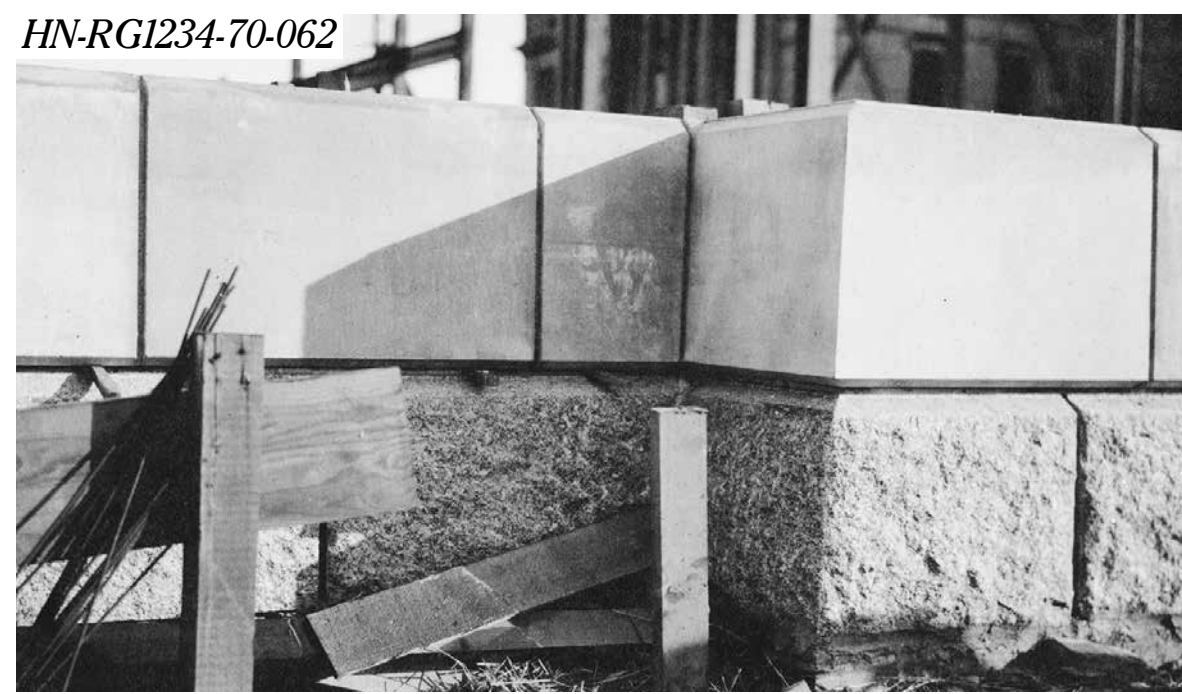


# 100 years ago - Walls Start to Rise

Working in a native limestone building which was settling and crumbling, the Nebraska Legislature created the Nebraska Capitol Commission and assigned it the task of holding a competition, hiring an architect and overseeing the construction of a new Capitol. After the June 1920 selection of New York architect Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue, site preparation work was completed, soil and bedrock stress tests were conducted, and architectural designs finalized. On April 15, 1922, ground-breaking for the third Capitol on the 1867 platted Capitol Square took place on the northeast lawn. A railroad was then built around the site to haul away excavated soil and bring building materials onto the site during the four phases of Capitol construction. While the W. J. Assenmacher Company worked to complete the first phase foundation in time for the Armistice Day November 11, 1922, cornerstone laying ceremony, the J. H. Wiese Company was awarded the contract to build the new Capitol's north and south first phase sections of the base around the old building. During this time architect Goodhue, thematic consultant Hartley Burr Alexander, Ph.D., and sculptor Lee Lawrie planned the decoration of the Capitol's exterior.



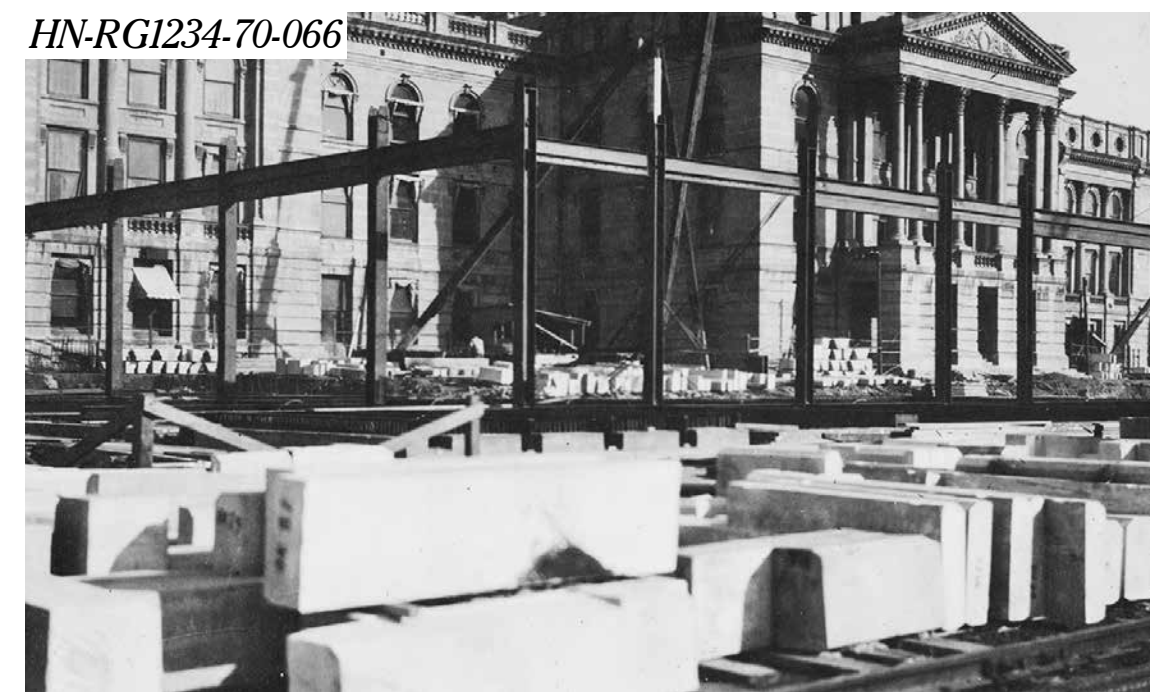
*Rising on either side of the cornerstone, the north and east first floor walls went up in November and December of 1922. This January 1923 photo shows the progress.*



