

# YOUR STATE CAPITOL



**MICHIGAN STATE CAPITOL**

*Rededicated November 19, 1992*

*Dear Friend:*

*Welcome to the Michigan State Capitol. We are delighted you have taken the time to visit us here and tour this historic landmark.*

*The State Capitol is unique. It is Michigan's most widely recognized building, and has come to be regarded as a symbol of the state itself. It is nationally recognized for its architectural and artistic importance. However, 113 years of weathering, neglect, hard use, and structural and technological modifications had diminished the magnificent design created by the Capitol's architect, Elijah E. Myers.*

*In 1987, the Michigan Legislature, recognizing that the Capitol is, historically, Michigan's most important building, established the Michigan Capitol Committee and charged it with overseeing the Capitol Restoration Project. It was not the goal of the Capitol Restoration Project to create a museum. Rather, the goal was to restore and retain the Capitol as the modern working seat of state government; the place where, for at least the next 100 years, the legislature and the governor would continue to address the issues that confront the citizens of this great state.*

*On January 1, 1879, a magnificent new Capitol building was dedicated to the people of Michigan. Speaking at the dedication ceremony, Governor Crowell noted that the structure stood as "evidence of the lasting taste, spirit and enterprise" of the citizens of the state. On November 19-20, 1992, more than 113 years later, another celebration marked the successful conclusion of a three-year project to restore the Capitol to its original Victorian glory and rededicate it to another 100 years of service as the seat of Michigan government.*

# YOUR STATE CAPITOL



MICHIGAN STATE CAPITOL  
*Rededicated November 19, 1992*

Prepared by the Michigan Legislature

---

This information is provided free to Michigan citizens  
and is not for reproduction for resale or profit.



# **BEFORE YOU START YOUR TOUR . . .**

We hope you enjoy your visit to Michigan's magnificent state capitol. You are part of a long tradition: for over 125 years, governors and lawmakers, students and teachers, protesters, tourists, and visitors from every walk of life and from every part of the state and nation have traveled to the Capitol, first by horse and buggy and today by automobile and airplane. Today, the Michigan State Capitol enjoys a well-deserved reputation as one of the nation's most important historic buildings. It is also one of its most beautiful.

This has not always been true. Crowding, inadequate maintenance, and more than a century of hard use left their mark on the aging building. Fortunately, recognizing the need to save our historic statehouse, Michigan began a challenging and highly successful restoration of the building in 1989. Completed in 1992, the meticulous restoration won the nation's highest preservation award from the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

In 1992, the National Park Service designated the Capitol a National Historic Landmark, an award reserved for America's most important historic places. This is a great honor, since there are only a few thousand Historic Landmarks in the nation. To qualify, a site must possess exceptional historical, architectural, or artistic significance—not just for Michigan, but for the nation as a whole. Today, over 125,000 visitors, representing every state in the nation and dozens of foreign countries, take guided tours of the Capitol every year.

As you tour the building, take note of its breathtaking, award-winning art and architecture. Look carefully—you may be fooled! Inexpensive pine, plaster, and cast iron were painted in the 1880s to look like costly marble and walnut. Every wall and ceiling in the Capitol was handpainted as well, using brilliant colors, elaborate patterns, and every skill of the painter's art. More than nine acres of columns, doors, wainscot, cornices, ceilings, and walls were painstakingly decorated by hand. Today, authentically and carefully restored, the Michigan State Capitol stands as a national treasure and one of America's finest examples of Victorian decorative painting.

Although its decorative arts alone qualified the Capitol for Historic Landmark status, there were additional reasons for this honor. Michigan's Capitol established the career of its architect, Elijah E. Myers, who would go on to become one of the most noted architects of his day and the greatest designer of capitol buildings in American history. Our Capitol became the model for many other state capitols, establishing the domed United States Capitol as a national symbol.

It is our goal to preserve this beautiful building for at least the next 100 years as our working seat of state government. Our staff is dedicated to the ideals of preservation maintenance: by respecting the building's history, art, and architecture, and by using and maintaining it properly, we can prolong the Capitol's useful life indefinitely.

This is where **you** can help! As you tour the building, please help us preserve Michigan's heritage by remembering:

**DO LOOK—BUT PLEASE DON'T TOUCH THE PAINT:** Almost every surface you see, including the “marble” columns and wainscot and the “walnut” wainscot, doors, and trim—as well as the walls themselves—are hand-painted. Help us preserve this fragile art. Please do not touch the walls, woodwork, or columns or lean anything against them.

**BE CAREFUL:** We are also concerned about **your** well-being.

- Be careful on the Grand Stairs. Hurrying can be dangerous!
- Be careful at the railing in the rotunda galleries. Take small children by the hand and make sure they do not climb or lean over—or through!—the railings. A good rule for children is to ask them to keep their heels on the floor while looking over.
- Do not place anything on the railings. Items can easily slide off and create a hazard for those standing below. If you have a camera, please place its strap around your wrist or neck before taking a picture over the railing.

## **If You Would Like to Learn More . . .**

The Capitol Tour Guide and Information Service offers guided tours of the Capitol five days a week and serves as a ready reference for questions about the restored Capitol and state government. Tours last 45 minutes to an hour and leave from the Information Desk at the front (east) ground floor entrance to the Capitol.

**Tours are offered from 9 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. The Capitol is closed Saturdays, Sundays, and on state and federal holidays.**

# FIRST, SOME HISTORY . . .

## Michigan's Three Capitols

Lansing was not Michigan's first capital city. French fur traders and missionaries traveled the upper Great Lakes as early as the 1660s. In 1668, the Jesuit mission at Sault Ste. Marie became the first permanent European settlement in what is now Michigan.

