

Historical New Hampshire

The Education of a New Hampshire Philanthropist

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Cover Illustration: Focusing on the life and philanthropy of Edward Tuck (1842-1938), this issue of *Historical New Hampshire* celebrates the 150th anniversary of Tuck's birth in Exeter. Tuck is pictured here in April 1928 with his wife of fifty-six years, Julia Stell Tuck (1850-1928). Photograph by Desgranges of Nice, France, near the Tucks' winter home in Monte Carlo. NHHS Collections; gift of Miriam Gardner Dunning.



From a Single Stone: The Portal Sculpture of the New Hampshire Historical Society's Building

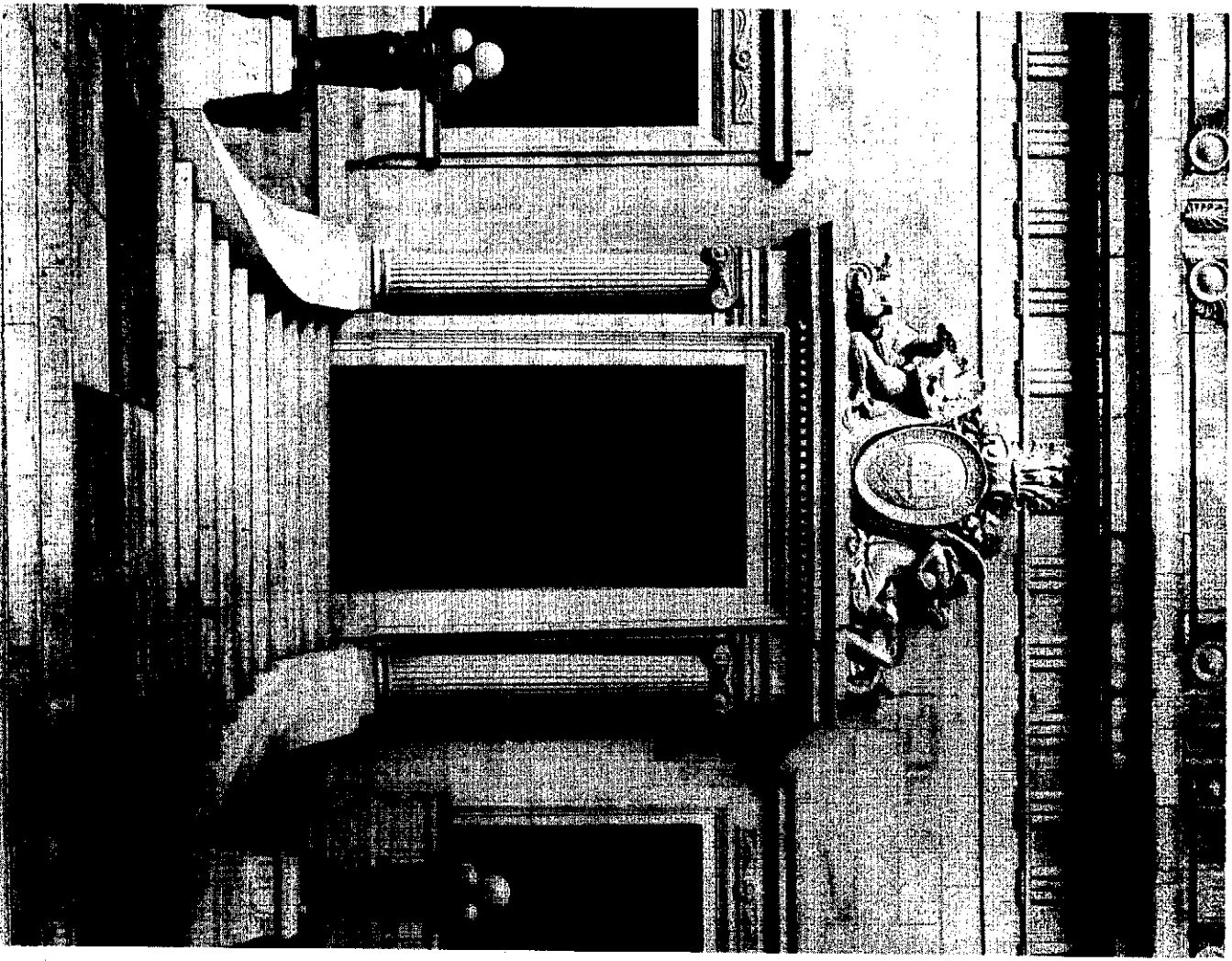
James L. Garvin

The focal point of the facade of the New Hampshire Historical Society's building is a monumental sculptural group resting above a doorway whose Ionic architectural order symbolized human wisdom. Representing *Ancient and Modern History*, the group was designed by New Hampshire-born sculptor Daniel Chester French, who expressed his determination to make it "the work of my life."¹ The two figures of the group kneel before giant consoles, their wings supporting a central seal that French designed on his own initiative and contributed to the Society. The entire group, except for the owl at its apex, was cut from a single, flawless block of Concord granite.