*Granite was used as a first course of the exterior stone walls. The granite base protects the Indiana limestone from direct contact with the soil and damaging moisture.*



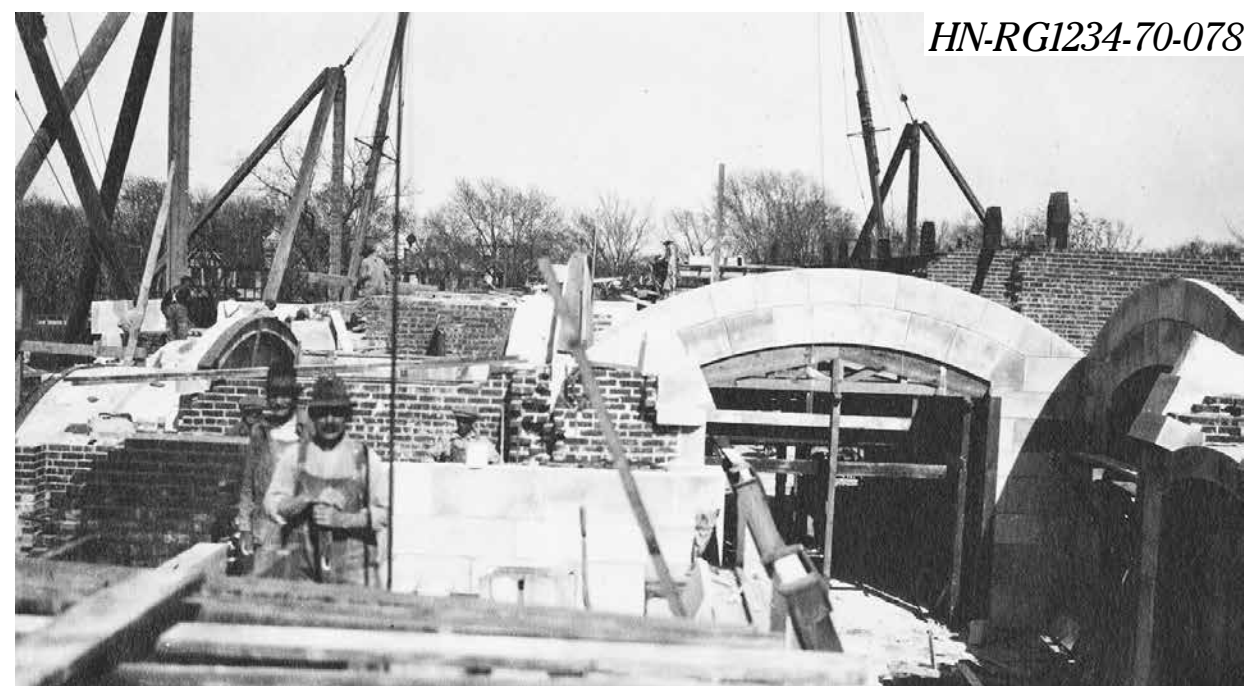
*A January 1923 interior view of the northwest corner shows structural walls of brick being laid atop piers and the structural walls hidden under the poured concrete first floor sub-floor. Steel beams provide additional support.*



*As walls went up on the north, limestone was delivered and stored along the railroad tracks on the south side. Once the steel support structure was in place, the limestone walls began to rise.*



*By May of 1923 brick and limestone walls were rising on the south side of the 2nd Capitol. Construction activity took place on both sides of the tracks that circled the site.*



*In this photo looking east, the arches of the first floor north entrance and vestibule are visible in May 1923. The first floor entrance arches and vaulting provide structural support for the 2nd floor entrance and vestibule.*



