

THE PENNSYLVANIA

Capitol



A NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK

PENNSYLVANIA'S *Capitol* An Architectural & Artistic Treasure

Pennsylvania's Capitol is, first and foremost, a public building belonging to the citizens of the Commonwealth.



It is also a priceless architectural and artistic treasure, a majestic symbol of history and power, and an icon of democracy and freedom.

When President Theodore Roosevelt attended the dedication of the building on October 4, 1906, he said, "This is the handsomest building I ever saw."

The Capitol was designed in the American Renaissance style by Philadelphia architect Joseph Huston (1866-1940), who envisioned the building as a "Palace of Art." Built and furnished at a cost of \$13 million, the Capitol features paintings, stained glass and furnishings by some of the best artisans of the day.

The building incorporates various Renaissance designs in some of its largest rooms: Italian in the House Chamber, French in the Senate Chamber, and English in the Governor's Reception Room. It also reflects Greek, Roman and Victorian influences in its art and ornamentation. Throughout the building, Huston blended the various styles with motifs featuring Pennsylvania's achievements in labor, industry and history, making the Capitol uniquely American. Its five-story exterior is faced with handsome Vermont granite, and the roof is composed of green glazed terra cotta tile.



The Capitol's centerpiece is a spectacular 272-foot, 52 million-pound dome inspired by Michelangelo's design for St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. Following its completion, the building was the tallest structure between Philadelphia and Pittsburgh for 80 years.

While the building has been modernized over time, efforts to blend form and function continue today, and a special Capitol Preservation Committee ensures that as the building evolves, the artistic elements are never lost.

The seat of Pennsylvania's government continues to inspire visitors with its wealth of art, its outstanding architecture, and its strong connection to the vision of the Commonwealth's founder, William Penn, who sought to establish a land that would be governed by just laws and tolerant of all religious faiths.

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William Penn

Timeline of Pennsylvania's Capitol

1682: William Penn founds Pennsylvania and convokes its Provincial Assembly, the predecessor to the state House of Representatives and America's oldest legislative body.

1683-1735: For 52 years the Assembly has no official meeting place. Members assemble wherever space can be found – in Philadelphia's Town Hall, meeting houses, schools, inns, taverns, and private homes.

1735: The Assembly meets in its first official headquarters, the State House, known today as Independence Hall.

1753: The bell that would come to be one of the nation's most treasured symbols, the Liberty Bell, is installed in the Hall.

1776: The Declaration of Independence is signed in the Hall by the Second Continental Congress.

1777-1778: When British troops occupy Philadelphia, the Assembly meets in Lancaster.

1787: The U.S. Constitution is drafted in Independence Hall. Pennsylvania officially becomes a state on December 12.

1790: The Pennsylvania Constitution is ratified, and the state House of Representatives and Senate are created.

1799: The General Assembly moves temporarily to Lancaster's Courthouse and considers new locations, including Bellefonte, Carlisle, Columbia, Harrisburg, Lancaster, Middletown, Northumberland, Pittsburgh, Reading and Sunbury. In 1810, Harrisburg is chosen as the new state capital.

1812: The General Assembly meets in the Dauphin County Courthouse in Harrisburg.



Independence Hall



Hills "Redbrick" Capitol

*President Lincoln's
coffin in the
House Chamber*



Hills Capitol in ruins after fire breaks out



Cobb Capitol



Architect Huston's entry in design competition

1819-1822: The Colonial or "Redbrick" Capitol, designed by the English-born Stephen Hills, is constructed in Harrisburg at a cost of \$135,000.

1861: Abraham Lincoln addresses the General Assembly on his way to his inauguration in Washington, D.C.

1865: Following Lincoln's assassination, hundreds of mourners file past the President's coffin as he lay in state in the House Chamber.

1897: Shortly after noon on February 2, a fire breaks out while the Senate and House are in session. Within hours the dome collapses in flames, and by midafternoon the building is in ruins. There are no fatalities in the blaze, and although an official cause is never determined, a faulty fireplace flue is thought to be responsible. The General Assembly meets at Grace Methodist Church, which still stands on nearby State Street.

1898: A new building, designed by Chicago architect Henry Ives Cobb, is quickly erected for \$550,000. However, the structure is considered undignified and unattractive, and is never completed. The General Assembly convenes in the unfinished building.

1901: The General Assembly holds a design competition and hires Philadelphia architect Joseph Huston to develop plans for a third Capitol, which will incorporate the outer walls of the unsuccessful Cobb design.

