's receipt here, he set to work to secure two others and succeeded in making a bargain for \$25,000 --payable in gold-- when his selection as architect should have been made. The Governor was given a pointer to unearth the scheme, which he did with the result of disgracing the two appointed Commissioners. . . .If that man is in no wise connected with Wendell and Humphreys they may be the best men you could have.¹⁰⁵

Although the handwriting comparison seemed to settle the matter beyond reasonable doubt, Seabury took one more step to assure himself that Wendell and Humphreys were not involved in the bribery scheme. In a letter on May 8, he confronted the Denver architects directly:

- First: Were you, or either of you, in the competition at Olympia, Washington, in 1893?
- Second: Were either of you ever in Olympia, in person? If your answer is yes, please give me all the facts connected with your being there, if connected with the Capitol competition.
- Third: What other Denver architects were in the Olympia competition and what facts can you give me, if any are within your knowledge, respecting the connection of any one or more of them with said competition, that was productive of any unpleasantness, in any direction. . . .¹⁰⁶

Seabury's answer to this letter contained affidavits attesting to the fact that neither architect had been in Olympia at the time of the competition. In fact, one of the men was in Europe at the time.¹⁰⁷

On May 15, Seabury wrote Wendell and Humphreys that allegations against them had been dropped. He told them, that contrary to what the newspapers were saying, they had won the first competition, but not "the right to build the New Capitol for our State."¹⁰⁸ Furthermore, Wendell and Humphreys' design was "impractical" because the House and Senate were placed on the first floor, which would make the main floor inactive twenty one months out of twenty four. Seabury added that Wendell and Humphreys could enter the second competition "on a much better footing."¹⁰⁹

If Seabury left the door open for Wendell and Humphreys in May, it was shut again the following month. In early June, Humphreys visited Seabury's office in the attempt to find out the name of the guilty Denver architect. On June 7, after Humphreys' visit, Seabury fired off an angry response:

. . .I cannot consent to having your Mr. Humphreys make any use whatever of the information which he accidentally obtained in my office, concerning the source from which that attempt at bribery emanated. I have given my word that third parties should not be dragged into trouble in this matter. . .it was upon giving this pledge that I obtained possession of, and the right to keep the papers [Mouat letters] which I showed to your Mr. Humphreys. . . .¹¹⁰

Seabury suggested that Wendell and Humphreys ask the president of the Colorado A.I.A. to write him for the information, and that he would send out the penciled "program" so that the A.I.A. could make its own investigation. Seabury again told Wendell and Humphreys that they were cleared of allegations, but this time more curtly.

. . . Having satisfied myself, and our board, that neither member of your firm was the guilty party, I have treated the matter with the disgust it merits, and dropped it.¹¹¹

Although Seabury was satisfied that Wendell and Humphreys had had nothing to do with the bribery scheme, their persistence, and perhaps, the fact that their names had been --even wrongly-- connected with the scheme, prevented him from ever seriously considering their entry again. When the experts gave Wendell and Humphreys fifth place in the second competition, the Commissioners determined their plans "defective" and Harry Jones was given the prize in their place.¹¹²

With the Wendell and Humphreys' affair out of the way, Seabury was able to turn his attention to the second competition. On May 21, Seabury told Edmund Rice that he was in a "waiting condition" because the country's architects had had more business that spring than for many previous seasons, and that the coming competition would probably have to be postponed until late fall.¹¹³ As it turned out, no selection was made until October 31.¹¹⁴

In September, Commissioner James McHench died.¹¹⁵ In a letter to McHench's successor Daniel Shell, Seabury ironically underscored the problems he had had throughout the year. He told Shell that there was little compensation in the job "except labor."

. . . The compensation to members of our Board is a mere trifle, compared with the responsibility and labor involved. I suppose, however, there is some honor connected with the position, and we must content ourselves principally with this, when working for the public. . . .¹¹⁶

The comment to Shell points back to the legislators, the A.I.A. and Wendell and Humphreys, but also to new problems ahead. One problem concerned the Board's selection of the winning architect; another the reaction to the winner by the local press.

On September 14, Seabury invited Edmund Wheelwright back to judge the second competition.¹¹⁷ In his letter of invitation, Seabury noted that forty-one designs had already been submitted, a group "superior to the previous lot," in Seabury's opinion. "I do not believe that your architectural taste will receive so severe a shock in looking them over, as I feel sure it did before," Seabury added.¹¹⁸ Seabury also commented on the greater number of "local architects" involved, adding that Wheelwright would probably be "beseiged" on his arrival by "ardent admirers of one or another of them, on behalf of their several drawings."¹¹⁹ His final comment suggests the relationship between Seabury and Cass Gilbert who was about to win the coveted prize.

. . . I have never been approached, in the slightest way, improperly, by any one of them [the architects] or their friends, nor do I think you will be; although, naturally, personal friendships are strong, and each [has its] partisans.¹²⁰

On October 17, Wheelwright made his selections, giving Cass Gilbert first place; George Mann, second prize; Bassford, Traphagen, and Fitzpatrick, third; Clarence Johnston, fourth; and Wendell and Humphreys, last place. The Commissioners substituted Harry Jones' name for Wendell and Humphreys, as noted above.¹²¹

During the following week, the Board met to make its own decision. The record of those meetings, one finds, is most curious.

On October 22, 23, and 24, Board meetings were held to discuss the designs with each competitor.¹²² On the 25th, the Board began balloting to select its choices. The Commissioners voted first by design numbers and selected five winning designs. At the afternoon's session, it was decided, having five winning numbers, to change the form of procedure so as to "select an architect" by ballot.¹²³ In other words, instead of voting on the numbers, which would have kept the balloting "blind," the Board took the winning numbers and voted on them after identifying the authors of the designs, obviously giving the advantage to an architect favorable to the Commissioners!

On the first ballot, Bassford, Traphagen, and Fitzpatrick received three votes; Gilbert, two votes; Jones and Mann, each one vote apiece.¹²⁴ Since there was no majority decision, another vote was taken; by the end of the day, five ballots had been cast with no decision arrived at.¹²⁵ By ballot number five, curiously enough, Gilbert was down to a single vote. The next day, Governor Clough, ex officio president of the Board, asked the Commissioners to let him sit in at the meetings.¹²⁶ Balloting continued on the 26th with no clear choice reached by the end of the day. When the Board adjourned at 5:30, Cass Gilbert still had but one single vote.¹²⁷

Four days later the Commissioners met again. On October 30, Seabury opened the meeting by resolving

That this Board, having carefully examined all of the designs submitted in this (second) competition, and having been thoroughly advised with

respect to each of them, hereby makes the following awards:

First: Design No. 38, submitted by Cass Gilbert, of St. Paul, Minn., is hereby adopted as the design of the New Capitol Building. . .and the said Cass Gilbert is hereby appointed architect of the said New Capitol Building, provided that a satisfactory contract can be made with him. . . .128

One would like to know, of course, what had happened between October 26 and 30 to make Seabury drop the balloting form and to move that Gilbert be selected outright (the resolution was accepted unanimously) especially since Gilbert had received but one vote during the previous session. Unfortunately, no record exists for that four-day period.

The fact that Cass Gilbert won the capitol competition shows the continually involved nature of his peculiar relationship to the Board --and to Seabury in particular-- as well as his success at climbing to prominence. It is apparent that from the time of the first announcement for the capitol competition, Gilbert was continually on the scene, either as advisor to the Commissioners or as an agitator for the A.I.A. It can also be inferred that Seabury had gained respect for Gilbert with each passing stage of the competition and that he probably felt that Gilbert was the best man to build the capitol. What must be kept in mind, however, is that from the public's point of view, competitions are by definition and by law contests to select a winner without the judges' or Board's knowledge of the competitors' identities. Although the

true facts that decided the competition are impossible to reconstruct with positive accuracy, the existing record suggests that Seabury's interest in Gilbert probably lent more weight to settling the competition than did the "blind" decision made by Wheelwright.

Obviously, the unusual method of settling the competition raises an important ethical question: Was the competition honest? Viewed from the standpoint of the detached critic or citizen who expects honesty from public officials, the answer is no. As seen from Seabury's point of view, one must say with qualifications, yes. Both Seabury and Gilbert would have been appalled by the charge of collusion. From the beginning of his tenure with the Board, Seabury insisted that the work be carried forward without graft, e.g., his handling of the Mouat-Huddart affair. But at the same time Seabury's role as a businessman made him adhere to the view that the "right man" had to be given the job --even if the system of choosing that man had to be set aside. In the end, "good business practice" and "local considerations" prevailed over ethics. The brunt of misconduct falls on Gilbert, I feel. Having been in on the preliminaries of the competition from its inception, the honest course for Gilbert would have been to eliminate himself from competition.

Seabury's feelings about the "right man" were summed up a few days after Gilbert's victory. His remarks help to explain the ethical dilemma Seabury must have felt himself to be in:

. . .I think you. . .now know that Cass Gilbert has won in this competition [he tells De Laittre] because of his superior talent, his strong personal

character and standing in the community, his integrity and ability, and not because of any special efforts on my part, or any personal relations that existed between us. . . .¹²⁹

The Minneapolis Journal took a different, though partly erroneous, point of view toward Gilbert's selection. Under the heading "This, According To The Card," the Journal wrote that the competition was a set-up because Gilbert and Seabury were related by marriage.¹³⁰ Citing a story that had appeared in the February 12, 1895, Journal, the newspaper alleged that the first competition

. . . was to be thrown out in order to let in Cass Gilbert of St. Paul, who was slated for the first place and the supervision of the building. Mr. Gilbert is a connection, by marriage, of Mr. Seabury, of the commission, and it has been understood, ever since The Journal's publication [February 12]. . . that he was to have the plum. . . .¹³¹

The Journal further elaborated on its charge by reporting scornfully that the October 30 Board meeting was a "seven hours' session, strictly executive and replete with ballots;" and that Seabury, Shell, and De Laittre "voted persistently" for Gilbert while Graves, Lamberton, and Du Toit held out for Bassford and Mann. At the session's end, the Journal alleged, "the non-Gilbert men were brought into line and the awards were made."¹³²

The Journal was undoubtedly partly correct in its latter charge as can be seen by studying the curious proceedings of the October 30 meeting. The "connection by marriage" charge fell flat, however. What the reporter, perhaps conveniently, forgot was that the newspaper had retracted the February 12 allegation two days later.¹³³ When the charge was again leveled on October 31, the

Journal, as in the first case, took back its allegation on November 13.¹³⁴

Between the time of the Journal's October 31 story and its retraction, Seabury explained the motives behind the newspaper's charge in a letter to De Laittre. Seabury told De Laittre that he was not related to Gilbert, and that the allegation stemmed from the fact that Seabury lived in St. Paul, the favorite target of the Minneapolis newspaper. He told De Laittre that the Journal probably had no "personal animosity" toward him, but

. . . imagine that because I live in St. Paul, and have been interested in this Capitol from its inception, they feel called upon to lie about me, and convey, broadcast, to the citizens of this state, the cheerful idea that I am corrupt, tricky, unreliable and scheming, and that this whole problem is of like nature. . . .¹³⁵

Seabury also mentioned that the originator of the charge was the manager of the Journal, Lucian Swift, a second cousin to Gilbert's wife! When the first charge was made, Seabury said, Gilbert had gone to Swift and demanded the correction. The second publication of the charge, according to Seabury, brought more serious action, for Gilbert on his way East after winning the competition had telegraphed his St. Paul attorney who contacted Swift demanding an "amende honorable" to "our mutual friend, Cass Gilbert."¹³⁶

If Lucian Swift was displeased with the selection of Gilbert as the architect of the capitol, most of Gilbert's friends, with the exception of Clarence Johnston, were not.¹³⁷ After the announcement of the Board's choice, Gilbert received letters and telegrams from architect friends throughout the country acclaiming

his selection.¹³⁸ Most of the congratulatory letters are revealing, for they provide further understanding of the social and political tensions surrounding the choice of an architect for a major public building. Gilbert's own response to the selection sheds further light on his feelings about his growing success.

One of the first letters of congratulation was from Edmund Wheelwright. Wheelwright said that he was pleased the Commissioners had awarded first place to his own candidate for the award. He also said that he understood the "local considerations" that made the Board substitute Harry Wild Jones' name for Wendell and Humphreys when awarding the fifth-place prize.¹³⁹ Since it was unlikely that Wheelwright knew anything about the attempted bribery scheme, his remark was undoubtedly a reference to his belief that Minneapolis had to be represented among the winners. One of the most revealing notes was from the secretary of the Minnesota A.I.A., an architect who signed himself "Pardee." In his congratulatory letter, "Pardee" unintentionally underscored the irony of Gilbert's victory.

'Influence' and not merit so often tips the scale in such competitions that the result in this case is a pleasure to all of us. . . . I have been told that your strictness in this respect [rules of right conduct] has sometimes been to your apparent disadvantage. . . such a course will now stand you in good stead.¹⁴⁰

Perhaps Gilbert's own thoughts and feelings serve as the most revealing final comment on the competition. With typical humility, Gilbert told W. S. Eames:

. . .I am young enough to learn lots about it [building the capitol] and at the same time, I feel what a pity it is that so big a work is put into the hands of a man who knows so little about monumental architecture. However, I am here now [New York] buying books and photographs, and talking the thing over with some of the best men in New York and Boston. . . .¹⁴¹

And to his old friend D. W. Willard, he proclaimed:

I worked hard on the project in its preliminary stages so as to get a good competition. I was very much disappointed not to be in the first competition, but felt that I could not properly submit to its conditions. . . .When the second competition was instituted, with greatly improved conditions, I went into it to win, if possible, that is to say I gave the matter most careful study.

After the plans were made, and it was known that I was a competitor, all sorts of schemes and combinations were offered to me. For a time it looked as though the thing would be a political job, but fortunately I steered clear of all this sort of thing [!] and with faith in the common sense of the Commissioners, and a belief that on the whole a good clean standing would win, I let matters take their course, merely being endorsed by our own people, and declining all political influences. I was fortunate enough to be recommended from the first by Ned Wheelwright. . . .Am also glad to say that in making his award, Wheelwright was in entire ignorance as to the authors of the various designs, the names having been covered up so that he could not see them. . . .¹⁴²

For both Seabury and Gilbert, one would have to argue, a certain amount of self-deception was operating, and, perhaps, the deception existed within the business milieu as well. Apparently neither Gilbert nor Seabury could see the difference between "political influence" and being "endorsed by our own people."

IV

The Controversies Over the Selection of
Stone and Artists For the Minnesota Capitol
1895-1905

When Cass Gilbert won the Minnesota Capitol competition in October, 1895, his reputation in the Northwest was assured. Had he remained in St. Paul to the end of his career, there is little doubt that he would have already earned his reputation as the leading architect of the region. Gilbert's ambition drove him on, however, to a wider and greater recognition beyond the boundaries of the Northwest.

The 1895-1905 period represents another phase in Gilbert's career. Relating the events from this period reveals that while he was superintending the construction of the Capitol, Gilbert was simultaneously striving to expand his business to include projects in the East. Gilbert's role as superintendent of construction for the Capitol, a position that involved choosing the stone and selecting the artists for the decorative work, is the subject of this chapter. His success at winning the competition for the New York Custom House in 1899 through the influence of James Knox Taylor is the subject of Chapter V.

A history of the period during which the Capitol was being constructed has to do with two controversies, each having as an implicit theme, a tension between people representing various re-

gions. The stone controversy concerns the conflict between Minnesota citizens, speaking through the local press and insisting out of loyalty to the state that only "local" stone be used for the Capitol, and Seabury, speaking as Gilbert's representative, who wished for esthetic and traditional reasons, to utilize "foreign" material.

As an integral part of the stone controversy, the inter-regional conflict was intensified by representatives of both local and foreign stone who, as in the case of Kettle River Sandstone and Georgia Marble, pressured Gilbert and Seabury to accept their products for reasons of personal profit. The Kettle River interests, in particular, are revealing of the extent to which private parties within the state were willing to push for private gain.

Following to a great extent the pattern of the stone controversy, the controversy over the selection of artists centered upon two factions: Minnesota fresco painters and artist-craftsmen who felt qualified to execute the Capitol decoration over against Gilbert, represented by Seabury, who insisted that only established Eastern artists were capable of handling the sculptural and mural work for the building.

An understanding of the inter-regional and intra-regional tensions implicit in the stone and artists' controversies illuminates the conflict within American culture between narrow, regional views, as well as reveals the values and ethical conduct of men within the business community at the turn of the century.

The story of the building of the Minnesota Capitol also adds dimension to Gilbert's successful attainment of national recognition in the East during the same period.

On the day Gilbert won the competition, Minnesota citizens, businessmen, and politicians began to agitate in favor of using "local" as opposed to "foreign" stone for the construction of the new Capitol. Some of these parties were undoubtedly motivated in part by a legislative act of 1893 which stated that Minnesota material must be used if it was offered as cheaply as foreign material,¹ but to most of them Minnesota stone symbolized loyalty to the state. The tone of the impending campaign for Minnesota stone was set by the Preston Times and echoed throughout the state by other newspapers. According to the editor of the Times,

. . .No agitation should be necessary to [ensure the use of local stone]. Any person who favors any other course is not a true, patriotic Minnesotan.²

William H. Yale, Winona attorney and former lieutenant governor, spoke for many Minnesotans when he told the Winona Republican that Gilbert and the Board of Capitol Commissioners should accept only stone quarried in the state:

. . .And I would go one step further [Yale argues] and require that all stone and brick work used in the construction of said building should be laid in Minnesota lime, not Portland cement, and as our fore-fathers, in the days of the Revolution, wore home spun clothing, let the capitol commissioners give us a home spun capitol.³

In an interview with the Minneapolis Journal, Governor Clough countered talk of going outside the state for stone by citing the

"hundreds of families of worthy stone cutters" who were allegedly out of work in Minnesota. Although Clough's argument was based in great part on the economic needs of the state, like Yale and the Preston editor, he, too, raised the cry of loyalty to the state:

. . .There is no politics in [the stone question] so far as I am concerned, and I am not trying to make capital for the future. I stand where I do because I believe it is right, and because the people of the state have the right to expect me to stand there. . . .The persons who favor a foreign product have no adequate excuse for their position, and every sound businessman in the state at heart will condemn them. . . .All I want to see is the building of a Minnesota product from top to bottom.⁴

Given the tone of the Minnesota press in regard to the loyalty shown local stone, Gilbert was seeking trouble when he announced that although ". . .as far as possible Minnesota stone will be used. . .[although] marble will be necessary for some purposes, such as polished columns, wainscoting, stairwork. . .and floors."⁵ Gilbert's public announcement that he planned to utilize stone that was not exclusively a Minnesota product marked the beginning of a controversy between two factions: Those who demanded that the Capitol be constructed of Minnesota stone solely, and the Commissioners, led by Seabury acting as Gilbert's spokesman, who argued that "foreign" stone should be included in the Capitol's superstructure.

Although the official announcement of bids to be let for stone was not to be made until June, 1897, Gilbert began receiving

letters of introduction from stone company representatives as early as February, 1896,⁶ and samples of stone were freighted to the Commissioners and displayed in the Board rooms beginning early in the same year. The barrage of correspondence concerning the merits of different stones, including marble, may have been instrumental in Gilbert's choice of marble for the Capitol, but other factors, including esthetic and traditional ones, were undoubtedly important. All of these factors helped to form Gilbert's thoughts concerning marble and led to the tension between the advocates of local as against foreign stone.

In attempting to defend Gilbert's choice of marble to the Minnesota press, Seabury, following Gilbert's instructions, argued that while ". . .utilizing Minnesota stone to as great an extent as possible," the state must not "[lose] the opportunity. . .of constructing this building of a material which has been recognized for 2,000 years as the most beautiful and durable one known to the builder's art --White Marble."⁷ Besides this esthetic argument, Seabury also cited tradition as a factor in the choice, by mentioning that Rhode Island had recently used Georgia Marble for its new Capitol, and that the same stone was to be found in St. Luke's Hospital, New York, and the Corcoran Gallery in Washington, D.C. In order to counter the loyalty argument, Seabury added that Minnesota should consider "the best that can be found, at least within the limits of the United States, whose citizens know no narrow lines in commerce,"⁸

While Gilbert and Seabury were making plans to utilize marble in the Capitol, representatives for various stone companies within the state were pushing for local products. The conflict among companies within the state shows that a tension existed within the region as well as between representatives of local and foreign stone. The most interesting and revealing episode within the stone controversy concerns the Commissioners' decision to use Kettle River Sandstone. The Kettle River episode is also revealing of the manner in which many businessmen operated during the period of the Capitol construction, because much of the maneuvering for the acceptance of the stone was done without exposure to public scrutiny by means of the press.

The Kettle River episode began in April, 1896, when George W. Bestor, president of the Minnesota Sandstone Company, Minneapolis, sent samples of Kettle River, a reddish stone quarried near Sandstone, Minnesota, to Gilbert to be included among the other displayed samples.⁹ It is probable that the Sandstone quarry was owned --at least in part-- by the Great Northern Railroad, and hence controlled by James J. Hill.¹⁰ Since Gilbert had been appointed company architect for Hill's railroad in 1891, it is also possible to assume that Hill expected Gilbert to make use of the quarry. Although a link between Hill and Gilbert in regard to Kettle River cannot be conclusively proven, Bestor's letter to Gilbert indicates that the Great Northern Railroad would not charge for "freight on samples for the Capitol."¹¹

It is also possible that Bestor was attempting to solicit for

Kettle River by attempting to make a contact with the Board through Commissioner John DeLaittre. A few days after Bestor wrote Gilbert, DeLaittre informed Gilbert that \$4,000 could be saved by substituting Kettle River for the granite specified for bearing blocks in the original plans.¹² Whether collusion took place or not, DeLaittre's letter is revealing because in two places he has crossed out "cheating" and inserted the correct word "cheapen," suggesting through these slips a possible subconscious guilt resulting from a conflict of interest.

A more direct approach to get Gilbert to accept Kettle River was used by Lucian Swift, manager of the Minneapolis Journal, and a minor stockholder in the Minnesota Sandstone Company.¹³ During the month when stone bids were let, Swift, who later referred to himself as an "intimate friend" of Gilbert's,¹⁴ wrote the architect:

As I am personally interested in the Minnesota Sand Stone Company, I naturally desire that they should obtain some work from the capitol building. . . .I would like to have you post me as to anything I might do in order to push its merits with the commissioners. The company of course does not intend to figure on doing any building, but would like to furnish to contractors with the stone. . . .¹⁵

Gilbert answered Swift's "request" succinctly, stating that ". . .all bidders will be on an exactly even footing. . .with a view solely to the best interests of the State."¹⁶

Whether prompted by this rebuff, or inspired by its earlier unfriendly attitude toward Gilbert and Seabury during the time of the competition award, the Journal began printing stories that

took a dim view of the Capitol project.¹⁷ After several unfavorable items in the Journal appeared, Gilbert again contacted Swift and informed him that in light of Swift's "interest in a certain Minnesota Stone company, I would inquire whether you would wish to have me publish your letter to me of June 11, 1897[!]"¹⁸ While admitting that he had restrained himself from taking such a course, Gilbert went on to say:

. . . We are attempting to do the work well and thoroughly, and to build a noble and beautiful building, which will be representative of the broad intelligence and civilization of our state. . . . The attitude of the Journal indicates to me that you either. . . do not understand, or do not appreciate this, and if such is to be the continued attitude of the Journal, I would like to know it, both for your sake, and my own.¹⁹

Answering Gilbert's letter the same morning he received it, Swift defended himself by calling the original "request" a personal letter "written only on account of our intimate relations," and added with great anxiety:

I will acknowledge that if you see fit to publish [my letter] you will place me in rather an embarrassing situation, as it would be impossible for me to explain the circumstances and my action in regard to it. . . .²⁰

The stone bids were opened on June 15, 1897, but because all of the fourteen bids exceeded the cost of the original total expended for stone, they were rejected in July.²¹ When the second series of bids were opened in August, the lowest bids and eventual winners included Georgia Marble, Kettle River Sandstone, and St. Cloud Granite.²² In the latter two examples it would appear that some consideration to "local interests" had been made. And

in the case of Georgia marble, the Commissioners had allowed foreign stone to be bid and finally approved, but the firm representing the marble was Butler-Ryan, a St. Paul construction company that supplied, not only the marble, but the St. Cloud Granite and Kettle River as well.²³

It would appear that some kind of deal had been made by an unknown party representing Kettle River, someone, perhaps, who owned quarries in Minnesota and who had used representatives to spread around the bids in the form of sub-contracts, but absolute proof of this kind of collusion is impossible to find with any degree of certainty. The list of bids does show that nine contractors had bid for Kettle River alone.²⁴ Whoever owned the sandstone quarry was covering himself sufficiently, to say the least.