The military post at Michilimackinac was founded a few years later and served for a quarter of a century as the center of French influence on the Great Lakes. Then Antoine de Lamothe Cadillac convinced the French court that a post on the Detroit River would be more advantageous. Detroit, founded in 1701, became the most important settlement in the western Great Lakes region, and remained so even after the British defeated the French in the 1760s.

In 1787, after more than a century of French and British rule, the Michigan region was set aside by the United States government as part of the Northwest Territory. Then, in 1805, Congress created the Territory of Michigan and chose General William Hull as its first governor. On July 1, 1805, Detroit became the capital of the new territory, with various locations in the city serving at different times as the seat of government.



*Michigan's first capitol was located in Detroit. After the legislature moved the location of the capital city to Lansing in 1847, the building was used as a school. It was destroyed by fire in 1893.*

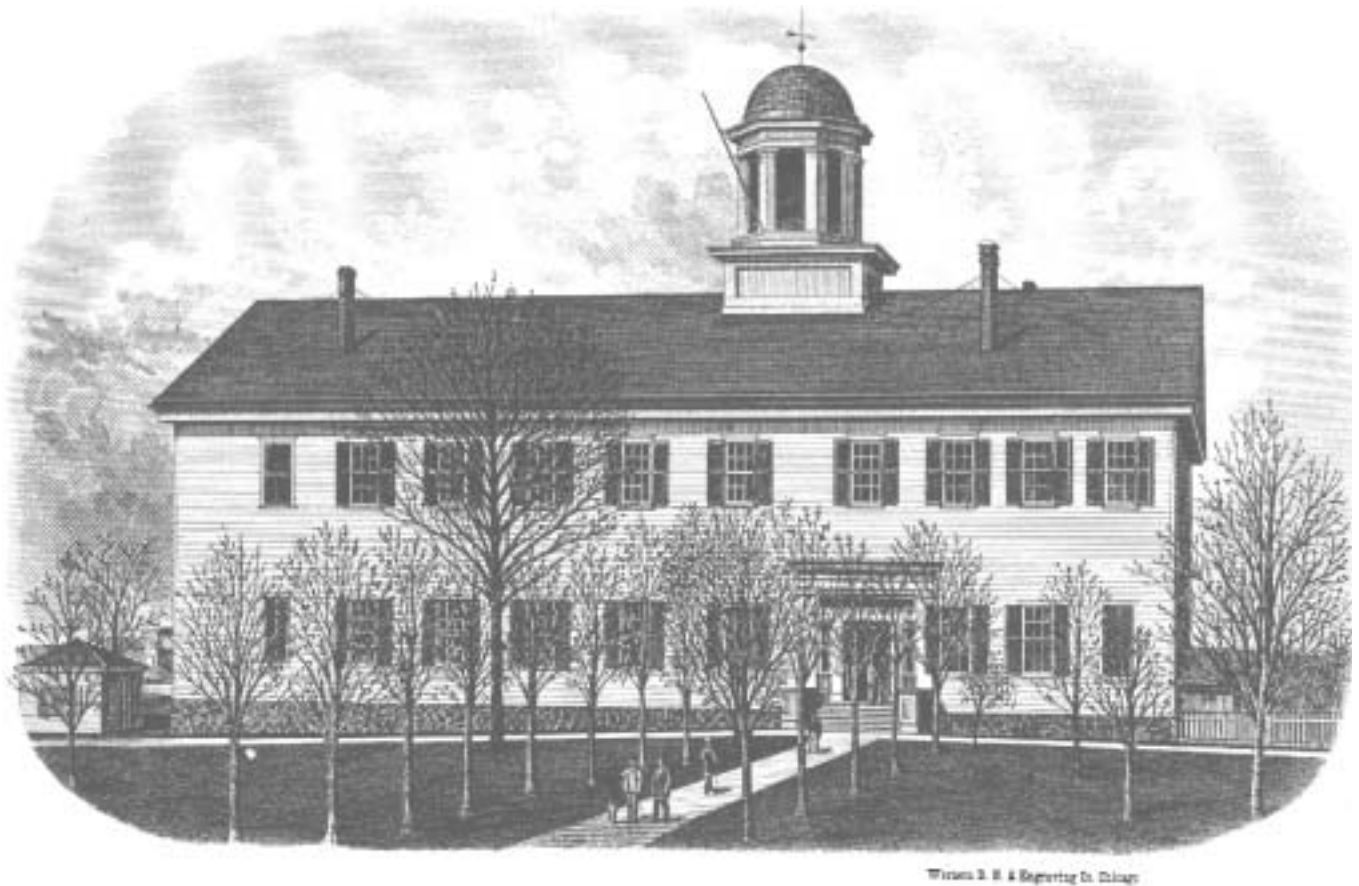


In 1837, Michigan was admitted to the Union. Through a provision in the Constitution of 1835, Detroit was selected as the first capital of the new state. A territorial courthouse, built in 1823, was pressed into service as the first capitol building.

The 1835 Constitution, however, carried another provision. Detroit would remain the state capital “until the year eighteen-hundred and forty-seven, when it shall be permanently located by the Legislature.” This provision unleashed a firestorm of debate as legislators vied for the honor of locating the capital in their districts.

With Ann Arbor, Jackson, Marshall, and many other cities promoted and opposed for various reasons, James Seymour, a land speculator with considerable acreage in Ingham County, drew attention to Lansing Township. On March 16, 1847, after months of debate in the legislature, the governor signed into law a bill naming Lansing Township in Ingham County as the new state capital. Horrified observers, noting that there was not so much as a village at the location, termed it a “howling wilderness.”

Nonetheless, the legislature would be required to convene in the new location in January 1848, so there was no time to waste. In late 1847, a wooden structure was hastily erected to serve as a temporary capitol building and a settlement began to rise around it. At first called “Michigan, Michigan,” this confusing name was changed a few months later to “Lansing.” Although it has been Michigan’s capital since 1847, Lansing was not actually incorporated as a city until 1859.