1904: On May 5, the cornerstone for the new building is laid.

1906: On October 4, President Theodore Roosevelt attends the dedication of the current state Capitol, pronouncing it, "The handsomest building I ever saw."

1987: The new East Wing is opened, adding almost 400,000 square feet of space to the Capitol.

2006: A week-long Centennial Celebration is held to mark the 100th anniversary of the Capitol building in early October. On December 5, the Capitol building is designated as a National Historic Landmark by the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service.



Cornerstone for new Capitol is laid



President Theodore Roosevelt at dedication of the new Capitol



The new East Wing is opened



The Capitol Rotunda

The Capitol Rotunda serves as a popular public forum, providing a magnificent and symbolic setting for many types of gatherings, from rallies and bill-signings to news conferences.

Many of the Rotunda's design features were borrowed from the Paris Opera House, including the Grand Staircase and three-tiered gallery.

Eight large murals by Philadelphia artist Edwin Austin Abbey (1852-1911) highlight the Rotunda as a tribute to Pennsylvania and its history. Four of the canvases are circular and 14 feet in circumference, and four are crescent-shaped and measure 38 feet by 22 feet.

The Rotunda is illuminated by 48 portholes at the top of the dome and by nearly 4,000 lights.

Architect Joseph Huston borrowed the Capitol Rotunda's features from the Paris Opera House, including the Grand Staircase and three-tiered gallery. Eight large murals by artist Edwin Austin Abbey highlight the Rotunda, including circular canvases 14 feet in circumference. The Rotunda's dome stands 272 feet tall.

William Penn's hopes for the new land are best captured in the quote which wraps around the Rotunda's interior, just below the main cornice, as a reminder for legislators and citizens: **"There may be room there for such a holy experiment, for the nations want a precedent. And my God will make it the seed of a nation. That an example may be set up to the nations. That we may do the thing that is truly wise and just."**

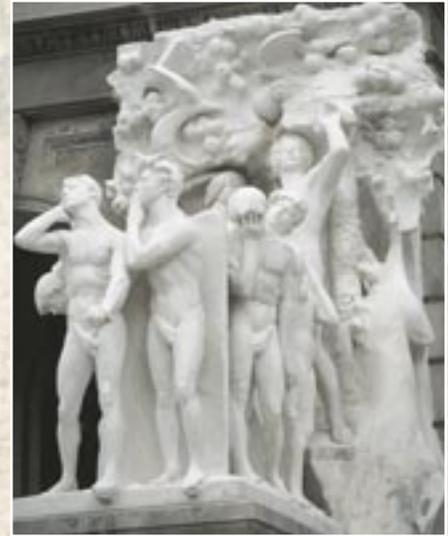
Moravian Tiles

One of the Capitol's most noteworthy features is the colorful Moravian tiles that cover the first floor of the Rotunda and its adjacent corridors. Designed and manufactured by Henry Chapman Mercer (1856-1930) of Doylestown, the floor is interspersed with close to 400 tile mosaics illustrating the state's history, animals, industries, occupations and modes of transportation. The tiles are thought to be some of the finest examples of Pennsylvania German folk art.



Barnard Statues

Renowned Pennsylvania artist George Grey Barnard (1863-1938) created the sculptures that flank the main doors of the Capitol. Twenty-seven figures are represented in the two groupings. To the left of the entrance is “Labor and Love / The Unbroken Law,” representing humanity advancing through work and brotherhood. To the right is “The Burden of Life / The Broken Law,” which portrays lives of degradation and spiritual burdens. The statues, which had seriously deteriorated, were restored to their original grandeur during the Capitol preservation project and are now better protected against the elements.



Bronze Doors

Each 17-foot door at the Capitol’s main entrance weighs a full ton, but can swing open at the touch of a hand. Modeled after a pair of gilded bronze doors by Italian Renaissance sculptor Lorenzo Ghiberti, the Capitol’s entrance features portrait heads of individuals responsible for the Capitol’s construction.



The Business of the Capitol

Pennsylvania’s Capitol is more than an architectural and artistic showpiece. The building, which contains more than 600 rooms, is also the “workshop” of state government. It is here that the members of the General Assembly come together for the purpose of making laws based on the public will and the public trust.

