

A Tale of Two Customhouses - Images

By Steven W. Hooper



Figure 1: The seven-story Alexander Hamilton Customhouse in New York City was designed by noted American architect Cass Gilbert and built from 1900 -1907. U.S. Customs vacated the building in 1973. The statues of the four continents in front of the building were designed by Daniel Chester French who also designed the Lincoln Monument in Washington D.C. and the Minute Man statue in Concord, New Hampshire.

Source: U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) website <https://www.gsa.gov/historic-buildings/alexander-hamilton-us-custom-house-new-york-ny>.



Figure 2: A closeup of the “America” statue by Daniel Chester French that stands in front of the Alexander Hamilton Customhouse. The statue features the goddess “America” seated on a throne surrounded by symbolism highlighting both North and South America.

Source: New York architecture website <https://nyc-architecture.com/LM/LM012-ALEXANDERHAMILTONCUSTOMHOUSE.htm>.



Figure 3: Central rotunda of the Alexander Hamilton Customhouse in New York City. The rotunda rises to the third story of the building and the ceiling is self-supporting and contains no supporting metal structure. The rotunda was designed by Spanish architect Rafael Guastavino. The panels contain murals depicting shipping activities in the Ports of New York and New Jersey by artist Reginald Marsh.

Source: U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) Services website

<https://www.gsa.gov/historic-buildings/alexander-hamilton-us-custom-house-new-york-ny#photogallery>.



Figure 4: The former customhouse at Castolon, Texas was built in the early 1920s to serve as a Texas Ranger station and U.S. Customhouse. The building was later used as the residence of Magdalena Silvas who worked as a cook while raising five children in the home. The only sculptures in front of this customhouse are a goat and some chickens.

Source: National Park Service (NPS) website <https://www.nps.gov/places/magdalena-house.htm>.



Figure 5: Metal signpost indicating directions to the U.S. Customhouse at Castolon, Texas. The building in the background is the Alvino House which is the oldest known adobe structure in Big Bend National Park. The gap in the mountains is Santa Elena Canyon which was cut by the Rio Grande River and is one of the most scenic areas of the park.

Source: Author's photograph.