*Michigan's second capitol was built in Lansing in the winter of 1847-1848. After the construction of our present Capitol, the second capitol was sold and used for offices and manufacturing. It was destroyed by fire on December 16, 1882.*



The “temporary” capitol was clearly inadequate from the start. Any thought of a grander building, however, had to be set aside for the duration of the Civil War. Although a 16-foot addition was added to the structure in 1865, it was not until 1871 that Governor Henry Baldwin called for a larger, fireproof, and more dignified seat of state government. The legislature agreed, calling for the construction of a new capitol in Lansing.

A board of building commissioners was named, and a nationwide contest was announced to select an architect for the new structure, with a limit of \$1,200,000 placed on its construction. In January 1872, a plan (called “Tuebor,” meaning, “I will defend”) submitted by architect Elijah E. Myers of Springfield, Illinois, was selected. Myers moved to Michigan to supervise construction and lived for the rest of his life in his adopted state.

Construction began in 1872. When the cornerstone of the eagerly-awaited building was laid on October 2, 1873, a ceremony was held which rivaled anything Lansing had seen since becoming the capital a quarter of a century earlier. People thronged to the city in numbers far exceeding its capacity. Private citizens opened their homes and made preparations to feed and shelter the visitors.



Photo: State Archives of Michigan

*The ceremony which marked the laying of the cornerstone for Michigan’s third capitol was held on October 2, 1873. Attended by thousands of people from all over the state, this parade was part of the gala events.*

Materials for the building came from all over the country and even from abroad. Although the millions of brick which make up its walls and ceilings were locally made in Lansing, the stone facade came from Ohio, the cast iron for the dome and floor beams from Pennsylvania, and the marble and limestone floors from Vermont. The Board of Commissioners made sure the best materials were selected for the best price—wherever they could be found. The final cost totaled \$1,427,738.78, considered modest for the construction of a state capitol during this period.



Photo: State Archives of Michigan

*The Capitol under construction, ca. 1875. Derricks rise above the walls, which have been completed to the second story.*

Michigan's third state capitol was dedicated on January 1, 1879. More than 40 years after Michigan entered the Union, the state finally had a seat of government to be proud of. One of the first to take as its inspiration the just-remodeled national Capitol in Washington, D.C., Michigan's new statehouse became, in turn, the model for other state capitols. The building's style, incorporating motifs from classical Greek and Roman architecture, is often termed Renaissance Revival or Neoclassical. Columns in the classical orders—Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian—are found both outside and inside the building and a four-storied central entrance pavilion is flanked by the balanced wings of the House and the Senate. Above the building floats a distinctive, graceful cast iron dome. Although the exterior changed little over the years, crowding, remodeling, and neglect severely altered the interior. An award-winning restoration, begun in 1989, was successfully completed in 1992.

Besides serving as the center of executive and legislative activities, the Capitol has long served as a public forum for Michigan citizens. Today, as in the past, it is the site of many ceremonial functions, special events, festivities, speeches, rallies, and protests.

# Inside the Capitol

Enter the building to go back in time—back to the Victorian era of fine craftsmanship, elegance, and grand opulence. Magnificent chandeliers softly light halls as they did when the Capitol was lit by gas; walls and ceilings glow with authentically restored painted colors and patterns; furnishings recreate the aura of another age.

## THE GROUND FLOOR

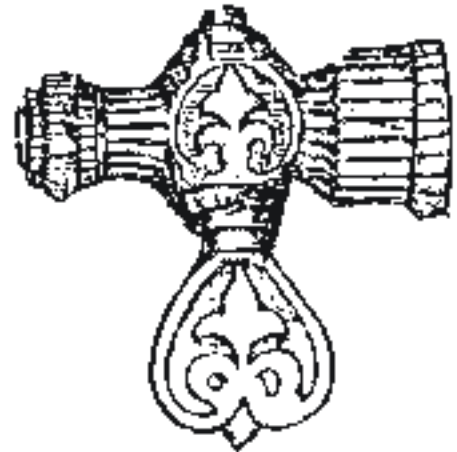
*RESTROOMS: Public restrooms are located on the ground, third, and fourth floors of the Capitol. All restrooms are accessible to visitors with disabilities.*

Plain and unadorned, the ground floor provides little hint of the splendors above. Never intended for the public, Architect Elijah Myers originally located store rooms and an armory here. However, during the Capitol's restoration, the building's main entrance was relocated to the ground floor in order to enhance public safety and improve accessibility. An **Information Desk** is located here, where you can inquire about tours, Capitol history, and the locations of legislators and other state government offices.

Originally, the walls on the ground floor were plastered and painted to resemble the exterior's sandstone facade. To enhance the illusion, even the joints between the stone blocks were re-created in plaster and paint. Here, as in most of the Capitol, the wood wainscot which covers the lower portion of the walls was painted to look like walnut. Simple pine strip flooring covered the floors. Arched doors with glass side panels let light into the corridors to augment the dim illumination characteristic of gas lighting.

During the restoration, every effort was made to accurately return the Capitol to its original appearance. The ground floor was no exception, and great attention was paid to detail. For instance, an original gas cock found during the restoration was copied and used in the replicated lighting fixtures on this floor. However, a few changes were made to enhance utility and safety. Durable gray tile was substituted for pine flooring and lighting fixtures are electric rather than gas.

Move to the center of the building where the corridors intersect. Now you are directly under the dome. Look up: above is a glass ceiling—actually the glass floor of the rotunda on the next floor. Here you can see the cast iron columns which support the floor and the massive walls which support the dome. The Capitol's walls are built of solid brick and—except for the rotunda's glass floor—even the ceilings and floors are brick.



