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THE GOLDEN DOME



THE
GOLDEN
DOME

The Golden Dome

The story of the birth of
Iowa's Statehouse —
commemorating the
100th Anniversary
of Iowa's State Capitol
1870-1970

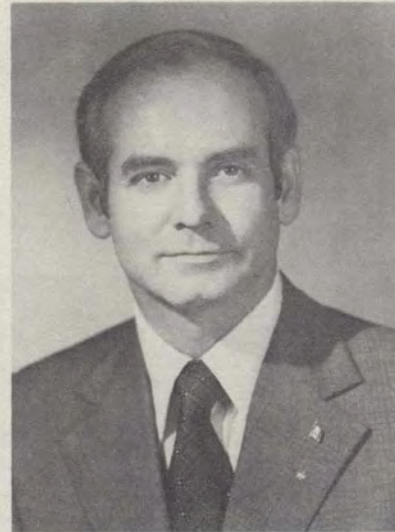
Published at the direction of

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Lieutenant Governor of Iowa

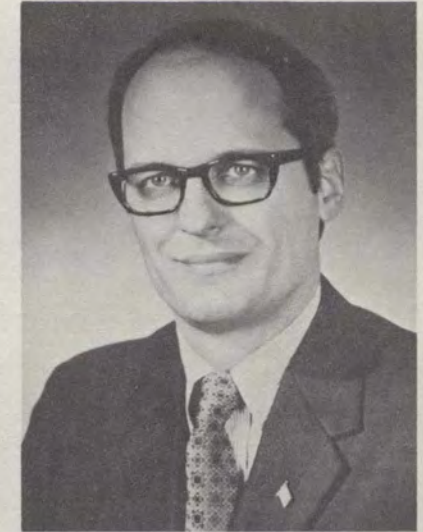
Ralph R. Brown
Secretary of the Senate

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ROBERT D. RAY
Governor of Iowa



ARTHUR A. NEU
Lieutenant Governor of Iowa

On his last day in office — January 14, 1868 — Governor William Stone urged the members of the Twelfth General Assembly to authorize the construction of a new State Capitol Building “of a size and character commensurate with the prospective demands and just pride of the State”.

Such an edifice, Governor Stone said, would not be designed “for the use of this generation only, but for future generations also; and in laying its foundation we should endeavor to anticipate the probable requirements of the State for many years to come”.

The members of the Twelfth General Assembly took the first step toward the construction of a magnificent Statehouse. In tribute to the faith and vision of those early Iowa leaders, the Iowa Senate has prepared this history of the State Capitol of Iowa and its “Golden Dome”.



Rotunda from landing of Grand Stairway.

The Golden Dome

*"And here twixt suns that rise and set,
Twixt river and river, and sea and sea,
Will we build thee a shrine, he said where yet
Our children's children shall worship thee
As their fathers have, O Liberty!"*

With these words, the cornerstone for Iowa's magnificent Statehouse was laid in 1871. These words culminated an almost impossible dream of brave and foresighted legislators — legislators who had faith in Iowa's future and who were determined to provide for the erection of a permanent Statehouse in Des Moines. The building of the "Golden Dome" is a fascinating story from Iowa's past.

Members of the Fifth General Assembly, meeting in Iowa City in 1855, determined that the permanent site of a new state capital should be within "two miles of the junction of the Des Moines and Raccoon Rivers". Governor William Stone, in his 1858 Biennial Message to the General Assembly, observed:

The unsafe condition of the present State House, with its cracked walls and unsecure foundation, and its admitted incapacity for the purposes required, will suggest to your minds the urgent necessity for the construction of a new edifice.

Legislation for the construction of a permanent Statehouse first was enacted on April 3, 1868, after three months of effort. On that date the House of Representatives concurred in Senate amendments to a bill authorizing the Census Board to advertise in two Iowa daily newspapers, as well as in newspapers in Chicago, New York and Philadelphia, for plans and specifications for a State Capitol. The legislation stipulated that the edifice be "built of the most fit and durable material, and to be constructed fire-proof". The Census Board was mandated to seek three proposals — one at \$1,000,000, one at \$1,500,000, and a third at \$2,000,000.

This dream for Iowa's future came only three years after the Civil War had torn apart the Nation, and left the new State of Iowa in financial distress. The State itself was only 22 years old, and the city of Des Moines had a population of less than ten thousand.

Final legislative approval was given on April 8, 1870, to an act creating a Board of Commissioners to select a plan costing \$1,500,000 and authorizing



construction of a building. State records give the names of many leaders who took part in the battle for a new Statehouse. Two men whose efforts should be remembered by all Iowans are John A. Kasson and Robert S. Finkbine. They overcame tremendous obstacles to give to future generations our "Golden Dome".

Kasson, an early political leader, had served as Congressman, as Assistant United States Postmaster General, and as a foreign diplomat. While still abroad, he was drafted to serve Polk County in the State Legislature. He was delegated to lead the battle for a permanent Statehouse. During debate Representative Kasson said:

A state, like an individual, should present a decent exterior to the world — a grand building with noble lines and elegant architecture would be an inspiration and a stabilizing influence.

The dreams of a new Capitol Building met with determined resistance from many legislators. Opposition came from legislators who feared that the cost would interfere with local institutional appropriations; from railroad interests other than the Rock Island who wanted the State Capitol on their lines; from legislators who wanted the building in their districts; and from those who were always conservative in money matters.