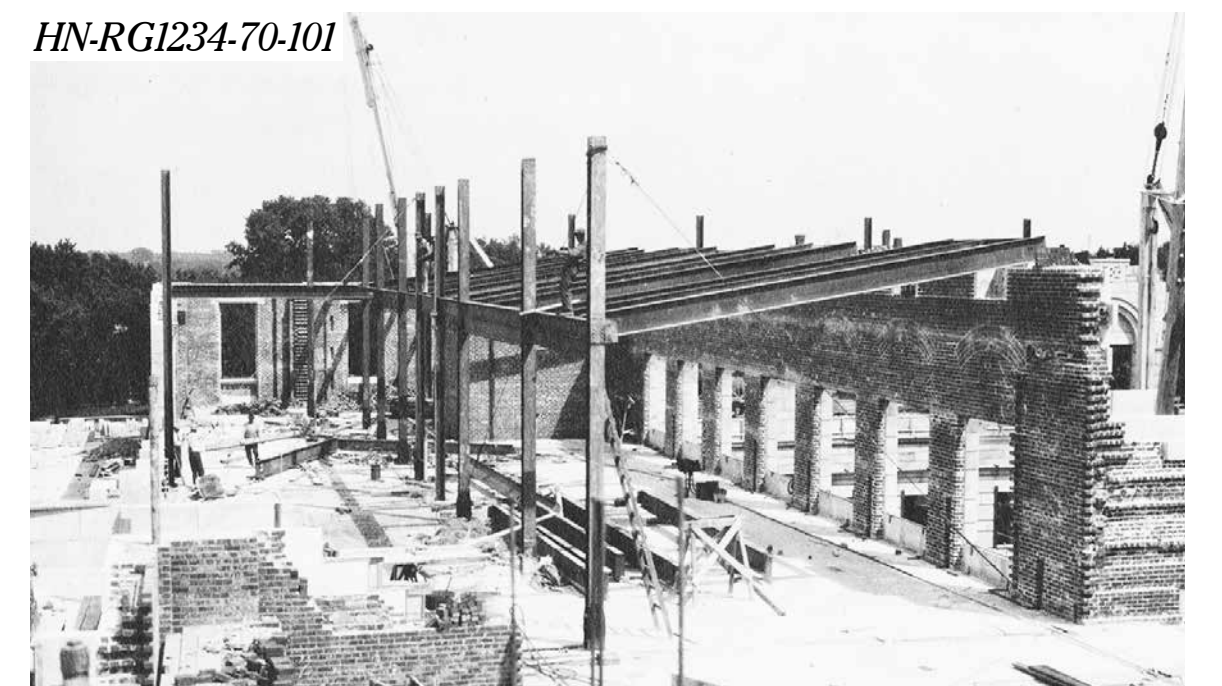
*The first floor north wall on the east side of the ground floor is in place by May 1923. The beveled openings of the ground floor clearstory windows provide a reference point in this view toward the north entrance vestibule.*



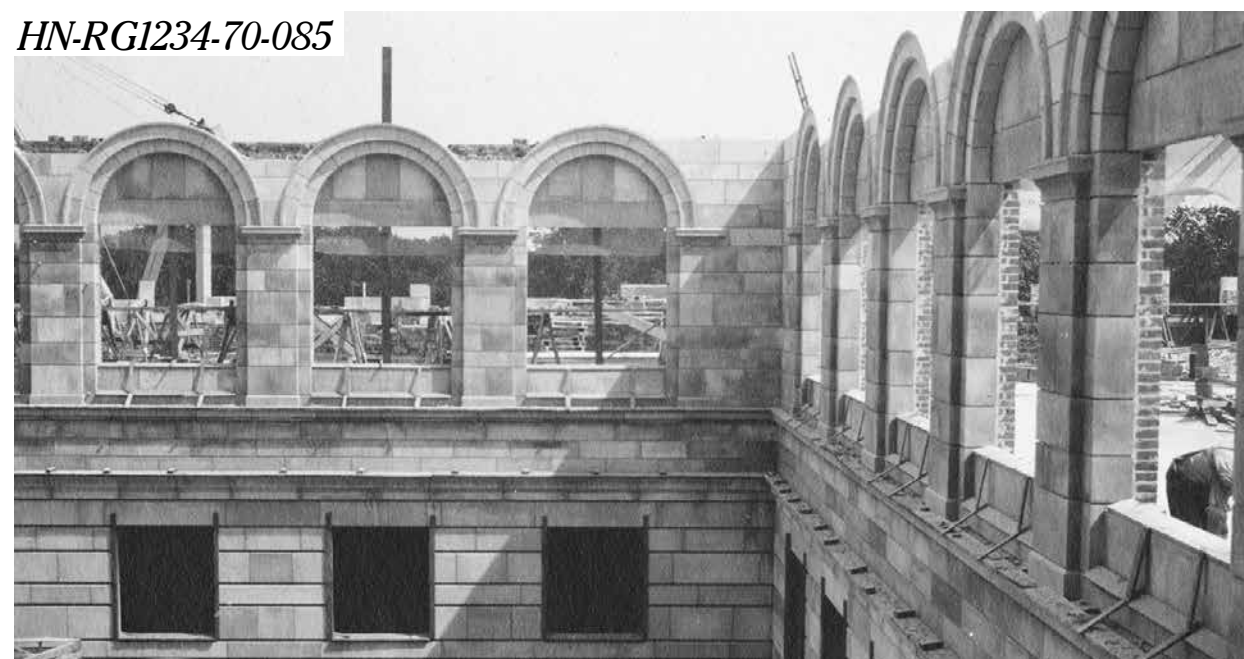
*In August 1923, a construction crew builds the Guastavino dome above the ground floor north entrance vestibule. Capitol architect Bertram Goodhue used Guastavino tile vaults throughout the building for structural support.*



