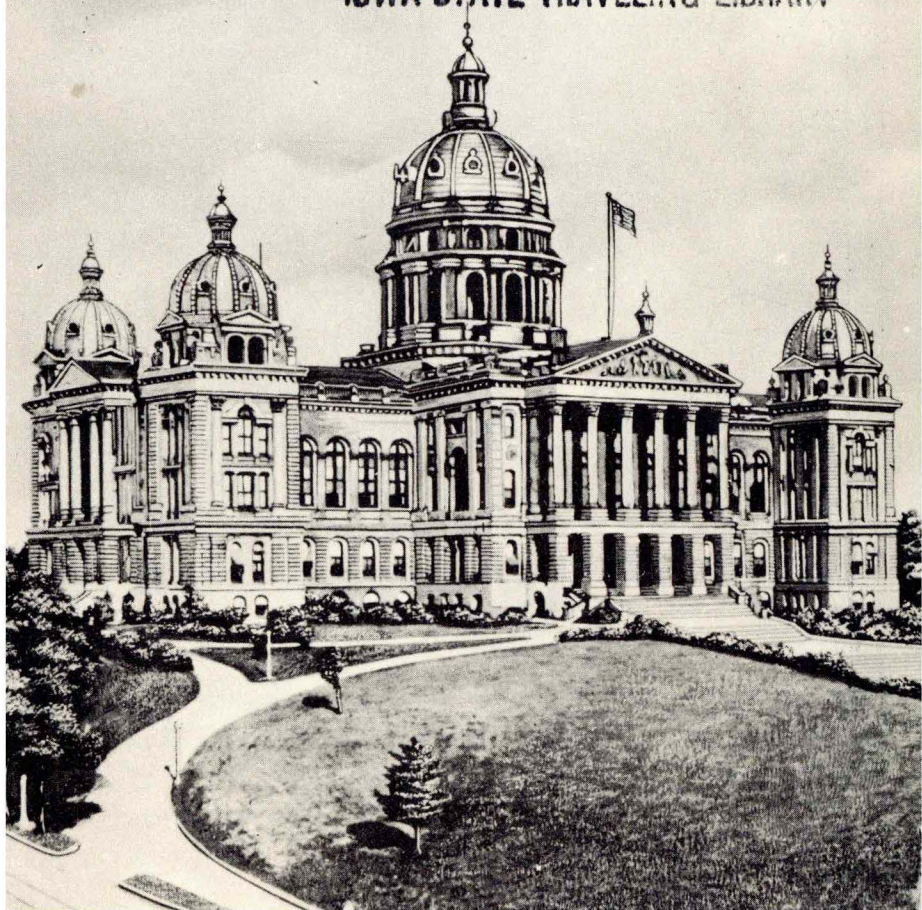


Iowa, Capital, Des Moines

# IOWA'S Capitol

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# Iowa's Capitol

Capitol located at Des Moines 1857.

Erection of the capitol building approved by the Twelfth General Assembly April 6, 1868.

The cornerstone, first laid Nov. 23, 1871, was cut from granite obtained in Buchanan county, Iowa, and presented for that purpose by David Armstrong of the same county. Its dimensions were 7x3x3; it contained a box with much historical material and had the names on its face of the first commissioners and the architects. Distinguished speakers at the ceremonies for the laying of the stone included Hon. James F. Wilson, Hon. Samuel Merrill, governor of Iowa, and Hon. John A. Kasson. A poem was read by the Hon. J. B. Grinnell.

Efforts of the first commission to use Iowa stone for the basement proved disastrous, though Iowa stone was later used for the foundation. The first stone put in proved to be porous and disintegrated the first winter. Better stone was found, the names cut from the cornerstone and "1873" placed on the face as it is now.

Stone for the foundation of the building was furnished from the Madison county quarries near Winterset. The stone for the basement story is from the old Capitol quarry in Johnson county near Iowa City. The Ste. Genevieve Sand, Stone and Granite company and J. A. Gaines and Company of Carroll county, Missouri furnished the stone for that part of the building above the basement. Outside steps and platforms are "Forest City" stone from near Cleveland, Ohio; rails are Saul Rapids granite. Pilasters and piers in the interior of the basement are from Anamosa, Iowa, and Lemont, Ill. Columns, piers and pilasters in the corridors of the first story are from Lemont, Ill. Red granite columns in the second story are from Iron Mountain, Mo., the dark colored granite in base and cap pedestals is from Saul Rapids, Minn., and the carved capitals, pilasters and piers are of Lemont stone. Twenty-nine kinds of domestic and imported marble were used in finishing: domestic marble from Tennessee, New York, Vermont, and Iowa, imported marble from Mexico, Spain, Italy, France, Germany, Belgium and Ireland. Cost of the marble work was \$114,815. Wood is mainly Iowa black walnut, butternut, cherry, oak and catalpa.

