MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS HELD

NOVEMBER 15, 1912.

The second meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts during the fiscal year 1913 was held in its office in the Lemon Building, 1729 New York avenue, NW., Washington, D. C., on Friday, November 15, 1912. The following members were present:

Mr. French, the chairman;

Mr. Olmsted;

Mr. Moore;

Mr. Blashfield;

Mr. Anderson;

also Colonel Spencer Cosby, the Secretary and Executive Officer.

The meeting was called to order by the Chairman at 11:45, and proceeded at once to the business before it.

1. The minutes of the preceding meeting, held on August 9th, were presented and approved.

2. Upon motion duly made and seconded, the following resolution was adopted:

RESOLVED, That, to conform with the requirements of Section 3679 of the Revised Statutes of the United States, the funds appropriated for the Commission of Fine Arts for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1913, be made available at any time during the year and that no special allotments by quarters be made.

3. Colonel Cosby called the attention of the members to the section in the Sundry Civil Act approved August 24, 1912, which provides that no money or fee paid for notary service in connection with the attestation of accounts for travel or other expenses against the United States shall be paid or reimbursed by the Government.

4. The Commission discussed the section of the Panama Canal Act, approved August 24, 1912, which provides that the Commission of Fine Arts "may make report to the President of their recommendation regarding the artistic character of the structures of the canal". Colonel Cosby stated that he had written to Colonel Goethals, Chairman of the Isthmian Canal Commission, to ascertain his views as to the action desired of the Commission of Fine Arts under the above law. He read the answer received from Colonel Goethals indicating that it might be advisable for the Commission to visit the Canal Zone before making its report. The Secretary stated that the Comptroller of the Treasury had decided that the expenses of the Commission for such a trip would have to be paid from its own appropriation. A letter has been written Colonel Goethals asking for further information in regard to the proposed visit of inspection. The Chairman was thereupon authorized to make all arrangements that may be found necessary to enable the Commission to make the proposed report.

5. The Commission formally approved the annual report for the past fiscal year, copies of which had been sent to all the members, and authorized the Secretary to take the necessary steps to have it printed in as good form as possible. Colonel Cosby explained that, on account of the smallness of this year's appropriation, it was undesirable to have the report printed by private contract as was done last year, and stated that it was his intention, when the report has been forwarded by the President to Congress and ordered printed by that body as a public document, to ask the proper committee to have the report printed in a style similar to that used last year. This suggestion received the approval of the Commission.

6. Upon motion made and seconded, the Commission approved the report made to the Isthmian Canal Commission on October 14, 1912, by members of the Committee (Mr. Hastings and Mr. Blashfield) appointed by the Chairman, upon sketches and designs

submitted by various competitors for the interior decoration of the public rooms of the Washington Hotel at Colon, Canal Zone. The report recommended that the sketches and design of Messrs. Mack, Jenney and Tyler be accepted.

7. Colonel Cosby brought up the matter of the proposed memorial to Mr. Millet and Major Butt. Mr. French had brought with him the plans and estimates for the fountain, and also a plaster model of each of the two allegorical figures in bas-relief which are to be incorporated in it. As the estimates exceeded the amount available, it was decided to request the architect (Mr. Hastings) to revise the design so as to reduce the cost. Mr. French agreed to take up this matter with Mr. Hastings.

8. The members then left the office for luncheon. Upon returning, after a short interval, they inspected, at the request of the President, the various designs submitted to him for a medal to Captain Rostron. After careful consideration the Commission recommended that the design showing the obverse and reverse of the medal, submitted by Mr. John Flanagan, 1931 Broadway, New York City, be accepted. (See Exhibit A.)

9. Mr. French stated that he had had a conference with the Acting Secretary of the Navy, Mr. Beekman Winthrop, regarding designs submitted to the latter for a memorial tablet to be made from parts of the wreck of the Maine or its equipment, and that Mr. Winthrop had referred these designs to the Commission for its recommendation. After an inspection of the designs, and of various accompanying photographs, the Commission recommended to the Secretary sketch number 2 by Charles Keck, 40 West 10th street, New York City, as the most meritorious preliminary design. (See Exhibit B.)

10. The Secretary next presented to the Commission a letter from Lawrason Riggs of Baltimore, Trustee under the will of Harriet Lane Johnston of a fund of one

hundred thousand dollars for the erection in the city of Washington of a statue of former President James Buchanan, asking the advice of the Commission as to the ~~xxxx~~ ~~xx~~ procedure to be used in procuring from Congress permission to erect the monument, getting designs, selecting an architect, &c. The Chairman appointed Mr. Olmsted and Colonel Cosby a committee to confer with Mr. Riggs regarding the whole matter and to report the result of their conference to the Commission at its next meeting.