Many amendments to the legislation were proposed. One in particular would have amended the title to read: "A bill for an Act to deplete the State Treasury". And at one time the bill came within one vote of being defeated.

Representative Kasson's thoroughness is exemplified by the story about a certain representative who did not appear at the Statehouse on the day the final vote was to be taken. Fearing foul play and knowing the representative's habits, Kasson called a friend, Father Brazil, and asked him to search for the missing legislator. Father Brazil found the representative on the bank of the Raccoon River, sleeping off a hangover induced by the bill's opponents. Father Brazil brought the wayfaring legislator to the Assembly and remained with him while he cast the deciding vote for the new Capitol Building.

As passed, the bill established a Board of Commissioners, composed of the Governor, two members from each Congressional District, and two members at large. Further, the bill required that Iowa stone should be used whenever possible.

During the first two years many troubles beset the politically motivated commission, and there was much dissatisfaction with its lack of progress. The chief problem was the stone used in the foundation. Unfortunately, the commissioners had chosen for the foundation poorly-quarried stone from Rock Creek in Van Buren County. Quarried late in the fall, the stone was put in the walls full of moisture or "quarry sap". In cold weather, it cracked and was ruined.

Statehouse from south showing Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument.



Capitol under construction, 1880.

In 1872 the Legislature passed another State Capitol bill. It provided for a new, bipartisan board of commissioners with only four members and the Governor. Each commissioner's salary was to be \$5 per day, not to exceed \$30 a month. Moreover, the commissioners were given an annual appropriation of \$125,000 for the new building.

Again, passage of the legislation was accomplished under the leadership of John Kasson. It was in spite of those who said: "The state cannot afford this luxury"; and "Poverty in Iowa is represented by little children with knees protruding from patched pants, ragged coats and torn caps with the father paying his last holy dime for taxes to build a magnificent Statehouse."

The new commission immediately removed the defective foundation, at a cost of \$52,000. It reported: "The cost would soon be forgotten, but a defective foundation would ever remain as a source of regret and would prove to be unsafe for a foundation of a massive structure designed to endure a thousand years."

The second of the two major names connected with the new Statehouse was that of Robert S. Finkbine. The Iowa Citian became the Superintendent of Construction, at an annual salary of \$3,000, including expenses.

A builder and contractor, Finkbine soon demonstrated his skill and ability. Questions regarding his skill and lack of experience with such large buildings

Cornerstone.



*Mourning former
President Grant's death in 1885.*



were dissipated by his practical knowledge and solution of problems. Peter Dey, a commissioner, described Finkbine:

He proved to be a rough, unhewn block, out of his inner consciousness he evolved the quality that made him master of every situation in which he was placed. He was not an artist, but could create in marble, wood or metal a model submitted to him.

Typical of Finkbine's construction technique was a winding dirt ramp from the ground to the dome. It was to serve as a road for mule drivers required to move the large building stones to the top of the building. The superintendent of construction also devised a series of air ducts, still in use, for the transfer of heat and air to the Legislative Chambers and to other parts of the building.

When the defective foundation was removed in 1873, the Fourteenth General Assembly directed removal of the names of the original commission from the cornerstone. Only the word "Iowa" and the date "1873" were cut on the stone which today can be found at the southeast corner of the Statehouse. The cornerstone contains forty items and has been dubbed "Iowa's most neglected library".

In addition to a United States flag, a copy of the Declaration of Independence, and a copy of the Holy Bible, the cornerstone contains \$40.55 worth of gold, silver, copper, and nickel coins. It also stores a record of premiums awarded at the eighteenth Iowa State Fair; a pamphlet discussing the merits of Iowa building stone; the autographs of state officials; a book entitled "Laws and Instructions Relating to the Duties of County Surveyor"; astronomical calculations for 1871 and 1872; a map showing the extent of the Chicago fire; and a membership list of the Monroe Cornet Band.

Shortly after the new commission began work, a determination was made that the design by architects Cochrane and Piqueard could not be built for the \$1,500,000 legislative allocation. Consequently, there were recommendations that the domes be omitted, that the marble columns be replaced with cast iron, and that the basement be eliminated.

The commission, however, sought more money from the Legislature, and was given an additional \$375,000 in 1874 and 1876. By this time the Statehouse project had gained popularity, and additional appropriations were granted to complete the building and to decorate it in accordance with the vision of the architects and commissioners.

During these years, architect Bell, who took over upon the death of Piqueard in 1879, determined that the original dome was out of proportion to the rest of the building. Hence, the dome was redesigned to simulate the Invalides in Paris.

Heated discussion developed as to whether the dome should be gilded. Finkbine opposed gilding because he felt that this would be in bad taste. But



Fire in the House Chamber, 1904.

he was overruled successively by Governors Gear and Sherman. The dome was gilded at a cost of \$3,500. The dome was regilded in 1927, at a cost of \$16,500, and in 1965, at a cost of \$79,938.

Although Governor Buren Sherman's office was unfinished, the Legislative Chambers and most of the upper floor were completed in time for use in 1884. As arrangements were made to vacate the temporary Statehouse, members of the General Assembly expressed themselves:

Noble people of Iowa — have borne so patiently the taxation that has resulted in a structure so magnificent — so inspiring — and so grand — and that stands as a monument to their liberality, intelligence, and enterprise."