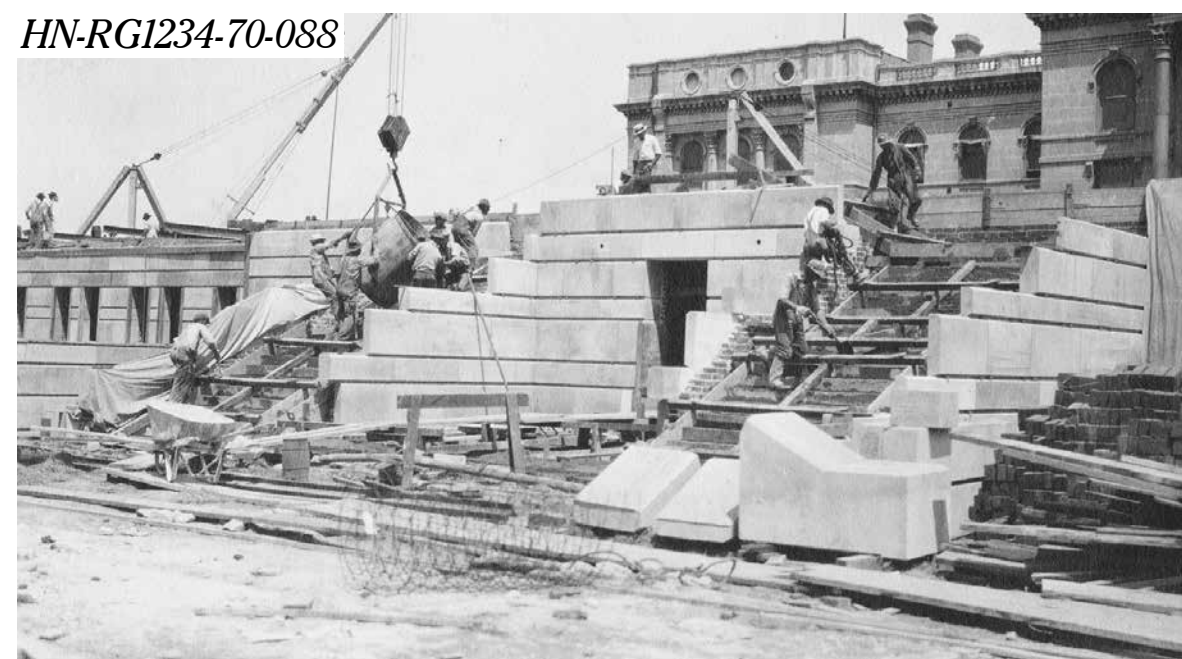
*This August 1923 photo shows the north entrance prior to the construction of the north plaza. Above the arches in the center of the photo, the upper stairs and the walls flanking the main entrance are visible.*



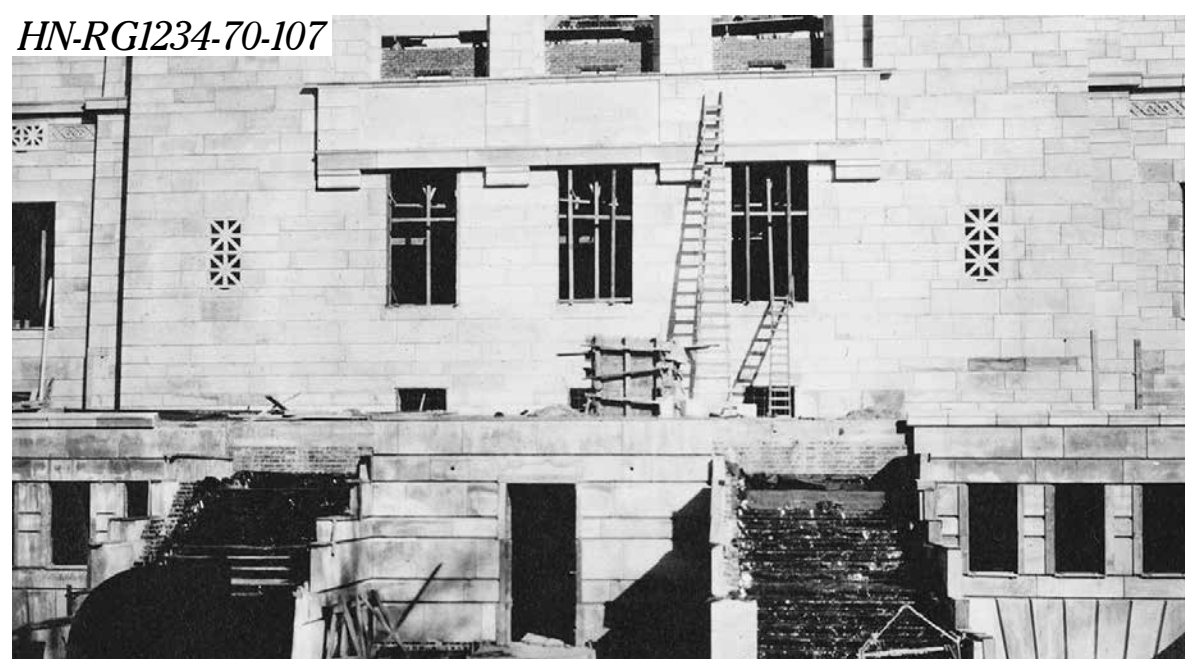
*In this view looking east on the north side of second floor, courtyard walls rise in September 1923. The Governor's desk will eventually sit in front of the window on the left of the far wall.*