Following the death of Augustus Saint Gaudens in 1907, Daniel Chester French (1850-1931) was universally recognized as America's preeminent monumental sculptor. A native of Exeter, New Hampshire, French achieved his early fame in Concord, Massachusetts, and New York. He was related by marriage to Edward Tuck, benefactor of the New Hampshire Historical Society. In 1909, French was engaged in modeling his pensive standing *Lincoln* for the Nebraska state capitol and had just completed his memorial in Concord, Massachusetts, to the Melvin brothers, a copy of which would later be placed in the Metropolitan Museum of Art.²

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1. Memorandum, Benjamin A. Kimball to Charles R. Corning, February 24, 1919, Edward Tuck Papers, New Hampshire Historical Society, box 1, folder 5.
2. Michael Richman, *Daniel Chester French: An American Sculptor* (Washington, D.C.: National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1976), pp. 116-18, 121-29.



When five or six hundred people passed through this doorway on opening day, November 23, 1911, Daniel Chester French's granite sculptural group had been in place less than a month. The ladder visible beyond the window at the left suggests the labor, turmoil, and frustration that lay behind the remarkable quality of the building. NHHS Collections.

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Sculptor Daniel Chester French (1850-1931), an Exeter native related by marriage to Edward Tuck, was of an artistic temperament foreign to the business-like chairman of the Society's building committee, Benjamin Kimball. From the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences Bulletin, 1909.

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Supported on the Ionic entablature of the historical society's doorway and carefully related to the Doric frieze above, French's group combines a strict classical symmetry with flowing naturalistic forms and a variety of symbolic devices. The figure on the right, representing *Ancient History*, is an aged female who cradles a human skull in her right hand while supporting an inscribed stone slab with her left. Gazing into the past as she strives to decipher the inscriptions on the tablet, the figure portrays the efforts of humankind to plumb the ancient days of the race. The tablet symbolizes early attempts to transmit a record of thoughts and accomplishments through time. The skull symbolizes both the antiquity of the human race and the human being's characteristic endeavor to comprehend his own history and evolution through study of the ruins of the dead past.

French had used the same symbol in his *Europe*, one of the four *Continents* (1903-7) on the New York Customs House. In this group, another female figure representing *Ancient History*, her body shrouded and hooded, sits contemplating a skull. Whereas the figure in *Europe* is brooding and sepulchral, however, that on the Society's gateway is intent on discovering, not merely contemplating, the mysteries of the past.

The figure of *Modern History* on the left of French's group takes the form of a muscular young man. Representing the "Genius of Discovery," the youth kneels to examine a globe girded by a zodiacal band, while supporting a sheaf of manuscripts on one knee. Like *Ancient History*, the youth gazes into the past, but his is a past illuminated by chronicles of modern exploits and discoveries, written in living languages. French's conviction that *Modern History* was synonymous with exploration, discovery, and enterprise is shown by the close parallels between this figure and that of *Labor* in the sculptor's *America*, one of the four *Continents*. Both figures are depicted as kneeling youths with flexed left arms and extended right hands holding a symbolic trophy. Whereas *Modern History* examines a globe, *Labor* guides a winged wheel representing progress.

The seal between the two figures was French's unsolicited gift to the Society, intended to symbolize the institution's purposes

in a more graphic and artistic manner than had an older insignia. In the sculptor's own words,

The Seal . . . has in its center an open book, with a torch, representing Learning and the transmission of it; above is the radiation of Light, and below is a skull of an Indian with the feathered head-dress of the New Hampshire Indians. Branches of the apple and the pine surround the skull as symbols of cultivation and wildness, and an Indian arrow-head appears below.³

Above the seal is a finial centered by an owl, a symbol of wisdom.

This frontispiece of the Society's building, described by Edward Tuck at the dedication of the structure as "the grandest specimen of the artistic work of a son of our own State," has certainly been overshadowed by some of French's more monumental commissions.⁴ Nevertheless, the work was important in French's artistic career, for it represents the sculptor's attempt to portray the history of the state of his birth and youth, a place which, he acknowledged, "occupies a very warm place in my heart."⁵

French expressed his sentiments toward New Hampshire in a didactic and classical form that met the expectations of his era and harmonized perfectly with Guy Lowell's building. These sentiments were genuine enough to motivate the sculptor to undertake a major element of his commission as a donation to the Society. Regrettably, French's language is somewhat beyond the comprehension of most modern viewers.

The history of the sculptural group is fully documented by a wealth of correspondence in the Society's archives. These documents reveal a story of contending human emotions and

3. *Dedication of the Building of the New Hampshire Historical Society, The Gift of Edward Tuck* (Concord, N.H.: New Hampshire Historical Society, 1912), p. 33. The torch, an element in the Society's older seal, was deleted from French's design after this description was written.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 36.

5. Daniel Chester French to Benjamin A. Kimball, July 21, 1911, New Hampshire Historical Society Archives, Series 3, "New Hampshire Historical Society Building." Unless otherwise cited, the following correspondence is from the same collection.