The Capitol was dedicated on January 17, 1884. Appropriately, John Kasson delivered the dedication address:

Our first prayer beneath this high dome is, that here the moral and political foundations of this imperial state may be so deeply and so wisely laid that remote generations shall recall and celebrate the wisdom and the virtues of their ancestors who in the Nineteenth Century erected and occupied this solid mansion of the state.

It is for us all a source of profound gratification that from the day when the

present commissioners assumed control with their accomplished Superintendent of Construction, the legislative bodies have never withdrawn from them their confidence. Not one act of speculation or spoliation, not one coin wasted or vainly spent has defaced the bright record of their administration. It shall be a part of the legacy we leave our children that all these vast and durable walls have been laid in the cement of honesty, and built by the rule of fidelity. More proud of this legend are we than of all these classic columns and brilliant domes which please the eye and gratify the taste.

With Capitol construction complete, the Commissioners made their final report to Governor William Larrabee on June 30, 1886. Their report showed expenditures of \$2,873,294.59. An audit of the report disclosed but one discrepancy, amounting to \$2.77. Later alterations and decorating increased the total cost of the new building to \$3,296,256.

The Capitol interior hardly was completed when, on January 4, 1904, the House Chamber and Committee Rooms were damaged badly by a fire. Probably started by a workman's candle left burning in the attic, the fire caused between \$400,000 and \$500,000 in damage.

The *Register and Leader* revealed that Governor A. B. Cummins was active in fighting the fire. "Clad in high rubber boots and rough coat, the chief executive cast gubernatorial dignity aside and worked as hard as anyone in fighting the fire," it reported. "The governor was cool throughout, and his wise counsel probably went far in bringing the fight against the fire to a successful conclusion," according to the newspaper.

With the Legislature due to convene on January 11, 1904, conferences were held immediately to determine what could be done to the House Chamber. But when the House convened, it decided to use the Chamber anyway. Tarpaulins were hung to cover breaches in the ceiling, and the session proceeded in spite of the heavy soot which necessitated daily baths for House members. When the session adjourned, the Chamber was repaired completely.

With this colorful historical backdrop, the Iowa State Capitol came to dominate the Des Moines landscape and to etch a special place in the hearts of all Des Moines residents.

Iowa's Early Capitols

The first settlements in Iowa were along the Mississippi River. Dubuque, Davenport, Bloomington (now Muscatine), and Fort Madison were the first bustling frontier towns. Another early settlement was Burlington, where Iowa's first Territorial Capitol was located in the Old Zion Church.

Permanent settlement began in Iowa in 1833. Iowa was attached to the Michigan Territory for purposes of government in 1834, and was included as part of the newly-created Wisconsin Territory in 1836.

The first session of the Wisconsin Territorial Legislature was held in Belmont, Wisconsin, in 1836. Iowa's impact on that Legislature included the election of Peter H. Engle of Dubuque as Speaker of the House and passage of an act establishing a bank in Dubuque.

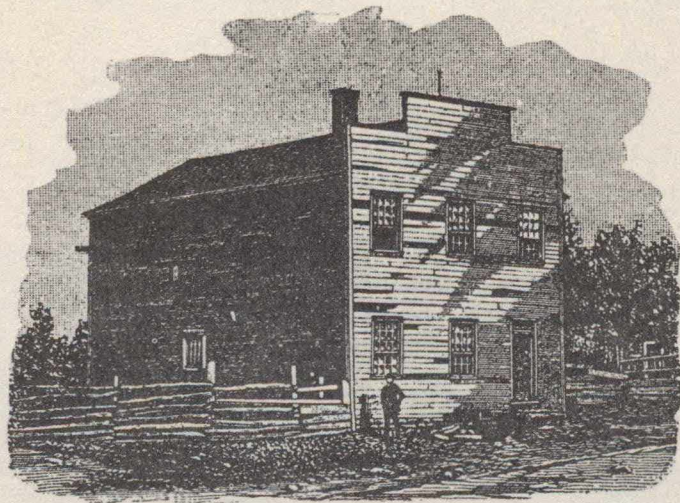
Belmont was a small village with only a few houses and inadequate facilities available for the Legislature. One legislator, Major Jerome Smith, proposed to build a suitable building to accommodate the Territorial Legislature if the capitol was moved to Burlington.

Accordingly, an act was passed relocating the seat of government, and the second session of the Wisconsin Territorial Legislature convened in Burlington on the first Monday of November, 1837. Its sessions were held in a two-story frame building erected as promised by Major Smith. The building was destroyed by fire during that session, and afterwards the Legislature met in Burlington's Old Zion Church.

On November 6, 1837, a convention of delegates from the west side of the Mississippi River met to petition the United States Congress to create a new Iowa Territory west of the Mississippi River. Subsequently, in June of 1838, Congress passed a bill dividing the Wisconsin Territory and establishing the Territory of Iowa. The Territorial Legislature was composed of a Senate — called the Legislative Council — of 13 members and a House of 26 members. The Governor was appointed by the President of the United States, and he was authorized to designate a time and place for the Legislature to meet. Robert Lucas, the first Territorial Governor, selected Burlington as the first capital of the Iowa Territory.

As the Territory's population grew, demands were made that the capital be moved to a central location. In 1839, Governor Lucas approved an act of the Second Legislative Assembly of the Iowa Territory providing that the capital be located in Johnston County. While the new Capitol was being constructed in Iowa City, the seat of government remained in Burlington.