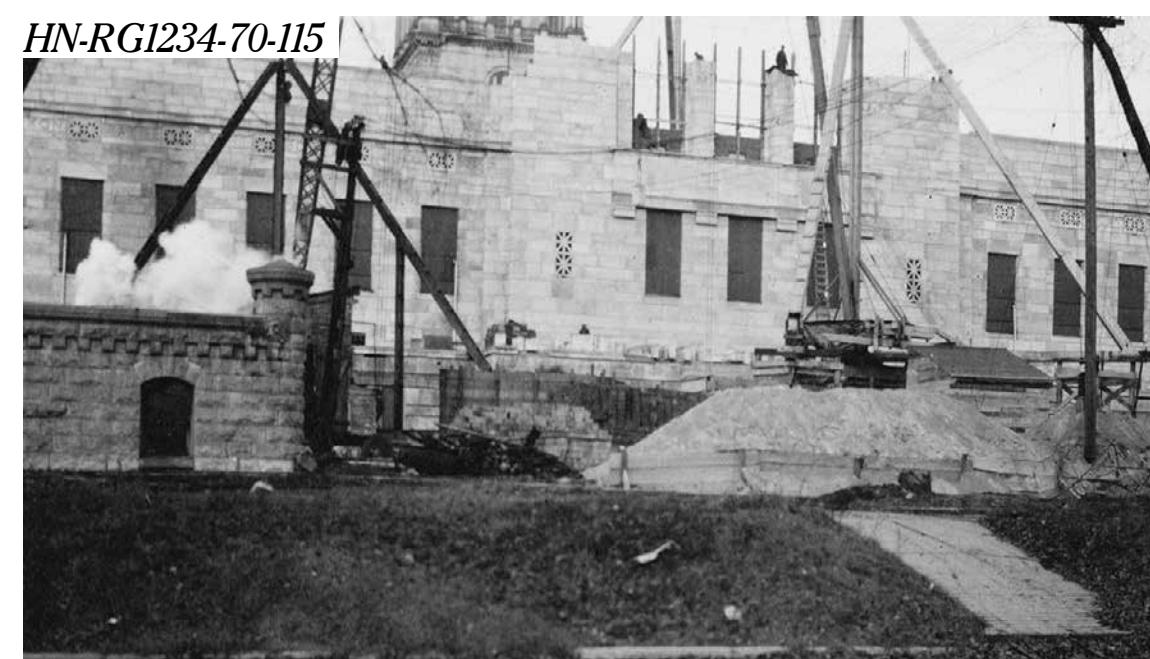
*This view of the northeast courtyard was taken from the second Capitol. State government continued to function in the second building as the outer square of the new Capitol was constructed around it.*



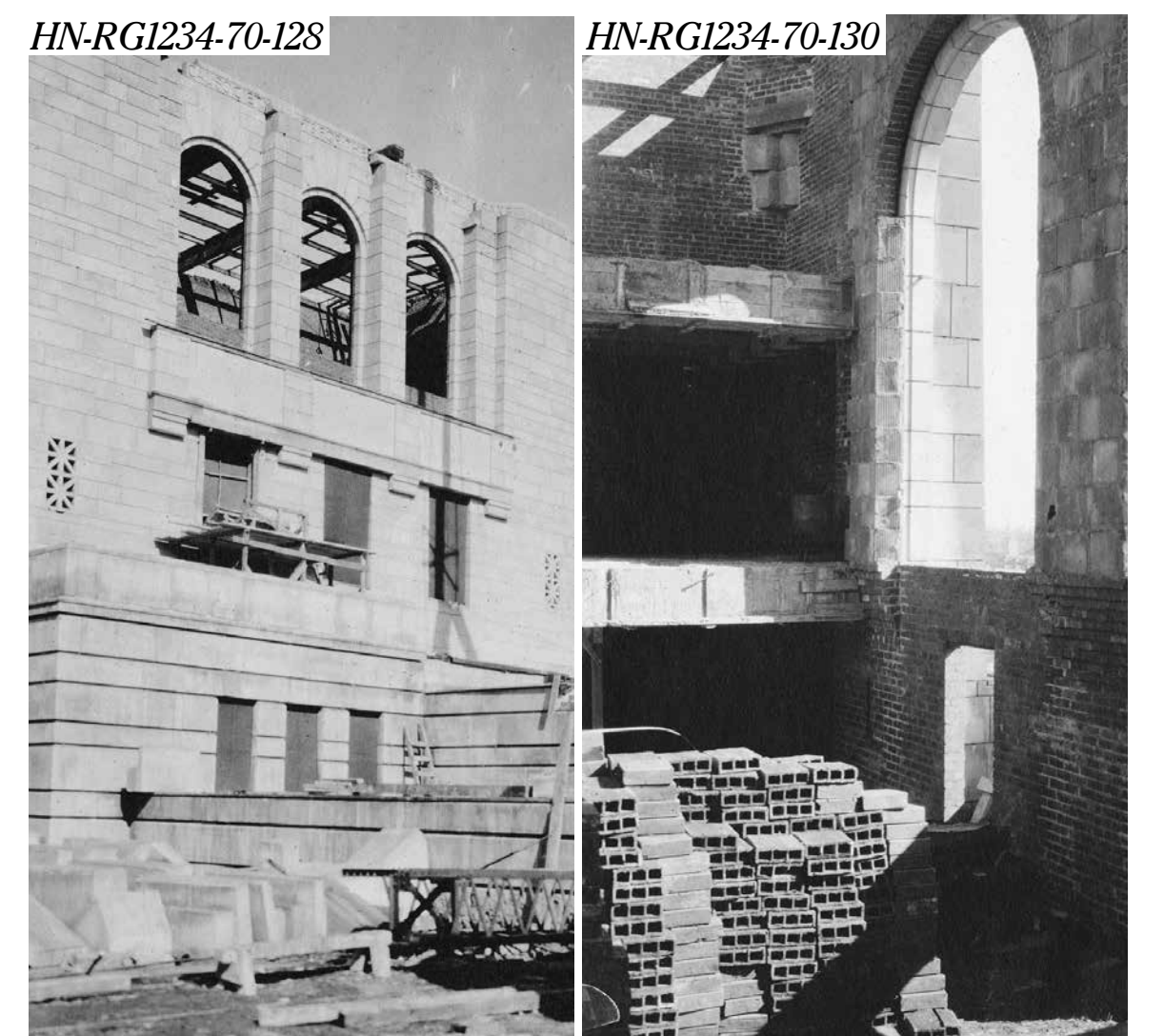
*The first of the new Capitol's four phases of construction built the outer north and south sections of the 437' square base around the old Capitol. This July 1923 photo shows the south entrance and stairs being built.*