Getting to the root of the Kettle River selection is a complicated ordeal. It is known that an unnamed and probably disinterested St. Paul architect had sent a memorandum to Gilbert in June, 1897, in which he stated that Kettle River has a beautiful color and is very hard, but is difficult to work, and recommended that Minnesota Granite would be a better stone for the Capitol.²⁵ On the other hand, State Geologist Horace V. Winchell, when interviewed by a St. Paul Dispatch reporter, rated Kettle River highly, citing Pillsbury Hall on the University of Minnesota campus as an example of the stone's ability to hold its color even after a period of ten years.²⁶ Perhaps the answer to the question as to why Kettle River was selected was hinted at by Commissioner Graves in

a letter to Gilbert marked "confidential" a week before the final bids were accepted. Graves stated that while he "hated to adopt Kettle River," he had to admit that it was the "only business-like quarry in the state."²⁷ Graves also suggested that Kettle River should be utilized and the specifications changed appropriately. Pointing to the need to placate interests locally, he concluded ". . .there is no business-like proposition before us save that from Kettle River, that is from inside the State."²⁸

The announcement of the Board's selection of bids on September 1, 1897, also suggests that some kind of compromise had been made between local and foreign stone. In its lead story, the Pioneer Press attempted to play down the choice of Georgia Marble by noting that Minnesota would supply two and one-half times as much stone as Georgia, and that the marble exterior ". . .[would be] only four inches thick,"²⁹ a fact that probably accounts for the "thinness" of the Capitol's appearance today. The Pioneer Press also stressed that the marble would be finished locally, and though a "foreign product," it would be "dressed by local labor on the site."³⁰ Additionally, the newspaper noted that St. Paul residents, Butler and Ryan, had been the successful bidders. Beyond that,

. . .Much of the freight to be paid on the marble will go to the Chicago Great Western railroad, a Minnesota corporation. The marble will be supplied at a remarkably low rate, in order to advertise the [Georgia] quarries. Thus, it is estimated that despite the apparent concession to outside interests, the actual amount of money to go from the State because of this selection, will be not more than \$100,000, or about 5 per cent only of the cost of the completed capitol.³¹

With the closing of the stone controversy in September, 1897, a kind of resolution as to local versus foreign stone had been achieved. Several years later, this "resolution" found its expression in a speech made during a ceremony celebrating the placing of Minnesota's Civil War battle flags in the new Capitol.³² In his speech, John Espy, a St. Paul lawyer and member of the Minnesota Chapter of the Grand Army of the Republic, told a gathering of war veterans how appropriately the Capitol symbolized the unity of North and South following the participation of both regions in the Spanish-American War:

. . . Let us never forget [Espy said] that out of our Southland, transported by the Southern battle fields of Atlanta, Chickamauga and Mission Ridge where our Minnesota soldiers won eternal fame and glory by their heroic deeds; there came this Southern material of great beauty and strength, and united with Northern art and skill, was erected this beautiful memorial; and may it ever remain through all the ages, a fit emblem of Unity and Brotherly Love.³³

After the stone controversy was settled, Gilbert left the country for an extended European vacation.³⁴ Gilbert's departure marked a habit that was to become characteristic of his career; that once a project was off the ground, he took leave, putting other people in charge and carrying on instructions for a project's completion by correspondence with only occasional visits to the site. In the case of the Minnesota Capitol, Gilbert assigned the task of on-the-site supervision to his protege, Thomas Holyoke.³⁵ When Gilbert returned from Europe, he was soon after

involved, as will be seen, in laying the groundwork for his successful bid for the New York Custom House.

In Minnesota, work on the Capitol progressed slowly. In the spring of 1898, work began on the superstructure and was completed in 1900.³⁶ In March, 1900, bids were opened for erecting the dome; the successful bidder again being the Butler-Ryan Company.³⁷ The dome was completed in the fall of 1902.³⁸ During this period the Commissioners became increasingly impatient with Gilbert's infrequent visits to the site, and by February, 1902, there was open hostility toward him, at least on the part of Seabury. Writing Gilbert's New York office, Seabury accused the architect of spreading himself too thin:

Practically nothing [on the Capitol interior] was accomplished. . . all last year [Seabury exclaimed]. . . Your [New York] office, practically, admits that it has been 'side-tracked' and nothing has been done with it since our December meeting. I am very much out of patience, and am firmly convinced that there is too much St. Louis, Newburgh, New York and other work in your office for the good of the Minnesota Capitol. . . .³⁹

Seabury, of course, was correct in his analysis of the situation, for Gilbert was busy establishing himself in the East. Moreover, Gilbert's prolonged absences from the West only compounded the problem of attempting to complete the Capitol, especially after 1903 when the building was ready for interior and exterior decoration. When Gilbert began making plans for hiring sculptors, muralists, and portrait painters, a new crisis ensued.

The artists' controversy began when Gilbert selected Daniel Chester French and Edward C. Potter to execute a quadriga group for the base of the Capitol dome.⁴⁰ Plans for commissioning French and Potter, who had sculpted a similar work for the Columbian Exposition, had been in Gilbert's mind as early as 1896,⁴¹ and he had received an estimate of \$36,000 from French to do the Minnesota Quadriga in copper.⁴² In January, 1900, the Architectural League of New York asked Gilbert if he would be willing to exhibit his dome model at the group's exhibition.⁴³ While writing Seabury to ask permission to use the model, Gilbert added that French's sculpture would also be on display, and that the exhibit would have "a certain value in showing the eastern people what Minnesota is doing in this regard."⁴⁴ Gilbert also noted that he wanted to use the exhibit to interest artists in future work for the "interior finish and adornment of the Capitol."⁴⁵

On April 18, 1903, French informed Gilbert that he could execute the Quadriga for him, but that because of the rise in costs of labor and material since the time of the original estimate, he would have to charge an additional \$5000.⁴⁶ Surprisingly, however, French wrote Gilbert a week later that he could do the work at the cost of the 1896 estimate.⁴⁷ Apparently, Seabury had told Gilbert that costs must be kept in line, for French told Gilbert to tell Seabury that given the rise in sculptors' fees, "he [was] getting a great deal for his money."⁴⁸

The Commissioners' acceptance of the Quadriga proposal created an uproar in the Minnesota press. When it was learned that a

quadriga consists of four winged horses, the Mankato Free Press complained that it was

. . .not necessary for the commission to dig down into mythology in order to procure appropriate figures with which to adorn the entrance way to Minnesota's magnificent state capitol building.⁴⁹

In place of the Quadriga, the newspaper argued, the Commission should place statues of Alexander Ramsey and Henry H. Sibley, first territorial and state governors; men "who had watched [the state's] growth and development with increasing pleasure, and [who had] guarded her interests with such jealous care."⁵⁰ (What the Free Press overlooked, however, was that French planned to substitute for Columbus "a male figure" personifying "Minnesota" as driver of the four-horse team.⁵¹

Of all the attacks made by the press against the proposed Quadriga, the sharpest came from the Mower county Transcript. Assuming the pose of a common-sensical country bumpkin, the Transcript's editor in the guise of "Farmer Ben," lampooned the Quadriga in the following fashion:

. . .Why the present statehouse, that ain't been used twenty years yet, only cost a quarter of a million, and here the spend-thrifts are puttin' over one-seventh of the total cost of the old one into a foolish and needless ornament that ain't of any more use than a piano in a deaf and dumb institution. The audacity and brazen extravagance of the capitol commissioners would shock a field of barley. I couldn't find out for awhile just what a quadriga was. Our gal Sarah looked it up in the dictionary and found it to be a two-wheeled chariot to which four horses were harnessed abreast of frequent occurrence in ancient sculpture. Of course, when the commission went to Georgia to get marble to veneer the new buildin' with when Minnesota has the finest granite on earth, naturally it

looked the proper thing to go to the old heathens of a million years ago for a quadriga, but ain't it a fool job, all the same? . . .⁵²

"Farmer Ben" went on to say that the Quadriga was only "a second-hand reproduction of some crazy design they had at the world's fair," and as to the figure of Columbus:

Christopher Columbus! But wouldn't that cork you, and strike you dumb? Columbus has been dead four centuries, and he never saw Minnesota or Comrade Van Sant. The idee of stick-in' up such a contraption on a twentieth century capitol. Columbus wasn't even a charioteer. He didn't travel to this country in any such way. I bet he never see a chariot. Maybe he wouldn't know how to hitch up a team to plow with. . . .⁵³

The newspaper that quoted "Farmer Ben" concluded that he was about "three-fifths right [and] whatever a 'quadriga' may be, we and Uncle Pease and Farmer Ben are agin it."⁵⁴

The voice of the rural press, so far as it reflected the thought of the common man in the West, represents, I feel, an explicit feeling of superiority in matters of economy, as well as an implicit desire to show urban dwellers, and by extension, Easterners like French and nouveau-Easterners like Gilbert, that country dwellers possess a greater intelligence in matters of common sense and practical skill. "Farmer Ben's" common sense is reflected in his concern for the cost of the Quadriga and his observation that Columbus had been "dead four centuries, and. . . never saw Minnesota;" and the Westerners' skill, as opposed to that of the effete Easterners', is revealed in the remark that French's Columbus wouldn't know how to "hitch up a team to plow with."

In part, the rural dwellers' feelings about the sculpture was undoubtedly based upon the fear that the city and the East are in fact superior, if not in matters of economy, common sense, and skill, at least in regard to social manners and habits as well as in artistic taste. Gilbert himself formed his assumptions about matters of taste upon Eastern standards, as shall be seen, but a more startling example of "inner tension" between the social manners and habits of country versus city, as well as West versus East, is revealed in the character of Channing Seabury.

In the summer of 1897, Seabury wished to send his wife and two children to a farm for a month's vacation. In a letter of inquiry to his farmer friend, Buckman Shea, Seabury apologized for asking Shea to entertain his family, and to put the friend at ease, insisted that:

We do not belong to the 'Four Hundred,' and Mrs. Shea would soon discover that my wife is not a fashionable city woman, whom she could not expect to please, or who would in any serious way interfere with the daily events of her life. . . . I know that the little ones would soon become favorites with you all, for they are well brought up, and would not be the nuisance that I am well aware many city children (of fashionable mothers) are. . . .Our habits of life are plain and simple.⁵⁵

In his attitude toward Shea (and country life generally), Seabury underscores by implication the rural dwellers' fear that city people are superior (at least fashionable urban dwellers) and he feels compelled to assert his "plain and simple" habits.

Seven years after writing the letter to Shea, Seabury had to confront the East when plans were being made for the Commis-

sioners to visit the Capitol artists in New York. In January, 1904, Seabury again asserted his "simple tastes" by warning Gilbert:

Do not let these artists think that each one of them must give us a separate dinner. That is the first prompting of a New Yorker, but you know our crowd, and know that such an idea would be positively distasteful, to several members, while none of us would want such a fuss over us. We are in business relations with them now, and they are not called upon to 'wine and dine' us, especially as we are not that kind of outfit.⁵⁶

Besides Daniel C. French, the Commissioners --at Gilbert's insistence-- hired a group of Eastern artists to execute the mural decorations and paintings for the Capitol. Gilbert himself made all of the decisions in regard to the murals and paintings, but at his suggestion, he and other artists involved in the decorative work formed a Board of Design whose purpose was to assure unity of design and to settle disputes.⁵⁷ The members of the Board of Design included French, John LaFarge, Elmer E. Garnsey, Francis D. Millet, Edwin H. Blashfield, and Edward Simmons.⁵⁸ Garnsey, who had been in charge of similar work for the Library of Congress, was appointed by the Commissioners to take charge of the entire operation.⁵⁹ By insisting that the decorative work be handled by these men, all of them residents of New York, Gilbert opened the way to conflict between the Commissioners and Minnesota fresco painters and artists who resented the Eastern monopoly.

During the initial stages of preparation for the hiring of the artists, Seabury underscored the tension the Commissioners

felt concerning the Eastern artists:

. . .I cannot. . .get myself to your frame of mind [he tells Gilbert] about these artists, so as to look upon Mr. Garnsey's coming as, in any sense, a condescension to our Board, or to the West. If we employ him and the other gentlemen to do this decorative work, we are going to pay them such a very handsome sum of money, and I should want each and every one of them to make their trips out here, if they come, in exactly the same spirit in which other bidders who have worked on the New Capitol have made similar trips heretofore. . .wholly and entirely on a business basis, and not as a favor to any of us.⁶⁰

Seabury's interpretation of Gilbert's "frame of mind" suggests that the architect had already decided to hire men he felt were capable of handling the decorative work, and that such talent (from Gilbert's point of view) could be found only in the East. Seabury's fear of the Easterners' "condescension" to their Western "inferiors" underscores not only the Easterners' attitude of assumed superiority, but also the Westerners' feelings of inferiority when confronted with the talent of the East.

By December, 1903, Gilbert had persuaded the Commissioners to allow him full control over the choice of artists. As a gesture to "local talent," however, part of the interior sculptural work was given to Carl Brioschi and Associates of St. Paul.⁶¹ Douglas Volk, founder of the Minneapolis School of Fine Arts, was commissioned to paint two panels in the governor's reception room.⁶² It may be assumed that Volk was chosen because of his association with the state, although by 1903 he was residing in New York, and, like Gilbert, was well on his way to a national career.⁶³

When it was publically announced that the artists had been chosen, the conflict over "local" versus "national" talent began anew. For the first time in its long running battle with the Capitol Commissioners and the architect, the Minneapolis Journal, however, took a surprisingly cosmopolitan view of the artists.

By its decision to provide means for the complete decoration of the new capitol by the greatest mural artists of the country [the Journal intoned] Minnesota has taken a most important step in the artistic development of the state. . . .The Capitol is to be the show place of the state, where every citizen may go without let or hindrance, and the work of LaFarge, Garnsey, Blashfield, and Simmons will have an exhibition such as would be possible under no other circumstances.⁶⁴

Not everyone took so broad a view of the Eastern artists as did the Journal. Several weeks after the Journal praised the artists, Seabury informed Gilbert that "another row [was] brewing."⁶⁵ Seabury was referring to an application for injunction filed against the Board in Ramsey County District Court by several St. Paul and Minneapolis fresco painters who were attempting to enjoin Garnsey from continuing work on the Capitol.⁶⁶ The plaintiffs, who filed both as painters and taxpayers, claimed that a Minnesota statute stipulated that all work for the Capitol over \$500 must be advertised and let by contract, and that the decorative work assigned Garnsey was "mere artisan work" that did not call for any "special or high degree of artistic skill" with the exception of the two main stair corridor lunettes.⁶⁷

Behind the charges brought against Garnsey and the Commissioners, however, was resentment over the fact that Garnsey had brought six assistants with him from New York to help with the

decorative work. The plaintiffs also argued that Garnsey was not a state resident and that several people in Minnesota were "willing to undertake the work."⁶⁸ The issue was further complicated by newspaper charges made against the Commissioners by Minnesota members of the International Brotherhood of Painters, a union that had six men working for Garnsey. According to the union spokesman, Garnsey's New York assistants were members of the Amalgamated Painters, a solely Eastern union, and the I.B.P. had ruled against letting its members work with the Eastern organization.⁶⁹ Rather than taking out its own union members, the spokesman argued that the New York group should go.

We have men right here in St. Paul and Minneapolis [the union spokesman told the Globe], members of the brotherhood, who are fully capable of doing any part of [the Capitol] work, and we feel that it should go to them rather than to outsiders.⁷⁰

In filing a reply to the application for injunction, Seabury argued that the "nature of the work let was such that it could not have been performed by those who have entered into the competition by bids,"⁷¹ a reference to the supposedly low quality of talent for decorative work available in the state. Citing Garnsey's previous work with LaFarge, Blashfield, and Simmons, Seabury said that the "decorative scheme" could not have been carried out "without this class of expert workers."⁷²

Frank Hanson, the Commissioners' secretary, took an even stronger, and perhaps unfair, stand in an interview with a Dispatch reporter. Hanson stated that Garnsey was recognized as an artist and not a house painter.⁷³ The decorative work, Hanson

argued, was

. . .Not a mere question of muscular arm for spreading paint. . . .Mr. Garnsey has found it necessary to use, in the execution of some of the more delicate portions of his designs, men who are accustomed to his methods. . . .⁷⁴

The controversy was settled in February, 1904, when the judge of the Ramsey Court denied the injunction after hearing arguments from both sides.⁷⁵ Setting aside the argument that the decorative work should have been competitively let, the judge, following the argument presented in an affidavit filed by Gilbert and other affidavits from "distinguished artists in New York," denied the request for injunction by citing the difference between an artist and an artisan. The judge argued that ". . .after inspecting the pleadings and carefully reading all the affidavits, I am clearly of the opinion that the work. . .is artistic, as distinguished from work of the artisan."⁷⁶ Undoubtedly influenced by Gilbert's reasoning on the issue, the judge went on to say that the whole interior of the Capitol should be harmoniously unified.

. . .These affidavits show that there are required a number of large paintings (thirty-two, it is claimed) which only an artist of merit can undertake to produce. It is plain to the most casual observer that to make these pieces effective, the whole interior of each room containing them must blend into harmony . . .unless a patchwork quilt effect is to be had. . . .The illustrations. . .and the general ornamentation of the building should be similarly blended. It seems impossible to separate the work that clearly belongs to the artist from that which belongs to the artisan, without injury to both; certainly not without irreparable injury to the Capitol.⁷⁷

Although the issue of who should be allowed to do the work

of decoration was settled with the February hearing, and no appeal was ever made,⁷⁸ a few voices of protest were heard for some time after. One local sculptor, Will J. Hutchison,⁷⁹ who had been hired to execute interior and exterior carvings, took up the cause for other local artists. Hutchison had used the light at the top of the Capitol's main staircase to work on a mural drawing for an exhibit at St. Cloud. Without Hutchison's permission, a Dispatch photographer had taken pictures of his work assuming that it was part of the work being done for the Capitol. When the pictures had appeared in the newspaper, Gilbert had written Hutchison demanding an explanation.⁸⁰ In explaining the mistake to Gilbert, Hutchison unloosed the frustrations that must have been felt by all of the local artists. Hutchison told Gilbert that he had "watched with interest

the efforts of the local artists of this state to just secure the crumbs that fell from the tables of public donations, also the heartless manner in which hundreds of thousands of dollars of the State's money have been spent in 'presenting' commissions for Works of Art for the New Capitol without any competition whatever. . . .⁸¹

Ripping into the New York artists, Hutchison went on to say that he had nothing personal against "Mr. Guernsey [sic?] or Mr. French," but that if "anyone else [had been] 'presented' with contracts to the amount of \$150,000 and \$35,000 respectively without competing for it. . . they would consider themselves Fortune's favorites. . . ."⁸² Hutchison closed his letter briskly by saying that Gilbert could cancel his contract if he so pleased, since "it is your privilege to do it."⁸³

In May, 1904, Seabury took a stance similar to Hutchison's when Gilbert decided to add two more artists --Rufus Zogbaum and Howard Pyle-- to the seven already hired.⁸⁴ Seabury's letter reveals how much power Gilbert had assumed as architect. Seabury said that he was sorry he had agreed to the additions because "they are two more added to the 'New York Ring,' outside of which, it is freely stated, that you will not work."⁸⁵ Writing at the top of his voice, so to speak, Seabury exclaimed:

WE MUST FIND SOMEBODY OUTSIDE OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK THAT POSSESSES ABILITY ENOUGH TO DO SOMETHING IN THE ARTISTIC LINE FOR THE NEW CAPITOL. Up to this time, we are justly chargeable with 'playing into the hands of a 'New York ring'. . . .Not all the artistic ability in the U.S. is centered in New York City, although I am free to admit that a good share of it is. We have now employed French, Garnsey, LaFarge, Blashfield, Simmons, Millet, and Volk, on our artistic work --7 men-- everyone of them a resident of New York City. . . .⁸⁶

Seabury also used the opportunity to blast Garnsey, with whom, apparently, he had had quite a bit of trouble:

. . .I have discovered that Mr. Garnsey is a very positive character, and not especially receptive. It is quite plain to me that he does not consider the opinion of any member of the Board of sufficient importance to even ask for it, and all that he thinks necessary is to please and satisfy you.⁸⁷

Seabury closed his letter with typical irony. Citing the fact that Garnsey and Gilbert had used the Board only to execute their own ends, Seabury admitted that

. . .The world is built on this same plan, and I do not know that I have any particular complaint to make, [but] if Mr. Garnsey should ever ask me, however, how I like the work that he has done thus far, I should be very frank to tell him that I do not like several portions of it at all.⁸⁸

When the Capitol was finally completed in 1905, the state of Minnesota was presented with an architectural monument. The building's monumentality was attested to by The Western Architect which devoted an entire issue to the Capitol in October, 1905.⁸⁹ The magazine cited both the Capitol's usefulness to the citizen as "an education in architectural design and decorative work," as well as its symbolic value as a "representation of the wealth and culture of the people by such an interior as the best art of the country could furnish."⁹⁰ State officials, however, took a slightly different point of view. When the government workers began moving in around New Year's Day, 1905, the reverse side of monumentality was soon discovered, for the monument was not a usable place within which to carry out the business of everyday working activity.

The final irony of the long battle over competitions, stone, and the selection of artists --problems complicated from beginning to end by the enormous presense of the architect's ego-- was the fact that the building simply did not function in a practical way. Within a week of occupancy, the Capitol was being referred to as "a great pile"⁹¹ and "an expensive luxury."⁹² Everything seemed to have been planned wrong. The basement, dubbed "the catacombs," was too dark and damp;⁹³ no lavatory had been provided for the Dairy and Food Commission;⁹⁴ the press gallery in the legislative chambers was placed in such a way that reporters could neither see nor hear the proceedings;⁹⁵ the acoustics of the legislative halls was described as "wretched;"⁹⁶ and all

offices were found to be cramped and poorly located in relation to one another.⁹⁷ The building's impracticality was summed up by the Dispatch in the following fashion:

. . .From a utilitarian standpoint, the great marble pile is a disastrous, costly failure. Everything has been sacrificed to esthetic effect. . . .Not only is the building too small, but, so far as use by the public is concerned, it could hardly have been more inconvenient were it studiously planned to that end. . . .But as something to rejoice the eye, the building is gorgeous. Minnesota has paid millions for this mere spectacle.⁹⁸

The Making of a National Reputation

1897-1899

Cass Gilbert's national reputation was assured when he won the competition in 1899 to design and build the New York Custom House, a prize that at the time was called "the greatest [award] that has been bestowed on an architect so far away in the Northwest as St. Paul."¹ His success was assured because through his experience with the competitions for the Minnesota State Capitol he had learned and practiced the ground-rules of businessmanship. During the years 1897-1899 Gilbert began the ascent from being a regional architect to becoming a national one, a progression that depended upon perfecting his role as a businessman. How Gilbert achieved national prominence is the subject of this chapter.

An analysis of Gilbert's career from 1897 to 1899 reveals not only the making of one man's national reputation, but also throws light on the way businessmen and politicians depended upon one another to enhance their mutual ambitions and careers. In the largest sense, Gilbert's experience during this period provides new insight into the ethical practices of businessmen and politicians in the late 1890's.

Two events in Gilbert's career will be emphasized here. Both events show the intricate inner workings of business and political practices, as well as the ethical implications involved. The first

event has to do with Gilbert's role in helping procure the position of Supervising Architect of the United States Treasury for his former partner, James Knox Taylor; the second, Taylor's apparent use of that office to assist Gilbert toward winning the competition for the New York Custom House. The roles of other architects, businessmen, and politicians associated with the procurement of these two positions form an integral part of both events.

After the termination of the Gilbert and Taylor partnership in 1891, James Knox Taylor moved to Philadelphia where he pursued a private architectural practice until 1895.² In April, 1895, he became a senior draftsman, and later principal draftsman, in the office of the United States Treasury.³ In June, 1897, Taylor began efforts to gain promotion to the highest position within his department --the post of Supervising Architect of the Treasury. In a letter to Gilbert, and similar ones to Daniel Burnham, George Post, Charles McKim, and Stanford White, Taylor began planning a campaign to acquire the higher position.⁴ Taylor's efforts to gain the post of Supervising Architect, and the relationships he depended upon to procure it, constitute the opening phase of what later became Gilbert's attempt to achieve success at the national level.