In 1841, it was determined that the new Capitol would not be finished in time for the Fourth Legislative Assembly. Nonetheless, the Assembly adopted



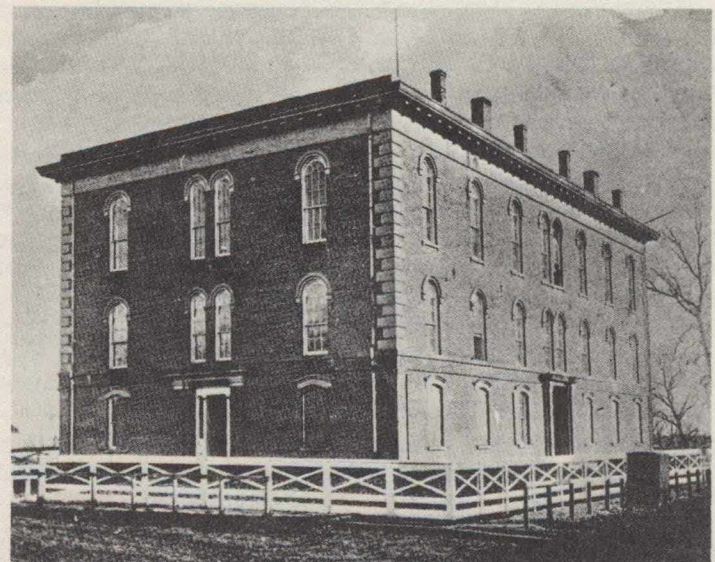
Territorial Capitol in Belmont, Wisconsin.



Old Zion Church, Burlington.



Old Capitol, Iowa City.



Old Brick Capitol, Des Moines.

a resolution that it would meet in Iowa City on December 6, 1841, if "Other sufficient buildings shall be furnished for the accommodation of the Legislative Assembly, rent free."

The citizens of Iowa City were enthusiastic. Walter Butler, one of the most public-spirited inhabitants of Iowa City, erected a two-story frame structure for legislative use. He did so with the understanding that the town would reimburse him for any loss due to the temporary occupancy by the Legislature.

Since the "Butler Capitol" was far from adequate, efforts were made to move the Capitol to Mount Pleasant, Davenport, Burlington, and Fort Madison. These efforts were unsuccessful, and the Fifth Legislative Assembly again met in the "Butler Capitol". During that session, Mr. Butler presented a bill for rental of the building since he had not been paid by the citizens of Iowa City. While Mr. Butler was paid \$325 for services to the government, the rental bill never was paid.

The Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth Legislative Assemblies met in the new Iowa City Capitol, later to be called the "Old Stone Capitol". The Constitution of 1846, by which Iowa became a State, contained a provision that Iowa City "shall be the seat of Government of the State of Iowa until removed by law".

The Act did not require the executive offices to be moved to the Capitol. Consequently, the Governors remained in Burlington, except during the legislative session. This situation continued even after the capital was changed to Des Moines. Not until 1864 was an act passed requiring the Governor to maintain the executive offices in the Capitol in Des Moines.

Iowa City was the seat of Iowa's government for 16 years, during which time 14 sessions of the Legislature and three Constitutional Conventions met. Various efforts were made to move the Capitol to such other towns as Mount Pleasant, Jacksonville (Clayton County), Davenport, Pittsburg (Van Buren County), Burlington, and Dubuque. All attempts failed, however.

The stream of settlers to Iowa gradually pushed the frontier west. With this westward movement came a continuing demand that the capital be located in central Iowa. Failure to include a provision in the 1846 Constitution establishing Iowa City as the capital for a stated time, led to charges that legislators from the South and Southwest would attempt to move the Capitol to the Raccoon Forks of the Des Moines River, the site of Fort Des Moines. Interestingly, the legislators did approve later a new Capitol within two miles of the junction of the Des Moines and Raccoon Rivers.

In February of 1847, the First General Assembly passed an act appointing three commissioners to examine the State for a permanent site for the seat of government. Their charge was that the site be "as near the geographical center . . . and be consistent with the interest of the state, generally".

The commissioners spent most of that summer and fall at their work. They rejected the Des Moines River Valley, the upper part of the Iowa River Valley,

the Oskaloosa area, and Tool's Point (now Monroe) as possible sites.

In late September, the commissioners selected a site in Jasper County, described as "a point unrivaled in natural beauty . . . in the most beautiful and fertile section of Iowa," and named it Monroe City. It was located 25 miles east of Des Moines and two miles southeast of Prairie City. A rush of land speculators, including two of the commissioners, quickly purchased 415 lots in Monroe City.

During a special legislative session in January of 1848, attempts were unsuccessfully made to repeal the law on relocation of the capital. In the Second General Assembly further efforts were made to cancel the selection of Monroe City. Legislation finally was passed to refund all money paid to lot purchasers, except the two commissioners.

The site was declared vacated and the question of a capital location was open again. During the Third General Assembly strong campaigns were conducted to establish the capital at Pella, Oskaloosa, and Fort Des Moines. The people of Pella were particularly active and Henry P. Scholte of the Colony offered to donate sufficient land for the site. During this session a lengthy report by the Committee on Public Buildings concluded that within a few years the capital would have to be moved to a central location, and "That it is inexpedient to legislate on the subject of removing the Capitol at this time."

Efforts continued in the Fourth General Assembly to establish the capital at a new location. The promise was made that a move to Fort Des Moines would be without cost to the State. Other towns promised free locations and additional attractions if selected for the capital. Notwithstanding these offers, the Fourth General Assembly failed to take any positive action.