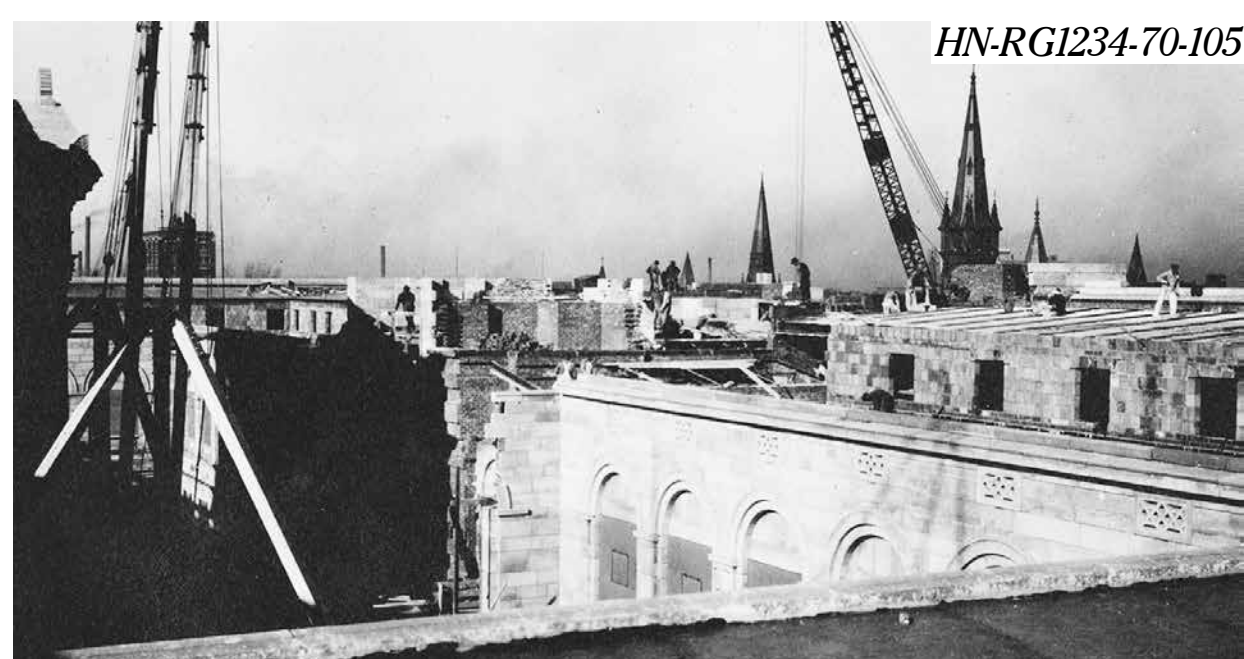
*In this November 1923 view of the South Pavilion, the balcony above the court windows is solid limestone. On-site sculptors will carve Lee Lawrie's pierced panels once the pavilion and south facade are complete.*



*This December 1923 photo shows the south wall of the Supreme Court and the partially constructed State Library wall. Notice a section of the old Capitol's power plant on the left-it will not be removed until 1929.*