In any given two-year legislative session, lawmakers consider as many as 40,000 formal proposals, citations, resolutions, bills and amendments. Therefore, lawmakers and their staffs are constantly busy drafting legislation, holding public hearings to gain input on possible new laws, attending committee meetings to consider bills, and, of course, meeting in legislative session to cast votes.

In addition to the Senate and House, the Capitol contains the offices of the Governor and Lieutenant Governor, as well as the state Supreme Court Chambers. The building also holds numerous meeting facilities and a media center for the staging of news conferences and other public events.

Pennsylvania's Capitol is, first and foremost, a public building belonging to the citizens of the Commonwealth. It is also a priceless architectural and artistic treasure, a majestic symbol of history and power, and an icon of democracy and freedom.



The Senate of Pennsylvania

The Pennsylvania Senate remains one of the vital components of the Commonwealth's self-government. Its first session convened on December 10, 1790, in Independence Hall.

One of its principal founders, James Wilson of Carlisle, said the Senate should be "the balance wheel in the great machine of government, calculated and designed to retard its movements when they shall be too rapid, and to accelerate them when they shall be too slow."

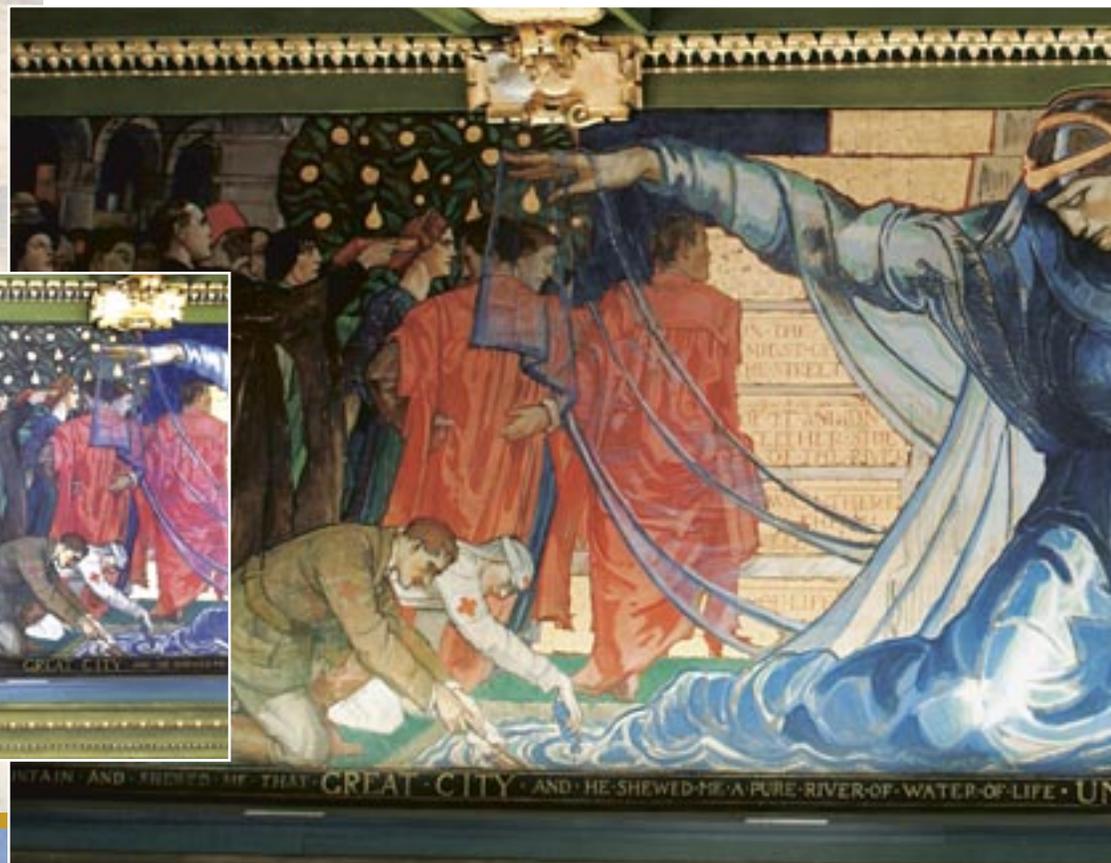
Reflecting the young Commonwealth's small population at this time, state residents were represented by only 18 Senators. In 1838, the number was increased to 33. The current complement of 50 members was established in 1874.

Each state Senator represents approximately 246,000 constituents, serving as an advocate for the people in his or her legislative district and voting on bills. Members serve four-year terms.

