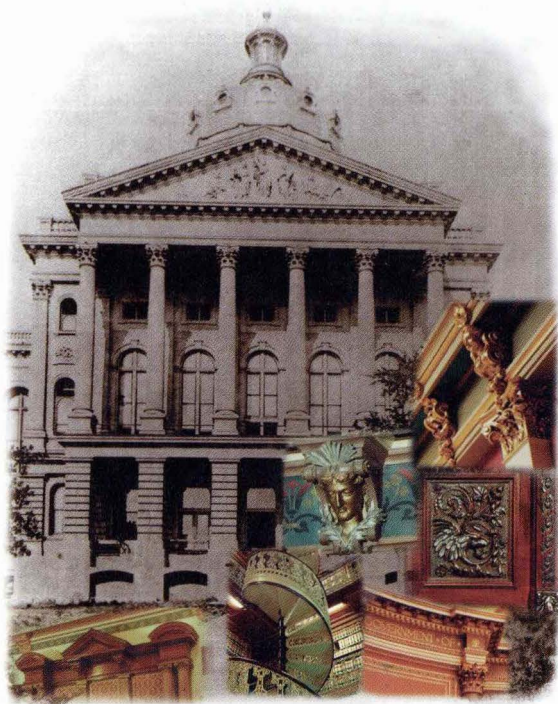




The Iowa Capitol



...government in action amid the splendor of the past

STATE LIBRARY OF IOWA
East 12th & Grand
DES MOINES, IOWA 50319

The Iowa Capitol

"Where Law Ends Tyranny Begins."

Inscription above the Capitol Law Library doors
from William Pitt, English Statesman.



The Iowa General Assembly, in 1868, voted to construct a new capitol that would stand through time as a symbol of the strength of Iowans and their commitment to good government. In this grand building, citizens petition their elected representatives in the General Assembly to enact laws for the common good, the Governor executes those laws for the well-being of the citizens, and the Supreme Court settles disputes and crafts remedies in order to apply the laws fairly to everyone. As was the General Assembly's intent, the Iowa Capitol has served as the seat of government for more than a century and is a working museum where visitors may view government in action amid the splendor of the past.

Topped by a dome covered in 23-karat gold leaf, the Iowa Capitol is constructed of limestone, granite, sandstone and brick. The massive structure measures 364 feet from north to south and 247 feet from east to west. Four smaller domes, covered with copper and tarnished to a



soft shade of green, rise at each corner. Like many government buildings constructed after the Civil War, the Iowa Capitol is patterned after the national capitol with a dome, rotunda, portico and wings. Iowa's Capitol combines the beauty and grace of classical architecture and art with the function of a working government building.

Construction of the new capitol was begun in 1871. Iowa materials and artisans were used extensively not only to keep construction costs down, but to take advantage of the valuable contributions Iowans could make to their capitol. The building was dedicated in 1884 and completed in 1886 with the dedication of the Supreme Court Chamber. At its completion, the building housed the Senate and House of Representatives, the Supreme Court, the offices of the Governor, and other elected officials and state employees. It was the centerpiece of government for the people of the state.



In 1902, remodeling, renovation and decoration of the building was begun, including the installation of electric lighting, electric elevators and a telephone system.

In 1904 a fire, reportedly started by the candle of a workman installing electrical wiring, destroyed most of the north wing, including the chamber of the House of Representatives and the ceiling of the Supreme Court Chamber below. Following the fire, damaged areas were repaired, decoration of the interior of the building was completed, and additional artwork was purchased. The costs of the repairs, decorating and artwork brought the total cost of the construction and furnishing of the Capitol to over \$3 million. The cost to replace the Capitol today would likely amount to the hundreds of millions of dollars because of the expensive materials and the expert artisanship that would be needed to duplicate the structure and its furnishings.

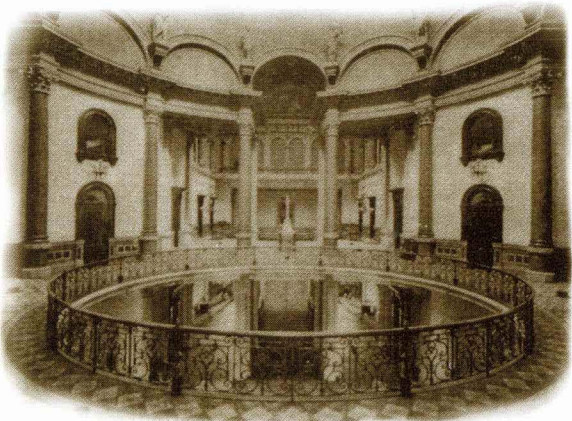
The Iowa Capitol's interior is one of the most ornate in the nation. Twenty-nine varieties of domestic and foreign marble are found throughout the building. In addition, door frames, stair rails, corridors and offices are finished with fine woods such as Iowa oak, walnut and butternut. An intricately hand-carved 27-foot mahogany bench for the Supreme Court justices dominates the Supreme Court chamber. In the Senate and House chambers and in the offices of the Governor and other state officials, walls and ceilings are elaborately painted and stenciled. The spectacular state law library occupies a five-level atrium in the west wing of the second floor. Over 200,000 legal volumes are contained in four tiers that are accessed by circular staircases at each end of the library.