Taylor's campaign, like Gilbert's earlier efforts during the Minnesota competitions, shows the importance of personal connections as a factor in achieving success in business. In his letter

Taylor told Gilbert that he did not know what procedure would be followed to make the final selection, but he thought that both his draftsman's ability, as well as letters testifying to his "standing as a businessman" would come into play.⁵ Taylor asked Gilbert to send along drawings, and also requested that Gilbert write Lyman Gage, Secretary of the Treasury, stating Taylor's qualifications as an architect, as well as Gilbert's opinion as to Taylor's ability in handling business affairs.⁶

Taylor's request for letters from business associates and friends is most important to his later selection as the Supervising Architect, for, beginning with the vacancy of the post in 1897, the Secretary of the Treasury initiated a plan whereby candidates were chosen by examination under a plan modeled by the Civil Service Law instead of by the previous method of direct appointment.⁷ As we shall see, the requested letters, as well as later personal contacts, came to play a much larger role than did the examination. The dependence upon contacts, moreover, calls into question the ethical implications of employment within the service of the United States Government.

In September, 1897, Secretary Gage announced that the method of personal appointment to the Supervising Architect's post would be abolished, and that a competitive examination following a public notice would be adopted in its place.⁸ In praising Gage's decision, the New York Times noted that the examination had been set up by architectural "practitioners" from all over the United States, and that the test

. . .has been framed with a view mainly to eliciting what the professional standing and experience of the applicant are; what, in a word, he amounts to as an architect. . . . The examiners are architects about whose 'practicality' in such an examination there will be no question.⁹

On September 15, 1897, Taylor wrote Gilbert that he had finished the examination, but that he wanted to "fortify [his] position by letters which will show the Secretary something of my standing among men in my own profession."¹⁰ While asking Gilbert for this second letter, Taylor also suggested that Gilbert particularly stress his "ability for the administration and control of [architectural] work,"¹¹ underscoring the Times opinion that the ". . .duties of the office are mainly [administrative]" rather than artistic.¹² Taylor further requested, in what seems to be not only a questionable ethical procedure but also an unworkable one, that Gilbert's letter be addressed to Gage but sent to Taylor himself.¹³ "I do not yet know," Taylor declared,

. . .if I have been successful enough in the examination to have my name presented to [Gage] and until I find out, it would appear as though I was trying to force his judgment.¹⁴

As in the earlier request for letters, Taylor said that he had asked for letters from five other architect friends as well.¹⁵

On the day that the examining board met in Washington to pass on the test results, a series of telegrams regarding Taylor's qualifications were sent to Secretary Gage from influential persons. Taylor's father, for example, wired Senator W. B. Dean, asking him to see or write Secretary Gage.¹⁶ Herman Knox Taylor's telegram reveals that his son had a "good chance of being appointed"

and would succeed if "his friends strongly recommend[ed] him at once."¹⁷ Other telegrams in support of Taylor were sent to Secretary Gage. Both Channing Seabury (whom Taylor cites as a fellow club member) and United States Senator Knute Nelson wired endorsements for Taylor.¹⁸ In a telegram to Taylor marked "strictly and absolutely confidential," Gilbert assured his former partner that his "chances [were] excellent," but warned him to "make no promises except absolute fidelity to duties of the office and stand pat."¹⁹ All of the wires imply that a great deal of verbal (and hence undocumented) communication took place around the time of the examination; that Taylor's friends were working by means of personal contact to make known his qualifications for public office.

When the results of the examination were tabulated, three contenders emerged: Howard Constable, first place; Taylor, second; and George Martin Huss, third.²⁰ Interestingly, Taylor learned from Secretary Gage that although he had finished second, he was still "very much in the running."²¹ It becomes obvious at this stage of the competition that personal factors came into play; that the results of the examination had less importance in the final selection than the personal opinion of the Secretary of the Treasury. In other words, it would appear that Gage's unprecedented method of selecting the Supervising Architect by examination, the procedure so praised by the Times, was ultimately set aside, and that Gage merely reverted in Taylor's case to the method of personal appointment. Re-enforced by letters of reference, telegrams,

and private consultations with friends of the architect, Gage would eventually choose the man he wanted for the position, regardless of the findings of the examination.

Another important factor in the selection of the man to fill the Supervising Architect's position was a political one. During the time that Taylor was working for the Treasury Department, the most powerful figure in the Republican Party was New York Senator Thomas Collier Platt. As senator and as leader of his party in New York state, Platt was interested in federal patronage that could be tapped for government offices in his home state.²² Since the largest post office and the largest custom house in the country are located in New York City, these institutions constituted rich political plums.²³ At the end of the Harrison administration (1893), eight thousand post office employees and two thousand custom house workers, as well as six hundred employees of other branches of the Treasury Department, held positions under the control of the federal government.²⁴ According to Platt's biographer, some fifteen thousand New Yorkers were federal employees, "a considerable portion of whom had grateful feelings toward the chief dispenser of political favors in the Empire State."²⁵ That man, of course, was Senator Thomas C. Platt.

In 1897, Theodore Roosevelt was New York's Civil Service Commissioner.²⁶ Gosnell points out that Platt did not, however, have to contend with Roosevelt when he wished to submit his personal choice to fill a vacated government post. Instead, Platt turned to President William McKinley, a man Platt thought of as a "most

tender-hearted" politician; one who invariably requested Platt, as senator and as Republican leader, to make his own choices.²⁷

"That choice," according to Platt's own testimony, "became the [President's] except in rare cases."²⁸ The authority granted Platt under McKinley's aegis helped create a political organization "which continued to be a factor in [New York] state politics during Roosevelt's two administrations as [President]."²⁹

Platt's importance as a force behind Treasury Department appointments was at a high point during the time of the examination for the Supervising Architect's position. Since both Constable and Huss were New York state residents, Taylor knew that he needed "all the pull [he] could get to put against Platt who will probably back Mr. Constable."³⁰ Feeling the pressure of Platt's influence, Taylor asked Gilbert to contact political leaders who might work in his behalf, citing in particular Minnesota's Senator Cushman K. Davis.³¹ Taylor said that even with the "extra endorsement" from Davis, he still refused "to bind himself by any promises," a practice that he felt in the past had probably resulted in his being placed second in the examination.³²

During the week following the examination and the day of the appointment, personal and political activity was furiously put into motion in Taylor's behalf. It is not known what factors were finally most important in Taylor's selection, but the existing evidence shows that many people, including Gilbert, were actively working to ensure Taylor's appointment. An account of the events from that week reveals the intricacies of political maneuvering

underlying the appointment of a government office-holder.

On October 19, Gilbert informed Taylor that he had requested that Senators Davis and Nelson send Secretary Gage telegrams in support of Taylor's appointment.³³ Gilbert also urged Taylor to help his own cause by claiming Pennsylvania residency and by contacting politicians from that state. Governor Daniel H. Hastings, Gilbert felt, could be contacted through Warren P. Laird, professor of architecture at the University of Pennsylvania, a man who knew Hastings through a "close relation in the matter of the Harrisburg Capitol Building."³⁴ Gilbert also suggested contacting Pennsylvania Senator M. S. Quay, but warned Taylor that

. . .under no circumstances permit your friends to make any promises to him regarding your management of affairs. You could better afford to lose than to be under political obligations which you cannot fulfill.³⁵

The intricate system inferred by these relationships, where one makes contact with public officials through other persons who have had contact with the officials in the past, as shown in the cases above, is compounded when one realizes that Hastings, as one example, was chairman of the Pennsylvania delegation during the Republican convention of 1896, and had placed Quay's name in nomination for President.³⁶

Besides suggesting that Taylor work through Pennsylvania sources, Gilbert promised to contact people he knew in the West who were in some way tied to interests in the East. Gilbert said he would reach H. H. Kohlsaatt, Chicago editor, a man Gilbert cited as "next to Hanna, the President's closest political friend."³⁷

To reach Kohlsaat, Gilbert said he would have to go through the George A. Fuller Company, Chicago contractors, something he did not want to do "except at the last pinch."³⁸ Gilbert also told Taylor to write or telegraph Charles S. Frost, former partner of Henry Ives Cobb. Frost was a particularly strong contact, Gilbert said, because he was the son-in-law of Marvin Hughitt, President of the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad, and a "very intimate friend" of Secretary Gage.³⁹ Covering all possible Chicago contacts, Gilbert further suggested writing Solon S. Beman, another Chicago architect, who might possibly procure the support of George M. Pullman.⁴⁰

Gilbert's final suggestion involved Taylor's search for support from among New York architects "who could go to Senator Platt and ask his support on your behalf, as though you did not know that [Platt] was interested on the other side."⁴¹ Gilbert also urged Taylor not to disclose the sources of support, except to Senator W. B. Dean, who apparently was acting as Gilbert's liaison man in Washington.⁴² "Mention my connection," Gilbert told Taylor, "as little as possible." It would be best, Gilbert went on to say, to

. . .rest your case upon the facts of your experience in the [Treasury] office and your fitness for the position, as evidenced by your passing the examination, and make no embarrassing promises.⁴³

Gilbert's personal feelings regarding his role in the Taylor appointment reveal the continuing application of his knowledge of using contacts to procure desired ends:

I am doing all I can for you [he tells Taylor] and believe you will get there, but I do not wish to be considered a politician, for I am not, although chance has given me a little experience in public work, and the acquaintance of a few men of influence.⁴⁴

On the same day Gilbert wrote Taylor he contacted Charles S. Frost as well. Gilbert stressed Taylor's merits by calling him "a man of the highest personal character and unimpeachable integrity."⁴⁵ Gilbert urged Frost to telegraph Gage and asked Frost to encourage Hughitt to send a telegram as well.

In these proceedings Gilbert reveals that "political influence" in his estimation differs from establishing personal contacts, though the detached critic can see little difference between the two procedures. As an example of Gilbert's apparent self-deception, he states in his letter to Frost that Gage wants to make the appointment "purely upon the merits of the case, and from a business standpoint free from political influence," but adds hopefully, and as if he means to assure himself, "I . . . do not think that we are engaging in political affairs when giving assistance to Mr. Taylor."⁴⁶

Taylor's appointment was secured on October 21,⁴⁷ though Gilbert did not know it until the next day. On the 21st, Gilbert wrote Taylor to say that he had met with Senator Davis and former Minnesota Governor William Rush Merriam⁴⁸ at "the Club" the night before. Both Davis and Merriam had sent telegrams to Gage at Gilbert's urging, though only Merriam's may have reached Gage prior to the appointment.⁴⁹ Merriam, according to Gilbert, "seemed to want [Taylor] to know that he had used his influence with Gage in

[Taylor's] behalf," and Davis "inquired particularly" whether or not Taylor had the support of Pennsylvania senators.⁵⁰ Gilbert added that he was leaving for Omaha and would contact the firm of Walker and Kimball there to ". . . see if they [could] do anything for you at that end."⁵¹ This early contact with Thomas R. Kimball is important because two years later, when Gilbert was under consideration for the New York Custom House competition, Kimball, through Gilbert's influence, became one of two judges who decided the contest.

Gilbert's assistance in helping Taylor receive his appointment was not forgotten by the new Supervising Architect. Two years later while the Minnesota Capitol was in progress, and negotiations for the Broadway Chambers, a New York skyscraper, were being conducted, Cass Gilbert turned his attention toward the impending competition for the New York Custom House.⁵² While visiting New York City to settle the Broadway Chambers business in February, 1899, Taylor came to Gilbert's hotel and told him: "I can put you on the list now for the New York Custom House. The bill has passed Congress, and it will be built."⁵³ Gilbert's memorandum of his New York visit for this day and the week following reveals the approach he took to obtaining this important commission. After talking to Taylor on the telephone and later in his office, Gilbert went to the office of the Washington Star where he saw an editor and requested "favorable editorial support of Mr. Taylor."⁵⁴ After visiting the Star, he approached Frederick

C. Stevens, Representative from Minnesota's Fourth District,⁵⁵ who suggested that Gilbert should see the United States Attorney General or the Secretary of the Treasury, after first contacting Senator Knute Nelson.⁵⁶ That evening Gilbert met Nelson in a restaurant where the Senator offered his aid and agreed to go with Gilbert to see the Attorney General or any other official Gilbert desired to meet.⁵⁷

The next day Nelson's clerk accompanied Gilbert to the Treasury Secretary's office where Gilbert requested to be put on the list of competing architects for any future Treasury Department building, particularly citing the New York Custom House. The Secretary told Gilbert that he was planning to limit the list of competitors for the Custom House to five, and that although he was unsure of what procedure he would follow in determining who would be on the list, he thought he would select only architects who had constructed buildings costing not less than one million dollars.⁵⁸ Gilbert told Secretary Gage that this procedure would "rule out Bruce Price, and other good men," and suggested that a "sort-of Civil Service examination" be held instead to select a list of competent men --a list out of which five names would be selected to compete for the Custom House. The meeting ended with Gage asking Gilbert to tell him about his professional experience; after which Gage promised that Gilbert would be given "full consideration" and that "careful inquiries" into his professional background would be made.⁵⁹

After leaving Gage's office, Gilbert called Taylor in person

to "tell him of the situation" before leaving that night for St. Paul. It is fairly obvious from reading Gilbert's memorandum that making contacts was again to play an important part in procuring the Custom House commission --or in this case of at least "getting on the list."⁶⁰

The Custom House competition was complicated from the beginning because of the legislation governing it. On February 20, 1893, Congress had passed the Tarnsey Act, a law providing for a system that would eliminate the personal appointment procedure and the evils implied by that method of operation.⁶¹ Unfortunately, the language of the Tarnsey Act was so phrased that anyone interpreting it could read what he wished into the law. For example, the law authorized the Treasury Secretary "in his discretion" to obtain plans, drawings, and specifications for all public buildings in the United States by "competition among architects under such conditions as the [Secretary] may prescribe."⁶² Although the law did specify that "not less than five architects shall be invited to compete," the rather loose wording concerning the Secretary's "conditions" led to such a practice as making a larger list out of which five names were selected. In other words, the Treasury Secretary could interpret the Tarnsey Act in such a way as to retain the personal appointment system almost intact. Another provision of the Tarnsey Act that Gilbert in particular would find advantageous was the one specifying the Supervising Architect as the "representative of the Government in all matters connected with the erection and completion of [public] buildings."⁶³

Leaving New York with the signed contract for Broadway Chambers and with hopes of getting on the list for the Custom House, Gilbert stopped in Chicago to meet with L. E. Ritter whom he asked to "act as [Gilbert's] confidential consulting engineer to review drawings made by Purdy and Henderson for the Broadway Chambers."⁶⁴ Gilbert also suggested that Ritter and E. C. Shankland should go into partnership and open a New York office "in conjunction with my proposed office there."⁶⁵ Gilbert added that he was not offering a partnership, nor "specific employment," but rather that he "believed [Ritter and Shankland] could do a good business for themselves in this connection."⁶⁶

In April, 1899, Gilbert opened his own office in New York City, putting one of his St. Paul men, Stevens Haskell, in charge.⁶⁷ On April 20, Taylor sent the following note to Gilbert in his St. Paul office: "The New York Custom House is coming up soon. Do you want to be in on it? If so better file your application from New York City very soon."⁶⁸ Gilbert responded that he was "most anxious" to be in on the Custom House competition:

I have only been waiting for my New York letter heads in order to file my application. I will send it to-day via the New York office, so as to do the whole thing in New York. . . .I want to add that I am intensely in earnest in this matter, and want to use every means that is proper and right to be included in the list.⁶⁹

The references to filing from New York show that Gilbert and Taylor were aware of the importance of establishing residency so as to avoid any criticism from New York architects. (There was, as we shall see, a great deal of criticism from New York architects

who were unimpressed by Gilbert's recently established New York residency).⁷⁰

During the last week of April, Taylor was in the West selecting sites for new government buildings.⁷¹ It is very likely that Gilbert and Taylor talked about the Custom House competition during Taylor's tour, though no record of such a conference exists. Another document, however, sheds much light on Gilbert's manner of operation just prior to the competition. On April 28, while Taylor was still in the West, Stevens Haskell was in Washington meeting with McDowel, Taylor's private secretary. Haskell's report of that meeting implies that during Taylor's absence Gilbert had sent Haskell to see McDowel and find out whatever he could about the competitor's list. Reporting back to Gilbert, Haskell said that

. . . Mr. McDowel received me very pleasantly and in all confidence we talked together, he telling me about what he thought Mr. Taylor would have been able to say. Apparently there is much confidence between them; Mr. McDowel being much interested in doing what he could in Mr. Taylor's absence. Mr. Taylor had said that he hoped to have Mr. Gilbert among the competitors. I did not disguise things with him, but tried to bring out and pump him a little to see how the land lay and what other architects had done. . . . We went together to the [Treasury Secretary's] office but Mr. Gage was out of town. . . .⁷²

Haskell learned from "pumping" McDowel that Taylor had spoken three times with Gage, and that although nothing had been decided about the competition, the Secretary had asked Taylor for a list of those architects who had asked to compete and that Taylor had "inserted" Gilbert's name on this list.⁷³ Haskell felt that a decision would

not be made until Taylor's return.

Haskell ended his report with the feeling that perhaps his liaison work might have been unethical, although he tried to show Gilbert that he had been aboveboard in his actions:

Now! I think I have told all that has passed; outside of this I have met Mr. McDowel and last evening took him to dinner, but I have not said a word of business except at the office, and as explained above. . . .I thought best to explain rather fully all these matters as my action has perhaps appeared questionable at times. However, I have tried to do the right thing at each step and if I have failed [it] is not because I did not think before acting. The program has been varied but I trust that the result will be to your satisfaction. I shall be as careful as possible and do to the best of my knowledge what comes up for action.⁷⁴

A curious ethical duality on Haskell's part should be noted here, though the burden of ethical misconduct falls on Gilbert. Interestingly, Haskell felt free to discuss with McDowel certain things pertaining to business, but only in an office; a dinner engagement, on the other hand, placed a taboo on the discussion of business matters. Far more important to Gilbert's conduct of affairs at this stage of the competition is his apparent use of Haskell as a spy, and the fact that Gilbert allowed Haskell to work through Taylor's secretary, and during Taylor's absence as well. (It is instructive to note that Gilbert himself had no qualms about discussing the competition with Senator Nelson at a restaurant.)

Several days after Haskell's letter, Gilbert received a letter from the Acting Secretary of the Treasury, inviting him to compete with "twenty of the most prominent members of your profession" for

the New York Custom House.⁷⁵ Gilbert accepted his invitation on May 9.⁷⁶ One of the first letters of congratulations was from Senator Nelson:

I am very glad to learn that favorable results followed from our visit to the Secretary of the Treasury last spring. You are certainly as worthy as any architect I know of in the country and as much entitled to be placed on the list. I trust the outcome may be as favorable as you hope and clearly deserve.⁷⁷

It is safe to assume that many factors were involved in Gilbert's selection. In light of Nelson's comment the "visit" to the Secretary must have worked in Gilbert's favor. Gilbert himself felt that Taylor was instrumental in the choice. As he told a friend two months later: ". . .I was put on the list for the New York Custom House competition by the Secretary of the Treasury --and I presume at Taylor's suggestion, without other endorsement. . . ."78

It is interesting that beginning in June, 1899, when drawings for the competition were being received in Washington that Gilbert's outward relationship to Taylor began to change. In addressing correspondence to Taylor, Gilbert dropped the familiar "Dear Jim" and used the formal "Sir." Ironically, now that he was properly in the running Gilbert wanted his letters to appear strictly business-like so as to avoid any hint of collusion should an outsider see his correspondence!⁷⁹

In July, Taylor wrote the competitors asking each one to select two judges "satisfactory to you" to serve on the commission "to judge and report as to the relative merit" of the competitive designs.⁸⁰ It is apparent from Taylor's letter that the Super-

vising Architect had been placed in charge of the competition, implying that Gage had laid down his own rules for governing the competition following the rather loose strictures of the Tarnsey Act.⁸¹ The most questionable practice, of course, was having competitors choose their own judges, the same kind of procedure followed in the Minnesota competitions.

The names submitted to Taylor by Gilbert were Walter Cope,⁸² a Philadelphia architect, and Thomas R. Kimball,⁸³ Omaha, the architect Gilbert had contacted two years before when he was seeking support for Taylor's appointment.⁸⁴ As an alternate to one of these two men, Gilbert suggested the judge of the Minnesota competitions, Edmund M. Wheelwright.

While Gilbert's New York office staff⁸⁵ moved forward by studying the site of the future Custom House as a preliminary to working up competitive designs, Taylor made the final selection of judges for the competition. On September 11, Taylor announced the judges as Frank Miles Day⁸⁶ and Thomas R. Kimball.⁸⁷ Although there is no evidence to prove the case one way or the other, it is curious to note a possible Philadelphia connection with Taylor implied by Day's selection. Taylor's choice of Kimball most certainly was the result of Gilbert's suggestion. Day and Kimball, along with Taylor as chairman, acted as a commission to decide the results of the Custom House competition. The commission was answerable to the Secretary of the Treasury.⁸⁸

According to the Programme governing the rules of competition, the commission decided not to follow the "blind" approach to

selection, but rather to have each competitor print his name and address on the submitted designs. This procedure, it should be noted, made the selection of the "right" man even easier, and calls into question the ethical implications of competitions for public buildings. The looseness of language in the Tarnsey Act, however, as has been noted above, was responsible in part for the choice of an "open" competition. Interestingly, in its report naming the finalists, the commission stated that "nothing is gained by having the names of the competitors exhibited with their drawings," and suggested that in the future drawings for competition be submitted anonymously.⁸⁹

The judges reached their decision quickly. In fact, as later criticism of the contest will show, with too much haste. Winners were placed in four classes: The firm of Carrere and Hastings and Cass Gilbert receiving the first class position; McKim, Mead, and White, Bruce Price, Shepley, Rutan, and Coolidge, second; Burnham, and Babb, Cook, and Willard, third. Within each class, competitors were listed alphabetically, so that Carrere and Hastings and Gilbert actually tied for first place. Both Gilbert and Carrere and Hastings were asked to further develop and improve their designs "[so] as to enable the commission to make a final recommendation."⁹⁰

The commission's choice of two winners caused immediate problems. After both Carrere and Hastings and Gilbert were selected as winners, the commission met with all three architects in private. At that meeting Carrere and Hastings agreed that they would be satisfied no matter which architect was finally selected as the

winning designer. There was also some talk between the New York firm and Gilbert about forming a partnership to handle the Custom House project, but Gilbert hesitated because he wanted to receive the commission himself.⁹¹ On October 2, Carrere and Hastings wrote Taylor asking for a new and enlarged jury "to judge between its firm and Gilbert."⁹² Carrere and Hastings also sent a copy of their letter to Gilbert urging his support, but Gilbert was adamant in not pushing for a new jury. As Gilbert told a friend:

I was opposed to the enlargement of the jury for the reason that I thought it would be a technicality that might be taken by politicians for overthrowing the award.⁹³

Regardless of protestations from Carrere and Hastings, Gilbert was finally selected as the winner.⁹⁴ Why Carrere and Hastings were set aside is not known, although it is reasonable to assume that Taylor's influence, instrumental from the beginning, finally emerged during the final selection.

