In 1938 a furniture unit was established which employed “old school” carpenters, upholsterers and shopworkers who were unable to find work because of physical disabilities or age. The unit was headed by Clarence Wescott, a young designer trained by his father in their basement shop. Workers made chairs, tables, desks, sofas and cabinets – all designed to meet the exact requirements of the institution placing the order. With this unit in place, the Milwaukee Handicraft Project was able to offer full interior design services, coordinating furniture, upholstery materials, draperies and rugs.
The Milwaukee Public Library is still using armchairs and sofas made by project workers for its browsing room. This armchair was designed by Clarence Wescott, woven upholstery fabric by Edmund Wichman, screen printed draperies by Camilla Travanti (Wichman), and hooked rug by Ann Krasnan.
No furniture pieces were put into production until tested for comfort and appearance. The large circular rug was designed by Edmund Wichman for the music room at the University of Wisconsin in Madison.
See Mary Kellogg Rice, *Useful Work for Unskilled Women: A Unique Milwaukee WPA Project* (Milwaukee County Historical Society, 2003) for references and photo credits.