In a typical two-year legislative session, Senators consider as many as 2,000 bills that originate in the Senate, of which about one-tenth become law.

The Senate plays a critical role in the budget process. Although the Constitution stipulates that "all bills for raising revenue shall originate in the House," no tax change becomes law without the Senate's approval.

The Senate Chamber isn't just a vital seat of government for the people. It is an impressive marriage of art, architecture and functionality. Thanks to a major restoration, its original design by architect Joseph Huston and painter Violet Oakley survives remarkably intact. From the bronze and glass chandeliers to the stained glass windows by William B. Van Ingen, the Senate Chamber is full of awe-inspiring artistry and historically significant artifacts.



Pennsylvania's Lieutenant Governor serves as the President of the Senate, presiding over voting sessions in the Senate Chamber and ensuring that the complex rules of parliamentary procedure are properly carried out.

The Senate also elects from among its members a President Pro Tempore, who leads voting sessions in the absence of the Lieutenant Governor and is responsible for assigning committee chairpersons. The President Pro Tempore is also a de facto member of every Senate committee.

Throughout its history, eight members of the state Senate have gone on to serve as Governors, 13 have been elected Lieutenant Governor, and in recent years, about half of the state Senators have also served in the House.



Each state Senator serves a four-year term and represents approximately 246,000 constituents. In a typical two-year legislative session, Senators consider as many as 2,000 bills that originate in the Senate, of which about one-tenth become law. Pennsylvania's Lieutenant Governor serves as the President of the Senate, presiding over voting sessions in the Senate Chamber and ensuring that the complex rules of parliamentary procedure are properly carried out.



The Senate Chamber

The richly appointed Senate Chamber, located on the second floor of the Capitol's north side, is where Pennsylvania's 50 state Senators meet to debate and vote on legislation and resolutions.

Each member is assigned a desk. Democrat lawmakers sit on the left side of the Chamber (facing the rostrum), and Republicans sit on the right – a parliamentary grouping adopted from the early French National Assembly.

While the House of Representatives uses an electronic tally board to record votes, the Senate continues the old-fashioned practice of voice voting, with each member offering a verbal “aye” or “nay” on each amendment and bill.

Although access to the floor of the Senate Chamber is restricted during voting sessions, visitors are invited to watch democracy in action from a gallery at the rear of the Chamber.

The Senate Chamber is more than a vital seat of government for the people. It is an impressive marriage of art, architecture and functionality. A major restoration of the Chamber was completed in 1994. Today, its original design by architect Joseph Huston and painter Violet Oakley (1874-1961) survives remarkably intact.

The Senators' desks, constructed of mahogany and imported from Belize, date back to the Capitol's 1906 opening. The green marble that lines the Chamber's walls is rare Connemara, imported from Ireland. The four massive, gold-finished iron and glass floor standards weigh two tons each.

From the bronze and glass chandeliers to the stained glass windows by Philadelphia native William B. Van Ingen (1858-1955), the Senate Chamber is full of awe-inspiring artisanship and historically significant artifacts.





Stained Glass

Windows



ABUNDANCE



EDUCATION



JUSTICE



LIBERTY



RELIGION

The 24 stained glass windows in the Senate and House Chambers (10 in the Senate, 14 in the House) were created by Philadelphia native William B. Van Ingen, who had been a student of the famous glass artist Louis C. Tiffany. The works are framed in 24-karat gold leaf embellishments. Each features a theme, such as Architecture, Commerce, Education, History, Justice, Liberty and Peace. The windows were removed in the late 1980s and completely reled and reglazed.



ARCHITECTURE



HISTORY



LEGISLATURE



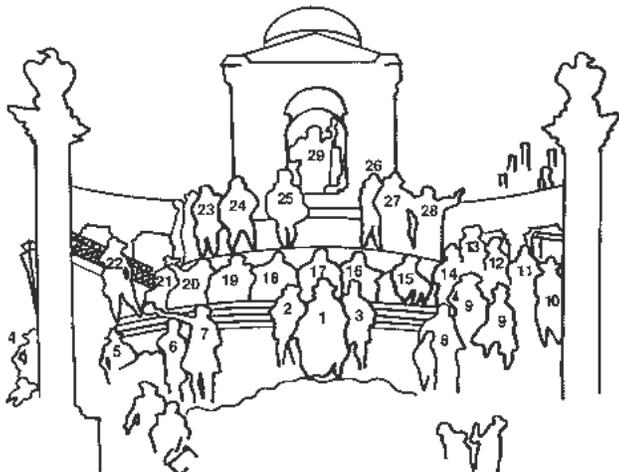
MILITIA



PEACE



The Apotheosis of Pennsylvania



The largest mural in the Capitol, “The Apotheosis of Pennsylvania” by Edwin Austin Abbey, is located directly behind the Speaker’s podium in the House Chamber.