Fine artworks in the Capitol contribute to its opulence. The most striking works are visible from the second-floor rotunda. Above the marble grand staircase is the painting "Westward," symbolizing the arrival of the pioneers in Iowa. On the balcony above "Westward," in six arched panels, are mosaics made of small pieces of colored glass. The panels represent the three branches of state government and the governmental functions of Charity, Education and Defense. The current Capitol, a portion of the Old Historical Building, and the Old Capitol, the state's first capitol located in Iowa City, are incorporated into the design of the mosaics.



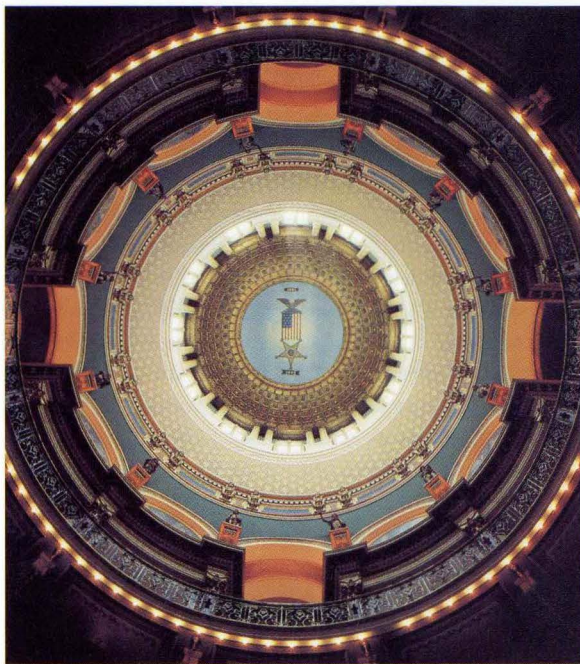
At the base of the interior dome, which rises 275 feet above the ground floor, are eight half-moon-shaped paintings called lunettes, which tell the story of the “progress of Civilization.” The 12 statues between the lunettes represent History, Science, Law, Fame, Literature, Industry, Peace, Commerce, Agriculture, Victory, Truth and Progress. Several of the artists and decorative painters who were hired to work on the Iowa Capitol were among the most sought after of their time, and were involved in the decoration and ornamentation of the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. Suspended on wire across the top of the dome is the emblem of the Grand Army of the Republic. The emblem was placed there in 1922 as a reminder of Iowa’s efforts to preserve the Union during the Civil War. Inscribed high above the second-floor rotunda are the words of Abraham Lincoln from his Gettysburg Address: “That government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.”

The Capitol remains the center of government, by and for the people of Iowa. The General Assembly, the Governor, and the Supreme Court continue to serve the citizens of the state in the building that is the heart of state government. With ongoing efforts to preserve and restore the building, Iowans for generations to come will be able to observe the foundations of state government, foundations as strong as the Capitol itself.





Iowa Capitol, west facade



Iowa Capitol, rotunda & dome



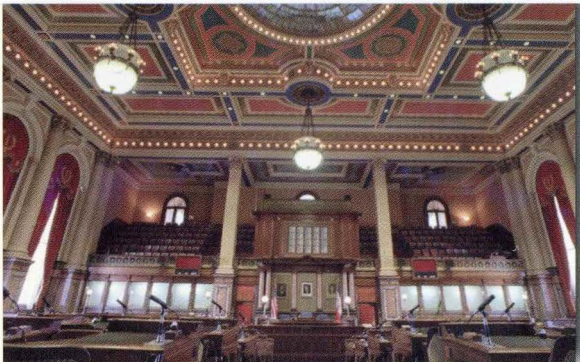
Iowa Governor's Office



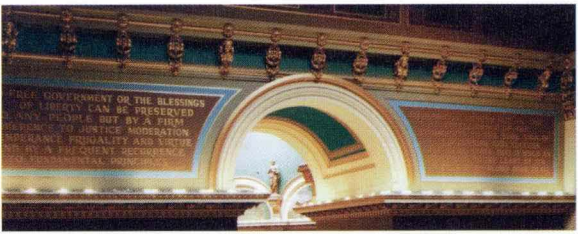
Iowa Supreme Court



Iowa Senate



Iowa House of Representatives



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