

The Architecture of the Main Library



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You might go to a library to get a book but what you might find is a great building surrounding the books! Some buildings are great because they won't fall over in the wind, but this building is great because not only is it strong but because it has beautiful art and architecture.

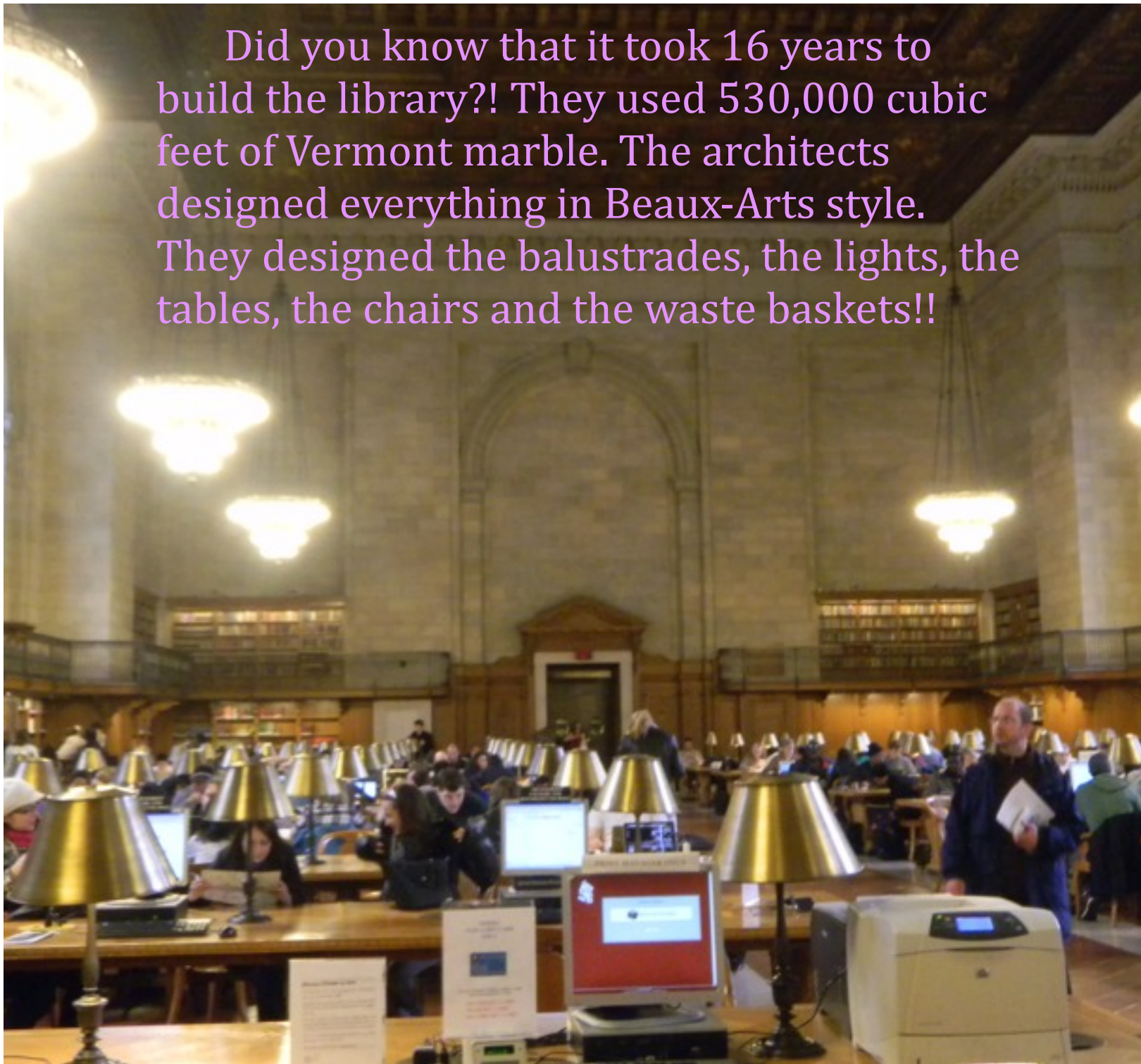
The New York Public Library opened more than 100 years ago. Samuel Tilden, John Jacob Astor and James Lenox combined three libraries to make the main library.

They thought that if New York was going to be one of the greatest cities in the world it needed a great library. They knew that it was important to have lots of books for learning and books just for enjoyment, but what was most important to them to have a beautiful building to keep them in. A beautiful building would bring people into the library to appreciate the books and the amazing architecture.



This is where the wall and ceiling connect inside the library. Look at the detail of the marble and the gold.

Did you know that it took 16 years to build the library?! They used 530,000 cubic feet of Vermont marble. The architects designed everything in Beaux-Arts style. They designed the balustrades, the lights, the tables, the chairs and the waste baskets!!





Sometimes people just say “ya, ya, ya. The art is pretty.” They don’t really take a close look at the art and the architecture of the library on 5th av. and 42nd street.

These rocks used to belong to the Croton Reservoir. Now they are used to support the library. You used to be able to see them from the outside of the library but after they added more to the building you couldn't see it from the outside, but you can still see them from the new part of the library. You can even touch them. After they took down the Croton Reservoir they needed a base for the library. So they decided to use the rocks from the Croton Reservoir to make the base. The rocks are over 100 years old!





The stacks aren't open to the public. They hold the books that don't fit in the Rose Reading Room. The only way to go down to them is if you work there or on special occasions they have tours. They are all above ground. If you go to Bryant Park you can look at the side of the building and see the stacks.

*Under Bryant Park is storage
for the library. If you think
about it the library really takes
up the whole block!!*





The balustrade is one of my favorite things in the library. A balustrade is what connects the railing to the floor.

The ceiling was designed to make it look like you are looking at the sky. They thought it was relaxing. They also thought that your mind can open up when you read.

