

The State Library of Iowa, now known as Iowa Library Services, has been housed in the Miller Building since 1910. Renovation of the building took place in three stages, beginning in 1999. The rotunda was completed in 2000; the east wing was finished in 2001 and the west wing in 2002. Iowa Library Services remained in the building during the renovation, moving from the east wing to the west wing and back to the east wing, where it is now housed on three of the four floors.

Ground Floor

The east wing, ground floor, houses state and federal documents and Technical Services. Compact shelving was necessary to hold the vast state documents collection. The floor had to be reinforced to support the shelving since, when loaded, it is twice as heavy as regular shelving.

A ramp on the ground floor provides access from the outside of the building for people with physical disabilities. The ramp enters the building in a small room off the rotunda, just outside the library.

First Floor

Rotunda

Each of the four alcoves on the first floor rotunda contains a bust: The busts represent George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, General Grenville Dodge, and General Jim Tuttle. Dodge and Tuttle were Civil War generals. Dodge, a native of Council Bluffs, Iowa, fought in the battles of Vicksburg and Shiloh. He was the chief engineer of the Central Pacific Railroad. Tuttle, from Van Buren County, Iowa, fought at Fort Donelson, Shiloh, and Vicksburg.

The tracings on the walls in the first floor rotunda were discovered when restorers scraped paint off until they found the original tracings. Restoration painters reapplied the tracings over the original designs.

The marble used for the pillars and walls in the rotunda came from a quarry in Carrara, Italy, the same quarry used by Michelangelo for his sculptures.

Library

The first floor library is the main reading room. It houses the general and reference collections, information on businesses in Iowa, the Iowa Collection, and the State Data Center, which provides a comprehensive collection of census information.

The mezzanine stores very old legal materials. Because there is no elevator to the collection, access is restricted to staff. Shelving goes up through the mezzanine floor, and actually supports it. In the 1950s, a bridge was added across the east window to connect the two mezzanines. It was removed so that the floor plan would reflect the original construction of the library. A staircase, which had been

added to connect the first floor to the mezzanine and the second floor, was removed.

Service desks are the same on the first and third floors, and were created using photographs of the originals. Apparently, however, the desks were higher back then and the librarians sat on high stools behind them.

The exterior of the original card catalog was completely restored. Some of the original drawers still have old catalog cards in them, including original, handwritten cards from 1892. The interior was redesigned to hold public access computers.

The tables on the first floor are original to the building. The rocking chairs are also original, and were rescued in disrepair and restored.

The green light fixtures were designed to look like the originals, which were identified in photographs. The chandeliers originally had two arms, but renovation architects added a third arm to provide more lighting.

The plates and other library memorabilia on the shelves across from the reference desk were a gift from a collector. There are also some old photographs of the library located there.

The Johnson Brigham Room, also known as the Blue Room, is now a meeting room. Originally, it was the State Librarian's Office, and was named after the first State Librarian. The room was nicknamed for the blue shell design in the stained glass window and has the only blue walls in the building.

Second Floor

The second floor now houses the Legislative Services Agency offices, and a large open meeting area.

At the time of renovation, the window in the beautiful alcove area was blocked with glass bricks. But this was not in the original building plan, and the architects decided to remove the bricks, providing a beautiful view of the Capitol and Judicial Building. The wooden pattern on the windows is original and is repeated throughout the building, most noticeably on the railing outside the front of the building.

Third Floor

In the early years, when the building was home to both the State Library and the State Historical Museum, Native American artifacts were housed on the third floor. Currently, Library Support Network and administration staff occupy the floor. Library Support Network staff work with the public, school, and academic librarians to improve library services to all Iowans. The third floor also houses Library Science books and materials.

False ceilings made of sheet rock were added to conceal electrical conduit. All

four floors are connected with fiber optic cables to increase computer response time. Wainscoting on each floor contains heating, cooling, and electrical wiring.

Architects attempted to restore the original paint colors, found as color swatches on the original architect's blue prints. Some other colors were identified by scraping through layers of old paint. Lighting was copied as closely as possible to original lighting and there are original wood floors throughout the building. Carpet was designed to keep with the era in which the building was constructed.

The skylights are original. Architects added a second glass ceiling to protect the skylights. At night, the skylights have backlighting, which looks like moonlight. Wooden cabinets by the staff break room are new, as are the marble facings and wainscoting on each floor.

Fire stairwells run from the third to ground floors and are considered areas of rescue assistance with a telephone at wheel chair height on each floor.

The State Librarian's office includes original, refinished shelving. The quilt hanging on the wall was designed by a librarian from Council Bluffs, Iowa.

Men's and women's restrooms alternate on each floor. Great care was taken to replace the marble walls in all the restrooms. Small pieces of marble were cut to ensure that the veins would run in the directions specified in the original architect's plans. Matching marble was found in a quarry in Indiana.

The Dome, Floors, Elevators

The designs on the dome show grapes and grape leaves; they are made of plaster. Restoration painters recreated the clouds from photographs found of the original dome. The mosaics on all floors in the rotunda are original. Tiles were brought from England. The marble columns on the first, second, and third floors of the rotunda are made from Italian marble. The Greek architectural styles of columns are Doric (first floor), Ionic (second floor), and Composite—a combination of Ionic and Corinthian—on the third floor. There was originally only one elevator in the building on the east wing; the second elevator is new. The design on the elevator doors is based on the former "cage" door of the original elevator.