*Original gas cock*



## THE FIRST FLOOR

*The Grand Stairs are located in the north and south corridors. Or you can take the elevators to the upper floors. One elevator is located in the east (front) corridor and one in the north corridor near the rotunda.*

At one time, the Capitol housed all branches of state government, including the supreme court, the legislature, the governor, and various state administrators, such as the attorney general and the secretary of state. Here on the first floor are offices where some of these agencies were located. Today, all but the governor, the lieutenant governor and the legislature have moved to other state office buildings.

*Start your tour in the center of the rotunda directly beneath the dome.*

The floor of the rotunda is made up of 976 pieces of glass. Each is about five-eighths of an inch thick. The floor is 44½ feet in diameter. The floor's design creates an optical illusion: seen from above it appears that the center of the floor sinks to form a bowl.

Above you, the rotunda rises 160 feet to an opening at the top of the inner dome. Called the **oculus**, or eye of the dome, it provides a glimpse into the vastness of the universe, represented by a starry sky. The rotunda and inner dome are beautifully decorated with elaborately hand-painted designs, as are the walls and ceilings throughout the Capitol. Over nine acres of hand-painted surfaces have been carefully restored to look exactly as they did originally.

Notice the cases circling the rotunda. Until 1990, they contained historic **battle flags** carried by Michigan regiments during the Civil War, as well as flags carried during the later Spanish-American War and World War I. Because of their deteriorated condition, the original battle flags were moved to the Michigan Historical Museum where they are being preserved. Replicas now take their place in the Capitol.

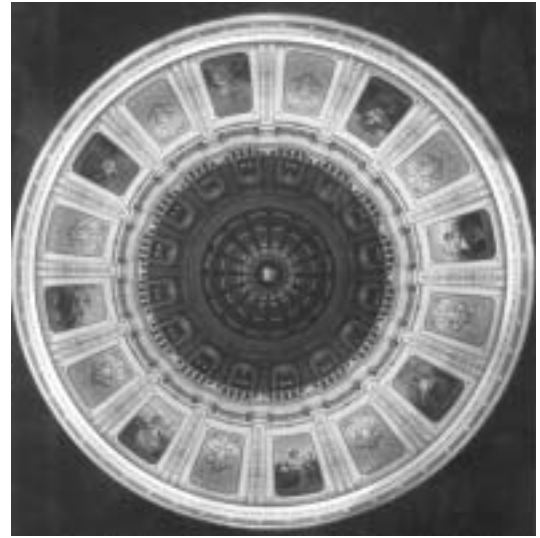


Photo: Thomas Gennara

*One of the most spectacular sights in the Capitol is the view of the inner dome from the first floor.*



Photo: David Trumple

*Twenty chandeliers like this one, designed and crafted expressly for Michigan's Capitol, grace the hallways.*

*Move into the east (front) corridor.*

On the north wall opposite the elevator is a large clock, called a "long drop" clock. It was once the building's master clock and is at least as old as the Capitol. It has been restored and today is in excellent running condition.

The **chandelier** above you is one of 20 designed just for the Capitol to light its main corridors. They are called the "Michigan" chandeliers because they feature

an elk and shield from our state's coat-of-arms. They were originally lit by gas. They are made of cast metal, not copper, as was long believed.

Note the entrance hall's beautiful "**marble**" columns, pilasters, and wainscot. None of it is real marble. Hand painted to fool the eye, the columns are cast iron, the pilasters are plaster, and the wainscot is pine. In this way, the opulence of the Victorian age was achieved without expensive materials, an economy necessary to keep the Capitol within its limited

construction budget. The resulting building is a masterpiece of craftsmanship rather than merely a showcase for expensive materials.

One of the most distinctive features of the Capitol is the checkerboard black and white tiled floors in the main corridors. The white tiles *are* marble, but they are a relatively inexpensive marble quarried in Vermont. The black tiles are limestone, also quarried in Vermont. Look carefully at the black tiles: they are filled with fossils of marine snails and other marine animals which lived in the seas covering Vermont during the Middle Ordovician, about 475 million years ago. The large white spirals in the black tiles are the fossils of Maclurites, a large snail-like mollusk.



Photo: Mike Oullinan

*The entrance corridor on the first floor conveys the original elegance and craftsmanship of the more than century-old Capitol. Restoration of the main corridors throughout the building involved stabilizing the plaster; restoring the decorative paint, including the wood-grained and marbled wainscot and the woodgrained doors, doorframes, and windows; restoring and improving the lighting; restoring the original marble and limestone tile floors; and installing an improved system of signs.*

*The Grand Staircases lead from the ground to the fourth floors on both the north and south sides of the rotunda. Made of cast iron manufactured in Pennsylvania, they are decorated underneath with beautiful painted designs.*



Photo: Dietrich Floeter

## THE SECOND FLOOR

*Continue to the second floor.*

Here you will see the **Gallery of Governors**, where portraits of former Michigan governors line the rotunda on this and the third floor. By tradition, each governor selects the artist, pays for the portrait, and donates it to the state after leaving office. When a new portrait is hung in the Gallery, room is made by moving the oldest portrait to another location in the Capitol.



Photo: Fred Golden

*Move around the rotunda to the east (front) corridor.*

Here you will notice the **Office of the Governor**. The Governor's Office and Parlor, among the best-documented and most beautiful rooms in the Capitol, have been carefully restored. Features include original furnishings manufactured by the Feige Brothers Company of Saginaw. Preserved through the efforts of Marie Ferrey, who in 1913 became the first curator of the Michigan Historical Museum, the furnishings are a tribute to Michigan's furniture manufacturing heritage. Pictures hanging on the Parlor walls are of former Michigan governors—reproductions of the charcoal-enhanced photographs which once hung here.

Note the doorknobs on the corridor doors here and elsewhere in the Capitol. They are cast with Michigan's coat-of-arms. Door hinges throughout the building also display our coat-of-arms.

