

The Conception

For my Public History practicum course I am working in a group to produce a digital exhibit for the DC History Center on the Carnegie Library on Mount Vernon Square. The Guastavino Tiles project was originally conceived to be a map that would link the Carnegie Library with other buildings featuring Guastavino tile work throughout Washington, D.C.

The Research

The first phase of my research began by attempting to identify all of the public buildings in Washington, D.C. that had Guastavino tiles.

I reached out to the National Building Museum who in 2013 opened an exhibition titled *Palaces of the People*, that discussed the architectural work of Rafael Guastavino and his company. The National Building Museum graciously supplied me with a complete list of Washington, D.C. sites with Guastavino tiles.

The next step of the process was to research each building. The majority of this was done on the organization's website that currently occupies the respective buildings. With this information I plotted points on the map and constructed the map pin labels.

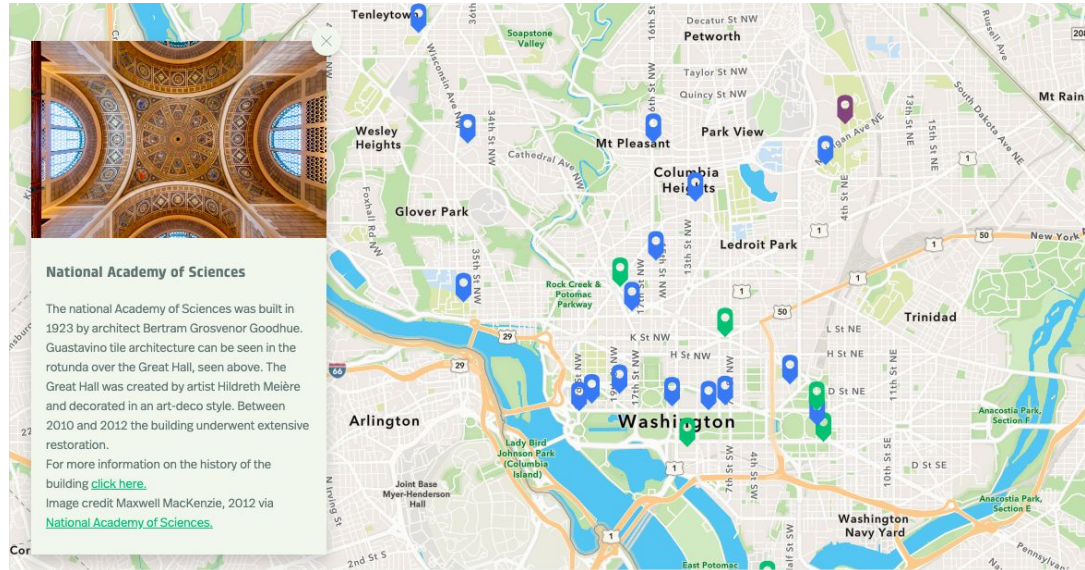
Guastavino Tiles in Washington, D.C.

A Digital Exploration

Project by Rosie Cain

Guastavino's Work in Washington D.C.

Rafael Guastavino, a Spanish architect and master builder, brought the art of Guastavino vaulting and tile work to the United States when he immigrated in 1881. A staple of the American Beaux-Arts movement and City Beautiful movement that shaped the construction of cities throughout America in the early 1900s, Guastavino's work is seen on display in over 20 public buildings, monuments, and churches in Washington, D.C. An architectural ingenuity of its time, Guastavino tile work was constructed at record speeds and is a self supporting tiling system with exposed various brick designs for aesthetic.



The Final Project

After all 23 points on the map were plotted and complete with their respective informational panels, I need to explain what an architectural feat Guastavino tiles were and why they should be appreciated. For this I turned to John Allen Ochsendorf, *Guastavino Vaulting: The Art of Structural Tile* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2010).

I constructed 6 interpretive panels following the map that provided information on Guastavino tiles, Rafael Guastavino, his importance to the American Beaux Arts movement, and the company following his death.

The addition of these panels allows for the Guastavino Tiles in Washington, D.C. project to be both a stand alone experience and an addition to the Carnegie Library exhibition.