When the Fifth General Assembly met in 1854 and 1855, it understood that the moving of the capital could not be postponed much longer. Between 1847 and 1854 the population of Iowa had grown from 116,454, to 326,500. In the next two years the population increased by 191,375.

The western and northwestern parts of the State were growing rapidly, and people in the eastern part of the State had become reconciled to a capital in a central location. Iowans seemed to agree that Fort Des Moines was the logical place for the future capital since it was "strategically situated on the largest waterway in Iowa, and at a point approximately in the center of the commonwealth".

The struggle in the General Assembly for adoption of an act authorizing the move to Des Moines was difficult. It involved many charges of excessive lobbying, among them that "oyster suppers" were being used by the people of Fort Des Moines.

The law ultimately enacted for the transfer to Des Moines required that the commissioners who were to select the site should "secure enough land for the Capitol and other necessary buildings without charge to the State and all



other grants and donations within their power". In the meantime, the General Assembly and the executive branch were to retain their locations at Iowa City.

In deciding on a Capitol site, the commissioners were under tremendous pressure from both sides of the Des Moines River. A donation of 20 acres of land was offered in what is now West Des Moines. And at least one commissioner was interested financially in the sale of lots on the east side of the river, a fact which may have been determinative in the selection of the east side.

Willson Alexander Scott, Harrison Lyon, and others donated approximately 17 acres of land for the Capitol site. In 1894, and again in 1913, portions of the original grant were sold by the state.

To fulfill the requirement of the law for a suitable building without cost to the state, a Capitol Building Commission was organized. It was composed of Des Moines citizens.

During the summer of 1856, work started on a three-story structure on the lots where the Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument now is located. The work was done with private funds on private land, and with the understanding that the structure would be leased to the state for one dollar per year. As the work progressed, it became increasingly difficult to secure money to complete the building. Initial financing had been by the citizens of East Des Moines since the efforts to secure money from the west side did not produce results.

With the advent of autumn, hard times made the work of the Capitol Building Commission still more difficult. Willson Alexander Scott and his East Des Moines friends felt that their triumph securing the Capitol site had been a hollow victory. Finally, east-side businessmen secured \$35,000 from the State School Fund, at an interest rate of 10%. Hence, the Capitol in Des Moines, built in haste and as cheaply as possible, moved to completion.

The new Statehouse, later called the "Old Brick Capitol", was built of brick. Its foundation and window sills were of stone and its roof was of tin. The building was 100 feet by 56 feet and three stories in height. A central dome extended 85 feet into the air. On the third floor were the halls for the General Assembly with a Senate Chamber 32 feet by 53 feet and a House Chamber 48 feet by 58 feet.

The Constitutional Convention of 1857 irrevocably settled the dispute on the location of the State Capitol by adopting the "compromise of 1847" which provided for the capital in Des Moines and the State University in Iowa City. An earlier private agreement had situated the Mental Hospital in Mount Pleasant, and thereby placated the citizens there who sought the capital for their community.

On October 19, 1857, Governor James W. Grimes officially declared "the Capitol of the State of Iowa to be established under the constitution and laws of the state at Des Moines, in Polk County". Although the Capitol still was



The Rotunda.



The Senate in Session.



The House in Session.

unfinished, state officials began the task of moving the contents of their offices to Des Moines.

Their move was no ordinary undertaking. There were neither railroads nor public highways, but only dimly outlined dirt trails over the prairies. Teamsters and contractors were not anxious to join the task. Finally the citizens of Des Moines sent men and teams to assist in the removal.

During a snowy November in 1857, several loads of furniture were hauled across the state in ox-drawn wagons. For four days Iowa had a "capitol on wheels". At one point during a raging blizzard, the Treasurer's heavy safe, laden with gold and silver, was marooned in an open prairie near Four Mile Creek in Polk County. It was recovered several days later and dragged into Des Moines on a bobsled, to the relief and delight of everyone — especially the state employees who were owed a month's back salary.

The Old Brick Capitol was completed in time for the General Assembly to meet in 1858. But the trouble connected with its financing persisted. Divided public sentiment in Des Moines, resulting from the Capitol's location on the east side of the river, prevented fulfillment of the city's pledge to "provide a state capitol without cost to the state".

Unable to meet their financial obligations, the Capitol Building Commission was forced to petition the Seventh General Assembly to purchase the building. Not until six years later, 1864, did the Tenth General Assembly finally agree to buy the Statehouse.

Willson Alexander Scott, ruined financially by his Capitol investments and the Depression of 1857, started for the West to rebuild his fortune. On his way to Pikes Peak in search of gold, he became ill and died. He never learned that the Iowa General Assembly finally acted favorably on the settlement of the financial problems of the Old Brick Capitol. His body was returned to Des Moines, and his grave is located on the southeast part of the Statehouse grounds.

The Old Brick Capitol, occupied in October of 1857, remained the home of Iowa's state offices and the General Assembly for 26 years. Sixteen sessions of the Legislature were convened under its tin roof.

When the present Capitol was completed, the "Old Brick Capitol" was vacated and allowed to deteriorate. In 1888, the Twenty-second General Assembly authorized the Iowa Executive Council to sell the old Capitol building, and the lot on which it stood, "in such manner and on such terms as may be deemed for the best interests of the state." In the meantime, the Executive Council was permitted to lease the property.