The contest might have been settled at this point, but New York politics again entered the scene with Thomas C. Platt playing a major role. The New York Times reported on September 29 that the commission recommended the appointment of Cass Gilbert (giving New York as his place of residence) but that no final action was to be expected for several days because Secretary Gage was on business in the West and Senator Platt had asked "that the matter be held up" until Gage's return.⁹⁵

At this stage, another important New York politician, Lemuel Ely Quigg, joined forces with Platt with the purpose of influencing the commission's choice. Quigg and Platt had worked together suc-

cessfully from as early as 1892 when Quigg served as press agent for the Republican National Committee during the Harrison campaign.⁹⁶ Quigg had entered Congress in 1893, supported by one of the strong Tammany districts in New York City. In that campaign he had been "materially aided" by Platt, and from that time on he "seemingly had no higher ambition than to be Platt's lieutenant."⁹⁷ At the time of the Custom House competition, Quigg had just completed five years in Congress, having left office in March, 1899.⁹⁸

In a letter to Platt a week after the announcement of the competition results, Quigg charged that Gilbert's selection was the result of collusion between Taylor and Gilbert and that Kimball had acted as a collaborator in the deal. According to Quigg, Kimball was too young (thirty-two), not a member of the A.I.A., nor a prominent member of the architectural profession. Beyond these alleged shortcomings, Quigg also charged that Kimball was at one time a draftsman in Gilbert's office. The fact that Gilbert and Taylor were former partners, coupled with their relationship to Kimball, implied that the "intimate connection of the successful competitor to the commissioners making the award seems to be unquestionably established."⁹⁹

A careful analysis of Quigg's charges reveals that many of his facts were wrong, though it is difficult to dismiss the charge of possible collusion between the former partners. In 1899, Kimball was thirty-seven and had been practicing his profession since 1889.¹⁰⁰ In 1891 he was a member of the Boston and Omaha firm of Walker, Kimball, and Best, and a partner with Walker alone from

1891 to 1899.¹⁰¹ Absolutely no evidence exists to show that Kimball ever worked for Gilbert; in fact, Kimball was in Boston, Cambridge, and Paris from 1884 to 1889.¹⁰²

Quigg's argument rested on safer grounds in other respects, however. Quigg was correct in citing Gilbert's rather sudden opening of a New York office and his description of himself as a "New York architect" in the public announcement of his successful competition.¹⁰³ Moreover, Quigg was right in noting the short span of time which the commission took to view and judge the twenty sets of competitive drawings, a charge that could and did look damaging to the Gilbert-Taylor relationship.¹⁰⁴

At the bottom of Quigg's argument, however, was the same problem that arose during the time of Taylor's appointment: that the winner was not a New Yorker (at least one of longer residence) and hence a person who could be used by Platt for purposes of patronage. Quigg reminded Platt that both of them had protested to Gage against a policy of letting non-New Yorkers compete for the Custom House competition.¹⁰⁵ Quigg's final suggestion to Platt was that they should push for the appointment of a new commission "for it is certain that the action of the present one if sustained will cause a very disagreeable scandal."¹⁰⁶

Quigg's insistence that the award should be given to a New Yorker may have resulted in the meeting Platt held with Secretary Gage on October 24 where he protested Gilbert's selection on the grounds that Gilbert was not a member of the Republican organization of the city and county of New York.¹⁰⁷ At Platt's urging,

Gage agreed to hold the matter in abeyance until November 1.¹⁰⁸

Interviewed by the Times on October 25, Gilbert side-stepped Quigg's argument, as presented in the Platt letter and later repeated to a Times reporter,¹⁰⁹ by stating, "I am a believer in the old saying that 'courageous confidence in the intelligence of the community is a sure sign of leadership and success.'"¹¹⁰

The Times itself editorialized in favor of Gilbert, although mainly because of its displeasure with Senator Platt. Setting aside the argument reported in the New York Tribune that Platt had criticized the Gilbert plan on esthetic grounds, the Times narrowed in on the central point:

The astounding demand which BOSS PLATT is reported to have made [throwing out the commission and restricting the competition to New Yorkers] is in a business and practical point of view simply a demand that the Senator and BOSS shall himself supervise the spending of the money the Customs House will cost.¹¹¹

Other people were concerned about Gilbert's selection as well. During the time of Quigg's and Platt's protestations, and the Times' support of the award, a group of architects who had entered the competition wrote a letter of protest to President McKinley asking him "to consider the proceedings by which the designs of Mr. Cass Gilbert have been selected by a Commission, and to cause the award of the Commission to be set aside."¹¹² The architects, a majority of whom belonged to the New York Chapter of the A.I.A.,¹¹³ repeated in substance the charges made earlier by Quigg.¹¹⁴ (The letter, in fact, so closely resembles Quigg's that it is safe to assume that some member or members of the A.I.A. had a hand in the Quigg docu-

ment.)¹¹⁵ Like the Quigg letter, the A.I.A. document cited the choice of Kimball as judge, his age, and lack of prominence, but added that although Frank Miles Day had been suggested by more than one competitor, no one could find anyone other than Gilbert who had submitted Kimball's name. The New York architects also cited the "intimate relations" between Gilbert and Taylor, and mentioned that Taylor not only had acted as judge but had had a hand in selecting the other judges as well.¹¹⁶

The A.I.A. members mentioned other facts that were not included in the Quigg letter. The architects, for example, questioned the fact that Taylor had stepped aside because of his relationship with Gilbert after most of the plans had been eliminated so that the finalists could be judged supposedly without prejudice on Taylor's part. "The elimination of some plans," the architects charged, "was done by all three of the judges, but the subsequent decision between Mr. Gilbert and one or more other competitors was left to two of the Judges." Taylor's ultimate elimination of himself as judge was an admission that he should not have been a judge in the first place, the architects argued. Since the rules governing the competition called for a decision by three impartial judges, the New York architects felt that the competition should be set aside. "These irregularities are such as would vitiate any award in law," they concluded.¹¹⁷

A week after the architects wrote their protest letter to President McKinley, the letter appeared in both the New York Tribune and the Times.¹¹⁸ On the previous night, the New York A.I.A.

chapter met to discuss the Custom House competition controversy. Although the members were reluctant to discuss the results of their meeting, some members told the Times reporter that the A.I.A. chapter had reached a decision concerning its opinion on the commission's findings and had communicated it to Secretary Gage. Among those supporting Gilbert's selection were John M. Carrere and Thomas Hastings.¹¹⁹ The Times also reported that Platt and Senator Chauncey M. Depew¹²⁰ had visited the White House where they had urged the President to appoint a new commission, and that both men had met with Gage and persuaded him to withhold a final decision for another week.¹²¹

Gilbert's response to the charges brought against him by the New York architects was immediate. On November 2, the day of the publication of the A.I.A. letter, he sent a letter to the Tribune "emphatically [denying] the false and slanderous charges and insinuations concerning me and the action of the jury."¹²² Gilbert also had his St. Paul attorney, George C. Squires, draw up a letter of protest addressed to Secretary Gage in which he answered the charges against Kimball, his former partnership with Taylor, and the question of the New York residency. Squires argued that Kimball had never worked for Gilbert; that Taylor had held back his opinion on the competitive drawings until the other men had expressed theirs; and that in regard to the New York residency, the Custom House was a Federal Building ". . .to the cost of which St. Paul contributes its share in taxes as well as New York."¹²³ The lawyer also referred to the efficacy of the Tarnsey Act and

its relation to the "cause of good architecture," the strongest argument in his letter:

I submit [the letter says] that it would be very unfortunate to the cause of good architecture, if the first important competition under the Tarnsey Act should fall through by reason of the charges and objections so false and flimsey [sic] as those which are urged. . .and that the impression should go abroad through the country that, notwithstanding the spirit and intention of the Tarnsey Act was to get our public buildings constructed on sound architectural lines, rather than on the basis of the political pull, which might be exerted; that politics were to govern after all, and that the disappointed competitors could change¹²⁴ the lines by calling upon their political friends.

On November 4 Secretary Gage announced that he would accept the commission's choice and Gilbert was officially awarded the prize.¹²⁵ Apparently, the recommendations of the New York A.I.A. chapter's meeting of November 1 had had an effect on the Secretary's decision, although Gilbert's argument noted above may have been persuasive as well. The New York chapter's resolution, which had been sent to Gage and made public on the 3rd, stated that it was "to the best interests of the architectural profession" that the commission's choice be upheld.¹²⁶ In other words, had the chapter repudiated the commission, future competitions for public buildings (for which New York architects would also compete) could be jeopardized. The A.I.A. members also stated that the protest letter to President McKinley had been a "very foolish thing" and an insult to Gage who had been instrumental in supporting the Tarnsey Act. "If it had not been for Mr. Gage, there would now be no such thing as competitions for Federal buildings, but the old system of the appointment of architects by the Supervising Archi-

tect would be in force," the architects concluded.¹²⁷

Another factor that may have helped Secretary Gage make his decision was the role played by Platt and Quigg. In a Times interview with Gilbert on the day of his selection, he said that Gage had called him in and shown him both Quigg's letter and the A.I.A. letter, the latter having been forwarded to the Secretary's office by President McKinley. During their meeting, Gage and Gilbert had compared the Quigg letter with the A.I.A. protest letter, noting the obvious similarities pointed out above.¹²⁸ It may be assumed that Gage made his decision in Gilbert's favor because he did not wish to be pressured by politicians.

One other and most curious factor is relevant here, too. On October 28 Gage had received a letter from a man identified only as "a prominent Republican member of Congress from the West." In the letter the Congressman revealed what he called the "inside history" of the Custom House controversy, particularly as it related to Platt and Quigg. The letter was apparently sent to Gage to persuade him to make no concessions that would benefit either of the two politicians.¹²⁹

According to the "Prominent Republican," Senator Quigg had at one time controlled a piece of land on Wall Street where he wanted the Custom House built. In order to control a custom house built on his site, Quigg had hand-picked a commission and with the support of House Speaker Thomas Reed¹³⁰ forced a bill relating to the Wall Street site through the House Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds. Quigg gained support at the same time from

Senator Quay who ". . . railroaded the same bill through the Senate by the grossest misrepresentation of the facts."¹³¹

While these events were taking place, leading New York merchants, preferring the site where the Custom House was finally built (Bowling Green), employed Henry H. Smith to lobby for the latter site.¹³² In a move resembling the kind of maneuvering practiced by Platt, Smith notified Reed that if either the House or the Senate bill were passed, ". . . facts and papers would be submitted exposing the rotten and corrupt character" of the bills. When Reed discovered that the facts behind Quigg's bill were known by other members of Congress --and that these facts were documented in writing-- he declined to recognize Quigg when the bill left committee and came up for House approval. According to Smith, Quigg retreated from his Wall Street plan, but not to be entirely put to rout, sought the "commission and patronage which grew out [of the Bowling Green site] for distribution by his committee."¹³³

When the controversy over selection of the architect for the Custom House began, Quigg asked Smith's support in his fight against the commission of architects, but Smith declined after reminding Quigg of the Wall Street site dealings.¹³⁴ In his letter to Gilbert, Smith said that Quigg had great hopes of controlling the contracts and the patronage for the construction of the Custom House, if the commission could be set aside. Smith also told Gilbert that Quigg was working for a "new deal," and that it was quite likely that George Post would be the "winner."¹³⁵

It seems apparent that when Gage accepted the commission's

award on November 3, he was also challenging any future plans Platt or Quigg might have to control the Custom House patronage. And Taylor, writing to Gilbert months later, related a similar opinion: ". . .I can assure you that the Department will sustain you and will not allow Senator Platt or any one else to hamper you or interfere in your work."¹³⁶

The final phase of the controversy surrounding the Custom House competition shows that the major figures involved reached a mutual understanding, though one of a somewhat tenuous nature. In February, 1900, Taylor wrote Gilbert that Gage and Platt had not been on "very friendly terms" and that Platt had refused to see the Secretary, while Gage ". . .wasn't breaking his neck to see the other gentleman."¹³⁷ Mutual friends of Gage and Platt, however, had arranged a meeting between them where Platt revealed bitterness toward both Gilbert and Taylor. According to Taylor, "[Platt] would not believe that both you and I were crooked, and had arranged the [Custom House] matter beforehand."¹³⁸ At that meeting Gage had persuaded Platt that he had known Taylor for years and felt him to be "perfectly honest."¹³⁹ Gage warned Platt, too, that he would not allow anyone to denigrate a Treasury Department employee. According to Taylor, Platt then agreed to meet Gilbert and Taylor "in a friendly frame of mind, rather than as an enemy."¹⁴⁰ Taylor's final suggestion was that the two men should meet with Gage and Platt, and

. . .That while we don't have to 'knuckle down' to the gentleman in question, still we none of us want his active opposition and that if we can get into touch with

[Platt], at the same time, retaining our own independence, that it may be better for us as well as for the work as a whole.¹⁴¹

In tracing the "inside history" of Taylor's appointment and Gilbert's award, I have tried to show the gap between what the public assumes to be the ethical method of conducting competitions and what happens in fact. It is important to point out, I think, that Taylor was a public servant and that the public provided the funds for the New York Custom House.

In Taylor's case the public assumed that Secretary Gage had set aside the questionable practice of personal appointment and replaced it with the fairer practice of impartial examination, when in fact he had merely continued the appointment system. The roles played by Gilbert and the New York politicians show that personal contacts, "letters of reference," and private conferences have a greater effect among businessmen and politicians than do examinations.

As to Gilbert, the Custom House, as I see it, was his from the outset. Ethically, he was putting himself in a bad light initially by getting himself "on the list" through the influence of Senator Nelson and Secretary Gage, and then competing for a prize held by his former business partner in a "contest" where judges were chosen by the participants and designs were identified by name and address. Even granting the ambiguous terminology of the Tarnsey Act, the competition was essentially a continuation of the personal appointment system.

The amicable understanding among the major participants symbolizes the extraordinarily ironic nature of the Custom House controversy from beginning to end. If one assumes that the whole affair was a "fix" from the time of Taylor's appointment to the awarding of the prize to Gilbert, there should be no reason why the "fixers" should not get together at the end in a "friendly frame of mind."

VI

Conclusion

As I have shown, at the beginning of his career, Cass Gilbert revealed an inner tension between becoming an artist or a businessman, with the former aspiration in the ascendance. At M.I.T., for example, he scorned his fellow classmate and later partner, James Knox Taylor, for ". . .thinking of a fat position in a comfortable office rather than of artistic aspirations and delights."¹ Gilbert's early letters also reveal a strong self-righteous attitude toward the unethical practices of other M.I.T. students. Gilbert's attitude during his student days serves as an ironic commentary to the later years when the "tension" between artist and businessman abated, and the architect sought to some extent the "fat position" he had decried as a young man. Gilbert's self-righteous attitude was a trait, however, that continued throughout his life.

After leaving M.I.T., Gilbert spent a short time working for the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey in the Catskill Mountains in order to support himself during a year's European study and travel. While working as a surveyor, Gilbert revealed a continuation of his earlier tensions concerning the life of an artist as opposed to that of a businessman. Through the experience of the back-breaking work of a surveyor, he also discovered that a life of hard work --and, by extension, the "real" world-- exists in sharp contrast to the life of the mind and emotions. This newly discovered "tension" is suggested in his letters by descriptions of the

hardships of surveying work, juxtaposed with sketches of the beauty of mountain scenery that he saw around him. The artist-business tension, coupled with this new discovery, made Gilbert understand the importance of dedicating his life to the search for success, a quest that would lead him toward a business, rather than an exclusively artistic, career.

Prior to and after the time of the European journey, the practical needs of life seemingly came to dominate whatever artistic aspirations Gilbert had held. The journey itself began with a shortage of funds, a problem that Gilbert had to face throughout the seven-month period he spent in Europe. Although the earliest letters are filled with pen sketches and prose descriptions of London architecture, the later letters from the Continent reveal the pressing needs of support for further travelling. Hoping to work as a draftsman in a London office, but thwarted by a shortage of openings, Gilbert returned to America. The planning of the European wanderyear had begun with high hopes of days spent sketching and learning and later working in the office of an important English architect, but ended on the mundane note of money problems. Needless to say, Gilbert was not a bohemian.

The short and disappointing European journey was followed by a two-year apprenticeship in the Baltimore office of the firm of McKim, Mead, and White. As a draftsman handling subsidiary parts of the firm's projects, Gilbert entered the workaday world. Interestingly, the transition from the student and European traveller --periods marked by the tensions described above-- was remark-

ably painless; so easy was the transition, in fact, that one might question the genuineness of Gilbert's earlier feelings. During the period with McKim, Mead, and White, Gilbert further revealed the habit of making judgments about his colleagues, including (in the privacy of his letters) attacks on the personal reputation of Stanford White.

The beginning of Gilbert's seventeen-year architectural practice in St. Paul, Minnesota, came in 1882. For a short time, Gilbert was torn between continuing with McKim, Mead, and White in the East and returning to his home in Minnesota where a possible partnership with Clarence Johnston had been discussed. After friction developed between the two men because of Gilbert's fear of possible conflicts resulting from partnership, Gilbert took the opportunity of returning to St. Paul as McKim, Mead, and White's superintendent of construction and architectural work for Villard's Northern Pacific Railroad in the West. Working out of a private office in St. Paul, Gilbert carried on projects for the Northern Pacific from June, 1883, to January, 1884. For a short time, Gilbert corresponded with William Mead concerning the possibility of opening a branch office for McKim, Mead, and White in St. Paul, with Gilbert in charge, but Villard's collapse prevented any further development of plans by the Eastern firm.

When any future plans for association with McKim, Mead, and White fell through in January, 1884, Gilbert turned his attention to private practice. At the time when Gilbert began making plans to strike out on his own, his letters are filled with references

to "contacts" he had made with socially prominent people in St. Paul whom he felt were potentially useful for future architectural projects. Gilbert's references to these clients mark the beginning of his climb to success by means of contacts with people of social, political, and financial influence. Gilbert's acceptance of the importance of making contacts, particularly with the upper class leaders of the community, constitutes the leading "theme" of his continuing career. Gilbert's estimation of his position within the community symbolizes the falling away of the earlier claims to the life of the artist and the acceptance of a career in business:

I command, I am sure, [he tells Mead] a good deal of influence among the wealthy men here, some of whom are politicians. The fact of my being one of the four men invited to go into the [St. Paul] Chamber of Commerce will be in my favor, and that I stand very well with the City Council. . .all of these are good points.²

From 1884 to 1891, Gilbert worked in partnership with his former M.I.T. classmate, James Knox Taylor. For seven years, Gilbert and Taylor enjoyed a prosperous practice as designers and builders of fashionable homes and churches for wealthy clients during a booming period of economic growth which St. Paul and the Middle West experienced in the 1880's. During this period, which I have described as Gilbert's initiation into the intricacies of "businessmanship," a term denoting contact-making with fellow architects, businessmen, and socially prominent clients, Gilbert suffered three setbacks which acted to goad him on toward other successes: the major one being chosen architect for the new Minn-

esota Capitol in 1895. By learning the ground-rules of "businessmanship" through the failure of receiving two important commissions, and by falling short of becoming Daniel Burnham's partner after John Root's death in 1891, Gilbert gained the knowledge that helped make him successful as the winning competitor for the Minnesota Capitol.

The phase of Gilbert's career that I called "The Rewards of Businessmanship" was concerned with the social and political events surrounding the two competitions for the Minnesota Capitol. During the time of the competitions, Gilbert played a major role as "expert advisor" to the Capitol Commissioners, the board charged with governing the competitions and the construction of the new building. Two "themes" emerge from the 1893-1895 period that are important to an understanding of both Gilbert and milieu. The first theme concerns the fight to remove the capital from St. Paul, an issue that puts into perspective the conflict between rural and urban legislators as it appeared later during the competitions and the period of construction. The second theme relates to the agitation by the Minnesota Chapter of the American Institute of Architects (with Gilbert as president) to "assist" the Board in forming rules for the capitol competition that would be advantageous to local (Minnesota) architects. Gilbert's role as advisor to the Board helped him to emerge as the winning architect, a fact that calls into question both Gilbert's conduct and the ethical tone of the business community.

From 1895 to 1905 Gilbert was in charge of the construction

of the Minnesota Capitol. During that time he was instrumental in choosing the stone and selecting the artists for the new building. Both tasks brought on new problems, including a controversy over the use of "local" stone as opposed to the architect's choice of "foreign" stone. The stone controversy concerns the conflict between Minnesota citizens --speaking through the state press-- who insisted out of loyalty to Minnesota that only local stone be used for their Capitol, and the Board, representing Gilbert, who wished to utilize foreign material. Following the pattern of the stone controversy, the conflict over the selection of artists centered upon Minnesota fresco painters and artists who wanted the decorative work reserved for local artisans solely, and Gilbert who insisted on hiring only established Eastern artists. An understanding of the tensions implicit in the stone and artists' controversies, illuminates the conflict within American culture between regions and its effect on architecture, and also reveals the values and ethics of men within the business community at the turn of the century. The story of the building of the Minnesota Capitol also adds a dimension to Gilbert's successful attainment of national recognition in the East during the same period.

The beginning of Cass Gilbert's national career occurred in 1899. With the experience of winning the Minnesota competition behind him, Gilbert turned his attention toward even more profitable goals. In 1897, he was helpful in procuring the position of Supervising Architect of the Treasury for James Knox Taylor. Two years later, Taylor apparently used the influence of that office

to assist Gilbert's ambition, resulting in Gilbert being awarded the New York Custom House prize. Chapter V, "The Making of a National Reputation," reveals the methods employed by Gilbert, other prominent architects, businessmen, and politicians to obtain Taylor's promotion; and, two years later, how similar tactics worked toward Gilbert's success at the time of the Custom House competition. An analysis of the social, business, and political machinations surrounding both Taylor's appointment and Gilbert's award opens the way toward a further understanding of the ethical Zeitgeist of the late nineteenth century.

NOTES

Introduction

¹Thomas C. Cochran and William Miller, The Age of Enterprise, A Social History of Industrial America, Harper Torchbacks (New York: Harper & Row, 1961), p. 2. Other studies that have influenced my essay are: Carl N. Degler, Out of Our Past, Harper Colophon Books (New York: Harper & Row, 1959) and Edward C. Kirkland, Dream and Thought in the Business Community, 1860-1900, Quadrangle Paperbacks (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1956).

²Ibid., Cochran and Miller, The Age of Enterprise.

³Ibid., p. 136.

⁴John Burchard and Albert Bush-Brown, The Architecture of America, A Social and Cultural History (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1961), p. 208.

⁵Cochran and Miller, p. 1.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Quoted in Cochran and Miller, p. 1. For an understanding of corruption in the 1890's, I have received invaluable insight from: Lincoln Steffens, The Autobiography of Lincoln Steffens, Vol. II, Harvest Book (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1958). See, Chap. III, "The Shame of Minneapolis."

⁸Cochran and Miller, p. 1.

⁹Richard Hofstadter, ed., The Progressive Movement, 1900-1915, Spectrum Book (Englewood Cliffs, (N.J.): Prentice Hall, 1963), p. 1. The quotations are from Hofstadter's Introduction.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Cochran and Miller, p. 132. Another source that provides insight into the corruption of the period is: William L. Riordan, recorder, Plunkitt of Tammany Hall, Dutton Paperback (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1963).

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Matthew Josephson, The Politicos (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1938), pp. 446-447.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 447.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Dorothy M. Johnson, "The Graft That Failed," Montana, The Magazine of Western History, Vol. 9 (Autumn, 1959), p. 3. Miss Johnson's account of the Montana scandal is taken from an unpublished manuscript by Fred Whiteside, a Montana legislator who helped expose the attempted graft.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Ibid., p. 11. Paulsen's obituary is reprinted from the Helena Weekly Herald, April 29, 1897, as a part of Miss Johnson's article. The second architect who was willing to accept a contract with the Commissioners was George R. Mann of St. Louis. Ibid., fn., p. 3. Cass Gilbert was one of the competitors who submitted plans for the Montana Capitol. According to Johnson, he did not get the contract because he refused to pay \$20,000 bribe money. Ibid. The Cass Gilbert Papers, Manuscript Library, Minnesota Historical Society, indicates that Johnson's point is correct. On March 13, 1897, E. H. McHenry, a friend of Gilbert's in Helena, wrote Gilbert: "According to Mr. Whiteside, your plan was originally adopted, but subsequently rejected, on account of a very grave defect --that there was nothing in it for the Commissioners. . . ." E. H. McHenry to Gilbert, March 13, 1897. [MHS].

²¹The success-cult of the late nineteenth century was undoubtedly rooted, in part, in the public knowledge of the success of the Robber Barons. During the period discussed above, Andrew Carnegie, John D. Rockefeller, Henry Villard, and James J. Hill made their fortunes. Both Villard and Hill, as will be seen, were influential in furthering Gilbert's success. For a standard work on the Robber Barons, see: Matthew Josephson, The Robber Barons, The Great American Capitalists, Harvest Book (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1962).

²²Samuel P. Hays, The Response to Industrialism, 1885-1914 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), pp. 11-12.

²³If the influence of the lives of the Robber Barons was a major source of the public belief in success, the other most popular source of influence was Horatio Alger, Jr. An author of boys' books, Alger "wrote the identical story over one hundred and nine times to prove that the American dream came true in real life. Between the end of the Civil War and the end of the century, Americans bought approximately two hundred million copies of Mr. Alger's books. These books constituted the most influential literary tripe ever published in our country." Stewart H. Holbrook, The

Age of the Moguls (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1954), p. 89.

²⁴Hays, p. 22.

²⁵Guy Kirkham, "Cass Gilbert, Master of Style," Pencil Points, XV (November, 1934), 543.

²⁶"In Conversation With Mr. Lundie," Northwest Architect, May-June, 1969, p. 20. Mr. Lundie is undoubtedly one of the most respected architects in the Middle West. Born in 1886, Mr. Lundie came to St. Paul in 1894, where he entered Gilbert's office as a student and later as a draftsman. When Gilbert moved to New York in 1899, Lundie entered the office of Emanuel L. Masqueray and studied in the "Atelier Masqueray," an affiliate of the American Society of Beaux Arts Architects. Since 1917, Mr. Lundie has been in private practice in the Endicott Building, St. Paul. Ibid., 19. In an interview with Mr. Lundie in 1970, the architect told me that Gilbert possessed a charismatic personality felt by everyone associated with him. In preparing a project, Gilbert would first make doodles while dreaming about the project before actually executing the plans. In our interview Mr. Lundie also decried the "promotional" aspect of contemporary architectural practice, saying that a firm's reputation was the major source of commissions at the turn of the century. Edwin H. Lundie, private interview, St. Paul, Minnesota, August, 1970.

