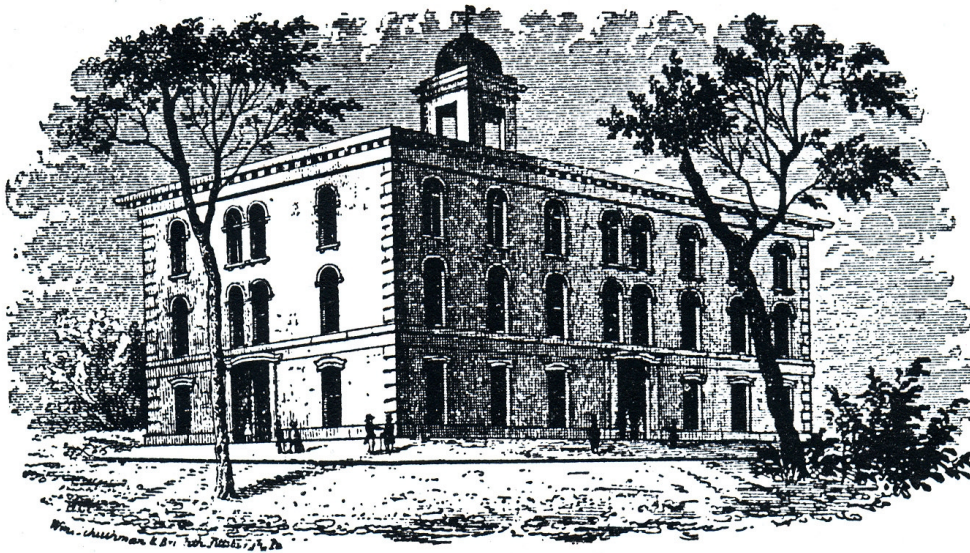


*Pieces of Iowa's Past*, published by the Iowa State Capitol Tour Guides weekly during the legislative session, features historical facts about Iowa, the Capitol, and the early workings of state government. All historical publications are reproduced here with the actual spelling, punctuation, and grammar retained.

**February 20, 2008**

**THIS WEEK: "The Old Brick Capitol"**

**BACKGROUND:** Iowa had been a state for eleven years when the seat of government was moved from Iowa City to Des Moines. The capitol building in Des Moines was to be situated within 2 ½ miles of the fork of the Des Moines and Raccoon rivers. The "Old Brick Capitol" was built on land donated by Wilson Alexander Scott and Harrison Lyon.



*First capitol—Des Moines, 1858—before it was rebuilt.*

The first capitol built in Des Moines, served as Iowa's seat of government from 1858-1884. This building was known as the Brick Capitol. The architect, believed to be Amos G. Basset, was from New York. The process used to select Basset is unknown. Des Moines citizens calling themselves the Capitol Building Association, were responsible for building the structure, and they contracted Alexander Scott, John Hyde and John Bryan. The Hon. John P. Huskins, was foreman. Built in just under a year, the contract price was \$37,000. The State of Iowa paid rent to the Capitol Building Association in the amount of one dollar per year. The Brick Capitol measured 55 x 108 feet.

In 1896, an article published in the *Des Moines Register*, describes the painted decoration in the House of Representatives and the Senate as “decidedly beautiful and artistic.”

Through the years this building was “improved.” The cupola was removed and chimneys added. In 1868 the building was raised and a new foundation and ground level were added. The structure served as a warehouse when state offices were moved to the present-day Capitol. It caught fire in 1892 and was torn down to make way for the Soldiers’ and Sailors’ Monument.