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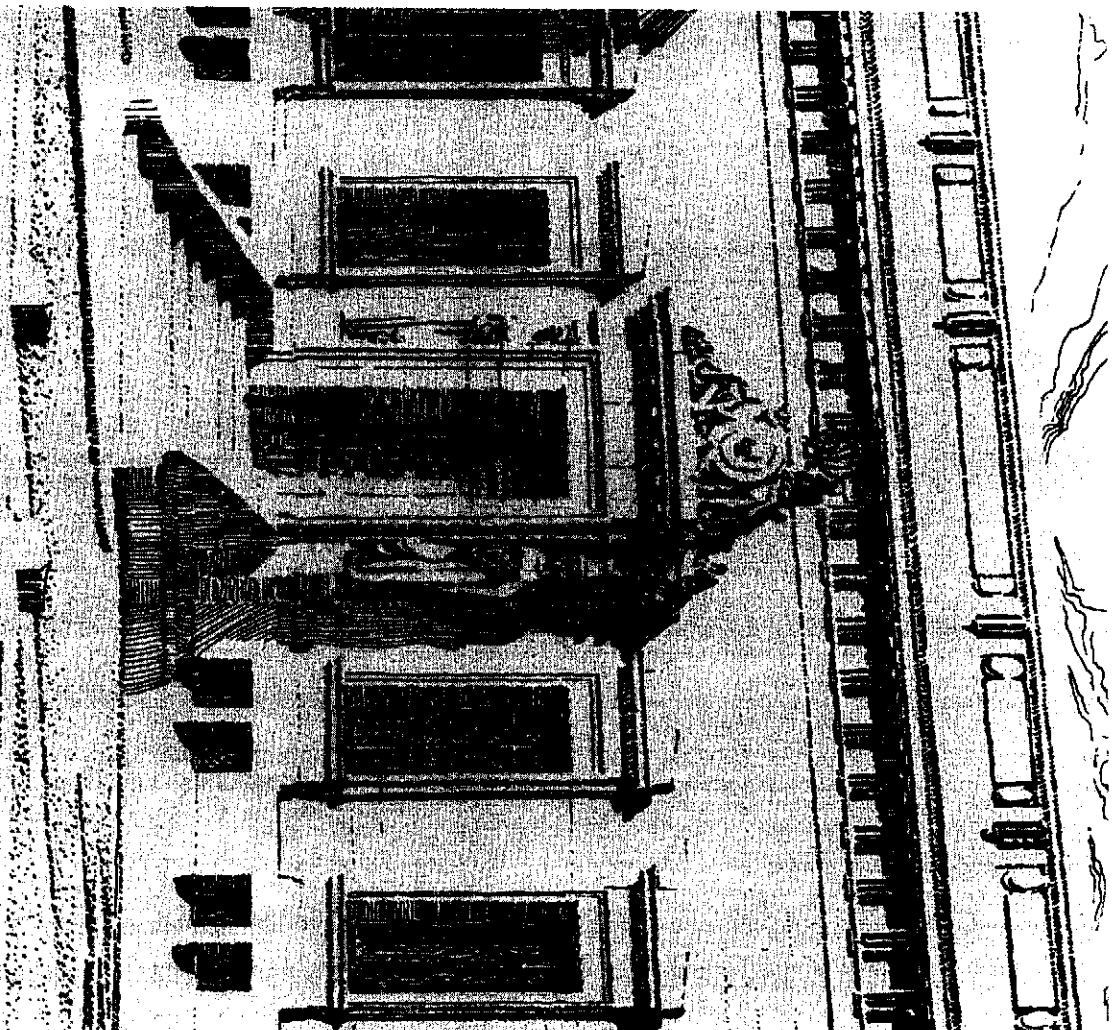
tribulations which belie the impassive expressions of the two winged figures. The story of the group reveals that the creation of even a serenely classical work of art, in perfect harmony with the expectations of its age, could be fraught with difficulty.

It is clear that by the early part of 1909, Guy Lowell (the Society's architect), Benjamin A. Kimball (chairman of the building committee), and Edward Tuck had all agreed that French was the proper man to execute a monumental group to surmount the doorway of the newly designed Society building and to exemplify the Society's purposes. Lowell approached French with the proposal; in May he was able to write Kimball that "Mr. Daniel French is delighted to undertake the work over the doorway . . . but has not yet heard from Mr. Tuck."⁶ By midsummer French had evidently given sufficient thought to the group to be able to quote a price—\$3,250—to Lowell.⁷ It would subsequently become clear, however, that neither architect nor sculptor had fully explored the symbolic content, the importance, or the cost of the group.

In August, 1909, Kimball decided to "take a motor drive over the country for a little outing," and to stop at French's studio in Glendale, Massachusetts. Kimball took along a copy of Lowell's sketches of the Society's building, showing the architect's preliminary design for the doorway. Lowell had originally sketched a portal whose entablature would be supported by Caryatids; on top of the entablature would be two standing figures supporting the seal of the Society. This ambitious plan was discarded by February, 1909, probably because of the excessive amount of carving it would have required. By the time of Kimball's "little outing," the doorway had been redrawn with an entablature supported by engaged Greek Ionic columns. The figures atop the doorway remained the same, and bore a close resemblance to the central bas relief over the doorways of the Boston Public Library. If French had elaborated this design, the result would have been both dull and close to plagiarism.

6. Guy Lowell to Benjamin A. Kimball, May 20, 1909.

7. Guy Lowell to Benjamin A. Kimball, August 14, 1909.



A preliminary design for the Society's doorway by architect Guy Lowell (1870-1927), with standing figures flanking the door and supporting the seal. From a printed ink rendering dating before February, 1909. NHHS Collections.