You may have already noticed the Capitol's beautiful "walnut" woodwork, including doors, door frames, and wainscot. Almost all the wood trim in the Capitol appears to be walnut—and almost none of it really is. Most of it is pine or other inexpensive woods, carefully hand painted to mimic walnut. Called "**wood graining**," this technique involves applying seven layers of paint by hand. Every line of grain—and even the pores in the wood—are painted by hand! Originally undertaken to save money, all of the building's wood graining has been completely restored. Today, the Capitol ranks as one of the finest examples of this ancient art in the nation.

The **lobbies of the House and Senate Chambers** are located on this floor, in the north and south wings. Note the illustrated seating charts, designed to help you locate your legislator's desk on the chamber floor. If the legislature is in session, pick up a session calendar here from the House and Senate Sergeants.

*Continue upstairs to the public viewing galleries for the House and Senate Chambers.*



## THE THIRD FLOOR

*Public Restrooms: On this floor a men's restroom is found at the entrance to the House Chamber gallery, while a women's restroom is located at the entrance to the Senate Chamber gallery. Both restrooms are accessible to visitors with disabilities.*

The public **viewing galleries** for the House of Representatives and Senate Chambers are located on this floor. You are always welcome here. Visitors must be seated when the chambers are in session. On very busy session days you may have to wait briefly until a seat is vacated before being allowed to enter the gallery. There are sections in both galleries designed to accommodate visitors using wheelchairs.

*Proceed to the House Chamber gallery in the north wing.*

The **House Chamber** is the larger of the two chambers, accommodating 110 members. Each Representative is elected for a two-year term from a district of about 90,000 constituents. Each member sits at an assigned desk, with Democrats traditionally sitting on the left of the chamber and Republicans on the right. The presiding officer is called the Speaker of the House and is a Representative elected to this position by fellow members.

The restoration of this chamber was completed in April 1990. Original 1878 desks were refinished, the curving rostrum at the head of the chamber reconstructed, and historic

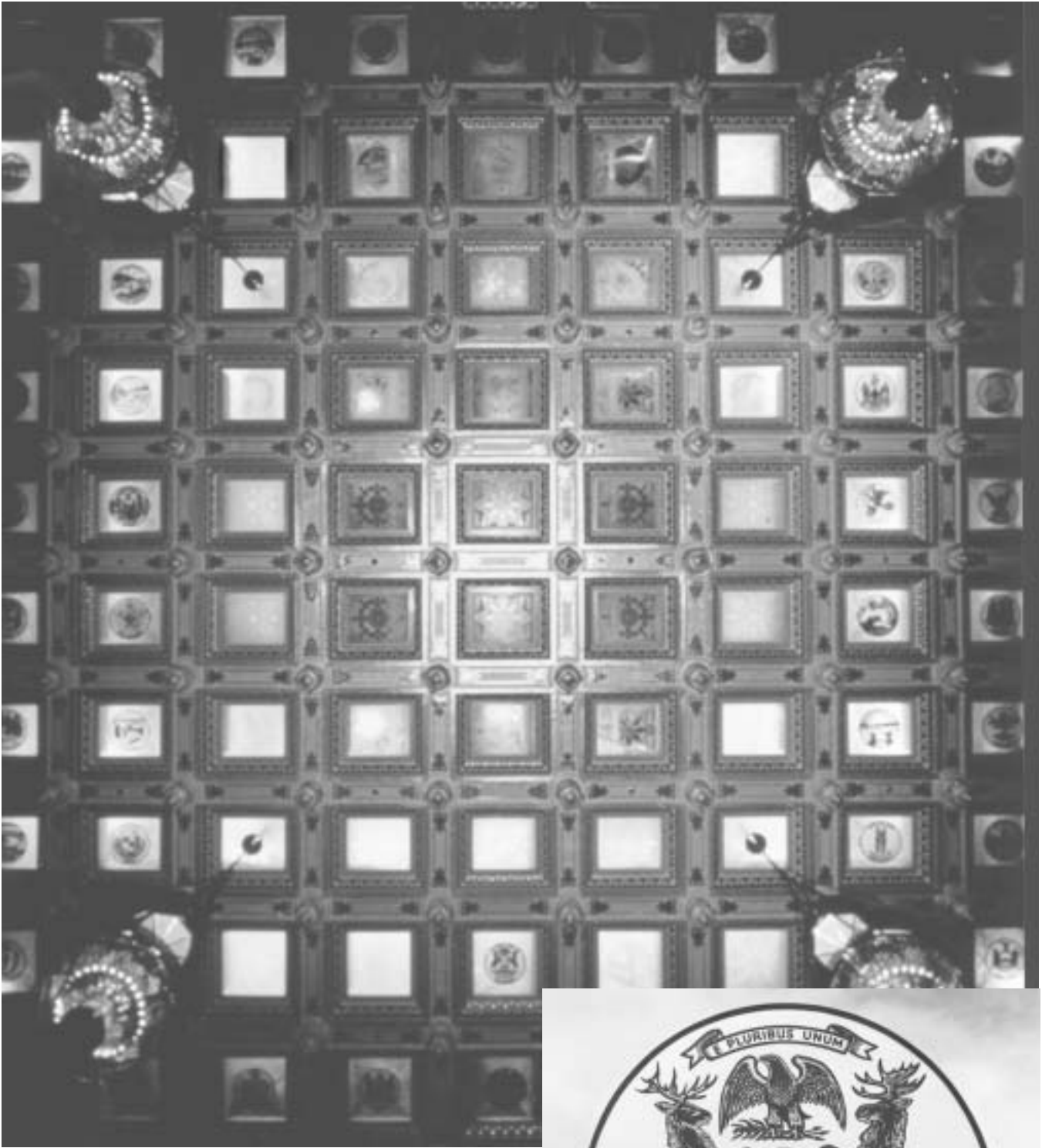
lighting restored or reduplicated from photographs. The chamber carpet is based on an authentic period design, and preserves a House tradition by incorporating the state coat-of-arms in the border. The oval cartouche at the entrance to the chamber features the state flower, the apple blossom. It was designed and handwoven by Michigan artist Paul V'Soske.