The Old Brick Capitol proved difficult to sell or lease, and it continued to deteriorate. In 1892, the Custodian of Public Buildings and Property reported to Governor Horace Boies that the building was in a dilapidated and dangerous condition. He recommended its removal from the area.

During this same period, the Grand Army of the Republic was agitating for the erection of a monument in honor of the soldiers and sailors who served in the Civil War. On April 7, 1892, the Twenty-fourth General Assembly donated the site of the Old Brick Capitol to the Grand Army of the Republic for a monument location.

While plans were being made for the Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument, the Old Brick Capitol caught fire on September 1, 1892. Lack of adequate water pressure made it impossible to save the primarily wooden building. The roof and third story were entirely destroyed by the fire and the remainder of the building was ruined by water. The cause of the fire never was determined, but it probably was "kindled by some boys who were noticed playing around the building before the fire broke out".

The Old Brick Capitol had been a historic building in Des Moines. Plagued by financial problems during its construction, inadequate in size and conveniences for a rapidly growing state, it served its destiny. It witnessed the historic War Sessions of the Legislature, and it provided the backdrop for many famous Iowans. One of the greatest was Iowa's War Governor, Samuel Kirkwood. Other Governors inaugurated in the Old Brick Capitol were Carpenter (Webster County); Gear (Des Moines County), Sherman (Benton County), Stone (Marion County), and Merrill (Clayton County).

The Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument was completed in 1894, at a cost of \$150,000. It replaced the charred remains of the Old Brick Capitol in the minds of all Iowans.



*View of Statehouse
through Japanese Bell House.*

*Statuary and lunettes
decorate the upper rotunda.*





Fascinating Facts

The golden dome of The Statehouse has sheltered untold thousands of Iowans since its completion on July 4, 1886.

Each visitor brings a special significance to Iowa's Capitol. All participate in an appreciation of the heritage of the **past**; most share the experience of seeing our form of government at work **today**; many represent the promise of the **future**. Among them, of course, are the busloads of school children who for generations met the challenge of the 398-step climb from the Statehouse grounds to the platform of the dome.

The Statehouse of Iowa is a massive building. It measures 363 feet 8 inches from north to south and 246 feet 11 inches from east to west. Its golden dome rises 275 feet above the ground floor. With a diameter of 80 feet, the golden dome is said to be the largest of its kind in the country.

The original 17 acres of the Capitol site have been expanded to approximately 165 acres. Thirty thousand plants, with 150 varieties of flowers, flourish on what will be the world's largest and most beautiful Capitol setting when the work of the Capitol Planning Commission is completed.

It was fitting that a prairie boulder should have been selected as the cornerstone. Originally laid on November 23, 1871, this stone, 7 feet long, 3 feet wide and 3 feet thick, was brought from Buchanan County and presented by David Anderson. Forty items were placed in it including \$40.55 in gold and silver coins and a membership list of the Monroe Cornet Band.

Glacial stone from the soil of Black Hawk and Buchanan Counties formed the foundation of the building. Granite, limestone and sandstone from Iowa, Missouri, Minnesota, Ohio, and Illinois were used in the superstructure. Iowa stone quarries included Bear Creek in Poweshiek County, Winterset in Madison County, Rock Creek in Van Buren County as well as quarries in Floyd and Jones Counties.

Old Capitol Quarry at Iowa City had the distinction of providing limestone for the first State Capitol in Iowa City as well as the present Capitol in Des Moines. On December 24, 1969, Governor Robert D. Ray designated Old Capitol Quarry, now called "Old State Quarry", as a State Geological Preserve.

Twenty-nine kinds of marble were used in the finishing of the Statehouse. The twenty-two foreign marbles were imported from Mexico, Spain, Italy, France, Germany, Belgium, and Ireland. These carried such descriptive names as Mexican Onyx, Alps Green, Italian Dove, Verona Red, Grotte Renaissance, Kilkenny Green, and Victoria Red.

*"Westward" by Edwin Blashfield
and mosaics by Frederick Dielman.*



Law Library with its outstanding iron grillwork and graceful circular staircases.

Domestic marbles were produced in Tennessee, New York, and Vermont. But the distinctive Coral marble, as found in the Senate Chamber, was quarried in Charles City, Iowa.

The marble Grand Stairway between the second and third floors is the focal point of the building. Up these steps the Chief Magistrate of the State is escorted to address the Legislative branch of government. Down these steps newly inaugurated Governors have led their official parties to begin gala balls in the majestic rotunda.

Year in and year out thousands tread these stairs but few note one of the most unique features of the building. At first glance the carvings on the marble newel posts at the foot of the stairway appear to be mere alabaster imagery of the Italian artist who created them. Closer inspection reveals intricately designed objects of remarkable subjects. Among the ropings are garlands of flowers, fruits, vegetables, nuts, butterflies and birds. Even more surprising are a nest of eggs, a serpent with forked tongue, a bat with outstretched wings, and two battling prehistoric reptiles.

Wood carvings in unexpected places provoke a sense of wonderment at the skill of these early itinerant craftsmen. Animals, flowers, birds, fruits, and even grotesque faces appear on door frames and columns, stair rails and cornices, in corridors, administrative offices, legislative and judicial chambers. Woods used include ash, red oak, white oak, chestnut, black walnut, white walnut, cherry, mahogany, poplar, catalpa, white pine, and yellow pine.

The twelfth Governor of Iowa, William Larrabee, was the first to occupy that office in the new building. He served from 1886 to 1890. His home, Montauk, near Clermont in Fayette County has been preserved as an historic museum.