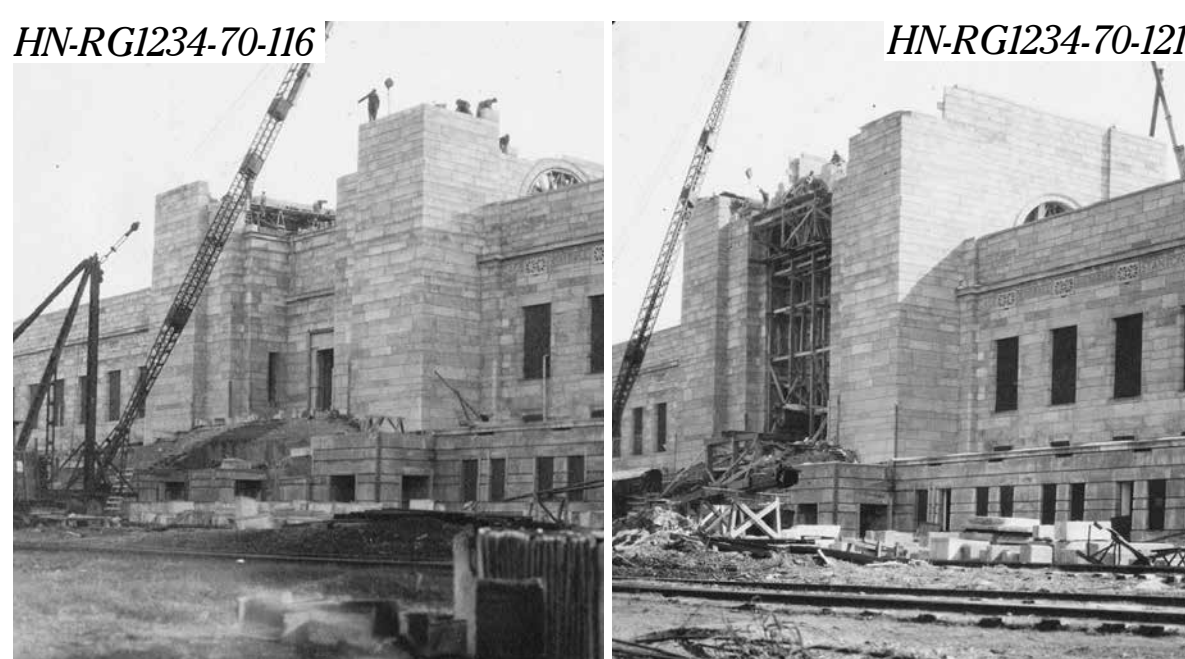
*By March of 1924, the south pavilion exterior walls and roof beams were in place awaiting installation of the copper roof. By September, scaffolding will be erected and the sculptors will begin carving the historic events and figures seen today on the south pavilion. The photo on the right shows an interior view of the State Library Reading Room with steel beams anchoring the south wall. The east and west sides of the pavilion will become library stacks and offices. The hollow terra cotta tiles on the floor will be used to erect non-structural interior walls to enclose stacks and office space.*



*Looking northwest from the new Capitol's east side roof in November of 1923, the north entrance pavilion remains unfinished.*



*This November 1923, photo of the north pavilion shows the north facade walls nearing completion. The main entrance portal barely rises above the opening for the north door.*



*The December 1923 photo on the left shows progress on the wall above the north door. Ten days later, the photo on the right shows framing in place for construction of the portal arch and the west pavilion wall almost complete.*

