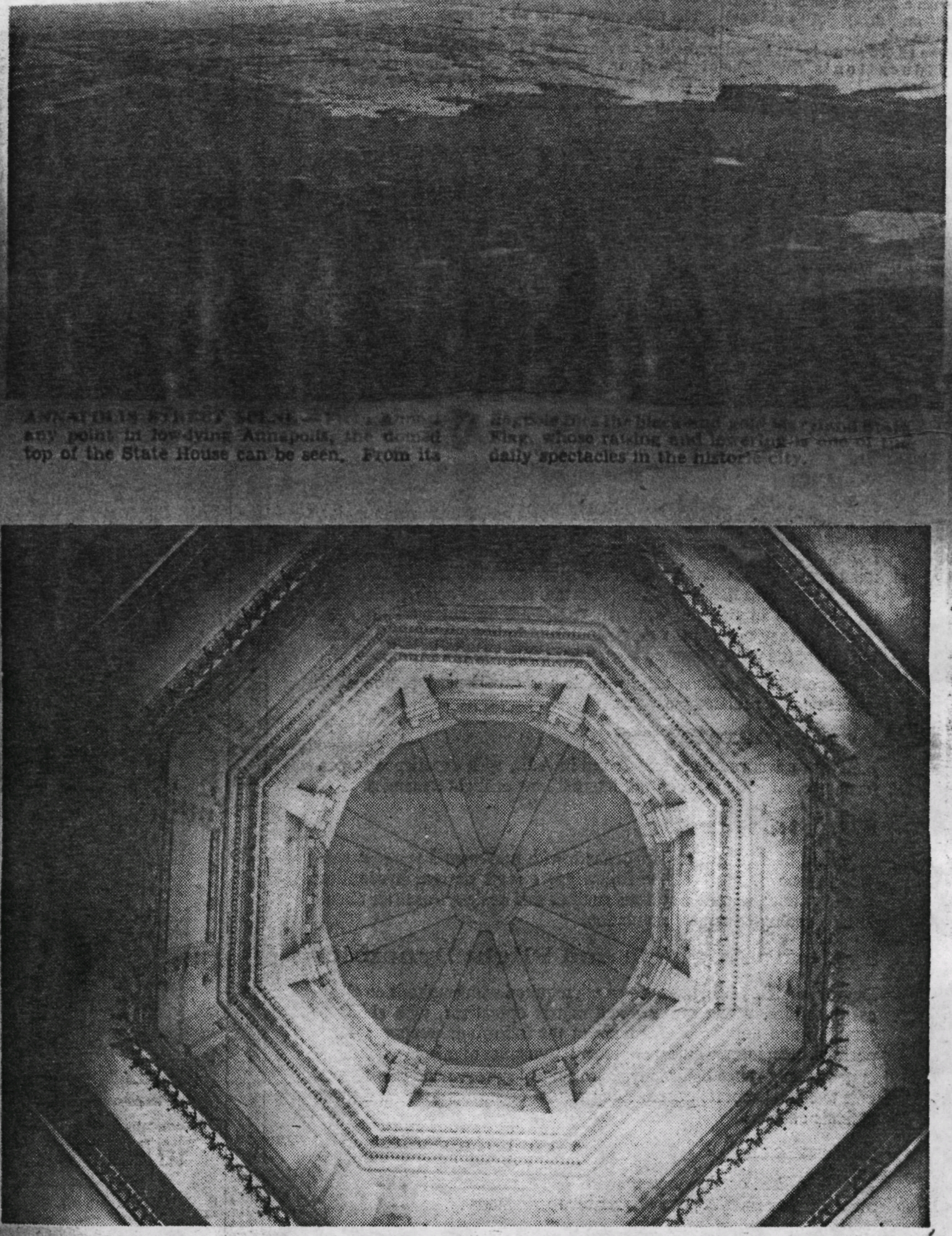


ANNAPOLIS SKYLINE—From almost any point in low-lying Annapolis, the domed top of the State House can be seen. From its ... flag, whose raising and lowering is one of the daily spectacles in the historic city.