²⁷Cass Gilbert Memorandum, March 2 and March 3, 1899. [MHS].

²⁸The first reference to Gilbert's selection as architect for the Woolworth Building (completed, 1913) is in a letter to E. E. Corliss, member of the Board of Capitol Commissioners, St. Paul. Gilbert to Corliss, May 31, 1905. [MHS].

²⁹Gilbert to Charles C. Gilbert, May 3, 1905. [MHS]. Charles was Cass Gilbert's brother.

³⁰Gilbert died on May 17, 1934, while travelling in England. Obituary, New York Times, May 18, 1934.

³¹Gilbert's honors are listed in several sources. The major and most all-inclusive list is recorded in Kirkham, "Cass Gilbert, Master of Style," p. 545.

³²The "underside" of the so-called "Gay Nineties" is poignantly documented by Richard Hofstadter in The Progressive Movement, 1900-1915. Through the use of documents written by enlightened critics living around the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Hofstadter's collection shows the degrading life led by a vast lower class which emerged with the rise of industrialism in America. See, "Upton Sinclair on the Chicago Stockyards," pp. 28-33; "Marie Van Vorst on the Flight of the Working Woman," pp. 34-38;

"John Spargo on Child Labor," pp. 39-44; "Ray Stannard Baker on the Condition of the Negro," pp. 44-48; "Robert Hunter on Poverty," pp. 55-58. Matthew Josephson also records that after the Depression of 1893, ". . . in Chicago alone 100,000 men walked the streets in search of work; thousands slept in public buildings, the police not daring to oust them; riots took place almost daily among the mobs of famished outcasts waiting in bitter cold before the soup kitchens furnished by the 'friendliness and charity' of private citizens, as Mr. Cleveland phrased it. . . ." Politicos, p. 560. It is interesting to note that Gilbert was apparently untouched by the 1893 depression. In that year he built at least one home, for William H. Lightner, Summit Avenue, St. Paul; the St. Louis Hotel, Duluth; and a warehouse for the Boston and Northwest Real Estate Co., St. Paul. The first appropriation for the new Minnesota Capitol was also made in 1893. Cass Gilbert Papers, MHS, Boxes 3, 4, 5.

³³ Gilbert to Robinson, September 25, 1891. [MHS]. This unmailed letter to a friend whom I have been unable to identify was written in Grand Forks, North Dakota. The "philosophy" therein is doubly ironic, for Gilbert was working on a depot in Grand Forks for J. J. Hill who had appointed Gilbert superintendent of construction for the Great Northern Railroad Company in 1891. Memorandum of Appointments of Cass Gilbert, undated, Papers of the Board of State Capitol Commissioners, Minnesota State Archives, St. Paul. [All future references to this collection will be marked "A"].

³⁴ Gilbert to Robinson, September 25, 1891. ³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Gilbert to Mrs. A. Pennington, March 26, 1908. [MHS].

I

1. The Student as Artist: The Apprenticeship Years, 1878-1884

¹ M. D. Shutter and J. S. McLain, ed., Progressive Men of Minnesota (Minneapolis: The Minneapolis Journal Press, 1897), pp. 134-135.

² Samuel Augustus Gilbert was a soldier, topographical engineer, and a "distinguished officer of the United States Coast Survey." He was awarded a medal by Congress for distinguished bravery in rescuing ship-wrecked sailors on the Texas coast. During the Civil War he received a special letter of thanks from President Lincoln "for gallant and brilliant conduct in the march on Cumberland Gap whereby 3,000 Confederates were captured." In March, 1865, Gilbert

was promoted to brevet brigadier general. After executing a commission to South America for the government, he resumed his service on the coast survey until his death in St. Paul, Minnesota, June 9, 1868. Ibid., p. 134.

³Cass Gilbert was a student at Winslow House, Minneapolis, a preparatory school which later became Macalester College when it was moved to St. Paul. Ibid. According to William Watts Folwell, Edward D. Neill opened Jesus College in the old Winslow House in 1872. The school contained two departments: the Baldwin Grammar School, a classical and English school preparatory to the University of Minnesota; and the school of Christian Literature, supplemental to the University. "It was the hope of the founder that Christian parents would send sons to Jesus College for 'gentle home culture' under Christian influences. . . ." William Watts Folwell, A History of Minnesota, IV, (St. Paul: The Minnesota Historical Society, 1969), pp. 439-441.

⁴Shutter and McLain, p. 134. The only references to Gilbert's association with Radcliff [sometimes spelled "Radcliffe"] occur in this source and Donald R. Torbert, "Minneapolis Architecture and Architects, 1848-1908: A Study of Style Trends in Architecture in a Mid-Western City," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1951), p. 418. Torbert's brief biography of Radcliff (1827-1886?) says that E. P. Bassford [q.v.] worked in Radcliff's office from about 1868 to 1871; Leroy S. Buffington was associated with Radcliff for an uncertain period of years after 1871; and Gilbert worked in the office in 1876.

⁵Shutter and McLain, p. 134.

⁶Gilbert to Johnston, July 11, 1878. This letter is from the Clarence Howard Johnston Papers, Manuscript Library, Minnesota Historical Society. [All further references to this collection will be labeled "CJ"]. Clarence Johnston (1859-1934) was born in Waseca, Minnesota, and moved to St. Paul as a youth where he became a boyhood friend of Gilbert's. Both men worked for A. M. Radcliff [qv]. Johnston attended M.I.T. from 1877 to 1881 where he received his B.S. degree. In 1881, Johnston opened his own office in St. Paul where he practiced until his death. For thirty years he was architect of the Minnesota State Board of Control, the organization entrusted with the construction and administration of public buildings for the state. As State Architect, Johnston designed the prison at Bayport and several of the buildings on the campus of the University of Minnesota. Brief sketches of Johnston are found in: Henry F. Withey and Elsie R. Withey, Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased), (Los Angeles: Hennessey & Ingalls, 1970), p. 326 and Warren Upham and Rose B. Dunlap, ed., Minnesota Biographies, 1655-1912 (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1912), p. 383.

⁷Gilbert to Johnston, January 5, 1879.

⁸Gilbert to Johnston, January 16, 1879. I have been unable to locate information concerning Brandt.

⁹Ibid. The career of James Knox Taylor (1857-1929) appears throughout the narrative above. At the time Gilbert made the comment quoted above, Taylor was a fellow student at M.I.T.

¹⁰I have been unable to find information on W. W. Franklin. E. P. Bassford was a St. Paul architect who designed two fine "Romanesque" buildings in St. Paul: The Germania Life Insurance Building (now Guardian Building) at Minnesota and Fourth in 1888-89 and the Merchants National Bank (McColl Building) at 366-68 Jackson Street in 1890. Both buildings are photographed and discussed in H. F. Koeper, Historic St. Paul Buildings (St. Paul: St. Paul City Planning Board, 1964), pp. 36 and 40. Leroy S. Buffington, of course, is now the better known of the architects mentioned by Gilbert in his description of the Radcliff office. See, Muriel B. Christison, ed., Memories of Leroy S. Buffington (unpublished M.A. dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1941) and Dmitros Tselos, "The Enigma of Buffington's Skyscraper," Art Bulletin, 26 (March, 1944).

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Gilbert to Johnston, Feb. 5, 1879.

¹³William Robert Ware (1832-1915) organized the School of Architecture at M.I.T. in 1866. It was the first such school in the United States. In 1881, Ware founded the Columbia School of Architecture. Withey, pp. 632-633. According to T. K. Rohdenburg, "Ware was not so much a great architect as a great educator, and as an educator, his teaching was inspirational rather than precise. . . . Ware became the foremost leader in the movement to reform the low ethical standards of the profession, successfully correcting the widespread abuses of the time in connection with architectural competitions and establishing the standards which are now maintained by the American Institute of Architects, of which he was a member for fifty years. . . ." T. K. Rohdenburg, A History of the School of Architecture, Columbia University (New York: Columbia University Press, 1954), pp. 15-16.

¹⁴Gilbert to Johnston, February 5, 1879. Although Johnston was not in attendance at the time, his drawings were being used for class discussion.

¹⁵Gilbert to Johnston, May 29, 1879. Rohdenburg says that students at Columbia studied designs by restoring historical examples and designing "from dictation" -- a pedagogic device originated by Ware. Subjects chosen by Ware for individual problems were "fanciful and romantic, or notably monumental. The students applied their imagination. . . to such projects as 'A Pavilion on a Terrace,' 'A Hunting Box,' 'A Campanile,' 'A Palace,' and 'A State Capitol Building[!].'" Rohdenburg, pp. 7-8.

¹⁶Gilbert to Johnston, May 29, 1879.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Gilbert to Johnston, June 22, 1879. The architects cited by Gilbert were the leading Gothic Revival designers in England in the nineteenth century. George Edmund Street was the designer of the Royal Courts of Justice; William Burges designed Cardiff Castle and Trinity College (Hartford, Connecticut, 1873); Alfred Waterhouse built the Town Hall, Manchester, England. Norman Shaw, the finest of the architects mentioned by Gilbert, has been cited as the man who combined "a simple vernacular and the elaborate ritual of late Victorian. . . [in his] best work." Robert F. Jordan, Victorian Architecture (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1966), passim.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid.

²³Ibid. Professor Ware's willingness to write letters of introduction indicates his confidence in Gilbert's ability, I feel, although it is somewhat remarkable that Ware would put himself on the line for someone with so little experience as Gilbert. The prize mentioned above was probably instrumental in Ware's decision, however. Russell Sturgis (1838-1909) was teaching at the College of the City of New York and practicing in his own firm in 1879. Withey, pp. 581-582. George Tilden (1845-1919) attended M.I.T. and continued his studies in Atelier Vaudremer, Ecole des Beaux Arts. Withey, p. 600.

²⁴Gilbert to Johnston, August 3, 1879.

²⁵Gilbert to Johnston, October 25, 1879.

²⁶Gilbert to Johnston, July 21, 1879.

²⁷A quote from a missing letter to Gilbert from Johnston, November, 1879, in Gilbert's letter to Johnston, November 17, 1879. [None of Johnston's letters to Gilbert are extant. Fortunately, Gilbert had the habit of quoting incoming letters.]

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Ibid. [my ital.]

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Gilbert to Johnston, August 26, 1879. Henry Van Brunt (1832-1903) practiced in Boston with William Robert Ware. Among his better known works are: Memorial Hall, Weld Hall, and the east wing of the college library at Harvard. Withey, p. 614. William Ralph Emerson (? -1917) began practice in Boston in the early 1870's. Vincent J. Scully, Jr., The Shingle Style (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957), pp. 82-88. One can only conjecture, of course, about what direction Gilbert's work would have taken had he secured a position in either Emerson's or Richardson's office.

³²Gilbert to Johnston, October 25, 1879.

³³Ibid.

³⁴Gilbert to Johnston, December 16, 1879. The letter does not specify who provided the letter of introduction.

³⁵Gilbert to Johnston, January 30, 1880.

³⁶Ibid. Gilbert's later and probably most successful designs were undoubtedly inspired by the parish churches he saw in England during this time. The best example of a church in the Gothic style by Gilbert is St. Clement's Episcopal, Portland Avenue at Milton Street, St. Paul, 1894, built with money provided by Mrs. Theodore Eaton, widow of the rector of St. Clement's, New York City. (Correspondence between Gilbert and Mrs. Eaton is in Box 13, MHS). Koeper illustrates and describes St. Clement's, St. Paul, pp. 100-101.

³⁷Ibid. Gilbert's most successful and engaging designs are the homes and churches executed in the 1880's and 1890's in St. Paul. When he turned to the "monumental" with the Minnesota Capitol in 1895 his style deteriorated markedly, I feel.

³⁸Gilbert to Johnston, April 2, 1880.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Gilbert to Johnston, April 12, 1880.

⁴¹Gilbert to Johnston, April 28, 1880.

⁴²Gilbert to Johnston, July 18, 1880.

2. Draftsman for McKim, Mead, and White

⁴³Francis S. Swales, "Master Draftsman, XVIII (Cass Gilbert)" Pencil Points, (1926), p. 583. According to William Mead, in the 1870's Charles McKim worked in the office of Gambrill and Richardson and Mead himself was a student in the office of Russell Sturgis. In 1878, the two men, along with William B. Bigelow, formed a partnership in New York City. Mr. Bigelow retired in 1879. That year, Stanford White, who had worked for Richardson, took Bigelow's place, forming the McKim, Mead, and White partnership. William Mead's account of the origin of the firm is recorded in Charles Moore, The Life and Times of Charles Follen McKim (New York: Da Capo Press, 1970), pp. 40-42.

⁴⁴Richard Grant White, "Old New York and Its Houses," The Century Magazine, XXVI (October, 1883). Richard Grant White possessed a number of talents; he was a lawyer, musician, writer, and editor

of Shakespeare. Dictionary of American Biography, X, 113-114.

⁴⁵"In the summer of 1877 a group of Boston architects made a pilgrimage up the New England coast to look at works that dated from earlier periods. The Classicist Revival which followed the play of these varied native and foreign influences was initiated by the firm of McKim, Mead, and White. In their designs they exploited the Italian monuments, Roman and Renaissance, and the eighteenth century American work that had been based on the architecture of Georgian England. The earliest among McKim, Mead, and White designs to be influenced by a Renaissance monument was the Henry Villard residences at Fiftieth Street and Madison Avenue in New York. The Villard building was designed in 1883 by Joseph Morrill Wells of the McKim, Mead, and White office. The design was closely akin to, but in no sense copied from, the Cancelleria Palace at Rome. The New York house became the prototype for the Italian 'palace' type of city building that assumed an important position in architectural fashion in the eighteen-nineties." Torbert, Minneapolis Architecture and Architects, pp. 197-198.

⁴⁶Gilbert's drawings appear on pp. 847, 850, 853, and 856 in Grant's article.

⁴⁷Gilbert to Johnston, August 6, 1882.

⁴⁸Ibid. Moore does not mention the Bennett yacht.

⁴⁹Ibid. I have been unable to find references to the Garrett [Garrett?] House.

⁵⁰Ibid. Alfred D. F. Hamlin (1855-1926) entered the office of McKim, Mead, and White in 1881. Later, he succeeded Ware as department chairman at Columbia. Withey, pp. 260-261. The only reference to William C. Hazlet that I have been able to find is in the "Office Roll of McKim, Mead, and White," Moore, p. 327.

⁵¹Gilbert to Johnston, August 24, 1882. ⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Swales, Pencil Points, p. 583.

⁵⁴Gilbert to Johnston, September 10, 1882. The Ross Winans' House is illustrated in Paul Wenzel and Maurice Krakow, Monograph of the Work of McKim, Mead, and White, Vol. I (New York: Architectural Publishing Co., 1915), Plate 2. For a description of the Villard House, see fn. 45 above. I have been unable to find references to the Greenwood vault.

⁵⁵Gilbert to Johnston, September 10, 1882.

⁵⁶Gilbert to Johnston, September 20, 1882.

⁵⁷Ibid. Augustus Saint-Gaudens (1848-1907) appears throughout the narrative above. The Farragut statue was completed in 1880. The famous pedestal was designed by Stanford White with Saint-Gaudens' assistance in 1879. According to a recent scholar "Instead of the prismatic block with a carved molding or two, the base became an integral part of the monument, decorated with reliefs and inscriptions that sang the praises of [the figure] above. . . ." Wayne Craven, Sculpture in America (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1968), pp. 380-381.

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹ Gilbert to Johnston, September 10, 1882.

⁶⁰ Gilbert to Johnston, October 5, 1882 "[White] seems to give me his fullest confidence, as far as the work goes, and seems disposed to take me into account in arranging it. . . ." Gilbert told Johnston.

⁶¹ Gilbert to Johnston, September 10, 1882.

⁶²Ibid. No reference to anyone with a name resembling DuNord appears in any standard biographical source.

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴Ibid.

⁶⁵Ibid.

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸ Gilbert to Johnston, August 24, 1882. Stanford White (1853-1906) planned luxurious city and country homes in New York, Newport, and the Berkshires. He was a designer of furniture, pedestals, picture frames, magazine covers, and jewelry. Some of his more famous buildings are: Madison Square Presbyterian Church, Century Club, The Players Club, Metropolitan Club, all in New York. White was shot by Harry Thaw on June 25, 1906. Gilbert was referring to White's reputation as a woman-chaser. Although Gilbert's estimation of White's private character may have been a fair one, his continual habit of damning his associates is most annoying. (For a sketch of White's life, see DAB, X, 116-118.)

⁶⁹ Missing Johnston letter, September, 1882.

⁷⁰Ibid.

⁷¹Ibid.

⁷²Ibid.

⁷³ Gilbert to Johnston, October 5, 1882.

⁷⁴Ibid.

⁷⁵Ibid.

⁷⁶ Gilbert to Johnston, October 20, 1882.

⁷⁷Ibid.

⁷⁸Ibid.

⁷⁹Ibid.

⁸⁰ Missing Johnston letter, October, 1882.

⁸¹Gilbert to Johnston, October 20, 1882.

⁸²Ibid.

3. McKim, Mead, and White's Man in the West: 1883-1885

⁸³Matthew Josephson, The Robber Barons, pp. 242-247.

⁸⁴Wayne Andrews, Architecture, Ambition, and Americans (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1947), p. 186.

⁸⁵The Robber Barons, p. 247.

⁸⁶See fn. 45.

⁸⁷Andrews, p. 188.

⁸⁸Only a handful of letters exist concerning Gilbert's association with the Northern Pacific. Information for this period comes from: Cass Gilbert's Letterbook, 1883, New-York Historical Society, and the Cass Gilbert Papers, Box 13, MHS. (To distinguish one collection from the other, I will use the abbreviations "NYHS" and "MHS.")

⁸⁹William R. Mead to Herman Haupt, June 5, 1883. [MHS]. Herman Haupt (1817-1905) was a civil engineer, author, and inventor. As general manager of the Northern Pacific Railroad from 1881 to 1884, during which period the road was completed to the Pacific, Haupt had charge of organizing the various divisions and departments necessary for its operation. In 1851, Haupt wrote General Theory of Bridge Construction. He was a member of the American Philosophical Society, the Pennsylvania Historical Society, and the Franklin Institute. DAB, IV, 400-401.

⁹⁰Mead to Haupt, June 5, 1883. Gilbert opened a St. Paul office in January, 1883. Shutter and McLain, Progressive Men of Minnesota, p. 134.

⁹¹Mead to Gilbert, June 12, 1883. [MHS].

⁹²Ibid.

⁹³Ibid.

⁹⁴Mead to Gilbert, June 15, 1883. [MHS].

⁹⁵Gilbert to Mead, June 18, 1883. [NYHS].

⁹⁶Mead to Gilbert, June 22, 1883. [MHS].

⁹⁷Mead to Gilbert, June 29, 1883. [MHS].

⁹⁸Ibid.

⁹⁹Gilbert to Mead, July 2, 1883. [NYHS].

¹⁰⁰Ibid. I have been unable to identify Ramsey Ninenger. In 1881, Minnesota's first territorial governor had left his post as Secretary of War under President Hayes. In 1883, he was chairman of a commission investigating polygamy among the Mormons. Saint Paul, History and Progress (St. Paul: The Pioneer Press Co., 1897), p. 188. The courthouse referred to by Gilbert was built in 1889 by E. P. Bassford. See, Montgomery Schuyler, "Glimpses of Western Architecture," American Architecture and Other Writings (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1961), fn. p. 296. Bassford's plan was chosen from among eight competitors. St. Paul Pioneer Press, May 27, 1884.

¹⁰¹Gilbert to Mead, July 2, 1883. [NYHS]. It is not known if Gilbert was one of the competitors.

¹⁰²Gilbert's name-dropping takes this form: ". . .Mr. Ramsey Ninenger a nephew, by the way, of Senator Ramsey's, and a man of some social influence. . .prominent member of the 'Club'. . . ." Ibid. [my ital.].

¹⁰³Ibid.

¹⁰⁴Gilbert to Mead, September 18, 1883. [NYHS]. I have been unable to identify Waterfield.

¹⁰⁵Ibid. Christopher Grant LaFarge (1862-1938), son of the painter and designer, studied at M.I.T. and worked for Richardson until joining George L. Heins in partnership in 1884. Withey, p. 357. Heins (1860-1907) and LaFarge are best known for their design of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, New York. It is difficult to tell how long LaFarge and Heins worked with Gilbert. Withey notes that Heins "acquired practical experience working in Minneapolis and St. Paul." Withey, p. 276.

¹⁰⁶Stanford White to Gilbert, [?] 1883. [MHS].

¹⁰⁷Ibid.

¹⁰⁸Gilbert to [illegible name] January 26, 1884. [NYHS].

¹⁰⁹Gilbert to Mead, January 4, 1884. [NYHS]. See fn. 100. Gilbert asked Mead to let him represent the firm in the courthouse competition. If Mead replied, no letter exists.

II

The Initiation of a Businessman: 1884-1894

¹Material relating to the Gilbert-Taylor association prior to the partnership has to be pieced together from many sources. Shutter and McLain notes the partnership but gives the wrong date. Progressive Men, p. 134. Withey, p. 592, records the fact of Taylor's St. Paul and M.I.T. schooling, as does A. N. Marquis, Who Was Who in America, 1897-1942 IV (Chicago: Who's Who Inc., 1968), p. 930. Gilbert said Taylor worked in Bruce Price's office in a letter to Edward Spiers, February 28, 1885 [NYHS]. A letter to Senator Thomas Carter of Montana, October 18, 1897, MHS, says that Gilbert and Taylor were boyhood friends.

²E. V. Smalley, The Northwest, I (May, 1883), p. 2. I have found this journal, published by E. V. Smalley, St. Paul, invaluable as a source for the economic and social milieu of St. Paul in the 1880's. The journal ran from May, 1883 to September, 1903. After January, 1887, the Northwest was called The Northwest, An Illustrated Journal of Literature, Agriculture, and Western Progress. [Bound volumes of this periodical can be found in the library of the Minnesota Historical Society and the library of the Burlington Northern Railroad, St. Paul.]

³The St. Paul Pioneer Press, December 8, 1883.

⁴Gilbert to Edward Spiers, February 28, 1885. Letterbook, 1883-5, NYHS. The only reference to Spiers is in the "Office Roll of McKim, Mead, and White," Moore, p. 327. All of the published designs under the label "Gilbert & Taylor" cite Gilbert as delineator or designer, but it is possible that Taylor may have played a role in the designing of the firm's projects.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Gilbert to Pierce T. Furber, October [?], 1884. [NYHS]. Furber (d. 1893) was a St. Louis architect, who, during the 1890's, served as a representative of the Boston firm of Peabody and Stearns in their St. Louis office. Withey, p. 226. It is not known how Gilbert knew Furber.

⁷Taylor's father, Herman Knox Taylor, was born in New York state in 1830; the family moved to Knoxville, Illinois, where he was in the mercantile business until a move to St. Paul in 1861. In St. Paul, Herman Knox Taylor was a bank examiner, businessman, and dealer in real estate. R. L. Polk, Little Sketches of Big Folks, Minnesota, 1907 (St. Paul: Polk & Co., 1907), p. 391. [Hereafter, this source will be labeled LSBF.]

⁸Gilbert to Furber, October [?], 1884.

⁹The Northwest, II (March, 1885), p. 4. According to the Catholic Archdiocese of St. Paul, the present owners of the James J. Hill mansion, Bavarian wood-carvers worked for two years on the ornate interior woodwork of that residence. Personal visit by the writer, 1960. Construction of the Hill mansion, however, was not begun until 1889, three years after the writing of the article above. The Hill mansion was designed by Peabody and Stearns, Boston. Interestingly, only the Hill mansion of all the homes represented in H. F. Koeper, Historic St. Paul Buildings, was built by an out-of-state firm. This suggests that even the higher reaches of St. Paul society --with the exception of Hill--relied on "local talent." Among important residences for prominent people --besides those later cited as Gilbert residences--was the John L. Merriam house designed by Harvey Ellis [?] for Mould & McNicol, St. Paul, 1887. Koeper, pp. 72-73; 78-79.

