

7
U582PI
:044
986

APR 11 1986

Old Capitol

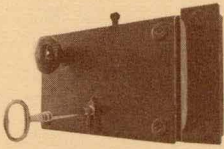


STATE LIBRARY OF IOWA
17 U582PI 7:044 1986 sdoc
/Old capitol

3 1723 00032 4418

The University of Iowa
Iowa City, Iowa

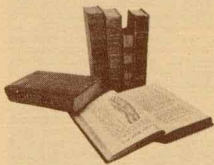
STATE LIBRARY OF IOWA
Historical Building
DES MOINES, IOWA 50319



For nearly 150 years, Old Capitol has served Iowa as a seat of government, of education, and of tradition. Built in the early 1840s, Old Capitol

was the first permanent capitol of Iowa where the last four Iowa territorial legislatures met. In this building, Iowa made the transition to statehood. Here, the first governor was inaugurated, the first six Iowa general assemblies met, and the state's constitution—still the fundamental law of the state—was drafted.

When state government moved to Des Moines in 1857, Old Capitol was given to The University of Iowa and became the first building owned by the University. Chartered in Old Capitol by the First Iowa General Assembly in 1847, just 59 days after Iowa's final admission to statehood, the University had opened in March 1855 with classes held in a rented building. Since 1857, Old Capitol has been the focal point of the University, a symbol of the University, and a witness to the University's history from its conception.

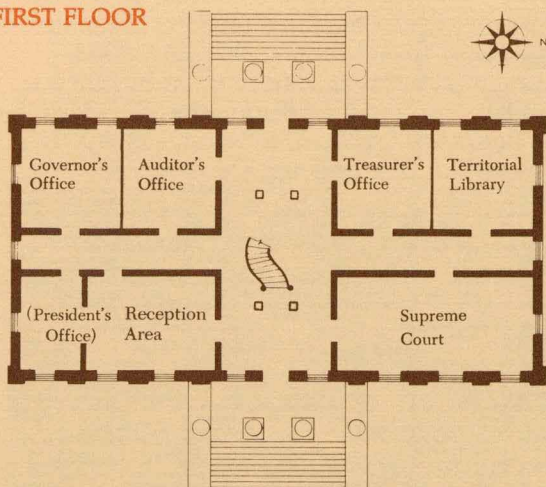


In 1970 the building's historic restoration was begun. The restoration committee delved into the history of the building and supervised a unique

restoration that returned the structure to the three periods of its use: the territorial government period; the state government period; and the University's long use of the building, represented in rooms of 1920s decor.

Old Capitol was reopened on July 3, 1976, as a National Historic Landmark.

FIRST FLOOR

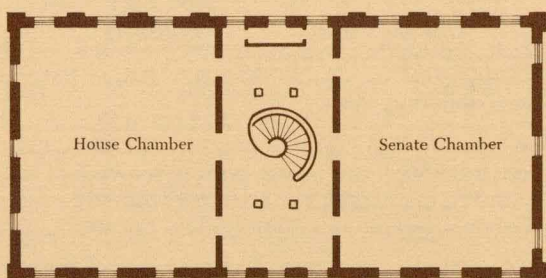


The cornerstone for Old Capitol was laid July 4, 1840. Nine days later, the project's architect, John F. Rague, resigned, leaving Chauncey Swan, one of the territorial government commissioners who had selected the site of Iowa City and the capitol, to oversee construction.

The building is an example of Greek Revival architecture. Most of the four-ton stones used in the walls of the building were quarried near North Liberty and floated down the Iowa River on rafts. Original floor joists, roof trusses, and other supporting beams were hand hewn from native oak. The dome was first sheathed in copper. An unusual reverse spiral staircase dominates the central hallways.

By 1842, four rooms in Old Capitol had been completed.

SECOND FLOOR



The legislature appropriated \$4,000 to complete the building in 1856, just a year before the state government moved, and \$3,000 for repair and remodeling in 1858, bringing the estimated cost of the building to more than \$125,000.



Between 1921 and 1924 Old Capitol underwent a major structural renovation. The oak supporting beams were replaced with steel beams, and the southwest corner of the building's foundation was repaired. The 650-pound crystal and brass chandelier, now in the Senate Chamber, was installed, and gold leaf five-millionths of an inch thick was applied to the dome. The west portico, called for in the original plan but never built, was added in the 1921-24 renovation, and Old Capitol was at last complete.

Chronology of Old Capitol

Territory of Iowa

- May 4, 1839: The site of Iowa City, the new territorial capital, was chosen by a commission of three legislators, Chauncey Swan, Robert Ralston, and John Ronalds.
- November 12, 1839: The contract for the design and construction of the new capitol was awarded to John Francis Rague, the architect who had designed Illinois's first Springfield capitol.
- July 4, 1840: Robert Lucas, first governor of the territory, officiated at the laying of Old Capitol's cornerstone.
- December 5, 1842: The Fifth Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Iowa convened in the building—the third capitol of the territory.

State of Iowa

- December 3, 1846: Ansel Briggs, first governor of the state, was inaugurated in Old Capitol.
- December 28, 1846: Iowa became a state of the Union.
- February 25, 1847: The University of Iowa was founded in Old Capitol.
- January 25, 1857: The State Historical Society of Iowa was founded in Old Capitol.
- December, 1857: The state capital was moved to Des Moines, and Old Capitol became the first permanent building of The University of Iowa.

The University of Iowa

- 1857-1863: Old Capitol housed the entire University until 1863, when the University's second building, South Hall, was occupied.
- 1921-1924: Old Capitol underwent a major remodeling and structural rehabilitation.
- July 18, 1970: University President Willard Boyd announced that Old Capitol would be restored as an historic monument.
- May 31, 1972: Old Capitol was entered in the National Register of Historic Places.
- July 3, 1976: The restoration was completed, and Old Capitol reopened as The University of Iowa's contribution to the United States bicentennial. Old Capitol was officially designated a National Historic Landmark by the U.S. Department of the Interior.

The Old Capitol National Historic Landmark is open from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday and from noon to 4:00 p.m. Sunday. On home football game Saturdays, the hours are 9:00 a.m. to noon. The building is closed on holidays and December 31.

There is no admission charge to visit Old Capitol, but reservations are required for group tours. Please call the Office of Public Information, (319) 353-5691, to arrange for group tours.

Informational brochures and other high quality memorabilia are sold in the Old Capitol gift shop on the ground floor. Proceeds from gift shop sales support Old Capitol programs and projects. Other contributions and appropriate gifts in kind are welcome.

