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The Breakers Hotel: Palm Beach Fla.

Stock#: 76333

Map Maker: Landes

Date: 1925 circa

Place: West Palm Beach, Florida

Color: Uncolored

Condition: VG

Size: 34 x 8 inches

Price: \$ 1,800.00



Description:

A Stark Illustration of Racial Segregation in the Construction of The Breakers Palm Beach.

Impressive and poignant panoramic photograph of The Breakers hotel in Palm Beach, Florida, taken on the advent of its second reconstruction - the one that elevated the establishment to its current standing as one of the greatest East Coast hotels. The photograph shows the workforce that completed the 1925 renovation and expansion of The Breakers, with notes on the contributing companies: "Turner Construction Co General Contractors New York." "MacGruder & Simpson Contracting Plasterers Ornamental Plaster-Artificial Stone-Stucco San Francisco Los Angeles California" "Schultze & Weaver Architects New York."

The photograph is notable for its lop-sided composition, which sees laborers almost exclusively on the right side of the main staircase, the natural center of the image, with the African American laborers segregated and shunted off to the edge of the image. This kind of segregation was standard practice in Florida in the 1920s, though it is striking in the context of the construction of what is now one of the most glamorous hotels in the United States.

Wikipedia gives the following explanation of the 1925 renovation of the hotel:

After fires in both 1903 and 1925, the hotel reemerged more opulent each time. The second reconstruction of The Breakers was awarded to New York City-based designers Shultze and Weaver, the same minds who would later create many of Manhattan's most coveted hotels: the Pierre, the Sherry-Netherland and Park Avenue's Waldorf Astoria. Described by the duo as "the acme of perfection in design and magnificence," The Breakers reopened in 1926, ushering in a higher degree of European influence and architectural flair. Flagler's newest iteration was modeled after the magnificent Villa Medici in Rome—an ambitious effort that called for 75 artisans brought in from



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Italy. Together they completed the intricate paintings, detailed across the ceilings of the 200-foot-long main lobby and first-floor public rooms, which remain on display today. It was a grand gesture that placed The Breakers in a class all its own.

Detailed Condition:

Tightly-rolled original panoramic photograph. Some attendant creasing. Toning at the right end. Blue ink stamp of W.E. Landes, the West Palm Beach photographer.