¹⁰Schuyler, "Glimpses: St. Paul and Minneapolis," p. 321.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Gilbert to John Q. Adams, July [?], 1884. [NYHS]. The Adams House is illustrated in J. G. Pyle, Picturesque St. Paul (St. Paul: Northwestern Photo Co., 1885), Plate XXX. A brief biography of Adams is given in Upham and Dunlap, Minnesota Biographies, p. 5. It is not known whether this house is extant. I have attempted to locate all known Gilbert and Taylor houses and commercial structures. Where I have been successful, addresses are given below.

¹³LSBF, p. 329. This frame building has been remodeled and stands at 595 Dayton Avenue, St. Paul.

¹⁴The Northwestern Builder, Decorator, and Furnisher, III, Plate 9. [The Minnesota Historical Society has a set of the Northwestern Builder, Vol. III-VII. [Yale University has the only complete set, I-VII. NB is an invaluable source for buildings constructed in the Middle West, 1880's and 1890's.] Squires' biography is in Upham and Dunlap, p. 731.

¹⁵The Bement House is illustrated in The Northwestern Builder, IV, Plate 20. Bement biography, Upham and Dunlap, p. 46. Extant: 27 Summit Court, St. Paul.

¹⁶The Northwestern Builder, IV, Plate 27, Extant: 89 Virginia Avenue, St. Paul. Noyes biography. LSBF, p. 292.

¹⁷The Northwestern Builder, IV, Plate 39. Biography, Upham and Dunlap, p. 27.

¹⁸Ibid., Plate 28. Biography, Upham and Dunlap, p. 825.

¹⁹The Lightner House is illustrated in Picturesque St. Paul, Plate LXVIII. Biography, Upham and Dunlap, pp. 440-441. Extant: Summit Avenue at Farrington Street, St. Paul.

²⁰Charles E. Jenkins, Architectural Reviewer (Chicago: Reviewer Publishing Co., 1897), Illustration #59. [This booklet contains the most complete pictorial catalogue of work done by Gilbert and Taylor. The only known copy is in the Burnham Library, Art Institute of Chicago.] John W. White biography, LSBF, p. 831.

²¹Jenkins, Illustration #62. Hadley biography, LSBF, p. 165. Extant: 123 Farrington Street, St. Paul. [At least until 1959 the home was still in the family and was in excellent condition inside and out. Personal visit by the writer, 1959.]

²²Jenkins, Illustration #69. Freeman biography, Upham and Dunlap, pp. 238-239. Extant: 505 Summit Avenue, St. Paul. Gilbert and Taylor also designed a wholesale warehouse for Conrad Gotzian and Company, Fifth and Wacouta Streets, St. Paul, in 1893. The building is almost a direct copy of Hartwell and Richardson's "Building for the Peter B. Brigham Estate," Boston, illustrated in the American Architect and Building News, XXVIII, April-June, 1890, Illustration #748, p. 62.

²³E. V. Smalley, The Northwest, II, July, 1885, p. 18.

²⁴Quoted in Nancy Woolworth, The White Bear Lake Story (White Bear Lake: Chamber of Commerce, 1968), p. 36.

²⁵Ibid., p. 40.

²⁶The Northwest, II, July, 1885, p. 21. The A. K. Barnum House is illustrated under the title "House at Dellwood [White Bear Lake]" in American Architect and Building News, XVII, January 17, 1885. AABN, March 14, 1885, describes the Barnum House as using granite boulders from the lake shore and shingles soaked in oil.

²⁷Illustrated in AABN, XXXI, May 23, 1891. [Manitou Island is restricted property. I have been unable to receive permission to visit it to seek out "cottages" designed by Gilbert on the island.]

²⁸The Morton House is illustrated in The Northwestern Builder, Decorator, and Furnisher, VI, January-December, 1892, Illustration # 180.

²⁹Tarbox House, Ibid., # 181. The Barnum and Morton and Tarbox houses are in the shingle style.

³⁰The Board of Trade Building, Duluth, is illustrated in The Northwest (Smalley), June, 1886, p. 14. The building was destroyed by fire in 1893. Duluth Herald, April 10, 1933. It was replaced by the handsome Board of Trade by O. G. Traphagen, a Duluth architect. Extant: Third and Superior Streets, Duluth. Traphagen's building is described in James A. Scott, Traphagen and Fitzpatrick (unpublished paper), St. Louis County Historical Society, Duluth, Minnesota.

³¹Judge D. Watson Rowe House was built c1885. Gilbert wrote Christopher LaFarge about stained glass for the home. Gilbert to LaFarge, August 29, 1884. [NYHS]. [A letter from the writer to the Chambersburg Historical Society was unanswered.]

³²Duluth Herald, January 6, 1886.

³³William Mead to Gilbert, March 13, 1887. [MHS].

³⁴Ibid. ³⁵Mead to Gilbert, April 11, 1887. [MHS].

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷"Memorandum of Cass Gilbert's Appointments and Important Commissions," File Box 1, State Archives, St. Paul. Babb, Cook, and Willard built the New York Life Insurance Company Building at Minnesota at East 6th Street, St. Paul, between 1888-1889. Schuyler describes it in "Glimpses: St. Paul and Minneapolis," American Architecture and Other Writings, pp. 315-318. The structure was razed in 1967. Personal observation by the writer.

³⁸Undated 1890 memorandum to Gilbert from George Heins. [MHS].

³⁹Heins to Gilbert, August 6, 1890. [MHS]. The Cathedral of St. Paul was built by Emanuel L. Masqueray (1861-1917), a former draftsman with Richard Morris Hunt, in 1906. Koeper, Historic St. Paul Buildings, pp. 102-103; Withey, 398-398.

⁴⁰AABN, XVIII, November 14, 1885, p. 230.

⁴¹C. H. Blackall to Gilbert, March 6, 1890. [MHS].

⁴²Root's article appeared in Scribner's, September, 1890. None of Gilbert and Taylor's drawings appeared in the article. Root mentions the rivalry between St. Paul and Minneapolis: "It is their ambition to excel in matters of population and wealth, but also in the splendor of prominence of their architectural movement." John W. Root, "The City House in the West," Scribner's, VIII (September, 1890), p. 434.

⁴³John Carrere (1858-1911) entered the Ecole des Beaux Arts at age twenty, and began his career with McKim, Mead, and White

in 1883. Thomas Hastings (1860-1929) studied at the Ecole where he met Carrere. He, too, worked for McKim, Mead, and White. Their famous partnership began in 1884.

⁴⁴ Gilbert to Mead, December 20, 1890, Cass Gilbert-Private Letterbook, NYHS. In 1893, Gilbert was chosen a member of the national jury of fine arts for the Columbian Exposition. Out of 997 drawings by Western artists, twenty were chosen for exhibition. Three of the twenty selected by the judges were Gilbert's own! AABN, XXXIX (March 25, 1893), p. 186.

⁴⁵ Mead to Gilbert, December 29, 1890. [MHS].

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Mead to Gilbert, January 19, 1891. [MHS]. [It is inconceivable to this writer --even given the values of the businessman of that day-- that Mead could have suggested a replacement for Root but one week after his death.]

⁴⁸ Gilbert to Mead, January 26, 1891. [MHS].

⁴⁹ Ibid. Daniel Hudson Burnham (1846-1912) began his career in the office of William LeBaron Jenney (1832-1907) in 1868. His famous partnership with John Wellborn Root (1850-1891) began in 1873. Between 1873 and 1891 Burnham and Root designed some 165 private homes and 75 buildings. In 1890, Burnham was chief of construction for the Chicago Exposition, and Root, consulting architect. From 1891 to 1896, Burnham practiced alone until D. H. Burnham and Company was organized with Burnham as head of the firm and Ernest R. Graham, E. C. Shanklin, and Charles Atwood as members. Withey, pp. 96-100. Two biographies expand on the careers of Burnham and Root: Charles Moore, Daniel H. Burnham (New York: Da Capo Press, 1921) and Harriet Monroe, John Wellborn Root (Park Forest: Prairie School Press, 1966).

⁵⁰ Mead to Gilbert, January 31, 1891. [MHS]. The letter contains a copy of Burnham's letter to Mead and Burnham's letter to Frank Sickels, January 29, 1891.

⁵¹ Burnham to Sickels, January 29, 1891. [MHS].

⁵² Mead to Gilbert, January 31, 1891. [MHS].

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Gilbert to Burnham, February 3, 1891. [NYHS].

⁵⁵ Burnham to Gilbert, February 5, 1891. [MHS].

⁵⁶ Gilbert to Mead, February 5, 1891. [NYHS]. I have been

unable to trace references to, or the existence of, the "\$300,000 building in Winnipeg," though Gilbert does mention work in Winnipeg in memorandum. See, fn. 65 below.

⁵⁷Ibid. ⁵⁸Gilbert to Burnham, February 11, 1891. NYHS.

⁵⁹Gilbert to Burnham, February 18, 1891. ⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹Burnham to Gilbert, March 5, 1891. [MHS]. [my ital.].

⁶²Ibid. ⁶³Ibid. ⁶⁴Ibid.

⁶⁵Gilbert memorandum, Grand Pacific Hotel letterhead, Chicago, March 11, 1891. [MHS].

⁶⁶Burnham to Gilbert, March 23, 1891. [MHS].

⁶⁷Gilbert to Charles McKim, March 25, 1891. [NYHS].

⁶⁸Gilbert to Daniel Willard, April 14, 1891. [MHS].
Willard was a member of the Babb, Cook, and Willard firm. I have been unable to find biographical information on him.

⁶⁹Gilbert to Harry J. Carlson, April 30, 1891. [NYHS].
No biographical information available.

⁷⁰Most sources agree that the Gilbert-Taylor partnership ended in 1892. See, Swales, p. 583. The Minnesota and New York collections do not contain papers specifying why the partnership terminated. Since their relationship continued in other affairs (Chapter V) there is no reason to assume that the partnership was severed under duress. Taylor moved to Philadelphia in 1892 where he practiced alone until 1895. Marquis, Who Was Who in America, IV, p. 930. Taylor's career after 1895 is discussed in Chapter V.

⁷¹Gilbert's appointment as architect for the Great Northern Railroad is recorded in the "Memorandum of Cass Gilbert's Appointments and Important Commissions," Box 1, Archives. Gilbert's appointment to that position is not documented elsewhere. It is known that in 1891 Gilbert designed depots in Grand Forks, North Dakota, and Willmar, Minnesota. [MHS, Box 3a]. The use of Kettle River Sandstone, which becomes a central issue in the Minnesota Capitol construction (Chapter V) was used in both depots. "Memo for specifications," Willmar Depot, July 6, 1891. [MHS]. Between 1892-1896, Gilbert designed and built six buildings for the Hill Seminary: Administration, a classroom building, two dormitories, a refectory, and a gymnasium. Extant: Summit and River Road East, St. Paul. As will be seen in Chapter IV, Hill was not a pleasant man to work for. For example, during the planning stages for the Seminary, Hill wrote Gilbert: ". . .I do not desire any change

to be made [in the plans] without its first being submitted to me. Even if you have made an error in the plan, as submitted, you must, before making any change, re-submit it. Two or three things have already crept in that have apparently increased the cost, and I am not willing that this should occur again, under any conditions. . . ." James J. Hill to Gilbert, December 12, 1892. Gilbert's relation to Hill continued after Hill took control of the Northern Pacific as its manager after 1893 (Josephson, 416) by doing the following projects for the Northern Pacific: Depots, Fargo, N.D., Little Falls, Minn., Anoka, Minn., North Yakima, Wash., Hospital, Brainerd, Minn., Hotel, Helena, Mont., and the Northern Pacific Office Building, St. Paul. [Boxes 12, 13, MHS].

III

The Rewards of "Businessmanship" : 1893-1895

¹William B. Dean, "A History of the Capitol Buildings of Minnesota With Some Account of the Struggles for Their Location," Vol XII: Collections of the Minnesota Historical Society (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1908), p. 1. Dean was a St. Paul businessman and state senator, 1891-1895. As senator he enacted the Capitol Bill of 1893 which provided funds for the new building. Dean was also a director of the Great Northern Railroad and boards of several Minneapolis and St. Paul banks. LSBF, pp. 103-104. Dean's article has been used extensively for material concerning the first "theme" in this chapter.

²Ibid., 3.

³Ibid., 3-6.

⁴Ibid., 6-8.

⁵Ibid., 9-15.

⁶Ibid., 17-18.

⁷Ibid., 19-21.

⁸Ibid., 21-22.

⁹Ibid., 22.

¹⁰Ibid., 22-23.

¹¹Ibid., 23-24. McMillan's resolution was reported in the Pioneer Press, March 25, 1891. The newspaper quoted a cost of \$650,000 as the proposed limit for the Capitol. Frank Griggs McMillan, architect and contractor, was a state senator, 1891-1893, and chairman of the Senate Capitol Committee for two years. LSBF, p. 257.

¹²Dean, 24-25. LaDue was a noted breeder of horses and a state senator, 1891-1893. Ayers was a businessman and a state senator, 1891-1893. Keller, manufacturer and banker, was a senator, 1887-1897. Upham and Dunlap, pp. 416; 25; 393.

¹³Dean, 25. ¹⁴Ibid., 25-27. ¹⁵Ibid., 27-28.

¹⁶Ibid., 29-30. ¹⁷Ibid., 31.

¹⁸Pioneer Press, February 5, 1893.

¹⁹Minneapolis Journal, February 3, 1893.

²⁰Pioneer Press, February 5, 1893.

²¹Dean, 31-32. ²²Ibid., 32.

²³Ibid., 32.

²⁴Pioneer Press, March 16, 1893. Samuel Rinnah Van Sant settled in Winona in 1883. He was a captain of steamboats and conducted a rafting and lumbering business on the Mississippi. He was a representative in the 1893-1895 legislature, speaker in 1895; governor, 1901-1905. Van Sant's relation to the Capitol is described in Folwell, A History of Minnesota, III, pp. 269-271. Blegen describes Van Sant as a "competent and friendly, if not distinguished, governor." Theodore C. Blegen, Minnesota, A History of the State (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1963), p. 457.

²⁵Pioneer Press, March 16, 1893. William A. Fleming, a lawyer, was superintendent of schools for Crow Wing county, city attorney and county attorney, representative, Minnesota legislature, 1893. Upham and Dunlap, p. 227. Fleming, of course, was referring to the Depression of 1893.

²⁶Pioneer Press, March 16, 1893. Loren Fletcher was probably a Minneapolis millionaire, which strikes a note of irony in regard to Fleming's comment about "millionaires of St. Paul." After 1856, Fletcher was engaged in the mercantile business and later flour milling and lumber. He was a representative in 1873-1883, speaker of the House, 1881-3; and a member of the United States Congress, 1893-1903, and 1905-1907. Upham and Dunlap, p. 227. The problems besetting the funding, competition, and selection of stone for the Minneapolis Courthouse are summarized in Stephen Alnes, "City Hall: A Bitter History," The Minneapolis Star, August 27, 1968.

²⁷Dean, 32. ²⁸Pioneer Press, March 17, 1893.

²⁹Dean, 32. ³⁰Ibid.

³¹Pioneer Press, April 5, 1893.

³²"Minutes of the Meeting of the Legislation Committee of the Minnesota Chapter, American Institute of Architects,"

February 7, 1893. [MHS, Box 5].

³³Minneapolis Journal, February 14, 1895. The Journal noted that "[Gilbert] has served the commission, without compensation, as one of two experts to advise with the commission as to the proposed building." This article, buried in the newspaper's back pages, is the only reference to Gilbert's exact role vis-à-vis the Board of Capitol Commissioners; and hence, the key to the reason why Gilbert "won" the Capitol competition.

³⁴A.I.A. Minutes, February 7 and 9, 1893.

³⁵Minutes, February 9, 1893. The provision stipulating the number and residence of architects is in Gilbert's handwriting.

³⁶Minutes, February 9, 1893. When the Board drew up the rules for the competition, the "blind" approach was followed. The rules state that "the face of the drawings must be left entirely free from all distinguishing marks or characters that will afford a clue to the author, and to place their address upon the reverse side of the paper and in the center of same." Bulletin No. 1, Minnesota State Capitol Competition, Instructions For Architects [sic] Board of State Capitol Commissioners (St. Paul: Pioneer Press Co., undated), p. 2. Box 1, Archives.

³⁷Joseph Wheelock to Knute Nelson, March 4, 1893. [MHS]. Nelson, an Alexandria, Minnesota, lawyer and farmer, succeeded Van Sant as governor in 1893. Upham and Dunlap, p. 542. After serving as governor for a short time, the Minnesota legislature appointed Nelson to a vacant seat in the United States Senate, where he served until 1923. Blegen, p. 390. Gilbert's relation to Nelson, which began in 1893, continued when Gilbert was maneuvering for the New York Custom House. See, Chapter V. Joseph A. Wheelock, editor of the Pioneer Press in 1893, was associated with that newspaper for thirty-five years. Saint Paul, History and Progress, p. 211.

³⁸Channing Seabury to Gilbert, March 16, 1894. [MHS]. Seabury, who along with Gilbert, was the central figure in the Minnesota Capitol project was born in Southbridge, Mass., in 1842. He came to St. Paul in 1860. After several clerking positions, he formed a partnership with Louis and William Maxfield, wholesale grocers. In 1891, Seabury became senior partner under the name Seabury and Company. In 1893, Governor Nelson appointed him one of the seven capitol commissioners (one chosen from each congressional district) and the members chose him vice-president, the governor of the state being, ex officio, president of the commission. Saint Paul, History and Progress, pp. 90-91. Seabury held this post from 1893 to 1907. Most of the material relating to the Minnesota Capitol (Chapters III and IV) comes from Papers of the Board of State Capitol Commissioners, Minnesota State Archives,

St. Paul, herein marked "A".

³⁹ Henry W. Lamberton, Winona, was president of the Winona Deposit Bank and the Winona and Eastern Railway Company. Upham, p. 419. Frederick E. DuToit, Chaska, was editor of the Chaska Valley Herald and a representative to the Minnesota legislature, 1872-3; state senator, 1899-1909. Ibid., 193. John DeLaittre, second in importance to Seabury, was vice-president of Greene and DeLaittre, wholesale grocers. In 1907, he became "heavily interested in Oregon, Washington, and Idaho timber lands." LSBF, p. 104. Col. Charles Hinman Graves, Duluth, was a businessman, state senator, 1873-6; representative, and speaker of the House. In 1906 he was appointed by Theodore Roosevelt to the position of United States minister to Sweden and Norway (March-June, 1906) and to Sweden 1906-1914. Who Was Who, I, p. 473; Upham, p. 273. E. E. Corliss, Fergus Falls, was a lawyer and a state representative. After 1910, he became Custodian of the Capitol. Upham, p. 142. When McHench died in 1895, Edgar Weaver, Mankato, took his place. Weaver was a general agent for the J. I. Case Threshing Company. Ibid., 470; 830.

⁴⁰ Pioneer Press, May 30, 1894.

⁴¹ Seabury to Minnesota Attorney General, Henry W. Childs, April 9, 1894. [MHS].

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid. Gilbert served as superintendent of construction for the United States Post Office and Custom House, St. Paul, from February, 1891 to June, 1893. As in other projects, Gilbert depended upon contacts to procure that position. On December 27, 1890, James J. Hill wrote William Windom, Secretary of the Treasury, endorsing Gilbert. This and other letters of reference are contained in the Private Letterbook, 1890, NYHS. Gilbert was relieved of the position when Cleveland was elected in 1893 and was replaced by E. P. Bassford. Pioneer Press, June 28, 1893. The Pioneer Press said "[Gilbert] is a Republican and the Secretary of the Treasury thought a good Democrat would answer the purpose just as well. That is all there is to the change of officials."

⁴⁴ Childs to Seabury, April 26, 1894. [MHS].

⁴⁵ "A.I.A. Memorandum to the Board of Capitol Commissioners," May 29, 1894. [MHS].

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid. The "Memorandum" makes a case for private enterprise as against state-hired architects. "Those men whose services are

of real value can find ready employment in private practice at a compensation that is more adequate. . . ."

⁴⁸Pioneer Press, May 31, 1894. Henry G. Koch designed a number of public buildings in Milwaukee including the City Hall in 1895. With his son, Koch designed at least twenty courthouses and schools mostly in Wisconsin. Withey, p. 353. Like Gilbert, Koch was a contender in the second competition.

⁴⁹"Minutes of the Board of Capitol Commissioners Meeting," Report of the Investigation of the Capitol Commission, 1903, May 31, 1894, p. 29. [A]. The Report from which these minutes are taken was the published findings of a 1903 legislative investigation of the Capitol Commissioners. The results of the investigation were favorable to both the Board and Gilbert. The committee investigating the Board concluded: ". . .the state has received careful and faithful services from the Board. . . and the architect Mr. Cass Gilbert has performed his duties in every detail with the utmost fidelity, honesty, ability and skill. . .the state has received full value for the money it has expended on said capitol. . . ." Item XXII, Report, March 12, 1903, p. 5.

⁵⁰Instructions For Archtiects [sic] June 5, 1894. This booklet was sent to any architect requesting a copy. The instructions state that the second, third, fourth, and fifth place winners will receive \$500 each, and the winner 2 1/2 percent compensation for designing and superintending the building. The total cost of the project was set at 1.5 million. Later, a bulletin was sent to competitors because many questions were not answered in the booklet. Point 8 quotes the Capitol Act of 1893 on the provision covering the stipulation about leaving the face of the drawings free of "all distinguishing marks or characters that will afford any clue to the author. . . ." The bulletin also moved the deadline to October 9, 1894.

⁵¹Seabury to Flagg, June 28, 1894. [A]. Ernest Flagg (1857-1947) had a long career as a New York architect, designing such buildings as the Corcoran Gallery and the Naval Academy, Annapolis. Flagg won the Washington State competition in 1894 over 185 competitors. Withey, pp. 211-212; Arthur S. Beardsley, "Later Attempts to Relocate the Capitol of Washington," Pacific Northwest Quarterly, XXXII, January, 1941, p. 430.

⁵²Seabury to Flagg, June 28, 1894.

⁵³Will S. Aldrich to the Board, July 2, 1894. [A]. Aldrich (1862-1947) attended M.I.T. in 1884. Later, he worked as a draftsman for both Peabody and Stearns and McKim, Mead, and White. In 1910, he became a partner with George R. Eckel, St. Louis. Withey, p. 14.

⁵⁴Long and Kees to Seabury, August 8, 1894, and Bertrand and Keith to Seabury, August 7, 1894. [A]. Franklin B. Long and Fred Kees designed the City-Council Building, Minneapolis, 1896, a building described as ". . .the most carefully considered and thoughtfully appraised design created in Minneapolis in the nineteenth century." Donald R. Torbert, A Century of Minnesota Architecture (Minneapolis: The Minneapolis Society of Fine Arts, 1958), no page.

⁵⁵Johnston to Gilbert, August 8, 1894. [MHS].

⁵⁶The effects of the boycott can be seen by Seabury's statement to the Pioneer Press, October 3, 1894. "The home architects --those of Minneapolis and St. Paul-- say they cannot afford to undertake so responsible a building for the state as compensated by the law. We expect very few designs to come from citizens of the state. One or two from St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Duluth are all we have any knowledge of at this time."

⁵⁷The following architects were asked to serve as judges: D. H. Burnham, Henry Ives Cobb, S. S. Bemen, Richard M. Hunt, Charles McKim, Thomas Hastings, R. S. Peabody, R. D. Andrews, E. M. Wheelwright, Wilson Eyr, and Frank Miles Day.

⁵⁸Memorandum from Seabury to Board, September 27, 1894 [A].

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰R. D. Andrews to Gilbert, September 22, 1894. [MHS]. No copy of Gilbert's earlier letter to Andrews exists. Andrews (1857-1928) was a draftsman in H. H. Richardson's office; he was later the senior partner in the firm of Andrews, Jacques, and Rantoul after 1885. Andrews was an early member of the Boston Society of Architects, A.I.A., and in 1891 was elected to Institute Fellowship. Withey, p. 21.

⁶¹Andrews to Gilbert, September 22, 1894.

⁶²Pioneer Press, October 22, 1894. Wheelwright (1854-1912) was appointed City Architect of Boston in 1891. He had studied at M.I.T. and the Ecole des Beaux Arts, and worked for both Peabody and Stearns and McKim, Mead, and White. Withey, 648-649. Henry Ives Cobb (1859-1931), also an M.I.T. student, began his career with Peabody and Stearns. After winning the competition for a new Union Club in Chicago, Cobb moved to that city in 1882. Forming a partnership with Charles S. Frost, the firm built the Newberry Library in 1887, the Chicago Post Office (1888-1905), and the Fisheries Building at the Exposition. Like Gilbert, Cobb began a New York career in 1902. Withey, 128-129.

