

HISTORY OF THE CYCLORAMA BUILDING

According to the Historic American Buildings Survey ([HABS No. NY-6297](#)), the Cyclorama Building was built in three short months, opening September 8, 1888. At the time, cyclorama buildings were popping up around the world as a form of entertainment, their purpose to house 'cycloramas,' or panoramic art displays.¹

Buffalo's first cyclorama painting hung 50 feet high by 400 feet long in a circular fashion inside the interior walls. There were no windows nor interior walls to the original structure, only skylights and lanterns were used to illuminate the painting as a docent described the scene. The original show, "View of Jerusalem on the Day of the Crucifixion of Christ," drew thousands of visitors daily for the two years it ran.² The next show, "The Battle of Gettysburg," ran for another two years. Soon after, cycloramas lost their popularity and in 1907, the building was acquired by the City of Buffalo and used as a roller skating rink, livery, and taxi garage.

By 1937 it fell under such disrepair that the building was condemned. Later that year the building was taken over by the Public Works Administration. Five years later, the building opened as an annex to the Grosvenor Library Reading Room, with newly installed windows and updates to the floors and ceiling. For 21 years the Grosvenor Reading Room hosted lectures, students, and library patrons, including Mr. Charles Lumsden, while studying for his CPA exam. Today the [Grosvenor Room](#) is housed at the central branch of the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library, housing the Library's special collections.

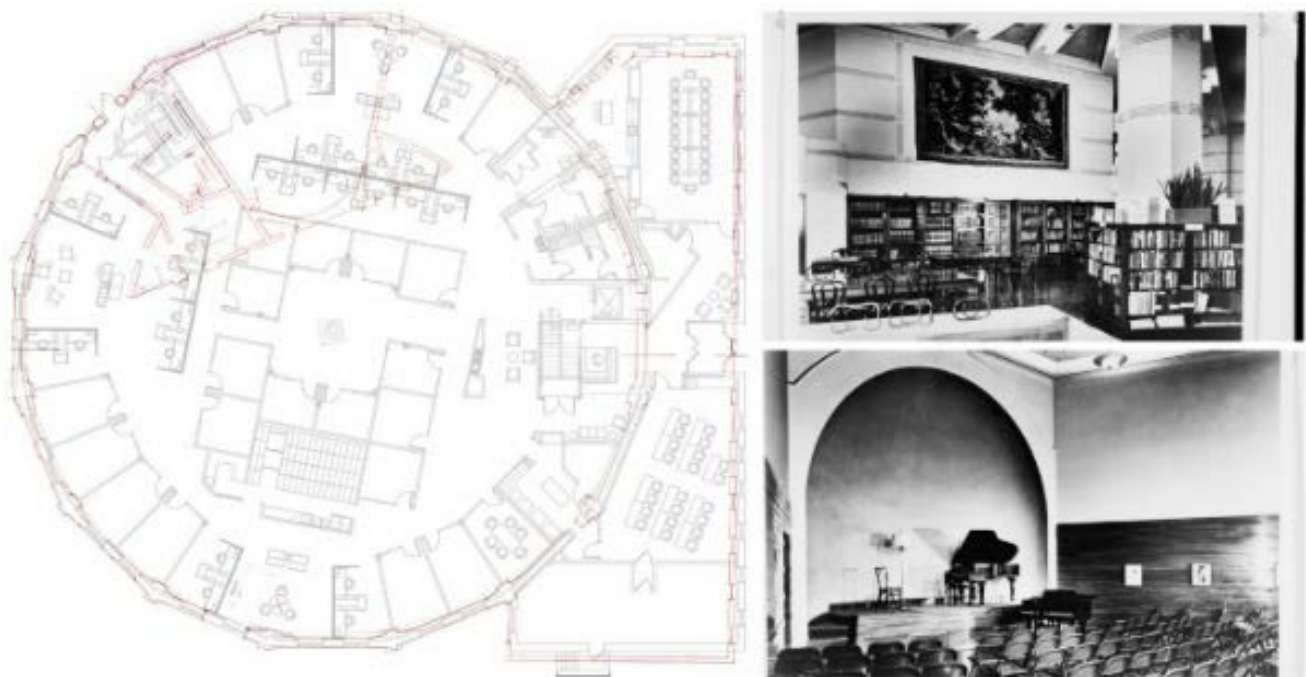



Figure 1: In red, the floorplan of the Grosvenor Library Reading Room circa 1957. In black, Lumsden McCormick's floor plan circa 2012.