This enormous painting is 35 feet square and features distinguished state residents at the feet of a figure representing the “Genius of State.”

Included in the painting are prominent legislators, explorers, pioneers, and intellectual, spiritual, military and industrial leaders. Pennsylvania’s founder William Penn stands in the center in a red robe, with Benjamin Franklin at his right hand.

The first steps are occupied by individuals who played key roles in Pennsylvania’s early history. Explorers and pioneers occupy the highest tier. Intellectual and spiritual leaders of the Colonial and Revolutionary eras are below them. To the right are leaders and workers in science and industry; to the left, Pennsylvania’s military history is celebrated.

- 1. William Penn** (1644-1718), the founder of Pennsylvania, served as Governor and in 1682 presided over the first Provincial Assembly, which later became the state House of Representatives.
- 2. Speaker Benjamin Franklin** (1706-1790), who was Speaker of the Pennsylvania Assembly, signed the Declaration of Independence and Constitutions of Pennsylvania and the United States.
- 3. Representative Robert Morris** (1734-1806) was a financier of the American Revolution, a member of the first U.S. Senate, and established the first Bank of North America.
- 4. Major General Winfield Scott Hancock** (1824-1886) was a Norristown native called “Hancock the Superb” at the Battle of Gettysburg and unsuccessfully ran for the U.S. presidency in 1880.
- 5. Major General George G. Meade** (1815-1872) was a Philadelphian and victorious commander at the Battle of Gettysburg.
- 6. Governor Andrew Gregg Curtin** (1817-1894) was a Bellefonte native who was elected as the first Republican Governor shortly before the onset of the Civil War.
- 7. Majority Leader Thaddeus Stevens** (1792-1868) served in the state House for eight years before gaining fame as an abolitionist and U.S. Congressman.
- 8. Stephen Girard** (1750-1831), a French immigrant who served briefly as a Philadelphia councilman, was a philanthropist and banker who helped finance the War of 1812. Girard College for Orphans was constructed and endowed from his trust and named after him.
- 9. John Bartram** (1699-1777) stands next to his son, William Bartram (1739-1823). The father and son were pioneer botanists in the Philadelphia area, and John’s father served as an Assembly member.
- 10. Oliver Evans** (1755-1819), a Philadelphia inventor-designer, built the first American steam engine.
- 11. Dr. Caspar Wistar** (1761-1818) was an outstanding physician, surgeon and chemist at the University of Pennsylvania.
- 12. Thomas Paine** (1737-1809) served as Chief Clerk of the Assembly from 1779 to 1780 and became famous as a propagandist and pamphleteer of the Revolution.
- 13. Dr. Benjamin Rush** (1746-1813), who established the nation’s first free medical clinic at Pennsylvania Hospital, was a member of the Continental Congress, and a signer of the Declaration of Independence. He founded Dickinson College.
- 14. David Rittenhouse** (1732-1796) was an astronomer, clockmaker and mathematician. He was director of the U.S. Mint from 1792 to 1795. Philadelphia’s Rittenhouse Square is named after him.
- 15. John Fitch** (1743-1798) was a steamboat inventor from Bucks County.
- 16. George Mifflin Dallas** (1792-1864) served as Philadelphia mayor, state Deputy Attorney General and U.S. Senator, and was the only Vice President from Pennsylvania (1845-1848).
- 17. General John Peter Gabriel Muhlenberg** (1746-1807), known as the “Fighting Parson” from Montgomery County, served in the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate.
- 18. Bishop William White** (1748-1836) was the first Protestant-Episcopal Bishop in Philadelphia and served as Chaplain of the Continental Congress and Chaplain of the U.S. Senate.
- 19. Professor William Smith** (1727-1803) was the first Provost of the University of Pennsylvania.
- 20. Thomas McKean** (1734-1817) was a signer of the Declaration of Independence and a Chief Justice for 22 years. He served as Governor from 1799 to 1808 and was a pioneer and advocate of free public schools.
- 21. John Dickinson** (1732-1808), an Assembly member and a signer of the U.S. Constitution, served as President of Pennsylvania before there was a Governor’s office.
- 22. General Anthony Wayne** (1745-1796), an Assembly member, was a Chester County general in the American Revolution and a frontier fighter who explored northwest Pennsylvania.
- 23. Captain Peter Minuit** (1580-1638) bought Manhattan for \$24 for the Dutch in 1626 and founded New Sweden on the Delaware River in 1638.
- 24. Hendrick Hudson** (1575-1611) was a Dutch ship captain and explorer who discovered the Delaware Bay and the Hudson River.
- 25. Sir Walter Raleigh** (1552-1618) was an English explorer, poet, courtier and politician.
- 26. Daniel Boone** (1734-1820), born near Reading, was the legendary “pathfinder” of the Cumberland Gap and noted outdoorsman.
- 27. Francis Pastorius** (1651-1720) was the founder of Germantown and a religious leader, lawyer, and early Assembly member.
- 28. Johann Kelpius** (1673-1708) was a religious leader in Philadelphia during William Penn’s lifetime.
- 29. Figure representing the “Genius of State.”**