Voting was originally done by calling the roll and recording the yeas and nays by hand. Today, roll call and voting are done electronically. Look for voting and message boards on either side of the Speaker's rostrum at the head of the chamber: they are carefully designed to blend almost invisibly with the wall when not in use. In this way, we preserved the historic appearance of the chamber without sacrificing modern speed or efficiency.

On the wall over the Speaker's Chair at the head of the chamber is a magnificent version of Michigan's coat-of-arms, rendered in cast



Photo: Bailthazor Korab



*The coffered ceilings in both the House and Senate Chambers have been restored. Original panes of ruby and white hand-etched glass were lost years ago, replaced in the House by plastic and in the Senate by plywood. Copies now feature the coats-of-arms of all 50 states, as well as Victorian designs and Michigan themes. A detail (right) shows Michigan's coat-of-arms. Skylights in the roof above let natural light into the chambers through the glass-paneled ceiling.*



plaster, glaze, paint, and gold leaf. On the left is an elk and on the right a moose, flanking our national symbol, the eagle. Above the eagle are the Latin words of our national motto, “E pluribus unum,” meaning, “From many, one.” A shield bears the Latin word, “Tuebor,” meaning, “I will defend.” Below is a small figure standing on a peninsula backed by the rising rays of the sun. The elk, moose, and shield are supported by a banner bearing the Latin words of Michigan’s motto, “Si quaeris peninsulam amoenam, circumspice,” meaning, “If you seek a pleasant peninsula, look around you.” At the time the motto was written, the Upper Peninsula was not part of Michigan.

The Great Seal of the State of Michigan, from which the coat-of-arms is taken, was designed in 1835 by General Lewis Cass, former governor of Michigan Territory. He based the design on the seal of the Hudson Bay Fur Trading Company. A portrait of Lewis Cass hangs on the east wall of the House Chamber: it is the portrait nearest you on your right as you face the rostrum. Opposite Cass, on the west wall, is a portrait of young Stevens T. Mason. Nicknamed the “Boy Governor,” he was Michigan’s first governor and, at the age of 24, the youngest person in our nation’s history to hold this office.

*Continue to the rotunda railings.*

Here you can once again view the **Gallery of Governors**. Above you are eight monumental paintings of female figures. Painted on canvas and glued directly to the inner dome, they are muses, or guides, drawn from Greek and Roman mythology. Each offers the people of Michigan, standing on the glass floor far below, gifts of progress and the future—art, agriculture, education, industry, science, trade and communication, philosophy, and good government.

*Proceed around the rotunda to the south wing.*

Here you can enter the **Senate Chamber’s** public gallery. The Senate, with 38 members, occupies the smaller of the two chambers. Each Senator is elected to a four-year term from a



Photo: Tim Burke, Michigan Department of Transportation



district of about 262,000 constituents. The presiding officer in the Senate, called the President of the Senate, is the lieutenant governor of the state.

Restoration of the Senate Chamber was completed in January 1990. Although architecturally nearly identical to the House Chamber, their very different color schemes render each chamber unique. Rather than the House's terra cottas and teals, here you see vibrant blues and silvers. The decorative paint in both chambers features elaborately stenciled and freehand designs, gold leaf, and colored glazes. As in the House Chamber, skylights once again allow natural light to stream through ruby and white etched glass panels in the beautiful coffered ceilings. More light is provided by four original chandeliers (there are six in the House Chamber) which glitter overhead. They consist of brass, lead crystal, and fire-hardened glass, and are lowered on pulleys for cleaning.

The seating arrangement on the chamber floor is essentially the same as in the House. The members' walnut desks in both chambers are original, designed by the Capitol's architect, Elijah Myers. Here in the Senate Chamber, however, extra space allowed the addition of side consoles to house computers and telephones.

As you face the rostrum, you see two portraits. The one on your right is Austin Blair, Michigan's beloved "war governor." He led the state from 1861 to 1864, during the turbulent years of the Civil War. He is the only person in Michigan history to be honored with a statue on Capitol Square. On your left is a portrait of the Marquis de Lafayette, the young French nobleman who helped America win its independence. Lafayette was greatly admired by Michigan's early leaders and this portrait was acquired when Michigan became a state in 1837. It has hung in all three Michigan capitols. Voting and message boards similar to those in the House are found to the right and left of the portraits. They are very hard to see unless in use.

*Leaving the Senate gallery, proceed to the east (front) corridor.*

The old **Supreme Court Chamber** is located here. The Supreme Court left the Capitol in 1970 and the room is now used by the Senate Appropriations Committee for meetings and hearings. The room, with its exceptionally high ceiling, elaborate decorative paint, and ornamental plasterwork is one of the most elegant in the Capitol. It shows how a space can be adapted to a new use without sacrificing beauty and history.

Some visits include a stop in the **House Appropriations Committee Room** opposite the old Supreme Court Chamber. This room was originally part of the Michigan State Library (later the State Law Library). The State Library was a large room similar to the Senate and House Chambers. Like the chambers, it rose from the second through the third floors. Bookshelves were arranged on iron galleries or balconies which ran all around the room on several levels. The floor here is not original; it was put in to adapt this space for offices after the library left the Capitol and moved to another building.

This room is now used by the House Appropriations Committee for meetings and hearings. Both the Senate Appropriations Committee in the old Supreme Court Chamber and the House Appropriations Committee here in the old State Library work on vital state budget issues.

When the Capitol was rededicated on November 19, 1992, this room was dedicated to all Michigan veterans, past, present, and future. Today this room is also called the "Veterans Room."