UP AND UP AND UP—Visitors to Maryland's State House stare upwards in astonishment as they stand on the marbled first floor to view the ornate plaster work which decorates the interior of the dome, the oldest wooden structure of its type in existence. The original plaster was applied in the 18th century, with renovation work taking place in 1947-1949.

ograph was
ests of the
the oldest
ies.

pen

oors

Week

r Tours
ration

ents of Colonial
of thousands of
and throws open
l Heritage Week.
s of Maryland's
and 1:30 p.m.,

f the brigade of

to the mansions
e port city is
mond-Harwood,
and the Chase
— the tour will
roll the Barris-
er restoration on
St. John's Col-
Hall, the scene
l functions in
ary Annapolis.
ivate homes also
oday, and next
Sunday.

al Triumph

the tour scene
e House, one of
stately build-
rviving triumph
chitecture. To
apolis for the
ns as a delight-

ate capitol still
lding harbored
history. In the
ber, still intact,
on resigned his
commander-in-
ntinental Army
1783. A few
e treaty with
he Revolution-
roved.
ouse tells the
racter and in-
ial Americans
before power
building dis-
hip so precise
f design and
der it a model.
ped dome, a
llubbers and
ecially shows
high order.
to raise two
ove the two-
of the build-
n enormous
en space.
architectural
storians have
the identity
achieved the
e, which has
e prominent
st elaborate

piece of wood framing in existence."

William Buckland, the designer of Gunston Hall in Virginia, was credited with the accomplishment, but recent research has narrowed down the field of many to Joseph Clarke and Joseph Horatio Anderson, both active in Annapolis in the last part of the 18th century.

Dome Prefabricated

The big dome was prefabricated, perhaps the first big job of its type in American building history. Component parts were cut on the ground and fitted together in accordance with a detailed master plan.

A journey up the 150 steps of the stairs between the two shells uncovers some of the secrets of the dome. Visitors, incidentally, are banned from the trip because of official fears of fire.

Massive lengths of bull pine form the foundation for the dome. Upright posts are as wide as 24 inches, hewn and shaped to straddle crossbeams. Weight of the 160-ton dome is distributed by crosspieces bracing the posts which form each angle of an octagon.

On the bridgework-like construction can be seen the markings that served as guides for the workmen. Connecting ends bear painted matched markings such as "D-4," or "W-63" or "SP-16." Each joint is mortised and tenoned and bonded with treenails.

Midway in the dome are unique pressure devices. At some point, the building's custodians discovered that air pressure, built up from the ground floor with the opening of the main doors, was smashing windows.

The problem was solved by placing slats on the bottom portion of the interior windows. On the windows on the outer shell, devices similar to furnace dampers were installed, allowing hinged flaps to swing outward, relieving the pressure.

The top of the climb leads onto the captain's walk—and a breath-taking view.

From this height can be seen the picturesque narrow streets of the capital, the sprawling grounds of the Naval Academy and the broad expanse of Chesapeake Bay, framed by the Eastern Shore. Northward the steel frame of the Bay Bridge stretches across the water.

Damaged by Hurricane

The State House, which cost $35,000, was started in 1772. Damaged by a hurricane in 1775, it lay unfinished during part of the Revolution, and was completed at some unknown date after that war.

Its dome certainly was finished by 1789 for it is pictured in a magazine of that year.

Ten years earlier, the General Assembly started to mee in the building and has me there every session since, wit the exception of the 1861 se sion when it adjourned Frederick because of the stro Confederate sentiment of people of Southern Maryla

Maryland's Governors h been solicitous of the fa dome, which years ago ringed with sprinklers flood its exterior with the of a button.

This year visitors w the completion of a which encircled the State grounds with a low br taining wall and place nial-type lampposts a vals around the lawns

msa_sc6008_1_1-0965.jpg