Kimball and French discussed the matter at Chesterwood, the sculptor's Glendale studio. The sculptor subsequently wrote to architect Lowell:

Mr. Kimball was here on Friday, and I had a long talk with him in regard to the building at Concord. . . . He told me that the design for the sculpture and ornamental work over the front entrance need not necessarily be the design that you submitted to me. I certainly

think very highly of that design, and shall be very glad to follow it if it is your wish and also the wish of Mr. Tuck and Mr. Kimball. Will you kindly let me hear from you about this, whether I am to follow this design exactly or whether I shall be at liberty to depart from it.⁸

Lowell replied, "By all means, I wanted you to break away from the design suggested on my drawing and do exactly what you consider best."⁹

French immediately prepared to model a new design for the doorway group, but two major questions soon arose. Lowell's first contract drawings for the doorway had shown three rough blocks of granite atop the entablature. These were installed by the New England Granite Company and left uncut until the sculptor's design should be in hand.¹⁰ By mid-August, 1909, Lowell had had second thoughts about the advisability of using three separate stones for a single sculptural group and had redesigned the doorway with one large stone, estimated to weigh thirty-five tons, to be substituted for the three already installed.¹¹ Lowell soon discovered, however, that removing the three blocks already in place and installing a new monolith would be a more vexing and expensive matter than he had anticipated.

Meanwhile, French had been considering Lowell's suggestion for the doorway. Following his visit to French's studio, Benjamin Kimball had sent the sculptor an engraving of the Society's seal for inclusion in the group.¹² Neither Lowell's sketch of the doorway nor the corporate seal appealed to the sculptor, and French resolved to break free from every suggestion as he developed his model. In early September, French wrote to Lowell:

8. Daniel Chester French to Guy Lowell, August 23, 1909.
9. Guy Lowell to Daniel Chester French, August 24, 1909.
10. Guy Lowell to Benjamin A. Kimball, August 18, 1909; Guy Lowell to Daniel Chester French, August 24, 1909; Guy Lowell to Benjamin A. Kimball, August 28, 1909.
11. *Ibid.*
12. Benjamin A. Kimball to Daniel Chester French, August 24, 1909.

The estimate as you know, was made with the understanding that the model was to be simply a development of the design that you sent me, and for this it was enough, though certainly not high; but for an original design it is not enough, and if an original design is desired, I feel that I should receive a larger sum,—five thousand dollars.

As far as I am concerned, I shall be satisfied to abide by the original understanding and carry out the design which you sent me. . . . The only objection that might be made to it might be that it is too nearly like the design over the entrance to the Boston Library and other excellent precedents.¹³

Lowell immediately forwarded French's letter to Benjamin Kimball, with a note that "an entirely original design made by Mr. French quite unhampered by anything, would of course add interest and dignity to the building."¹⁴

In his turn, Kimball followed the course he usually took in a situation involving a cost overrun: he consulted Edward Tuck. If Tuck accepted French's proposal, he would pay \$5,000—the price originally budgeted for the model *and* the sculpture—for French's design alone. On September 20, Tuck cabled his typically laconic reply, "Accept French's design."¹⁵

Tuck's decision solved the first problem, and the sculptor was immediately informed that he had the freedom he sought. But the three stones in place over the entrance remained a dilemma that could not be solved by a cable from Paris. Lowell frankly admitted his error:

I have referred to the specifications on the New Hampshire Historical Society Building . . . and find that unfortunately they do not state that the stone over the main door shall be in one piece and our contract drawings show it in three pieces. This matter seems to have gotten by Mr. [Timothy P.] Sullivan [the Society's building inspector] and all of us. I presume that there is not the least question

13. Daniel Chester French to Guy Lowell, September 8, 1909.

14. Guy Lowell to Benjamin A. Kimball, September 9, 1909.

15. Benjamin A. Kimball to Guy Lowell, September 20, 1909.

whatever but the stone must be in one piece, irrespective of this situation."¹⁶

Among the several problems involved in replacing the three stones with a single block was that of developing a technique for lifting the new monolith into place. It appears that the Central Building Company, prime contractors for the structure, arrived at a novel suggestion. By the fall of 1909, the walls of the building had risen to about the height of the doorway entablature. The Central Building Company evidently proposed to lift the stone (now estimated at fourteen rather than thirty-five tons) through the oculus or eye of the rotunda dome and to roll it forward over the foyer of the building. This plan provoked a scornful critique from Benjamin Kimball:

The suggestion of the Central Building Company's superintendent of hoisting the large stone over the entrance, weighing 14 tons, is unique, as he is hunting round to make an arrangement that will do the least harm when it should fall and smash things. To roll a 14 ton stone over a vestibule that was intended only to sustain the weight of its own construction and the passing public, does not seem to have been considered by him.¹⁷

Kimball's withering comments laid the matter to rest, and construction of the building was allowed to proceed with the matter of the three stones unresolved until the following year. In July, 1910, Kimball's faithful and plain-spoken overseer, Timothy P. Sullivan, took the matter in hand, suggesting that

... nothing be done until Mr. French gets here except to get a price for the granite block delivered at the site. The stone to be bedded and roughed out as may be indicated on plan.¹⁸

Sullivan's advice was followed. The New England Granite Works of Concord proposed to deliver a single block for \$1,800, but would not guarantee the stone against defects once carving had begun, and would not give a firm price or assume any risks in raising the

16. Guy Lowell to Benjamin A. Kimball, August 18, 1909.

17. Benjamin A. Kimball to Guy Lowell, October 29, 1909.

18. Timothy P. Sullivan to Benjamin A. Kimball, July 19, 1910.

stone and setting it over the doorway.¹⁹ John Swenson, a local quarryman, proposed to supply a block of Concord granite, guaranteed free of imperfections, and to mount it over the doorway for \$2,950.²⁰ French visited Concord in September, 1910, and his remarks confirmed the advantages of using a single stone.