The House of Representatives

Members of the House serve two-year terms and represent approximately 61,000 constituents each. Approximately 3,000 bills are introduced in the House during each two-year legislative session. The Speaker of the House presides over sessions and is charged with literally "speaking" on the people's behalf. The House Chamber features magnificent art, including remarkable stained glass windows, splendid murals and original wooden desks.

The Pennsylvania House of Representatives is America's first independent legislative body.

The precursor to the House, called the Provincial Assembly, first met at Upland, near Chester, on December 4, 1682, just 40 days after William Penn arrived in the colony.

After three years, the Assembly insisted upon greater autonomy from colonial authorities, including the right to initiate legislation, and became the foundation upon which representative government in America was built.

With the adoption of the Pennsylvania Constitution in 1790, the Assembly was restructured as the House of Representatives. Reflecting the young Commonwealth's small population at the time, state residents were represented by just 65 House members. Over the years, the number increased to its current complement of 203 members.

Members of the House serve two-year terms. This is the shortest term of any public office in Pennsylvania and is intended to keep representatives in close touch with their electorate. From the 1st Legislative District in Erie to the 203rd in Philadelphia, each member serves approximately 61,000 constituents. When the House is in session, visitors are welcome to watch the action from the gallery in the rear of the Chamber.

Approximately 3,000 bills are introduced in the House during each two-year legislative session. While the Senate still uses a voice-vote system, with mem-



bers calling out “aye” or “nay,” the House votes electronically, making it easier to tally the responses of 203 members. Each time a member casts a vote – pressing a green button for “aye” or a red button for “nay” – a corresponding light appears on a voting board.

The Speaker of the House is the oldest statewide elected position in Pennsylvania. Chosen by the other members, he or she is charged with literally “speaking” on the people’s behalf in the House of Representatives. The Speaker presides over sessions, appoints committee chairs, assigns bills to committees, and signs all passed bills and joint resolutions. He or she also maintains order on the House floor and protects the parliamentary rights of members during voting sessions.

The Speaker may also sponsor legislation and vote on bills, and on rare occasions may turn the podium over to a Speaker Pro Tempore in order to occupy a desk on the floor and participate in debate.

The Pennsylvania House of Representatives played a significant role in several of the nation’s most important events, including hosting the meetings and conferences that led to the creation of the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution. Also, the Commonwealth’s Bill of Rights, drafted by the House, later served as a model for the U.S. Bill of Rights.



Five colorful murals by Edwin Austin Abbey decorate the walls of the House Chamber, including the two pictured at left: “The Reading of the Declaration of Independence” and “Penn’s Treaty with the Indians.” Pictured above is the center of the House ceiling with Abbey’s evocative mural “The Hours” representing the passage of time in the form of 24 maidens revolving in an endless circle among the moon, the sun and the stars. At left is Abbey’s painting of Baron Friedrich von Steuben, a Prussian officer recruited by the American Colonies, training the troops at Valley Forge.







The Chamber

The 203 members of the House of Representatives meet in the House Chamber on the second floor of the Capitol's south side. The House Chamber is also called the Hall of the House. Here, members cast votes on legislation and debate issues.