⁶³Gilbert to Cobb, September, 1894. [missing letter].

⁶⁴Cobb to Gilbert, September 9, 1894. [MIS].

⁶⁵Pioneer Press, October 3, 1894.

⁶⁶Pioneer Press, October 22, 1894. The design illustrated in the newspaper by E. P. Overmire and G. W. Orth, a Minneapolis firm, is simple and elegant, a much finer design, in my opinion, than Gilbert's later winning design. Overmire and Orth designed the Asbury Methodist Church and Asbury Methodist Hospital, Minneapolis. Withey, 451.

⁶⁷Pioneer Press, October 23, 1894. See, fn. 30, II, above.

⁶⁸O. G. Traphagen to Gilbert, October 23, 1894. [MHS].

⁶⁹Minneapolis Journal, November 10, 1894 and Pioneer Press, November 10, 1894.

⁷⁰Minutes, Meeting of the Board, November 9, 1895. [A].

⁷¹Pioneer Press, January 20, 1895.

⁷²Minutes, January 24, 1895. [A].

⁷³Pioneer Press, February 24, 1895.

⁷⁴Ibid.

⁷⁵Ibid.

⁷⁶"Report of the Expert Architects," November 1, 1894. Quoted in Report of the Investigation of the Capitol Commission, 1903, pp. 31-36. [A].

⁷⁷Seabury to H. P. Blair, March 12, 1895. [A]. Blair, a Chicago heating and ventilating engineer, had written Seabury earlier seeking a position in the Capitol project.

⁷⁸Seabury to Wendell and Humphreys, March 8, 1895. [A].

⁷⁹Pioneer Press, February 24, 1895.

⁸⁰"Report of the Expert Architects," November 1, 1894. Also published in the Pioneer Press, February 24, 1895. Wendell and Humphreys are involved in later developments of the competition as the text below will show. John J. Humphreys (1860-1896) was designer of the Transportation Building, Trans-Mississippi Exposition, Omaha, 1898. Withey, p. 308. Henry Wendell (d.1917) studied in Paris and settled in Denver c.1880 where he did a number of churches and residences. Withey, pp. 643-644. J. A. Schweinfurth (1858-1931) was a prominent Boston architect who studied in Paris and later worked for Peabody and Stearns. Withey, p. 543. George R. Mann (1856-1939) studied

at M.I.T. and worked in New York offices. Withey, p. 389. (Withey is incorrect in citing Little Rock, Arkansas, as Mann's home.) W. B. Dunnell (1851- ?) was an M.I.T. student. He designed Westminster Church, Minneapolis. I have been unable to locate references to G. DeGersdorff.

⁸¹Report of the Expert Architects; Pioneer Press, February 24, 1895.

⁸²Editorial, Pioneer Press, February 24, 1895. I have not been able to identify the writer(s) of the Pioneer Press editorials. It is quite possible that the newspaper had a competent critic of the arts, but it is also plausible to assume that local architects, perhaps even Gilbert himself, were asked to evaluate the designs for the first competition. One should also keep in mind the vested interest of St. Paul in wanting a local architect for the capitol's designer. The same assumptions hold true in regard to the Board. No member was an authority on architecture. Seabury undoubtedly depended upon his "experts" for criticism of the designs.

⁸³Pioneer Press, March 2, 1895.

⁸⁴Ibid.

⁸⁵The resemblance between the Minnesota Capitol dome and that of St. Peter's, in fact, has been a source of pride to many critics of the building. "Gilbert's awareness of symbolism in form is seen in every important part of the building. . . .The dome is a copy of the one crowning St. Peter's in Rome, but of superior proportions. . . ." Albert L. Hoffmeyer, "The Minnesota State Capitol," Northwest Architect, May-June, 1969, p. 50.

⁸⁶Pioneer Press, March 6, 1895.

⁸⁷Pioneer Press, March 8, 1895.

⁸⁸Ibid., March 10, 1895.

⁸⁹Ibid.

⁹⁰Ibid., March 29, 1895.

⁹¹Seabury to H. H. Hart, March 18, 1895. [A].

⁹²Pioneer Press, April 16, 1895.

⁹³Minutes, Board Meeting, April 11, 1895. [A].

⁹⁴Ibid. I have been unable to identify Dennis or Willoughby. Radcliffe [Radcliff] was undoubtedly A. M. Radcliff. See, fn. 4, I.

⁹⁵Instructions to Architects, Second Competition, April, 1895. [Box 1, A].

⁹⁶Seabury to Daniel Burnham, May 2, 1895. [A].

⁹⁷ John Mouat, Mouat Lumber and Investment Company, Denver, Colorado, to Otto Miller, Miller Printing Company, Minneapolis, July 16, 1894. [A].

⁹⁸ Ibid. The Mouat letter is a most interesting social document. The straight forward offer is a neat contrast to "businessmanship" methods. Unfortunately, only two of the four or five Mouat letters are extant, and the penciled "program" is lost.

⁹⁹ Mouat to Miller, August 21, 1894. [A].

¹⁰⁰ DeLaittre to Seabury [obscured date] 1895. [A].

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Seabury to Edmund Rice, May 21, 1895. [A]. Rice, a former St. Paul real estate man, had moved to Washington state where he later became a member of the Board of Capitol Commissioners during the competition for the Capitol there. Beardsley, Northwest Quarterly, p. 428. Seabury and Rice apparently were friends. (The letter referred to here is a summary of the Wendell-Humphreys fiasco.)

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Seabury to R. S. Roeschlaub, President, Colorado A.I.A., July 9, 1895. [A]. I have been unable to discover the names of the other three Denver firms.

¹⁰⁵ Rice to Seabury, March 28, 1895. [A]. I have been unable to locate references to J. J. Huddart's identity.

¹⁰⁶ Seabury to Wendell and Humphreys, May 8, 1895. [A].

¹⁰⁷ Seabury to Roeschlaub, August 7, 1895. [A].

¹⁰⁸ Seabury to Wendell and Humphreys, May 15, 1895. [A].

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Seabury to Wendell and Humphreys, June 7, 1895. [A].

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid. Harry Wild Jones enrolled at M.I.T. in 1880. He is reported to have spent the year 1883 in the office of H. H. Richardson. Jones established his own office in Minneapolis in 1885. Torbert, "Minneapolis Architecture and Architects," p. 448. The competitive drawings by Jones are contained in The Scrapbook of Harry Wild Jones, Harry W. Jones Papers, Hennepin Co. Historical Society. Another collection of Jones' papers is in the Minnesota Historical Society.

- 113 Seabury to Rice, May 21, 1895. [A].
- 114 Pioneer Press, October 31, 1895.
- 115 Seabury to Daniel Shell, September 9, 1895. [A].
- 116 Ibid.
- 117 Seabury to Wheelwright, September 14, 1895. [A].
- 118 Ibid. 119 Ibid. 120 Ibid. [my ital.]
- 121 Wheelwright's Report, Second Competition, September 17, 1895. [MHS].
- 122 Report, 1903, p. 54. 123 Ibid., p. 55. 124 Ibid.
- 125 Ibid.
- 126 Ibid., p. 56. David Marston Clough succeeded Governor Nelson, January 31, 1895. Clough moved to Minneapolis in 1866 where he established one of the most successful lumber enterprises in the state. He was a state senator, 1886-90; lieutenant governor, 1893-5; governor, 1895-1899. In that year he moved to Everett, Washington, where he became engaged in the lumber business. Upham, p. 130.
- 127 Report, 1903, p. 56. 128 Ibid., p. 57.
- 129 Seabury to DeLaittre, November 8, 1895. [A].
- 130 Minneapolis Journal, October 31, 1895.
- 131 Ibid. 132 Ibid.
- 133 Minneapolis Journal, February 14, 1895.
- 134 Journal, November 13, 1895.
- 135 Seabury to DeLaittre, November 8, 1895. [A].
- 136 Ibid.
- 137 Gilbert's oldest friend wrote: "I made a good fight but failed; you succeeded. That is all there is to it. With me the matter now is an incident only. With you it is a substantive reality. . . ." Clarence Johnston to Gilbert, November 1, 1895. [NYHS].
- 138 William Ware to Gilbert, November 2, 1895; Lyman Farwell to Gilbert, November 1, 1895; Radcliff; Eames and Young; Harry

W. Jones to Gilbert, October 31, 1895. Misc. Letterbook, 1895-1899. [NYHS].

¹³⁹ Wheelwright to Gilbert, October 31, 1895. [A].

¹⁴⁰ "Pardee" to Gilbert, October 31, 1895. [NYHS].

¹⁴¹ Gilbert to W. E. Eames, November 20, 1895. [NYHS]. Eames (1859-1915) was a prominent St. Louis architect. With T. C. Young as partner, Eames designed the Education Building at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition; United States Custom House, San Francisco, 1906-1911. Eames succeeded McKim as President of the A.I.A. in 1904. Withey, p. 186.

¹⁴² Gilbert to D. W. Willard, November 19, 1895. [NYHS].

IV

The Controversies Over the Selection of Stone and Artists: 1895-1905

¹ The General Laws of 1893 state that "In any cases where there are bidders and materials from other states, the preference shall be given, the quality and terms being equally favorable, to the bidders and materials within the State." General Laws of 1893, Chapter 2, "An Act to Provide for a New Capitol," (St. Paul: Board of State Capitol Commissioners, 1894), p. 11. [Box 1, Archives].

² Preston (Minnesota) Times, October 31, 1895. The same sentiment was expressed throughout October in other Minnesota newspapers. See, Plainview News, Winona Republican, Hookah Chief, Blue Earth Post, Austin Transcript, and the Pipestone County Star. Source: Scrapbook of the Board of Capitol Commissioners. [A].

³ William H. Yale, Letter to Winona Republican, June [?], 1897. [MHS]. Yale was a state senator, 1867-8, 1876-7, 1895-7; lieutenant governor, 1870-4; representative, 1899. Upham, 886.

⁴ Minneapolis Journal, June 23, 1897.

⁵ Pioneer Press, March 22, 1896.

⁶ Undoubtedly as a result of winning the competition, letters introducing stone products, cement, fire-proofing, and iron began pouring into Gilbert's office in 1896. [Box 5, MHS]. The first reference to Georgia Marble, the "foreign" stone eventually utilized in the Capitol's superstructure, is contained in a letter from Gilbert to W. K. Sheldon, agent for Georgia Marble, Chicago,

March 16, 1896. [MHS]. Gilbert told Sheldon that Minnesota stone "may not necessarily be used," but that "local" sources should be investigated first. In the same letter Gilbert mentions that stone samples are already on display in the Board of Commissioners' rooms.

⁷Seabury to the publishers of the Owatonna, Minnesota, Chronicle, September 29, 1897. [A].

⁸Ibid. The Rhode Island Capitol (1903) bears a strong resemblance to the Minnesota Capitol. According to E. Swartwout, Gilbert's design was "good if not strikingly original, not as interesting as McKim's Rhode Island capitol designed a short time previous, although Gilbert's dome was perhaps better." DAB, XI, p. 341. Both buildings are photographed in G. H. Edgell, The American Architecture of Today (New York: Scribner's, 1928), p. 227. In this letter Seabury also says that Minnesota does not possess marble quarries, and hence, any use of marble would have to come from out-of-state. According to authorities on the subject of Minnesota stone, "Marble is of little importance as a rock in Minnesota. There is a small outcrop of marble about a mile southeast of Denham in Pine County, however, and underground drilling in the Cuyuna Range area has revealed some marble under the glacial drift." George M. Schwartz and George A. Thiel, Minnesota's Rocks and Waters, A Geological Story (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1963), p. 86.

⁹George W. Bestor to Gilbert, April 17, 1896. [MHS].

¹⁰The importance of Kettle River Sandstone to the dealings surrounding the construction of the Capitol was drawn to my attention by Cass Gilbert, Jr. in a letter to me, April 20, 1965. Under the title "Kettle River Sandstone and James J. Hill and the Minnesota State Capitol," Mr. Gilbert relates the following story:

"Cass Gilbert was company architect, or rather was recognized as company architect, for the Northern Pacific Railroad [Great Northern]. 'Jim' Hill was 'King' of the road and was also known as the King of the Northwest. Mr. Gilbert specified Vermont Marble [Georgia] for the exterior of the Capitol, and Mr. Hill wanted Kettle River Sandstone, because his road had an interest in the quarry. Mr. Hill demanded that kettle river sandstone be used and Mr. Gilbert refused to change the spex. Whereupon Mr. Hill said 'You use Kettle River Sandstone or I'll brake [sic] you as I do these matches,' and he broke several wooden matches. Mr. Gilbert replied, 'Mr. Hill I wont use Kettle River Sandstone for the purpose you want me to use it and I'll see you in hell first Sir.' Needless to say Kettle River

Sandstone was not used."

Since 76,000 cubic feet of Kettle River Sandstone was used in the Capitol for the unseen foundations of the dome, Gilbert, Jr.'s story must, in part, be discredited, although Bestor's letter (quoted below) does put a note of credence to Gilbert's story quoted above. The use of Kettle River Sandstone is documented in: Pioneer Press, September 1, 1897.

¹¹Bestor's letter, April 17, 1896, is the only document available that directly links Kettle River to James J. Hill. In his letter to Gilbert, Bestor said: "We do not prepay the charges on [Kettle River samples] because the Great Northern had assured us there would be no charge for freight on samples for the Capitol. . . ." In 1896, James J. Hill was president of the Great Northern Railroad. Upham, p. 328. (An attempt to directly prove that Hill owned Kettle River failed. Perhaps Hill's connection to the Capitol can be documented when the Papers of James J. Hill are opened in 1981. Information, Hill Library).

¹²DeLaittre to Gilbert, April 24, 1896. [MHS]. DeLaittre wrote: "I want to carefully consider these suggestions. I do not wish you to think of [the Board's] interfering with your work as an Architect. You understand that we have got to work together and use every means in our power to economize in the work ahead of us. But we do not wish to do this and cheapen ["cheating" crossed through] the building in any important way." Later that year, DeLaittre wrote Gilbert to recommend a J. W. Hernlund of the Crown Iron Works, Minneapolis. "This is a good company and I have often let them contracts and always found them up to standards." DeLaittre to Gilbert, October 1, 1896. [MHS]. One company sent Gilbert a keg of wine with a sample of Wautab Granite. The accompanying note read: "[The wine] is a very nice thing in case of sickness." Minneapolis Jewelry Company to Gilbert, November 25, 1896. [MHS].

¹³Lucian Swift to Gilbert, June 11, 1897. [MHS]. In the 1870's, Swift made plats of land, grants, rights of way, and carried out other work for the Northern Pacific. In November, 1885, he bought a part interest in the Minneapolis Journal, and later became manager, secretary, and treasurer of the company. Swift was also "in demand as a promoter of public enterprises," a member of the Minneapolis Board of Trade, the Business Union, and the Minneapolis Exposition Association. Shutter and McLain, Progressive Men of Minnesota, p. 432.

¹⁴Swift to Gilbert, September 3, 1897. [MHS]. According to Seabury, Swift was a second cousin to Gilbert's wife! Seabury to De Laittre, November 8, 1895. [A].

¹⁵Swift to Gilbert, June 11, 1897. [MHS].

¹⁶Gilbert to Swift, June 14, 1897. [MHS].

¹⁷Articles that were particularly critical of the Capitol project appeared in the Minneapolis Journal on the following dates: June 28, 1897; June 30, 1897; July 7, 1897; July 8, 1897; and July 10, 1897.

¹⁸Gilbert to Swift, September 2, 1897. [MHS].

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Swift to Gilbert, September 3, 1897. [MHS]. The Swift-Gilbert correspondence ends with this letter. (Needless to say, the Journal's criticism of the Capitol project was also terminated).

²¹Third Biennial Report, Board of Capitol Commissioners, January 1, 1899. [A].

²²Pioneer Press, August 11, 1897. The newspaper said that the original bids were rejected July 9 because "changes so important had been made in the specifications after receipt of these bids that the proposals no longer afforded an adequate presentation of what the contractors would charge for the work actually to be done."

²³Ibid. The Butler-Ryan Company handled almost all of the construction for the Capitol. At the time of the Capitol project, Walter Butler was president of the firm. Walter's brother, Pierce, who in 1922 became a Justice of the United States Supreme Court, was attorney for the firm. In 1897, Pierce Butler was also employed as a lawyer for the Chicago, Minneapolis, and Omaha Railroad and the Northern Pacific. The other brothers connected with the Butler-Ryan firm (William, John, and Cooley) carried on mining operations in the western Mesabi and Cuyuna ranges, and by 1914 had eighteen mines under contract. Upham, p. 98; Blegen, p. 376; Tow W. Campbell, Four Score Forgotten Men: Sketches of the Justices of the U.S. Supreme Court (Arkansas: Pioneer Publishing Co., 1950), p. 349. Problems with the Butler-Ryan firm occurred periodically as the voluminous Seabury-Butler and Gilbert-Butler correspondence shows. [Archives and MHS]. In 1901, Gilbert told Seabury, "I shall be very glad when we are all through with Butler-Ryan, and my experience of them this season has been such as will make me hesitate to ever recommend them again, no matter what their bids may be." Gilbert to Seabury, September 4, 1901. [MHS]. Seabury said that Walter Butler was "a pretty smooth individual, and I do not always feel certain that everything he tells me could be proved right up to the letter." Seabury to Gilbert, February 17, 1898. [MHS].

²⁴Pioneer Press, August 11, 1897. Five different types of

marble were bid. Butler-Ryan's bid of \$690,000 for Georgia Marble was the low one.

²⁵Unsigned Memorandum to Gilbert, June, 1897. [MHS].

²⁶St. Paul Dispatch, June 21, 1897.

²⁷C. H. Graves to Gilbert, August 24, 1897. [MHS].

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Pioneer Press, September 1, 1897. The appearance of "thinness" that one observes when viewing the Minnesota Capitol can be directly linked, I believe, to the state's refusal to utilize a greater quantity of "foreign" stone, though Gilbert's design may be a factor here too.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Ibid.

³²John Espy, "Battle Flag Day," speech given to the G.A.R., Department of Minnesota, St. Paul, March, 1901. [MHS]. Espy sent a copy of his speech to Gilbert with a note saying "please note how I have linked the new capitol building to the Southland." Espy to Gilbert, April 9, 1901. Espy biography, Upham, p. 210.

³³"Battle Flag Day" speech, p. 2.

³⁴Seabury to Gilbert, February 17, 1898. [MHS]. Gilbert was in Europe from November, 1897, to March, 1898.

³⁵Gilbert Memorandum to Thomas Holyoke, October 30, 1897. [MHS]. In the memorandum Gilbert calls Holyoke "general representative in all matters." Although Holyoke later became a prominent architect in St. Paul, references to him are scarce. Edwin Lundie cites Holyoke as one of the three (with Gilbert and Masqueray) most influential architects upon his career. Northwest Architect, May-June, 1969, p. 20.

³⁶"Story of Building Minnesota's New Capitol," unlabeled newspaper story, 1904. [Archives, Box 1].

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Seabury to Gilbert, February 7, 1902. [A]. As Chapter V will show, Gilbert opened a New York office in 1899. Gilbert designed the Festival Hall and Art Building at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, St. Louis, 1904, and the New York Custom House, 1899. I have been unable to locate any project in Newburgh, New York, by Gilbert. Seabury may have meant the Essex County Court House, Newark, New Jersey, which Gilbert designed in 1902. Both the Festival Hall and the Newark building are recorded in "Memo-

randum of Appointments," Archives.

⁴⁰ Edward Clark Potter (1857-1923), a famous sculptor of animals, studied under Mercel and Fremo in Paris, 1888-1889. He collaborated with French in the sculpture for the Columbian Exposition. Potter also executed four groups for the Buffalo Exposition, 1901, and two animal groups for J. P. Morgan's library, New York, among other works. Who Was Who, I, p. 986. Daniel Chester French (1850-1931), along with Saint-Gaudens, one of America's most famous sculptors, studied in Florence and Rome. His first work, the Concord "Minute Man," was exhibited at the Philadelphia Centennial, 1876. According to Craven, "The decade following the Centennial saw the rise of allegorical groups on governmental and commercial buildings --great imposing figures personifying such virtues and ideas as Justice, Truth, Progress, Time. French was among the earliest to put these abstractions into monumental form, developing in the process a new artistic mode of expression that would reflect the emergence of the titanic industrial and commercial ventures and a government that seemed blessed to endure after its first turbulent century." Craven, Sculpture in America, pp. 395-396. The Minnesota Quadriga stands at the base of the dome of the Capitol. Entitled "The Progress of the State," the Quadriga symbolizes the triumph of government and prosperity. The central figure, Prosperity, stands on a triumphal car holding a cornucopia. In the figure's left hand is a staff with the state symbol. The horses are guided by two young women. The Quadriga was hammered out of sheet metal, the parts riveted together over a steel construction, and the whole covered with copper and overlaid with gold leaf. Julie C. Gauthier, The Minnesota Capitol Official Guide and History (St. Paul: The State of Minnesota, 1939), pp. 15-16.

⁴¹ Pioneer Press, March 22, 1896. Potter and French executed "The Triumph of Columbus," a quadriga group for the triumphal arch, Columbian Exposition. Made of staff, the quadriga did not survive the fair, though a smaller, gilded bronze replica, made in 1916, still exists. Craven, p. 398.

⁴² French refers to the estimate made in 1896 in a letter to Gilbert, April 18, 1903. [MHS].

⁴³ Architectural League of New York to Gilbert, January 2, 1900. [MHS].

⁴⁴ Gilbert to Seabury, January 4, 1900. [MHS].

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ French to Gilbert, April 18, 1903. [MHS].

⁴⁷ French to Gilbert, April 23, 1903. [MHS].

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Mankato Free Press, July 22, 1903.

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹French to Gilbert, May 26, 1903. [MHS]. French said, "As the two figures leading the horses are female figures, I think the figure in the chariot should be a male figure. I think it should represent 'Minnesota' if you think a male figure can personify a state. Has Mr. Seabury or have the other Commissioners ever expressed any opinion as to what the Quadriga should typify?" (A slightly patronizing attitude, I would say!) Note that Gauthier says the central figure is "Prosperity." Guidebook, p. 15.

⁵²Unlabeled Minnesota newspaper, July 18, 1903. The quotation was taken from the Mower County Transcript. Scrapbook, Archives.

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴Ibid. "Uncle Pease" is not identified in the story.

⁵⁵Seabury to Buckman Shea, June 14, 1897. [A]. I have not been able to find references to Shea's identity.

⁵⁶Seabury to Gilbert, January 7, 1904. [A].

⁵⁷"Eminent Artists to Work on Minnesota's New Capitol," Minneapolis Journal, December 19, 1903. Capitol Scrapbook, NYHS.

⁵⁸Ibid. Elmer Garnsey is not mentioned in any of the standard biographical works. The only biographical information I have been able to find occurs in an unlabeled Minnesota newspaper story where Garnsey is cited as having done work over a period of twenty years (prior to 1904) as decorator at the Boston Public Library; Massachusetts Historical Society; Harvard University; New England Conservatory of Music; Yale University; the Rhode Island State Capitol; the Library of Congress; and a large number of banks and commercial buildings. Unlabeled newspaper story, February 26, 1904. John La Farge (1835-1910) studied in Paris with William M. Hunt. He is most famous, of course, for work in stained glass. LaFarge painted four lunettes for the Supreme Court Room, Minnesota Capitol, the scholarship for which is described in a letter to Seabury, July 16, 1904. Of all of the Capitol artists, LaFarge seems to have studied his subjects the most thoroughly. He told Seabury, for example, ". . .I decided, with much conversation with gentlemen that you know such as Col. Hay, his friend, Mr. Henry Adams, Mr. Wayne McVoagh and others, that I might represent a number of Greek philosophers and thinkers debating on the formation of the Laws of the State. The accounts of these philosophers and their actual writings have then to be consulted and in this case a special moment chosen so that each figure will help to tell the exact

story of some one of the conversations in which these men decided by argument their views in the matter. . . ." LaFarge to Seabury, July 16, 1904. [MHS]. LaFarge's life is recorded in Royal Cortissoz' eulogistic: John LaFarge, A Memoir and a Study (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1911). Edward Simmons (1852-1931) studied at Harvard and Paris. Besides his work on the Minnesota Capitol, which included painting four pendentives above the piers of the rotunda, using the theme "The Civilization of the Northwest," Simmons did decorative work for the Massachusetts State House, Library of Congress, the South Dakota State Capitol, Waldorf Astoria, J. D. Rockefeller's home, Tarrytown, New York. Who Was Who, I, p. 1126 and Gauthier, pp. 22-23. Edwin Blashfield (1848-1936) studied in Paris and the Royal Academy, London. He accomplished innumerable works in America and held many honors. For the Minnesota Capitol, Blashfield painted "The Fifth Minnesota Regiment at Corinth" for the Governor's anteroom and two lunettes in the Senate chamber. Who Was Who, I, p. 106 and Gauthier, pp. 32-34. Francis D. Millet (1846-1912) was director of decoration at the Columbian Exposition. Millet was commissioned to paint "The Treaty of Traverse des Sioux" and "The Fourth Minnesota Regiment Entering Vicksburg" for the Governor's reception room. Who Was Who, I, p. 844, and Gauthier, pp. 34-36. Two other artists not mentioned in the text but who were part of the "New York Ring" were Kenyon Cox and Henry Oliver Walker. Cox (1856-1919) painted a lunette in the Supreme Court room, "The Contemplative Spirit of the East." Cox also carried out work for the Library of Congress, Bowdoin College, the Appellate Court, New York, the Iowa Capitol, and the public library at Winona. Gauthier, pp. 28-29. Walker painted a lunette over the west stairway. Gauthier, p. 29.