I am convinced . . . that, in spite of the expense, we should advise Mr. Tuck to substitute a single stone for the two now in place over the main entrance. The joint between the two stones is . . . 3 / 16 of an inch in thickness, the same as between the other stones on the exterior of the building and these are so obvious that I feel that a similar line across the middle of the group and through the face of the central coat-of-arms (where it would come) would be a serious disfigurement. . . . Another advantage of using a single stone will be that the carving can be done in the shop where pneumatic tools can be used and where all the conditions are favorable and will conduce to better workmanship than could be secured if the group were carved in place.²¹

John Swenson readily agreed to French's proposal that the group be carved indoors before being mounted on the building, offering to "allow the Carvers to carve the statuary in my shop" and to use compressed air "for a fair compensation."²²

All that remained was Tuck's approval. This came on October 8 in a dramatically succinct telegram signed with Tuck's cable code: "Single Stone Tuckibus."

Meanwhile, the long-suffering Benjamin Kimball found himself beset by another problem—the unaccountably slow and intuitive ways of the artist. As early as November, 1909, Kimball wrote hopefully to French to ask whether the sculptor's model "has been so far completed that you could send me a photograph of it."²³ French, who had moved to New York City for the winter,

19. D. L. McLaren to Benjamin A. Kimball, July 21, 1910.

20. John Swenson to Benjamin A. Kimball, September 14, 1910.

21. Daniel Chester French to Benjamin A. Kimball, September 25, 1910.

22. John Swenson to Benjamin A. Kimball, September 27, 1910.

23. Benjamin A. Kimball to Daniel Chester French, November 10, 1909.

replied that it had not, but that he was "trying experiments and hope[d] to have something to submit to Mr. Lowell in a few days."²⁴ French's few days stretched into a month, then two, then three. Finally, in February, 1910, the model (probably merely a *maquette* or sketch in clay) was ready and French sent photographs to Kimball and to architect Lowell, who carried them to Paris on a winter visit to Edward Tuck.²⁵ Evidently all parties agreed on certain changes, which were incorporated into the model. French traveled to England in the summer of 1910, while Kimball anxiously wrote to the sculptor's studio to inquire whether "the model . . . is being prepared for the carvers, and will be ready for Mr. French's final touches upon his return, so that we shall get the model very soon after his arrival?"²⁶

This was not to be, for in September, following a visit to Concord, French wrote Kimball that he was "already at work upon the ¼ size model, which in the course of three or four weeks, I shall have ready to show to you if you are in New York."²⁷ Kimball and Lowell travelled to New York to see this second model in November, 1910, at the same time that Swenson was quarrying the stone in Concord for the sculptural group. Evidently the architect and building chairman were pleased with what they saw, for the sculptor proceeded to enlarge the model to full size. In February, 1911, French wrote to Kimball that "the full sized model . . . has been completed and is now being cast in plaster. . . . I think the model can be delivered to the granite cutters some time next week." The sculptor then proceeded to raise an issue which would substantially change the design of the group and delay its completion:

When it came to modelling the seal on the shield between the two figures it was borne in upon me that the present seal is not a decorative thing, and certainly not very good artistically. I have, therefore, made

24. Daniel Chester French to Benjamin A. Kimball, November 13, 1909.

25. B. F. W. Russell to Benjamin A. Kimball, February 9, 1910.

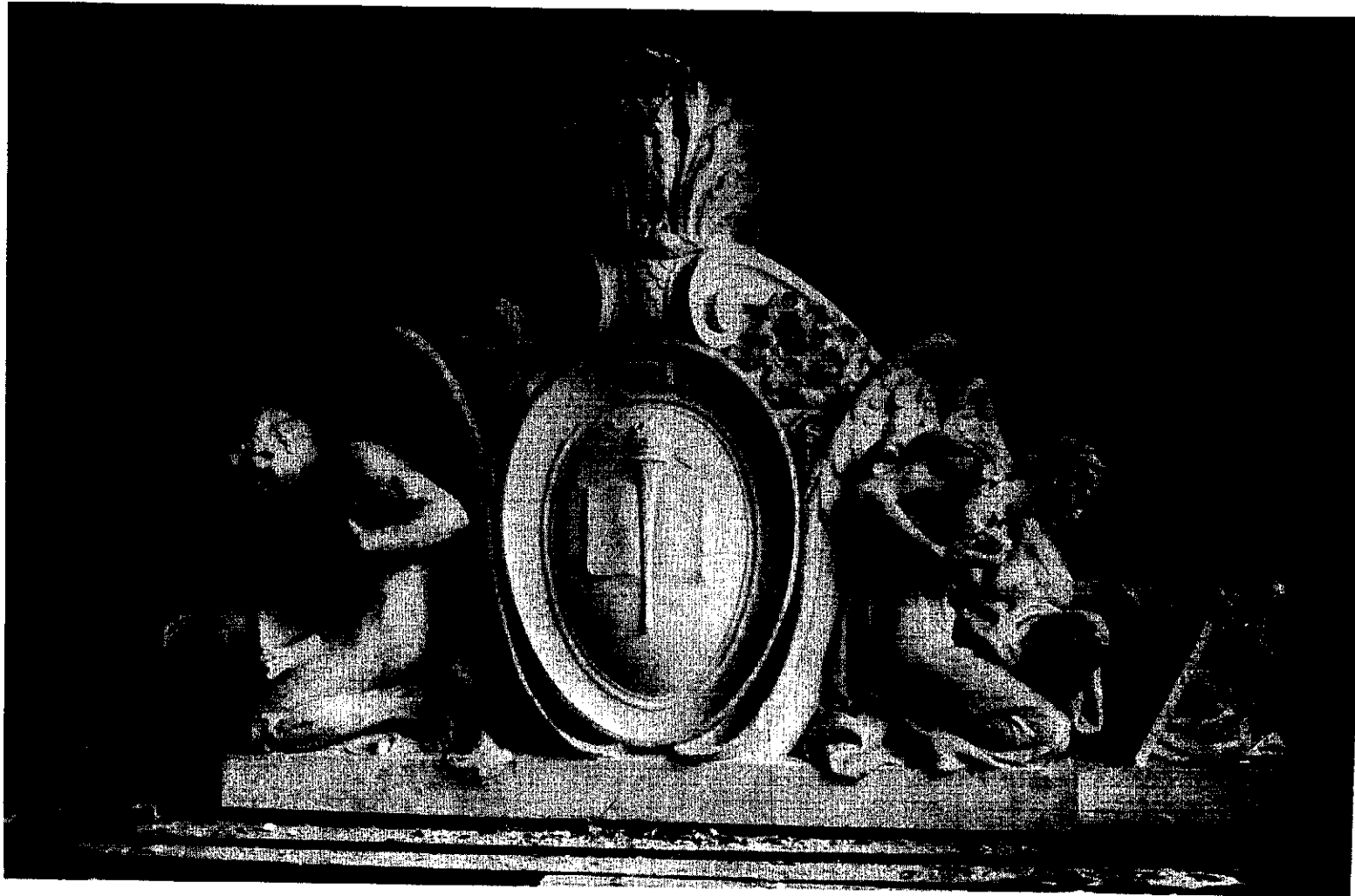
26. Benjamin A. Kimball to Daniel Chester French, July 19, 1910.