Representatives sit with members of their own party in semi-circular rows of mahogany desks arranged to face the Speaker's rostrum. In keeping with tradition, Democrat members are seated on the left of the Chamber (facing the rostrum), and Republicans are seated on the right. Leadership on both sides of the aisle work to keep caucuses unified and to achieve the goals of their legislative agendas.

The House Chamber features magnificent art, including remarkable stained glass windows, splendid murals and original wooden desks. Five murals by Edwin Austin Abbey decorate the walls, including the largest in the state Capitol, "The Apotheosis," located behind the Speaker's podium. Spanning 35 feet square, the painting depicts explorers, intellectuals and leaders from the state's past.

The Speaker's chair was designed in 1906 by Capitol architect Joseph Huston. The carved wood "throne" chair was made of pollard oak and was originally covered in Spanish leather upholstery tooled in ornate patterns.

The mace used by the House is a symbol of authority, peace and order, dating back to early Roman times. It is 46 inches long and made of solid mahogany, topped by a polished brass sphere engraved on each side with the Coat of Arms of the Commonwealth. An American Eagle stands on top of the sphere.

Philadelphia native William B. Van Ingen created 14 stained glass windows for the House. The 200-pound works of art are four feet in diameter and are framed in 24-karat gold leaf embellishments. Each features a theme, such as "Abundance," "Chemistry," "Natural Gas," "Justice," "Education," and "Bridge Building."

Six crystal chandeliers light the House. The fixtures range from two tons to over four tons each, and require over 1,000 light bulbs.

On ceremonial days as many as 1,000 individuals can be accommodated in the House Chamber. Also, the annual Speaker's Millennium Lecture attracts large crowds of citizens who come to hear such luminaries as historian David McCullough and journalist Anna Quindlen, both of whom have won Pulitzer Prizes for their writing.

Caucuses & Legislative

Leadership

When the General Assembly meets at the Capitol to vote on bills, each of the four caucuses – Republicans and Democrats in the Senate and House – generally meet in closed sessions to discuss pending legislation and state issues.

The Pennsylvania Assembly established the first “caucus” in 1703, when House members organized to win the right to legislate from colonial administrators. Since 1857, there have been Democrat and Republican caucuses in both the House and Senate. In the 1960s, informal caucuses were formed by legislators interested in common issues such as promoting the coal industry or supporting firefighters.

The word “caucus” originates from the Algonquin language and means “elder” or “counselor.” In modern usage, it means a closed meeting or a group of people belonging to the same political party or faction.





Benjamin Franklin believed that caucus unity was necessary to maintain order in the Legislature.

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Each caucus maintains its own leadership. Caucus officers include the majority and minority leaders, also referred to as floor leaders, who direct legislation and serve as the spokespeople for the caucus. Assistant floor leaders, or whips, keep caucus members informed on issues and work to solidify the party's position on issues. The word "whip" is borrowed from the British Parliament and is a fox-hunting term, referring to the rider who did not permit the hounds to stray.

Work on the Senate (left) and House (above) Majority Caucus Rooms included cleaning and preserving all of their wooden and decorative surfaces, returning them to their resplendent 1906 condition.



The Governor's four-sided desk, pictured above, was used by Governor Samuel Pennypacker, who was in office during the Capitol's construction. He called the new building "the most elaborate and complicated constructive work ever undertaken by the state."

Office of the Governor

For much of Pennsylvania's first century, Governors appointed by the British government ruled the colony.

Then, in 1776, the state's citizens formed a 12-member Supreme Executive Council to serve as a governing body and "take care that laws be faithfully executed."

In 1790, under the new Pennsylvania Constitution, Commonwealth residents chose their first elected Governor, Thomas Mifflin.

Today, the Governor maintains veto power over bills passed by both the House and Senate, and is responsible for drafting the outline for the state's annual budget. Although the document is then modified by the Legislature, the Governor maintains the final say in the form of line-item veto power.

Other responsibilities of the Governor include appointing executive officials and overseeing the state's various departments, boards and commissions.

The Governor works in a room rich with history, including an unusual four-sided desk once used by Governor Samuel Pennypacker.

GOVERNOR'S RECEPTION ROOM

The Governor's Reception Room, which is open to the public, is used for news conferences, receptions and bill-signings.

Its grandfather clock is over 100 years old, and once belonged to Governor Daniel Hastings, who served in 1897 at the time the Hills Capitol was destroyed by fire. The paintings by Violet Oakley depict the history of religious liberty in England and the rise of the Quaker religion.