⁵⁹ Minneapolis Journal, December 19, 1903.

⁶⁰ Seabury to Gilbert, July 28, 1903. [A].

⁶¹ According to Gauthier, Guidebook, p. 52, the large sculptured work above the speaker's desk is the work of Carl Brioschi of St. Paul. The Gilbert papers do not mention this sculptor. Brioschi was born in Italy, educated in Milan, and practiced in New York where he assisted Stanford White in remodeling the White House. He worked in St. Paul from 1909 to 1941. Pioneer Press, March 28, 1941.

⁶² Volk painted two panels in the Governor's Reception Room: "Father Hennepin Discovering the Falls of St. Anthony" and "The Second Minnesota Regiment at Mission Ridge." Gauthier, p. 37. Long descriptions of Volk's work-in-progress are given in letters to Gilbert from Volk, August 15, 1904 and July 28, 1904. [A].

⁶³ Stephen A. Douglas Volk (1856-1935) studied in Rome and Venice. In 1874, he entered the studio of J. L. Gerome in Paris. Upon his return to America in 1879, Volk taught at Cooper Union

and at the Art Students League, New York. In 1886 he came to Minneapolis where he was the first director of the Minneapolis School of Art. He returned to New York in 1893. Volk became very successful in New York where he received many important prizes and awards and was elected to full membership in the National Academy in 1899. National recognition came largely as a result of his many studies of Abraham Lincoln. Donald R. Torbert A Century of Art and Architecture in Minnesota (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1958), pp. 25-26.

⁶⁴Minneapolis Journal, December 19, 1903.

⁶⁵Seabury to Gilbert, January 12, 1904. [A].

⁶⁶"No Bids on the Masterpieces," St. Paul Dispatch, January 27, 1904.

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸"Say Local Painters Should Have the Job," St. Paul Globe, unlabeled, NYHS.

⁶⁹"Object to Outsiders," St. Paul Dispatch, unlabeled, NYHS.

⁷⁰"Painters' Charge Answered," Minneapolis Times, January 28, 1904. [NYHS].

⁷¹Ibid.

⁷²Ibid.

⁷³"Object to Outsiders," St. Paul Dispatch, unlabeled, NYHS.

⁷⁴Ibid.

⁷⁵"New Capitol Interior Decoration," unlabeled Minnesota newspaper, NYHS.

⁷⁶Ibid.

⁷⁷Ibid.

⁷⁸St. Paul Pioneer Press, February 12, 1906.

⁷⁹I have been unable to locate biographical information on Will J. Hutchison.

⁸⁰Gilbert to Hutchison, April 9, 1904. Missing letter.

⁸¹Hutchison to Gilbert, April 23, 1904. [MHS].

⁸²Ibid.

⁸³Ibid.

⁸⁴Seabury to Gilbert, May 19, 1904. [A]. Seabury does not name the two artists, but they were undoubtedly Zogbaum and Pyle.

See, "List of Mural Decorators, Minnesota State Capitol," undated memorandum, Archives. Rufus Zogbaum (1849-1925) was a delineator of military and naval subjects. He was paid \$6000 for painting "The Battle of Gettysburg" for the Governor's Reception Room. Who Was Who, I, p. 1396 and Gauthier, p. 38. Howard Pyle (1853-1911) was an illustrator of childrens' books. He painted the "Battle of Nashville" for the Governor's Reception Room at a cost of \$6000. Who Was Who, p. 1002 and Gauthier, pp. 38-39. Gauthier notes that Pyle's painting was "pronounced by leading art critics the greatest war painting of modern times." p. 39.

⁸⁵Seabury to Gilbert, May 19, 1904. [A].

⁸⁶Ibid.

⁸⁷Ibid.

⁸⁸Ibid. When the decorative work was completed sometime late in 1905, Seabury made a computation of the cost of the work accomplished by the "New York Ring." It is clear that he felt the state had paid a high cost for the New York artists. Garnsey's commission came to a staggering \$126,500, with LaFarge receiving \$40,000; Simmons, \$33,000; Blashfield, \$25,000; Cox, Walker, Millet, and Volk received an average of \$3000 for their paintings. Seabury showed his feelings toward these last four artists by marking "insufficiently paid for" beside their names. "List of Mural Decorators, Minnesota State Capitol." [A].

⁸⁹The Western Architect, IV (October, 1905).

⁹⁰Ibid., p. 15.

⁹¹"Beautiful But Not Useful," January, 1905, unlabeled newspaper, Scrapbook, NYHS.

⁹²Taylor's Falls (Minnesota) Journal, January 5, 1905. [NYHS].

⁹³"Capitol is Good Only to Look At," Dispatch, January, 1905, NYHS, and "Beautiful But Not Useful," January, 1905, NYHS.

⁹⁴"State Employees File Complaints," Minneapolis Times, January 6, 1905. [NYHS].

⁹⁵Unlabeled editorial, "Must Be Improved," January 11, 1905. [NYHS].

⁹⁶"Capitol is Good Only to Look At," Dispatch, January, 1905.

⁹⁷Ibid.

⁹⁸Ibid.

The Making of a National Reputation: 1897-1899

¹"Wins High Honor," Chicago Times, October 16, 1899.

²Who Was Who In America, IV, p. 930.

³Ibid.

⁴James Knox Taylor to Gilbert, June 22, 1897. [MHS]. At the top of this letter, Gilbert noted that copies of Taylor's letter had been sent to Burnham, Post, McKim, and Stanford White.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid. Lyman Gage (1836-1927) was president of the First National Bank of Chicago in 1891 and president of the Chicago board of directors for the Columbian Exposition. Because of his defense of the gold standard during the election of 1896, Gage was appointed Secretary of the Treasury by President McKinley soon after he took office. Gage resigned that post in 1902, and from 1902 to 1906 held the position of president of the United States Trust Company of New York until his retirement. DAB, IV, pp. 85-86.

⁷New York Times, July 7, 1897. According to the Times, [The Tarnsey Act] authorizes the Secretary [of the Treasury] to obtain plans and specifications for public buildings by competition among architects. Merits of the plans will be investigated by a commission consisting of the Supervising Architect of the Treasury and two architects who will [together] report to the Treasury Secretary."

⁸New York Times, October 2, 1897.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Taylor to Gilbert, September 15, 1897. [MHS].

¹¹Ibid.

¹²New York Times, October 2, 1897.

¹³Taylor to Gilbert, September 15, 1897. [MHS].

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Telegram, Herman Knox Taylor to W. B. Dean, October 12, 1897. [copy, MHS].

¹⁷H. K. Taylor telegram, October 12, 1897.

¹⁸Telegram, Seabury to Gage and Knute Nelson to Gage, October 16, 1897. [MHS].

¹⁹Telegram, Gilbert to Taylor, October 12, 1897. [MHS].

²⁰Taylor to Gilbert, October 16, 1897. [MHS]. I have been unable to locate references to the lives of Huss and Constable.

²¹Ibid.

²²Harold F. Gosnell, Boss Platt and His New York Machine, A Study of the Political Leadership of Thomas C. Platt, Theodore Roosevelt, and Others (New York: Russell & Russell, 1924), p. 248.

²³Ibid., 252.

²⁴Ibid., 248.

²⁵Ibid., 248-9.

²⁶Ibid., 250.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Taylor to Gilbert, October 16, 1897. [MHS].

³¹Ibid. Cushman Kellogg Davis (1838-1900) was elected to the Minnesota legislature in 1867, and served as governor from 1874 to 1876. He was a United States Senator from 1887 until his death. According to Upham and Dunlap, Davis was "a profound student of French and English literature and of international law." In 1884, he published The Law in Shakespeare, and in 1897, Lectures on International Law. Upham and Dunlap, p. 165. For a detailed biography of Davis, see, Folwell, A History of Minnesota, III, passim.

³²Taylor to Gilbert, October 16, 1897.

³³Gilbert to Taylor, October 19, 1897. [NYHS].

³⁴Ibid. Warren P. Laird (1851-1941) was born in Winona, Minnesota, and studied at Cornell University. Laird trained in New York and Boston offices, and in 1891, took charge of the newly founded School of Architecture at the University of Pennsylvania. In 1920, when the School of Fine Arts was established at the University, Laird was chosen Dean. He served in that position until his retirement in 1932. Withey, p. 360. (I have been unable to track down the comment about the Harrisburg Capitol).

³⁵Gilbert to Taylor, October 19, 1897. Matthew S. Quay (1833-1904) held control of Republican politics in Pennsylvania from 1884 to 1904. He was a United States Senator from 1887 to 1889 and 1901 to 1904. Always a behind-the-scenes manipulator, Quay helped elect Harrison, together with Platt secured Roosevelt's

nomination as Vice-President, and brought Mark Hanna into national politics in 1888. DAB, VIII, 296-298.

³⁶ Who Was Who, I, p. 533.

³⁷ Gilbert to Taylor, October 19, 1897. [MHS]. H. H. Kohlsaet (1853-1924) was part owner of the Chicago Inter-Ocean, 1891-1893. He was editor and publisher of the Chicago Times-Herald, 1894; Chicago Record-Herald, 1910-12. Who Was Who, I, p. 690. According to William Allen White, William McKinley at one time had endorsed a bad note. "Hanna, Myron Herrick, H. H. Kohlsaet, and Judge Day gathered together sixty thousand dollars and paid the note, saving McKinley's name and fortune." William Allen White, Masks in a Pageant (New York: Macmillan Co., 1928), fn., p. 157.

³⁸ Gilbert to Taylor, October 19, 1897.

³⁹ Ibid. Marvin Hughitt (1837-1928) was division superintendent and general superintendent with C & A and I. C. Railways; assistant general manager of the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railway; general manager, Pullman Palace Car Company, 1871-2, becoming president in 1887. He had his hands in a number of other railroads later in his life. Who Was Who, I, p. 604.

⁴⁰ Gilbert to Taylor, October 19, 1897. Solon S. Beman (1853-1914) after training with Richard Upjohn took up a career in Chicago as George Pullman's architect for the eighteen hundred homes comprising Pullman, Illinois. "On the work Mr. Beman was given full charge in the preparation of plans and supervision of construction. He also served as architect on a similar project for the town of 'Ivorydale,' Ill., though smaller in scale than Pullman, sponsored by the firm of Proctor & Gamble." Withey, p.49.

⁴¹ Gilbert to Taylor, October 19, 1897.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Gilbert to Charles S. Frost, October 19, 1897. [NYHS]. Charles Sumner Frost (1856-1931) studied at M.I.T. and worked for Peabody and Stearns. In 1882, he joined Henry Ives Cobb in a Chicago partnership, Cobb & Frost. Withey, p. 224. Gilbert undoubtedly knew Frost through Cobb's relationship with the Minnesota Capitol.

⁴⁶ Gilbert to Frost, October 19, 1897.

⁴⁷ New York Times, October 21, 1897.

⁴⁸ Gilbert to Taylor, October 21, 1897. [NYHS]. Merriam was governor of Minnesota from 1889-93. From 1889 to 1903 he was director of the United States Census, an appointment made by McKinley

for Merriam's support of the gold standard during the election of 1896. Upham and Dunlap, p. 504, and Folwell, III, p. 194.

⁴⁹ Gilbert to Taylor, October 21, 1897.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid. Thomas R. Kimball (1862-1934) was a student at M.I.T., 1884-87. His practice began in Boston, 1889, as a member of Walker, Kimball, and Best, Boston and Omaha. Walker and Kimball continued their practice in Omaha solely in 1891. Kimball practiced alone from 1899-1903, but joined Walker again for the St. Louis Exposition, 1903-04. Some of Kimball's projects include: Battle Mountain Sanatorium, Hot Springs, South Dakota, for the U. S. Treasury Department (no date available). Who Was Who, I, p. 676.

⁵² Gilbert's memorandum on his trip to New York, February 25, 1899. [MHS].

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid. Frederick Clement Stevens (1861- ?) was a representative in the Minnesota legislature, 1889-91. In 1891 he was elected a member of the United States Congress. Upham and Dunlap, p. 741.

⁵⁶ Gilbert's memorandum, February 25, 1899.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Memorandum, March 2, 1899.

⁵⁹ Ibid. Bruce Price (1843-1903) designed the layout for Tuxedo Park (1885-86) for Pierre Lorillard and many of the individual houses there, as well as the Lorillard houses at Newport, R. I. He designed Osborn Hall and Welch Dormitory at Yale in 1888. The largest and most lavish of his domestic work was the group called "Georgian Court" (1898-1900) for George Jay Gould, at Lakewood, N. J. He was also the designer of the memorial to R. M. Hunt in Central Park. DAB, VIII, p. 211.

⁶⁰ Gilbert Memorandum, March 2, 1899.

⁶¹ "The Tarnsey Act." Chapter 146, Statutes at Large of the United States of America, Vol. XXVII, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1893), pp. 468-469.

⁶² Ibid., p. 469.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Gilbert's memorandum, March 3, 1899.

⁶⁵Ibid.

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸Taylor to Gilbert, April 20, 1899. [NYHS].

⁶⁹Gilbert to Taylor, April 22, 1899. [NYHS].

⁷⁰See page above.

⁷¹Gilbert to Taylor, April 22, 1899.

⁷²Stevens Haskell to Gilbert, April 28, 1899. [MHS].

⁷³Ibid.

⁷⁴Ibid.

⁷⁵Acting Secretary of the Treasury to Gilbert, May 2, 1899. [MHS]. Other names on the list were Bruce Price, Carrere and Hastings, McKim, Mead, and White, George Post, Peabody and Stearns, Daniel Burnham, Henry Ives Cobb, and Babb, Cook & Willard. Behind the name of the latter firm Gilbert noted on his copy: "My guess possibly to win." "E.A.C.," Acting Secretary of the Treasury to Gilbert, May 2, 1899. [MHS].

⁷⁶Gilbert to Acting Secretary of the Treasury, May 9, 1899. [NYHS].

⁷⁷Knute Nelson to Gilbert, May 26, 1899. [NYHS].

⁷⁸Gilbert to Seligman, July 7, 1899. [NYHS].

⁷⁹Gilbert to Taylor, May 26, 1899. [NYHS].

⁸⁰Taylor to Gilbert, July 7, 1899. [MHS].

⁸¹Ibid. The Tarnsey Act provides that the competition shall be governed by the Secretary of the Treasury and that the "general supervision of the work shall continue in the office of the Supervising Architect." As I interpret the Act, "work" refers to "matters connected with the erection and completion" of public buildings, not the competition itself. U.S., Statutes at Large, Vol. XXVII, "Tarnsey Act," February 20, 1893, ch. 146, pp. 468-469. [*Italics mine*].

⁸²Gilbert to Taylor, July 12, 1899. [NYHS]. Walter Cope (1860-1902) was in partnership with John and Emlyn Stewardson, a leading Philadelphia architectural firm. The firm's first commission was Radnor Hall, Bryn Mawr College, and several of the other campus buildings. In 1896, Cope and his partners were appointed architects of buildings at Princeton, including Blair Hall and flanking dormitories. In 1899, the firm designed Brookings Hall, Washington University, St. Louis. Withey, pp. 139-140.

⁸³ Gilbert to Taylor, July 12, 1899. [MHS].

⁸⁴ Gilbert to Taylor, October 21, 1897. [NYHS].

⁸⁵ By the summer of 1899, Gilbert's New York office staff had been augmented to include, besides Haskell, Thomas G. Holyoke, a Gilbert protégé from the St. Paul office, and John Rachac, Jr. The size of this office may indicate that Gilbert felt he had the Custom House commission in hand, though it is important to remember that the Broadway Chambers was under construction at the same time. Gilbert's associates are listed on his "New York letterhead" after July, 1899.

⁸⁶ Taylor to Gilbert, September 11, 1899. [NYHS].

⁸⁷ Ibid. Frank Miles Day (1861-1918) studied at the University of Pennsylvania and in Europe. While in London he attended the Royal Academy's School of Architecture, and acquired professional experience in the office of Basil Champneys. In 1887, he returned to Philadelphia. Between 1892 and 1912 in partnership with his brother he designed several buildings on the Princeton campus. In 1904, Day, along with Walter Cope and Wilson Eyr, designed the Archaeological Museum at the University of Pennsylvania. Mr. Day also served as Consulting or Supervising Architect for other colleges, including the University of Chicago, Penn State, and Delaware College. Withey, p. 166.

⁸⁸ Tarnsey Act, p. 469.

⁸⁹ Letter from the Commission (Supervising Architect's Office) of the Secretary of the Treasury to Gilbert, September 20, 1899. [MHS].

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Gilbert to Francis H. Bacon, October 11, 1899. [NYHS]. I have been unable to identify Bacon.

⁹² Carrere & Hastings to Taylor, October 2, 1899. [MHS].

⁹³ Gilbert to Francis H. Bacon, October 11, 1899.

⁹⁴ New York Times, November 4, 1899.

⁹⁵ New York Times, September 29, 1899.

⁹⁶ New York Times, October 17, 1897. Lemuel Ely Quigg (1863-1919) was editor of the Flushing, L.I., Times, 1883-84. In 1884, he became connected with the New York Tribune, then owned by Whitelaw Reid. After remaining on the staff ten years, Quigg was sent to Congress by one of the strong Tammany districts of New York,

even though he was a Republican. DAB, VIII, pp. 302-303.

⁹⁷DAB. p. 303.

⁹⁸Ibid.

⁹⁹Quigg to Platt, October 3, 1899. [MHS].

¹⁰⁰Who Was Who, I, p. 676.

¹⁰¹Ibid.

¹⁰²Ibid.

¹⁰³Quigg to Platt, October 3, 1899.

¹⁰⁴Ibid.

¹⁰⁵Ibid.

¹⁰⁶Ibid.

¹⁰⁷New York Times, October 25, 1899.

¹⁰⁸Times, October 24, 1899.

¹⁰⁹Times, October 25, 1899.

¹¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹¹Ibid.

¹¹²Letter, "New York Architects to President William McKinley," October 26, 1899. [MHS]. The letter was signed by R. W. Gibson, F. H. Kimball, Israels & Harder, J. B. Baker, Bruce Price, Woodbridge & Livingston, Cady, Berg, and See, Clinton and Russell, George Martin Huss. Huss, it should be remembered, was one of the three competitors for the Supervising Architect's position.

¹¹³Ibid.

¹¹⁴Ibid.

¹¹⁵Ibid.

¹¹⁶Ibid.

¹¹⁷Ibid.

¹¹⁸New York Times, November 2, 1899.

¹¹⁹Ibid.

¹²⁰New York Times, November 3, 1899.

¹²¹Ibid.

¹²²Letter, Gilbert to New York Tribune, November 2, 1899. [rough draft copy, MHS].

¹²³George C. Squires to Gage, November 2, 1899. [MHS].

¹²⁴Ibid. Gilbert's desire to win the Custom House competition can be measured by the fact that he was willing to retain Squires at the unusually high cost of \$5300.00. "Itemized Receipted Bill," Gilbert to Squires, December 30, 1899. [MHS].

¹²⁵New York Times, November 4, 1899.

¹²⁶Times, November 3, 1899.

¹²⁷Ibid.

¹²⁸New York Times, November 4, 1899.

¹²⁹Henry H. Smith to Gilbert, November 6, 1899. [MHS]. The information concerning the Platt-Quigg deal was sent to Gilbert on November 5 by Henry H. Smith, ex-Journal-Clerk of the House of Representatives and late Assistant Register of the Treasury. Smith enclosed a carbon copy of the letter to Gage from the "prominent Republican" which contained the information detailed herein. Smith's letterhead identifies his present occupation as "statistician and writer." Henry H. Smith to Gilbert, November 5, 1899 and "Prominent Republican" [unsigned] to Lyman J. Gage, October 28, 1899. [MHS].

¹³⁰Ibid.

¹³¹Ibid.

¹³²Ibid.

¹³³Ibid.

¹³⁴Ibid.

¹³⁵Ibid.

¹³⁶Taylor to Gilbert, February 23, 1900. [MHS].

¹³⁷Taylor to Gilbert, February 19, 1900. [MHS].

¹³⁸Ibid.

¹³⁹Ibid.

¹⁴⁰Ibid.

¹⁴¹Ibid.

Conclusion

¹Gilbert to Clarence Johnston, January 16, 1879. [MHS].

²Gilbert to Mead, January 4, 1884. [NYHS].

VIII
B I B L I O G R A P H Y

The major sources from which material was gathered for the study above include the following collections.

Minnesota Historical Society, Manuscript Library, The Clarence Johnston Papers, 1878-1883. 1 box, 2 volumes. This collection contains 29 letters from Cass Gilbert to Johnston which shed light on Gilbert's architectural training at M.I.T., his European Wanderjahr, and his experiences in the office of McKim, Mead, and White. These letters are the only available source material concerning Gilbert's early career. The first volume included in the Johnston Papers contains tracings, drawings of architectural details, drawings of buildings and houses, and watercolors of European and American architecture. Volume 2 is a scrapbook containing pictures of St. Paul buildings designed by Gilbert, the competitive drawings for the Minnesota State Capitol, and newspaper clippings. The Johnston Papers are in fine condition and are well cataloged.

Minnesota Historical Society, Manuscript Library, The Cass Gilbert Papers, 1883-1910. 21 boxes. 5 volumes. 11 oversize folders. This collection constitutes Gilbert's business papers from his St. Paul office. The boxes contain correspondence, most of it incoming letters, specifications, contracts, newspaper clippings, as well as sketches and drawings relating to buildings and private residences designed by Gilbert. The bulk of the material is routine, consisting of letters from business firms relating to the construction of various projects, but many letters, coupled with the outgoing correspondence found in the New-York Historical Society, help to form the story of the political manipulations of businessmanship. The five volumes and the eleven oversize folders contain specifications for Gilbert's St. Paul buildings. All of the material constituting the Cass Gilbert Papers is well cataloged and is in immaculate condition for research.

The New-York Historical Society, Maps and Prints Room, The Cass Gilbert Collection, 1883-1934. Approximately 500 volumes. The New York collection includes most of the remaining out-going Gilbert correspondence in carbon-copy form. Many of the volumes were bound by Gilbert's office into letterbooks and include material covering the architect's entire career with a concentration on the New York period, 1899-1934. No real systematic method has been utilized by the Society so as to make the papers easily useable for the researcher. The problem has been compounded by a lack of funds and the sizeable amount of material included in the collection. Besides being poorly cataloged, the collection is in almost unusable form because of the deteriorating condition of

the volumes.

Minnesota State Archives. Manuscript Collection, The Channing Seabury Papers, 1893-1910. 4 boxes. 2 volumes. 1 scrapbook. This collection, comprising the papers of the Board of State Capitol Commissioners, forms the bulk of material necessary for an understanding of the two competitions and the selection of stone and artists for the Minnesota State Capitol (Chapters IV and V), though both the St. Paul and New York collections were used to complete the narrative for these chapters. Because of Channing Seabury's careful documentation of each step of the Capitol's construction, these papers are indispensable for an understanding of the project. Like the New York collection, the Seabury Papers are in poor condition, and it is doubtful that the Archival staff will allow researchers to use the material again until the entire collection has been re-cataloged and preserved in some better form.

Other Collections and Libraries

- Art Institute of Chicago. Burnham Library.
- Burlington Northern Railroad, St. Paul. Library.
- Hennepin County Historical Society, Minneapolis.
Harry Wild Jones Papers.
- James J. Hill Library, St. Paul.
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