27. Daniel Chester French to Benjamin A. Kimball, September 25, 1910.



An early model for French's sculptural group, probably in clay, 1910. This photograph of the model was made for Edward Tuck and the building committee to examine and approve. NHHS Collections.

An early model for French's sculptural group, probably in clay, 1910. This photograph of the model was made for Edward Tuck and the building committee to examine and approve. NHHS Collections.



The full-sized plaster model, apparently photographed in French's New York City studio in 1911, before shipment to John Swenson's stone shed in Concord. Photographed by A. B. Bogart of New York City. NHHS Collections.

a new design. . . . As soon as may be I will send you a photograph of my design for the seal and . . . I hope the Society will permit the design that I have made to remain on the shield and not oblige me to adapt the present seal to this purpose.²⁸

Unaware that an apparently minor change would result in some six months' delay, Kimball confidently replied, "Model the shield and the seal on it just as you would have it, and I will attempt to have it approved by the Society after you send a photograph of your design."²⁹ Three days later, Kimball assured French that "I have had a conference with some of the leading men of the Society and they agree to adopt the design for [a] seal you recommend. Please send photograph."³⁰

As the time approached for shipment of the plaster model to Concord, Kimball reserved a heated place in Swenson's building where stonecutters could inspect the sculptor's design, the block of granite, and the pneumatic tools available.³¹ French wrote to recommend that the Society request carving bids from Frank C. Recchia of Cambridge and the Piccirilli brothers of New York City. Then, just as the model was due to arrive in Concord, Kimball received a note from French stating that "at the eleventh hour" the sculptor had become dissatisfied with the finial atop the piece and had decided to redesign it. Breathing a sigh of resignation, Kimball (who by now realized that no promise by an artist ought to be considered binding) replied to French:

Yours . . . is received, apologizing, in a way, for what may be called delay. Note what you say of making a new design for top decoration and [that you] think it much more satisfactory. Of course I am not a judge, but when you say it is more satisfactory, it receives my endorsement.³²

Since the model remained in New York longer than planned,

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28. Daniel Chester French to Benjamin A. Kimball, February 6, 1911.
 29. Benjamin A. Kimball to Daniel Chester French, February 8, 1911.
 30. Benjamin A. Kimball to Daniel Chester French, February 11, 1911.
 31. Benjamin A. Kimball to Daniel Chester French, February 8, 1911.
 32. Benjamin A. Kimball to Daniel Chester French, February 21, 1911.

the stonecutters inspected it in French's studio there. Piccirilli Brothers submitted a bid of \$3,700, while Frank Recchia, determined to obtain the commission, quoted a price of \$3,000 and stated that he would reduce even this bid if necessary to receive the contract. French recommended that the Society accept Recchia's bid, but noted that Recchia wished to have the stone shipped from Concord to his studio in Cambridge. By now exasperated by his failure to get the first blow struck on the stone waiting in Swenson's shed, Kimball wrote pointedly to the sculptor:

Mr. Recchia's suggestion of moving a thirty ton stone to Cambridge is impracticable. . . . The Swenson contract is very favorable for us, and we do not wish to make any change in it.³³

Still the matter stalled. More than a week later, French wrote to Kimball to restate Recchia's desire to "rough out" the group in Concord, then ship the stone to Cambridge for finishing. Again the sculptor stated that he would delay shipment of the model, which was "now entirely finished," until this point was settled.³⁴ Kimball fired off a telegram refusing Recchia's proposition and insisting that the model be shipped immediately to Concord.