Across the hall from the Governor's reception room is one of the largest reproduction photographs in the world. Taken in front of the west entrance of the Capitol on May 15, 1919, it is of the famed Rainbow Division, 168th Infantry, upon its return from France following World War I.

Around the rotunda, which is 66 feet 8 inches in diameter, are four cases of regimental flags of Iowa Civil War companies. Others contain flags carried in the Spanish American War and World War I.

The Supreme Court occupies the west side of the north corridor. Here nine Justices presently preside over the high court of the State of Iowa. Fine wood carving is part of the outstanding decor of the Judicial Chambers and was the result of a newspaper advertisement. William Metzger, a 20-year old wood carver from Chicago, came seeking work. With some reluctance the young man was put to work and the Supreme Court bench was his principal task. The excellence of his craftsmanship was recognized in the fact that forty-one years later, when the Court grew to a membership of eight, Mr. Metzger was sought and found to add panels to enlarge the bench to its present size.



Governor Robert D. Ray greets visitors to the Governor's Office.

The tools of William Metzger drew from walnut sixteen panels of satiny fruits, leaves and vines, eagles, cockatoos, and cornucopia. An owl, symbolic bird of wisdom, dominates the pattern of the central panel.

Other wood-carvers apparently also worked in the Court Chamber. In 1965 painters found carved on top of one of the columns behind the bench the words: "R. D. McCulloch, wood-carver" and "Earl W. Locke, water boy, 1886".

The ceiling of the Supreme Court chamber is not the original. It was damaged by water and smoke in the disastrous fire of 1904 which threatened to destroy the Capitol. However, the allegorical paintings on canvas were stored and, when the State Historical Building was constructed across the street, they were placed in the Portrait Room on the first floor.

These fine frescoes of Greek Mythology form a series of four pictures: Justice on her throne; Columbia (the Union) reigning, with Iowa her special favorite, sitting at her feet; Justice and Peace; and Cere, the Goddess of Agriculture. These, and smaller pictures, agricultural scenes, are the work of Fritz Melzer of Berlin, Germany.

Seldom seen by the visitor are the seven rooms behind the Court Chamber. Six rooms are provided for the private study of the Justices. In each room is a

marble fireplace. (There are 27 fireplaces in the Statehouse. However, steam has always been the principal source of heat.)

Each judicial office was once equipped with a massive hand-carved folding bed for the justice who, working late, spent the night in the Statehouse. By day, the bed appeared to be a huge mirror. One of these beds is preserved in the office of the State Treasurer.

The Law Library, one floor above the Court consultation room is reached by means of a direct stairway. A circular staircase of iron grillwork at each end of the Library leads to the more than 150,000 volumes. One of the most beautiful rooms in the Capitol building, the original fixtures light the room though no longer do they burn gas. The floor of the Library, too, is the original encaustic tile as are the other floors on this level.

Inscribed above the entrance to the Law Library are the words of William Pitt, "Where Law Ends Tyranny Begins".

On the walls on the first and second levels of the building are found the philosophical inspiration for the governing of the state. "Justice is the idea of

Justices Le Grand, Mason, Harris, Moore (Chief Justice), McCormick, Rees, Reynoldson, Rawlings, and Uhlenhopp pose in the historic Supreme Court Chamber.



God, the Ideal of Man"; "Education is a better safeguard of Liberty than a Standing Army"; "Courageous Confidence in the Intelligence of the Community is the sure sign of Leadership and Success"; "The Ideal State, That in which injury done to the least of its citizens is an injury done to all"; and, finally, in the words of Patrick Henry, "No free government or the blessings of Liberty can be preserved to any people but by a firm adherence to Justice, Moderation, Temperance, Frugality and Virtue and by a frequent recurrence to Fundamental Principles".

The art work of the Capitol is outstanding. Facing the Law Library, looking up into the alcoves and moving to the right, one finds statuary representing History, Science, Law, Fame, Literature, Industry, Peace, Commerce, Agriculture, Victory, Truth and Progress.

The eight allegorical lunettes by Kenyon Cox, a famous American artist, surround the rotunda. The half-moon-shaped paintings tell the story of "The Progress of Civilization": Hunting, Herding, Agriculture, the Forge, Commerce, Education, Science and Art.

"Westward" the magnificent painting at the landing of the Grand Stairway, is the best known of all the Capitol art. The theme of the picture is a symbolical presentation of the Pioneers led by the spirits of Civilization and Enlightenment to the conquest, by cultivation of the Great West.

An observant viewer complained that the ox driver was "on the wrong side of the wagon". Artist Edwin Howland Blashfield had answered in advance by explaining that he had taken artistic liberty to preserve the balance of the composition.

Statehouse guides encourage school children to solve the intriguing puzzle of the location of three white horses. The reason for the position of the pipe held in the hand of the rugged pioneer is another mystery.

Above "Westward" are six mosaics designed by Frederick Dielman in New York and made in Venice. This intricate art form was used to avoid the placing of one painting directly above another. The colors are worked in stone and are indestructible.

Mr. Dielman has made a picture of the west front of the Statehouse as a background for the four central panels. In the left-hand panel, called "Defense", he has shown a portion of the state historical building. In the background of the panel called "Education" he has shown a part of Old Capitol in Iowa City, now the administration building of the University of Iowa. The panels represent Defense, Charities, the Executive, the Legislative, the Judiciary, and Education. They were commissioned at a cost of \$70,000.