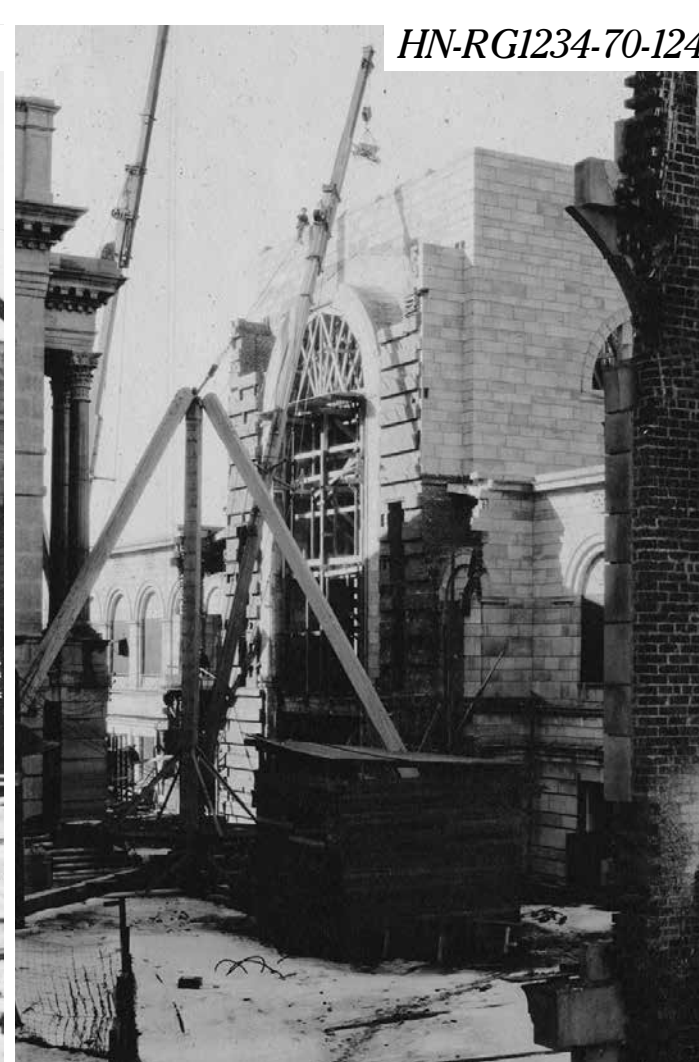
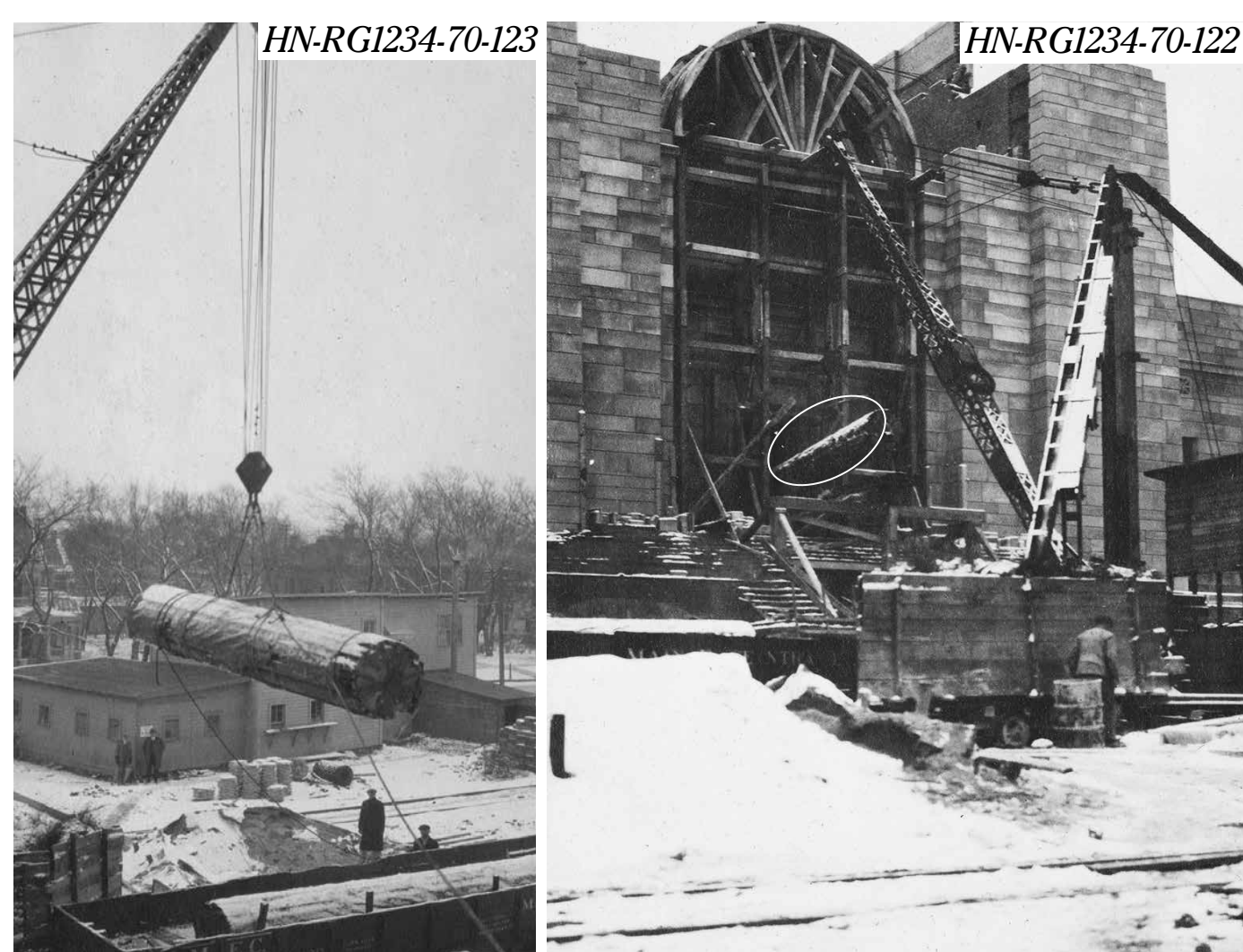
*These images are cropped from period photographs taken by William Younkin, Bertram Goodhue's on-site architect. The scrapbooks containing these photographs are in the archives of History Nebraska (HN-1234 Group 70 & 71 Younkin Album). Photographs taken during construction provide information about building techniques used, and the impact of construction on the physical and social landscape of Lincoln and Nebraska. The Office of the Capitol Commission seeks material associated with the Nebraska State Capitol. For more information about the 100th anniversary of the construction of the Capitol or to donate materials to the Capitol Archive visit: [www.capitol.nebraska.gov](http://www.capitol.nebraska.gov).*

Taken on a snowy Statehood Day, March 1, 1924, the three photos on the right document a significant event during the first phase of construction. The arrival of the four 2nd floor Vestibule's Red Verona marble columns. The 15 ton monolithic marble columns were imported from Italy as rough blocks and finished in New York. They were brought by rail to Lincoln for installation. How do you get a 25' tall 15 ton solid one piece marble column into the Capitol?

The first photo on the right shows a large crane using a large pulley system to lift a column off the railcar. Notice another column remains on the railcar at the bottom of the photo.

The second photo shows the crane delivering a column to the north steps where it was placed on a platform. Then the column was transferred to rollers and pushed and pulled through the door opening into the Vestibule. Once inside, the column was placed on a platform on the floor to await placement in one of the four corners of the Vestibule.

A third photo taken that day is a view from the east side interior of the new Capitol looking beyond the second Capitol toward the Vestibule. It shows a crane lifting equipment over the south vestibule wall and down through the open roof. Was this method used to raise the huge columns and set them in place once they were inside? Were they placed on their bases with a crane lifting from above?



*This March 1924 photo shows masons working on the arch between the Vestibule and the Great Hall. Once the large 15 ton Italian marble columns were in place, the Guastavino tile dome and then the copper roof could be installed.*



*This March 1924, view of the northwest corner of the new Capitol shows how the first phase of construction did not fully encircle the second Capitol, but was built to leave the east and west center sides open to allow for the eventual demolition and removal of the old Capitol.*