By now Kimball was becoming anxious. The model was not yet in Concord. The seal on the model was not the one to be duplicated by the stonecutter. French had not yet completed his design of the new emblem.³⁵ Carving of the group would require at least three months. It was imperative that the group be mounted over the doorway by September first so that the lawn could be graded and seeded in time for the dedication of the building in October. To make matters worse, Recchia refused to guarantee a completion date for his work.

Finally, on April 3, 1911, French's model was delivered at Swenson's stone shed. By April 7, Recchia was at work on the block of stone. By April 21, Kimball had journeyed to New York and

33. Benjamin A. Kimball to Daniel Chester French, March 4, 1911.

34. Daniel Chester French to Benjamin A. Kimball, March 15, 1911.

35. Daniel Chester French to Benjamin A. Kimball, March 20, 1911; Daniel Chester French to Guy Lowell, March 22, 1911.



Plaster model of Daniel Chester French's new design for the New Hampshire Historical Society's seal, to be incorporated in his sculptural group. The design was approved from this model at an adjourned annual meeting, July 19, 1911. Photographed by the Kimball Studio, Concord, 1911-12. NHHS Collections.

approved French's model for a new seal for the Society, to be carved on the cartouche in the center of the group. In May, Kimball sailed to France to visit Edward Tuck. Tuck was pleased with French's design for the Society's seal and requested that the design be approved at the Society's annual meeting in June.³⁶

Since the trustees and members of the Society had not seen the new seal, Kimball asked French to send the plaster model to Concord in time for the annual meeting. Alas, the sculptor could not meet so exacting a deadline. On June 9, five days before the meeting, French wrote that completion of the design had taken longer than expected, but that the model would be sent the following day. He added that he hoped the Society would approve the design since "they are acquiring for nothing what I should have to charge a thousand dollars for under ordinary circumstances."³⁷

Eleven days after the meeting, French had heard no report and wrote anxiously to Kimball to learn whether the Society had rejected the new seal. Kimball's reply explained the matter simply: the model had not arrived in Concord until the day after the annual meeting.³⁸

The matter was soon remedied, however. In the absence of the model, the annual meeting had been adjourned until July 19th, and at that time French's design was enthusiastically accepted and the sculptor was elected an honorary member of the Society.³⁹ Highly gratified, French replied cordially that

New Hampshire, as my native state, occupies a very warm place in my heart and I am glad and proud to be associated with an organization which has for so long a period recorded her history and achievements.⁴⁰

36. Benjamin A. Kimball to Daniel Chester French, May 29, 1911.

37. Daniel Chester French to Benjamin A. Kimball, June 9, 1911.

38. Daniel Chester French to Benjamin A. Kimball, June 25, 1911; Benjamin A. Kimball to Daniel Chester French, June 29, 1911.

39. Daniel Chester French to Benjamin A. Kimball, July 21, 1911.

40. *Ibid.*

The difficulties between French the artist and Kimball the businessman were now nearly over. But the block of stone was still not carved, and another artist, Frank Recchia, remained a source of vexation to Kimball. The building committee had originally set September 1, 1911 as the deadline for installation of the completed sculpture so that the building could be dedicated in October. By August, Kimball had lost all hope of having the group in place at the appointed time. Somewhat plaintively, he wrote to French that the Tucks had engaged return passage to France on November 15th.

We must dedicate before that date. . . . I am well aware that the carving of the group cannot be rushed, and shall not venture to suggest haste for fear of bad results, so am looking complacently on the granite's wasting and the group growing, to the end sought, the first of November. . . . The contractor for the carving, if I may be allowed to say it, don't seem to have any idea of the amount of labor on the group, as he . . . said it would be done about the 15th of October, and all complete. As little as I know about it, this seems impossible, but hope he is right.⁴¹