*The old Supreme Court Chamber, now used as a meeting room for the Senate Appropriations Committee, retains much of its original appearance. Elijah Myers, the building's architect, paid particular attention to the details of this room and designed not only the walnut judges' bench but also the large bookcase behind it. The elaborately painted ceiling is original and required the attention of a fine arts conservator to save it. Plaster was stabilized, flaking paint reattached, and the whole ceiling carefully cleaned. The carpeting was copied from photos of the original. Restoration of the chamber's decorative paint and lighting was completed in 1992 and the room is once again one of the grandest in the Capitol.*

## AT THE END OF YOUR TOUR . . .

**We hope you enjoyed your tour. To return to your starting point on the *ground floor*, take the Grand Stairs in the north or south wings or the elevator in the east corridor (near the old Supreme Court Chamber).**

**If you have questions or comments or need assistance, please return to the Information Desk on the ground floor near the front entrance. We will be happy to help you.**

# OUTSIDE THE CAPITOL . . .

## Capitol Square

If you have time, spend a few more minutes and tour the Capitol's grounds. The grounds were carefully designed to enhance—rather than compete with—the Capitol. The original scheme called for rows of trees around the perimeter of Capitol Square, forming a leafy frame for the building but keeping the interior grounds open for unobstructed views. This scheme was forgotten over the years as many trees were planted randomly all over Capitol Square. The original scheme is now being slowly reestablished. Existing interior trees are being allowed to live their natural lifespans. They simply won't be replaced when they die.

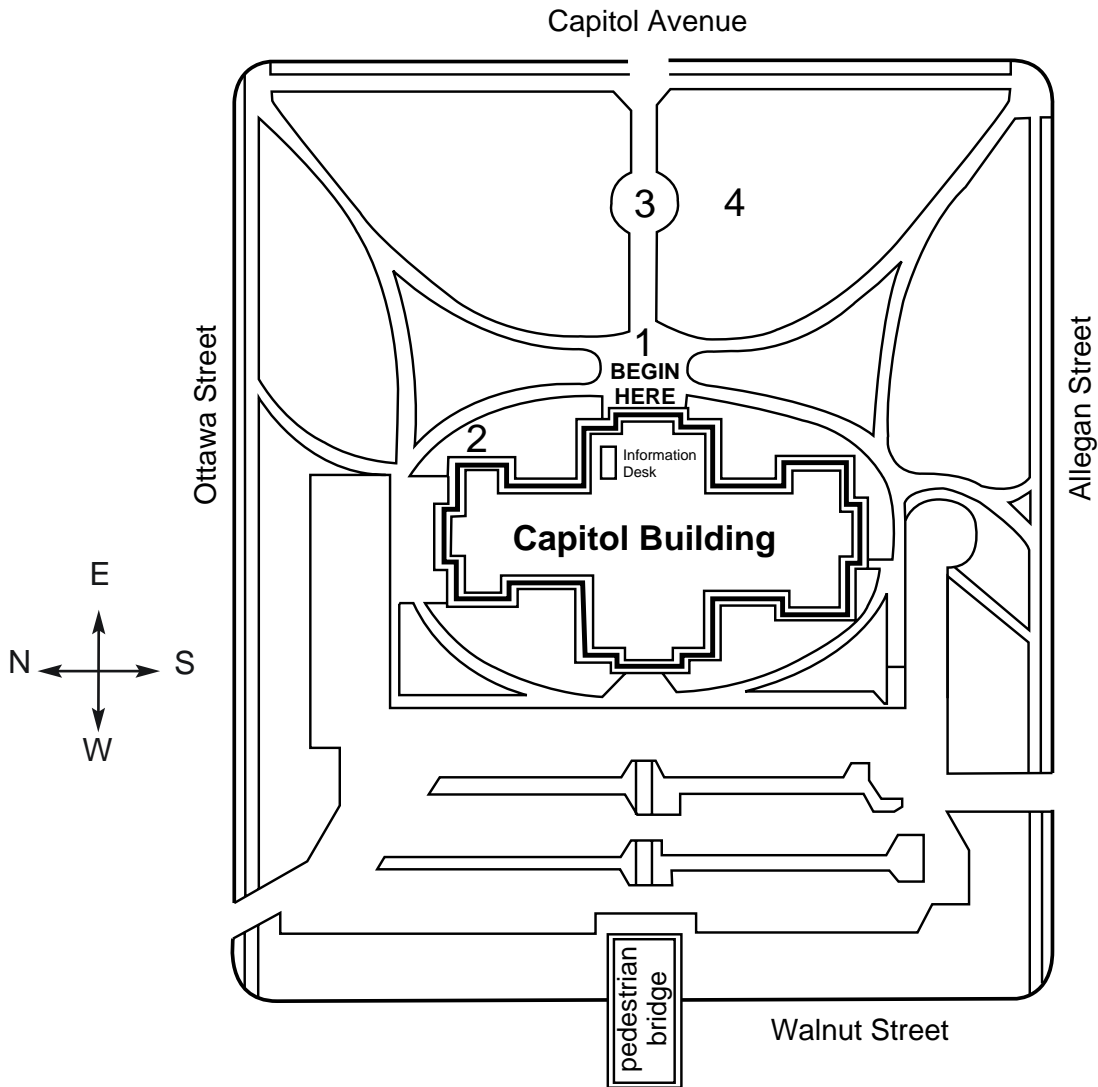
Besides many species of trees, an expansive lawn, and statues and monuments evoking Michigan's past, take note of Capitol Square's beautiful flower beds. These beds were designed by experts from the Landscape Architecture Program at Michigan State University and are based on historic research of Capitol Square's original planting scheme.

The two long curving beds in front of the House and Senate wings feature perennial flowers and plants. Authentically designed in the style of the Victorian period, they reflect the influence of English garden designer **Gertrude Jekyll**, whose writings inspired many American gardeners of the day. The beds provide masses of color throughout the blooming period. Each bed is a mirror of the other, with flowers arranged so that colors range through the color spectrum from hot to cool. Hot colors (yellows, oranges, reds) are found at the Capitol's front entrance. As the beds curve away, they range into cool colors (blues, purples, whites) at the outer ends.