Seemingly painted on a ceiling covering the rotunda far overhead is the emblem of the Grand Army of the Republic. In reality, the emblem and the flag are on canvas resting on piano wires. This was the work of Joe Czizek of Des Moines who was in charge of painting the Statehouse for many years, a man dedicated to the preservation of the beauty of the Capitol.

This reminder, one of many found in this building constructed when Iowa's great sacrifice in the cause to preserve the Union was still a personal memory, was placed in the rotunda in 1922 on the occasion of the convention of the Grand Army of the Republic. It was retained as a permanent decoration by order of Governor Nate E. Kendall. Just below on the frieze above the columns, are the famous words of the great Emancipator, Abraham Lincoln: "That government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

The legislative portion of the building was completed and dedicated to its future use on January 17, 1884. The Senate Chamber, a room 58 feet by 91 feet 4 inches and 43 feet 5 inches high, retains its original decor. The wainscoting is of marble and the finishing of mahogany. The large columns on each side of the room are fine examples of scagliola which is used in other parts of the building. This is an imitation ornamental marble made of finely ground gypsum and glue.

The four brass chandeliers weigh 2,000 pounds each and were originally gas. The ceiling is elegantly decorated with frescoes of fine figure work representing Industry, Law, Agriculture, Peace, History and Commerce.

The House of Representatives was decorated in a manner similar to the Senate Chamber. Measuring 74 feet by 91 feet 4 inches and 46 feet 7 inches high, the finish of this room is of black walnut with marble wainscoting. Instead of the allegorical paintings which decorate the Senate ceiling, the House had portraits of the following persons: Presidents George Washington and Abraham Lincoln; Governors Robert Lucas and James W. Grimes; Justices of the Supreme Court Caleb Baldwin and Charles Mason; Speakers of the House of Representatives Rush Clark and James P. Carlton; Generals M. M. Crocker and S. R. Curtis.

On January 4, 1904, the House Chamber was destroyed. Discovered by Statehouse barber, Charles E. Haynie, he and many state officials, including Governor A. B. Cummins, helped fight the blaze.

The present House ceiling depicts a Governor (steam engine control), Agriculture, Railroads and Medicine. The chandeliers, which replaced those which had been identical with those of the Senate, were made in Czechoslovakia, each with 5600 beads.

Behind the board which records the votes of the members of the House is a room where the oldest electronic voting machine in the United States is operated. It was installed in 1929.

Over each chamber of the General Assembly is a flagpole. Observers can tell when the House or the Senate are in session. An Iowa flag is run up on the proper pole as the legislative body is called to order. It is promptly run down when the body adjourns for the day.

A third flagpole, located over the west entrance, flies a flag when the Governor is in residence. Legend has it that this practice was instituted in early



The newel posts of the Grand Stairway have elaborately carved alabaster garlands depicting fruits, flowers, and living creatures such as a butterfly and a bird.

days to advise Iowa citizens arriving by rail as to whether the Senate and the House were in session and whether the Governor was available in his office. It must also have been of assistance to those disembarking from Steamboat Alice when she docked at the foot of the Capitol Hill on the Des Moines River.

Access to these flagpoles is made through trap doors to the roof from the spacious attic. In this attic tanks of water were once kept. Pipes carried the water downward into fountains containing ice for the benefit of thirsty visitors. One of these fountains, long unused, stands on the Senate side of the rotunda near the Grand Stairway.

Underneath the Statehouse exists a secret tunnel. It was built just before World War I to house steam pipes. Never used, this has often been labeled "Iowa's \$100,000 Folly". It is now used as a storage place.

No trip to the Statehouse is really complete without a study of the exterior of the building. The golden dome is covered with sheets of 23-carat gold so thin that 250,000 leaves pressed together would form a pile only one inch thick. All the gold on the dome weighs 100 ounces.

The four smaller domes were to have been gilded, but this has never been done. They carry their own, nearly tragic but also heroic, story of construction. One day St. Paul architect Anthony Nepil, construction supervisor of the four domes, slipped off the dome roof. His life was saved by a husky Iowan, a workman who caught him just in time to prevent his falling from the main roof to the ground.

A tour of the grounds leads one to the Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument erected by the Grand Army of the Republic at a cost of \$150,000. It is near what was once the site of the "Old Brick Capitol". Iowa's memorial to Abraham Lincoln was dedicated in 1961. Depicting the Civil War President and his son, Tad, it is the work of Fred M. and Mabel L. Torrey, Des Moines sculptors.

South of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument is the Japanese bell and bell house presented to the State of Iowa on June 1, 1962, by citizens of Japan's Yamanashi Prefecture. These were presented as a token of friendship in appreciation of a gift of Iowa hogs sent to Japan.

"The Pioneers" greets the visitor climbing the west steps to the Statehouse. The buffalo head at the base of the bronze statue trickles water into a horse-watering trough below. The trickle continues, but few horses take advantage of it today. It was once possible to drive horses under the west portico where passengers were protected from the weather as they made their way into the Capitol.

On the far southeast corner of the grounds is a grave. Willson Alexander Scott, original owner of the land, is buried where he lived most of his life.

These are "fascinating facts" of the Statehouse of Iowa. Those who labored to raise above the prairie soil a capitol "to last a thousand years" fashioned with more than stone and wood and marble. They built a "Golden Dome" that is the essence of the Iowa dream of the Yesterdays, Today and the Tomorrows.

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