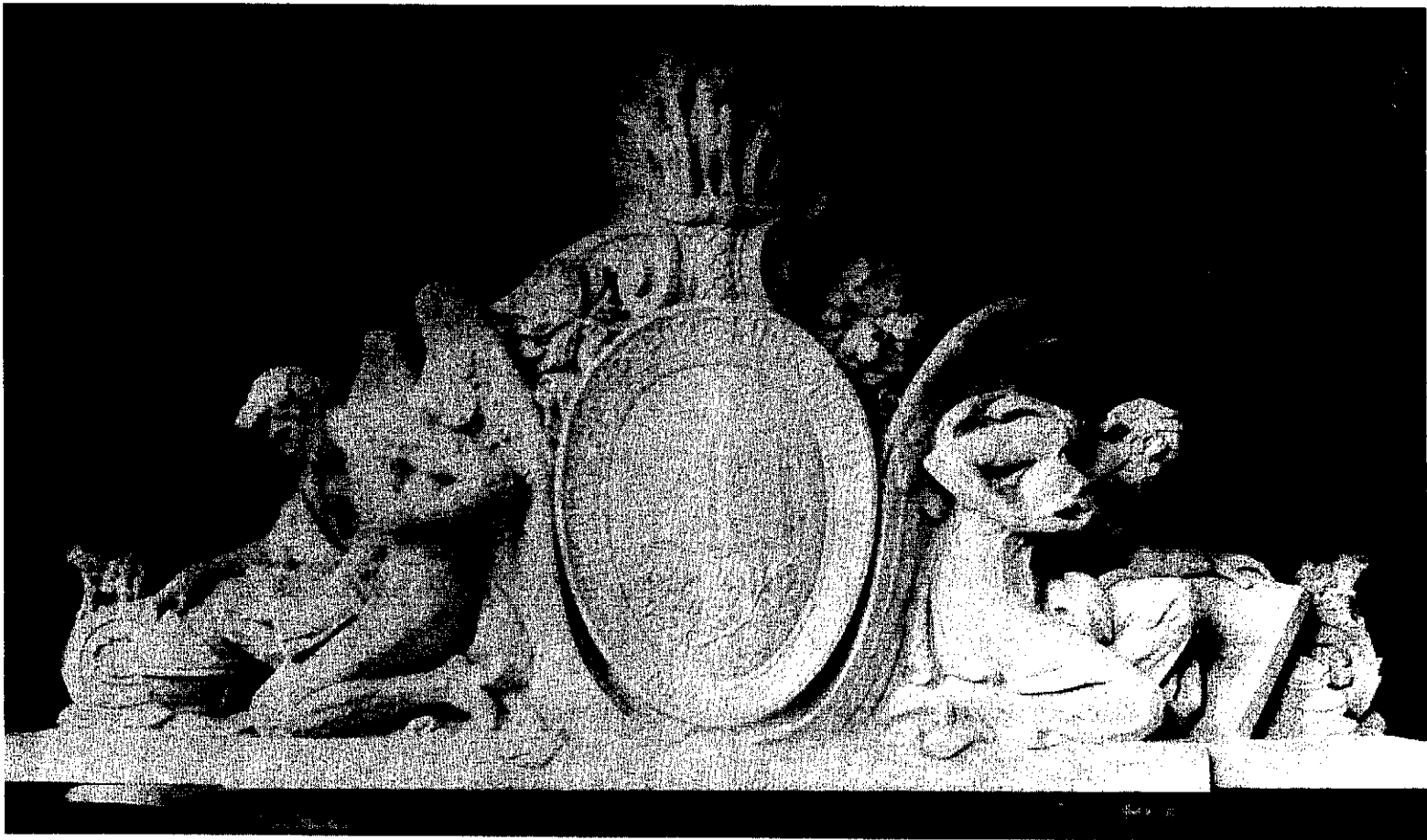
Throughout September a flurry of letters passed back and forth between Lowell, French, and Kimball as the latter anxiously attempted to orchestrate the completion of the group and the removal of the three troublesome stones atop the doorway. By October 2, Kimball could report that the group was

nearly completed and certainly looks beautiful. Its fine lines show more in the granite than I thought they would. . . . Mr. Swenson is cutting out the three blocks from over the entrance to make room for the single stone, and will have it done in season. . . . He has requested that a tie be left in the granite to hold the heads, so that the jar of moving will not affect them.⁴²

The group was officially completed on October 11, although French was too ill with sciatica to come to Concord to inspect it

41. Benjamin A. Kimball to Daniel Chester French, August 21, 1911.

42. Benjamin A. Kimball to Daniel Chester French, October 2, 1911.



The granite sculpture, incorporating the new seal, was completed on October 11, 1911, and photographed by the Kimball Studio while still supported on blocks in Swenson's shed. It was carved by Frank C. Recchia of Cambridge, Massachusetts, and was lifted to its position over the doorway by the first of November. NHHS Collections.

at that time.⁴³ Swenson employed workmen who had roughed out the group under Recchia's supervision to assist in lifting the stone into place over the doorway.⁴⁴ On November 1, Kimball wrote to French that "the group is practically in place and is safe. Tomorrow if fair, will see it placed back on the bed of lead."⁴⁵ Kimball also asked the sculptor's advice about removing the granite ties that supported the heads of the kneeling figures. French replied:

I have no doubt it was an anxious time when it was suspended between heaven and earth. I felt anxious about it myself.

About removing the supports at the back of the heads. — I think the judgment of the men who know the material would be more valuable than mine, but I should not have any doubt of its being strong enough without them.

I hope the group looks as well on the building as it did in the shed. I have seldom been as satisfied with the aspect of any of my productions as I did with that.⁴⁶

By November 11, the staging had been removed from the doorway and the entire facade of the building had been washed in preparation for the dedication. This ceremony took place on November 23, 1911. The tribulations of preceding months and years were set aside as the five or six hundred people present reveled in the glories of one of the finest buildings in the United States. Daniel Chester French was singled out for special recognition and gratitude. Edward Tuck, the donor of the building, praised the "monumental sculpture over the portal of the building" as "the grandest specimen of the artistic work of a son of our own State, one of America's most celebrated sculptors."⁴⁷ At the banquet

43. Daniel Chester French to Benjamin A. Kimball, August 30, 1911; Benjamin A. Kimball to Daniel Chester French, October 12, 1911.

44. Benjamin A. Kimball to Daniel Chester French, October 12, 1911.

45. Benjamin A. Kimball to Daniel Chester French, November 1, 1911.

46. Daniel Chester French to Benjamin A. Kimball, November 3, 1911.

47. *Dedication of the Building of the New Hampshire Historical Society, The Gift of Edward Tuck*, p. 36.



On November 23, 1911, Edward and Julia Tuck led five or six hundred people from an opening reception in the State House through the Historical Society doorway for the first time; Tuck called his involvement with the building "perhaps the happiest inspiration in my life." Detail from photograph by the Kimball Studio. NHHS Collections.