The beds flanking the entrance sidewalk and surrounding the statue of Austin Blair are also based on a popular Victorian planting scheme called "**carpet bedding**." In this scheme, annual flowers were planted in elaborate, often geometric, designs. This became very fashionable, particularly around grand public buildings and large private estates.

Once again, Capitol Square's spectacular flower beds achieve the Victorian ideal—they are beautiful, authentic to their period, and complement rather than distract from the building. In one respect, however, they do differ. Victorian beds often featured exotic and expensive plant material. Our beds are designed with the public use of the Capitol in mind and are as hardy and maintenance-free as possible.





(1) If you face the Capitol and look up toward the dome, you will see a sculpture on the **pediment** (the triangular area) above the Capitol’s multi-storied entrance porch. The sculpture is carved in the same Ohio sandstone as the building’s stone outer facing. Because it is somewhat raised from its background, it is called a “relief” sculpture.

The central figure, dressed as a Native American, represents Michigan. She offers the people of Michigan a book and a globe, symbols of progress and the future. She has discarded the symbols of Michigan’s wilderness past, as represented by the weapons at her feet. The seated figure on the right, surrounded by a plow, horn of plenty, sheaf of wheat, and laurel wreath, represents agriculture. The figure on the left, seated on a bale and supported by an anchor and the skeleton of a partly constructed ship, represents shipping and commerce. In the corners of the pediment are lumbering and mining tools. This allegorical composition reflects Michigan’s pride in its accomplishments and faith in progress and the future.

(2) At the northeast corner of the Capitol you will see a large granite stone with dates carved on it. This is the **cornerstone**: “1872” marks the start of the construction of the Capitol and “1878” marks its completion. The cornerstone was laid during a gala ceremony on October 2, 1873.

(3) Directly in front of the Capitol is a **statue of Austin Blair**, Michigan's beloved "Civil War Governor." Unveiled in 1898, it is the only statue on Capitol Square which represents an actual person. Governor Blair, who served from 1861 to 1864, was in large part responsible for inspiring and organizing Michigan's Civil War effort. More than 90,000 Michigan men, most of them volunteers, fought to abolish slavery and preserve the Union. Blair remained a great hero in Michigan until his death in 1894.

(4) A huge eastern **catalpa tree**, located just south of the Austin Blair Statue, is the biggest of its kind in the nation. Certified by the American Forestry Association's National Register of Big Trees, in 1992 it measured 107 feet tall, 85 feet across the crown, and more than 20 feet around the trunk.

Everything about a catalpa is large: huge creamy-white clusters of flowers form in the spring, heart-shaped leaves measuring up to a foot long and eight inches across form in the summer, and 10-inch seed pods, sometimes called "cigars" because of their distinctive shape, form in autumn. This tree is truly a piece of "living" history—it was growing on Capitol Square when the building was dedicated in 1879.

### **If you would like to learn more . . .**

Ask for our free guide, "**A Tour of Capitol Square**," available at the Information Desk just inside the front entrance to the Capitol on the ground floor. This booklet takes you on a self-guided tour of beautiful Capitol Square, providing fascinating information about its history, monuments, markers, trees, and flower beds, as well as the Capitol's architecture.



MICHIGAN STATE CAPITOL

### **Capitol Statistics**

Height — 267 feet from the ground to the tip of the finial above the dome.

Length — 420 feet, 2 inches.

Width — 273 feet, 11 inches.

Perimeter — 1,520 feet.

Area — 1 and  $\frac{1}{2}$  acres.

.....Construction Period — Six years (from the summer of 1872 until September 2 1878). The building was dedicated on January 1, 1879.

Restoration Period — Three years, from 1989 through 1992.  
The building was rededicated on November 19, 1992.

# Facts About Michigan

<b>State Name:</b>	“Michigan” is derived from the Native American word “Michigama,” meaning large lake.
<b>State Nickname:</b>	The “Wolverine State.”
<b>Capitol:</b>	Lansing, since 1847.
<b>Admission to the Union:</b>	In 1837, Michigan became the 26th state.
<b>State Motto:</b>	Si Quaeris Peninsulam Amoenam Circumspice (If you seek a pleasant peninsula, look about you.)
<b>State Flower:</b>	The apple blossom, adopted in 1897.
<b>State Seal:</b>	Adopted by the legislature in 1911.
<b>State Bird:</b>	The robin, adopted in 1931.
<b>State Tree:</b>	The white pine, adopted in 1955.
<b>State Stone:</b>	The Petoskey stone, adopted in 1965.
<b>State Gem:</b>	Chlorastrolite (known as “greenstone”), adopted in 1972.
<b>State Fish:</b>	The brook trout, adopted in 1988.
<b>State Soil:</b>	The Kalkaska Soil Series, adopted in 1990.
<b>State Reptile:</b>	The painted turtle, adopted in 1995.
<b>State Game Mammal:</b>	The white-tailed deer, adopted in 1997.
<b>State Wildflower:</b>	The dwarf lake iris, adopted in 1998.
<b>State Fossil:</b>	The mastodon, adopted in 2002.
<b>Size of State:</b>	Length: 456 miles; width: 386 miles. Area: 59,954 square miles of land; 1,573 square miles of inland lakes; and 38,575 square miles of Great Lakes.
<b>Population as of the 2000 Census:</b>	9,938,444.
<b>Population Ranking:</b>	8th among 50 states.
<b>Inland Lakes in State:</b>	11,037.
<b>Number of Counties:</b>	83.
<b>Number of State Senators:</b>	38.
<b>Number of State Representatives:</b>	110.







---

*The information in this publication is available,  
upon request, in an alternative, accessible format.*

---