11. The Commission then gave consideration to "the question of the character of the treatment of the unimproved portions of the central island of the Union Station Plaza", upon which its advice had been requested by the Board of Commissioners of the District of Columbia. Mr. Anderson, who had taken up the matter with the architects, Messrs. D. H. Burnham and Company of Chicago, laid before the Commission a number of sketches showing studies of various treatments of this portion of the Plaza. These were carefully considered and discussed, but none proved satisfactory, and the Commission finally decided to recommend that the plans of the architects for the pavement of this central island be adhered to. (See Exhibit C.)

12. The Commission next considered the request of the Officer in charge of Public Buildings and Grounds for advice as to whether the old house in Montrose Park - called the Boyce Mansion - and the small outbuildings should be put in good repair or should be torn down. After an inspection of the buildings and grounds later in the day, the Commission was of the opinion that the stable and all the other outbuildings should be removed, but, if Congress will make the appropriation needed to restore the main building, it should be retained. In its restoration the services of a competent architect should be employed so that the porches, porticos, &c, may be rebuilt in pure Colonial style. The Commission further suggested that the kitchen might be used for a public comfort station and the short passageway connecting it with the main building

might be pierced with arches or other openings affording a view of the grounds behind.

13. The Commission also considered the request of the Officer in charge of Public Buildings and Grounds for advice upon the treatment of the fountain of the Peace Monument. After an inspection of the monument later in the day, the Commission approved Colonel Cosby's suggestion that a shell-like or semicircular stone be placed on each face to receive the water, to be supported upon the projecting stone beneath the orifice and to have its edges project beyond that stone so that the water, in falling, will clear it.

14. The Commission at 2:50 P. M., left the Office for Montrose Park where it inspected the grounds and the various buildings. It then proceeded to the Peace Monument at the head of Pennsylvania avenue and inspected the fountain arrangement of that monument. There being no more business to be considered, the Commission adjourned at 4:00 P. M., subject to the call of the Chairman.

Spencer Cosby

Secretary.

Approved: Daniel C. French.

Chairman.

November 16, 1912.

The President,

The White House.

Mr. President:

The Commission of Fine Arts, at its meeting held yesterday, inspected the various designs for the medal to Captain Rostron which had been submitted by artists in response to your invitation of August 17, 1912. After careful consideration the Commission recommends that the design submitted by Mr. John Flanagan, 1931 Broadway, New York City, be accepted.

Very respectfully,

SPENCER COSBY

Colonel, U. S. Army,

ABC Secretary.

Exhibit A

November 16, 1912.

Hon. Beekman Winthrop,

Acting Secretary of the Navy.

Sir:

The Commission of Fine Arts, at its meeting held yesterday, gave careful consideration to your verbal request for the recommendation of the Commission upon the various designs submitted for a memorial tablet to be made from parts of the wreck of the Maine or its equipment.

I am directed to state that the Commission recommends sketch number 2 by Charles Keck, 40 West 10th street, New York City, as the most meritorious preliminary design, and that he be notified to elaborate it. The Commission will be very glad to pass upon the finished design when completed, if desired by the Navy Department.

It is believed that a fair price to pay the sculptor for the entire work necessary for the completion of his model would be one thousand dollars, or as much thereof as the Department has available.

The Commission believes that any of the following firms is competent to make a good casting of the tablets:

The Roman Bronze Works, 275 Greene street, Brooklyn, N. Y.
The Gorham Company, Silversmiths, New York City.
John Williams, Inc., 556 West 57th street, New York City.

By direction of the Commission:

Very respectfully, Exhibit "B"

SPENCER COSBY

SC-ABC- Inclosures.

Colonel, U. S. Army,
Secretary.

November 16, 1912.

The Board of Commissioners
of the District of Columbia,
Washington, D. C.

Sirs:

The Commission of Fine Arts has given careful consideration to the suggestion of the Commissioners of the District of Columbia in their letter of July 12, 1912, that a suitable parking treatment in grass and shrubbery be substituted for the pavement originally contemplated by the architects for the Central Island of the Union Station Plaza. The Commission has had several tentative plans for such parking treatment prepared, but none of them has proved satisfactory, and it therefore recommends that the plans of the architects as to the pavement of the Central Island of the Union Station Plaza be adhered to.

By direction of the Commission:

Very respectfully,

SPENCER COSBY

Colonel, U. S. Army,

SC-ABC

Secretary.

Exhibit "C"