¹ [HABS No. NY-6297](#); Library of Congress, Historic American Buildings Survey: Cyclorama Building, 369 Franklin Street, Buffalo, Erie County, NY <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/ny1591/>

² *The Cyclorama Building*; Meg Healy <http://www.buffaloah.com/a/franklin/369/>



After closing this branch of the library, the building once again stood vacant until 1985 when Frank Ciminelli purchased the building. With careful attention to preserving the building, no power tools were able to be used on the brickwork and nothing stronger than detergent could be used to clean it, the second floor was added and the Cyclorama Building became the offices of Ciminelli Construction Company.

In September of 2012, Lumsden McCormick moved into the historic Cyclorama Building. Buffalo's Cyclorama Building is one of three remaining cycloramas in the country. A version of "View of Jerusalem on the Day of the Crucifixion of Christ" exists in [Quebec's Cyclorama of Jerusalem](#) and "The Battle of Gettysburg" may be seen at the [Gettysburg National Military Park Museum and Visitor Center](#).



Figure 2: View of the Cyclorama building looking Southeast circa 1985, 2012.

PHOTO GALLERY



Figure 3: A reproduction of the original poster from the building's opening hangs in our office vestibule after being unveiled at a ribbon cutting ceremony on September 8, 201. The original poster is the property of the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library.



Figure 4: Cyclorama Building looking West circa 1890.

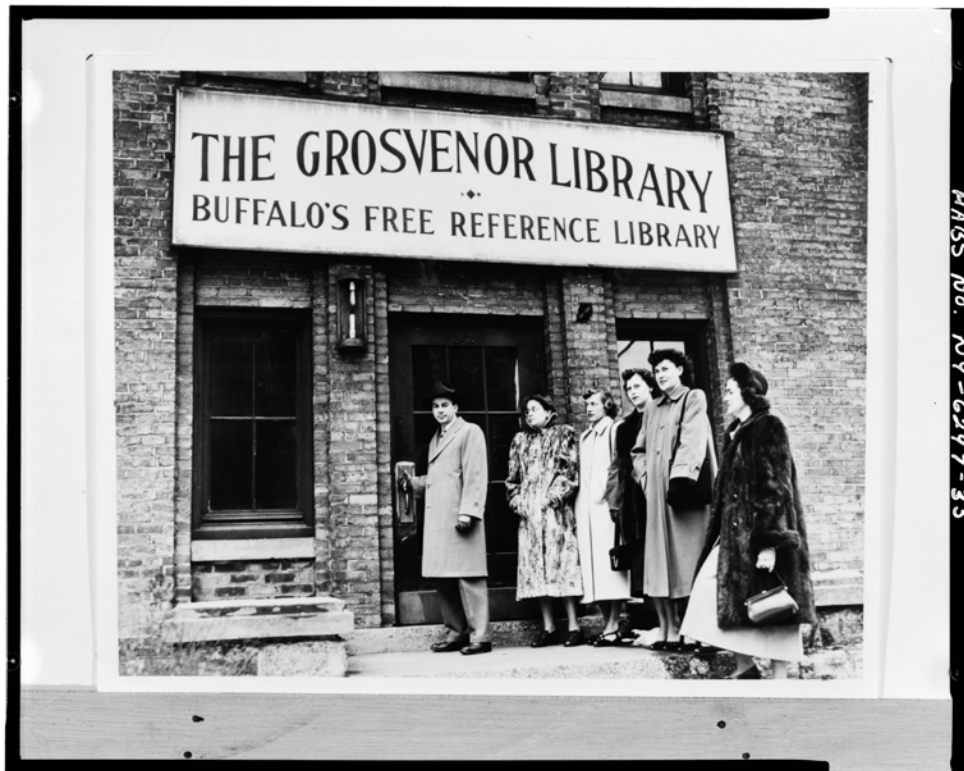


Figure 5: Grosvenor Library Reading Room circa 1945.



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Figure 6: Grosvenor Library Reading Room circa 1945.



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Figure 7: The Grosvenor Library.



Figure 8: General view of building facing Southeast circa 1963.