The Capitol was completed July 4, 1886 at a total cost of \$3,296,256. It is 363

feet, 8 inches long; 246 feet, 11 inches wide, east and west; 275 feet high to top of finial above dome. The rotunda is 66 feet, 8 inches in diameter. House of Representatives is 79x91.4, 47.9 to ceiling; Senate Chamber is 58x91.4, 41.9 to ceiling. The first door to the left as you enter the Senate chamber is the entrance to the stairway leading to the dome. Number of steps from sidewalk to top is 387.

The Capitol was dedicated in January, 1884, when the General Assembly first met in the new halls, having formerly met in a small building located where the Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument now stands. Not all the offices were occupied for more than two years thereafter.

## Decorations

The House and north wing, the main corridors and rotunda were redecorated after the fire of January 4, 1904. The original decorations are still in the Senate.

Twelve statues, high within the rotunda, beginning north of the library door, represent History, Science, Law, Fame, Art, Industry, Peace, Commerce, Agriculture, Victory, Truth, and Justice.

Eight lunettes, or half-moon-shaped paintings surrounding the rotunda are the work of Kenyon Cox, a famous American artist, who was paid \$8,000 for them. They are entitled: Hunting, Herding, Agriculture, the Forge, Commerce, Education, Science, Art. They are allegorical and indicate the progress of civilization.

Over the main stairway at the east end is the large painting entitled "Westward," the work of Edwin H. Blashfield of New York. It was placed at a cost of \$10,000 and is regarded as one of the notable American decorative pictures.

Above the large picture are six mosaics, designed by Frederick Dielman of New York and made in Venice. The colors are worked out in colored stone pieces and are indestructible. The subjects represented are Defense, Charities, the Executive, the Legislative, the Judiciary, and Education. These cost the state \$10,000 and are among the finest and largest in America.

A picture of the 168th Infantry, upon its return from France in 1919, hangs in the south corridor. Taken by W. T. Showers, the picture is 26 feet long and 6 feet high. It is one of the largest reproduction photographs in the world.

The dome of the capitol is covered with pure 22 carat gold leaf; cost, \$16,500.

## Description of Painting "Westward"

The main idea 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. Considered pictorially the canvas shows a "Prairie Schooner" drawn by oxen across the prairie. The family ride upon the wagon or walk at its side. Behind them and seen through the growth of stalks at the right come crowding the other pioneers and later men. In the air and before the wagon are floating four female figures; one holds the shield with the arms of the State of Iowa upon it; one holds a book symbolizing Enlightenment; two others carry a basket and scatter the seeds which are symbolical of the change from wilderness to plowed fields and gardens that shall come over the prairie. Behind the wagon and also floating in the air, two female figures hold respectively a model of a stationary steam engine and of an electric dynamo to suggest the forces which come with the later men.

In the right hand corner of the picture melons, pumpkins, etc., among which stand a farmer and a girl, suggest that here is the fringe of cultivation and the beginning of the prairie. At the left a buffalo skull further emphasizes this suggestion.

Considered technically, the dominant motive of the composition of the picture is the festoon or Roman garland. This is carried out by the planes of light color, commencing at the left with the group of spirits, carried downward by the white bodice of the girl, gathering flowers, onward through the mass of light in the center, to the white overdress of the girl leading the child and finally toward the right and upward, in the figures of the farmer girl and the spirits of Steam and Electricity. The dark accents in the composition are furnished by the three men grouped together and the skirt of the flower gathering girl.

The hour chosen for the subject is the late afternoon, since Westward suggests into the setting sun. The scheme of color of the picture is based upon his choice of hour, being in the main made up of orange-pink sunset light and its natural complement bluish shadows, with a few spots of dark blue and red-brown given as aforesaid by the costumes of the men and the skirt of the kneeling girl. For the sake of preserving the integrity of the composition certain liberties have been taken with average probabilities. Thus the driver of the oxen is upon the side which is not conventionally correct, because had he been placed in the correct place in that corner of the canvas he would have thrown the composition out of balance. Advantage was therefore taken of the fact that he might momentarily leave his place. Again, a very small child would not often hurry along keeping up with striding men and women, but on the other hand the children at times undoubtedly did wish and need, for the sake of exercise, to run along a while with the procession. From the point of view of composition, a small mass or figure was needed just at the point where the child was introduced; a dog would have made a spot of about the right height, but two dogs were already in the picture and a figure of a small child therefore served the purpose better.

These remarks about the ox-driver and the small child are added to bring to the notice of the layman the fact that the artist's first duty to his client is to make his picture artistically good; good, that is, in composition, drawing and color. For the sake of his composition, he may, and indeed should, take advantage of anything which is possible, avoiding only those things which would seem unreasonable to both common sense and imagination.

## Grounds and Monuments

The original site for the Capitol was given the state and covered about four blocks. In 1913 the legislature authorized a tax to pay for additional grounds and the park around the Capitol has been enlarged to 85.4 acres (or 93¼ including streets), by the purchase of several hundred lots and residences and business houses and is conceded to be the largest and most beautiful setting for a state Capitol in the world.

The Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument erected in 1889-90 is 145 feet high and cost \$150,000. It was designed by Harriet A. Ketcham of Mt. Pleasant. It has fine

bronze figures and medallions of Iowa soldiers and sailors and battle scenes.

The Allison Memorial, nearby, was constructed in honor of the late Senator W. B. Allison of Dubuque.

Battle flags of Iowa regiments in the Civil war and Spanish-American war are preserved in the rotunda of the Capitol. The monument west of the Capitol, represents "The Pioneers" and is cast bronze.

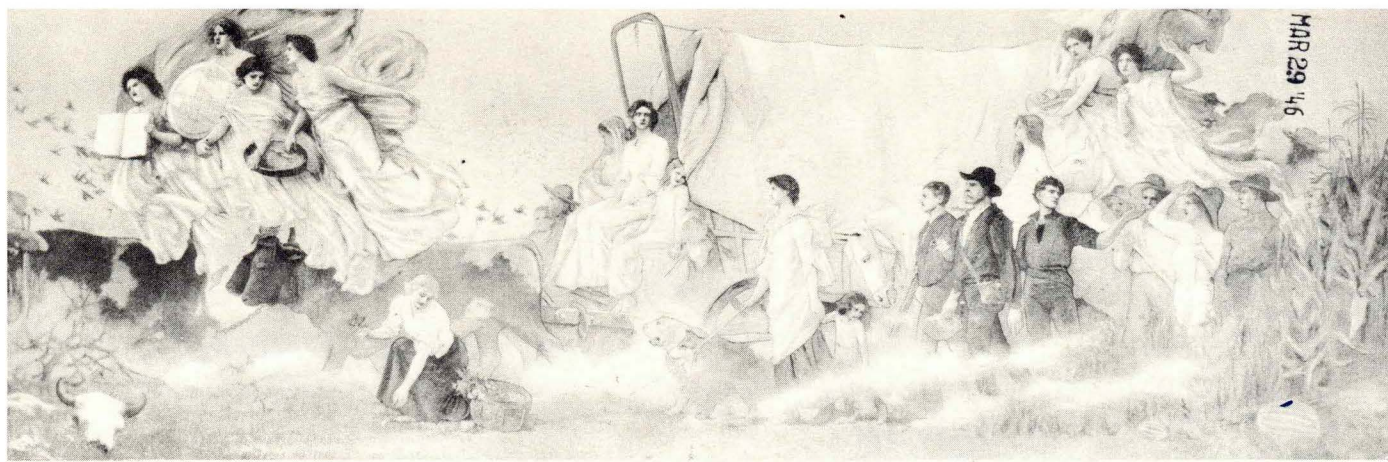
Old guns located on the grounds were used in the Spanish-American war and Civil war. The bronze gun in front of the Historical building was taken from a Spanish gun ship.

## Historical Building and Library

The Historical Memorial and Art Building is 260 by 110 feet in size and was begun in 1896, at first as a home for the Aldrich collection of historical matter. It is occupied by the Historical Department, the State Traveling Library, the State Medical Library and the Library trustees offices. (The State Law Library is located on the second floor, west wing, of the Capitol.)

The Historical department has a large

library of history and genealogy, a famous collection of autographs and photographs, many valuable historical relics, and antiquities, a vast natural history museum, a gallery of portraits of distinguished Iowa persons, a civil war collection, portraits and information regarding Iowa boys who died in the World war, and the public archives, consisting of millions of documents and records from the State Departments for permanent preservation.



MAR 29 '46

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**CAPITOL PARK**

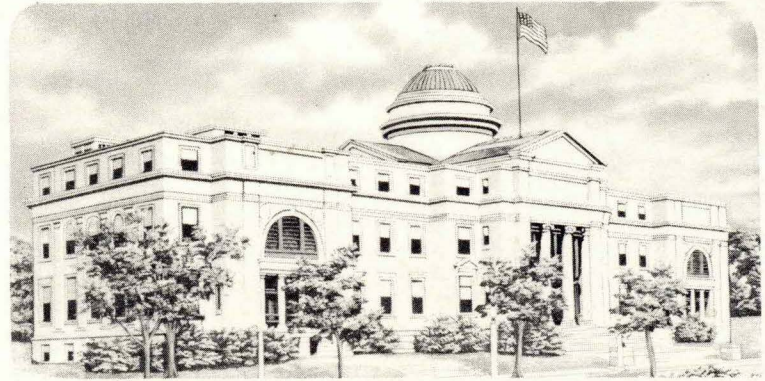
From the Air

(below)

One of the most beautiful settings for any state capitol, Capitol Park includes 93¼ acres, beautifully landscaped, with the State House high on a hill the center of interest

APR 13 '44

"Westward" The Blashfield Painting at the Head of the Grand Stairway, Iowa Capitol



Historical Building

Published by State of

JUL 24 '46 FEB 26 '54