Lieutenant Governor's Office & Reception Room

The Lieutenant Governor's Reception Room was originally used as the Capitol's "Ladies Parlor." The room's mural, "Venus and Two Loves," was painted by Donald McGregor.

The painting, the Reception Room, and the Lieutenant Governor's private office all suffered water and wood damage over the years and were restored starting in 1988.

The Lieutenant Governor's private office contains mahogany woodwork, a red Numidian marble fireplace, and 22 oil portraits of the state's Lieutenant Governors. As part of the restoration project, these portraits underwent conservation. All woodwork in the room, including the custom clock case over the mantel, designed by Capitol architect Joseph Huston, were also conserved. Paint analysis was conducted and replicated on all architectural and decorative elements throughout the suite.

A mural called "Venus and Two Loves," by Donald McGregor, decorates the ceiling in the Lieutenant Governor's Reception Room, which was originally the Capitol's "Ladies Parlor."



The Lieutenant Governor's private office displays 22 oil portraits of previous Lieutenant Governors and features woodwork by Capitol architect Joseph Huston.



The Harrisburg Chamber of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court is both a seat of justice and an artistic treasure. It contains a collection of 16 paintings by Violet Oakley. The above painting is entitled "Divine Law - The Keynote," and includes an intricate combination of letters and images spelling out the words Love, Law and Wisdom. The stained glass dome, below, was created by Pennsylvanian Alfred Godwin.

The Pennsylvania Supreme Court

Pennsylvania's Supreme Court was created by the Provincial Assembly in 1722. Predating the U.S. Supreme Court by 67 years, the establishment of Pennsylvania's highest court was a remarkable act unprecedented in American history.

A fair court system was a priority for William Penn, who had been unjustly imprisoned in England five times on dubious charges. In his original constitution, he established a Provincial Court under the control of his British Governors. However, members of the Assembly insisted upon the establishment of an even more impartial system and succeeded in pushing for creation of an independent Supreme Court.

Pennsylvania's Supreme Court was the only independent court in the early 1700s with the power to declare laws made by an elected legislative body unconstitutional. The concept of a free judiciary is one of Pennsylvania's greatest contributions to democracy.

Today, the Supreme Court meets in three places – Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and Harrisburg.

The Harrisburg Chamber, located on the fourth floor of the Capitol, is both a seat of justice and an artistic treasure.

It was renovated during 1993 and 1994. The project included restoration of the mahogany wood wainscoting and furnishings, repairs to the walls and ceilings, and cleaning and polishing of the Chamber's ornate chandeliers.



The Chamber houses 16 intricate paintings by Violet Oakley, a grouping she called "The Opening of the Book of Law." A close look at the "keynote" painting, "Divine Law," above the center door, reveals the words "love," "law" and "wisdom," almost hidden in the elaborate work. The stained glass dome was designed and executed by Pennsylvania native Alfred Godwin.

Commonwealth Statue

“Commonwealth,” by sculptor Roland Hinton Perry, is a female figure representing Pennsylvania. Placed at the top of the Capitol dome on May 25, 1905, the gilded bronze statue stands 17 feet, 8 inches tall. The figure holds the mace of statehood in her left hand and extends her right hand in benediction. “Commonwealth” was restored in 1997-1998 and returned to her rightful place at the Capitol’s peak on September 12, 1998.



The Capitol Centennial

From September 30 through October 4, 2006, Pennsylvanians celebrated a week-long, 100th anniversary of the Capitol building. The Capitol was originally dedicated on October 4, 1906, an event that featured an energizing speech from President Theodore Roosevelt. The recent celebration included a parade, a treasure hunt for children, a scholarly discussion of politics over the last 100 years, a ribbon cutting ceremony, and on October 4, a “rededication” that featured (who else) Teddy Roosevelt, providing an oration. Prominent presidential historian Michael Beschloss delivered the keynote speech. The event also featured displays and presentations from the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, the Capitol Preservation Committee, and the State Library and culminated with a Centennial Gala.



“Commonwealth,” a gilded bronze statue, stands at the peak of the Capitol (above).



During the Capitol Centennial Celebration, a re-enactor playing Teddy Roosevelt speaks at the rededication ceremony (left). The week-long celebration ended with a fireworks celebration.

The Capitol Complex

In 1906, the 633 rooms of the Capitol housed the entire state government.

Within five years more facilities were required, and nationally renowned architect Arnold W. Brunner (1857-1925) presented the plans for the future Capitol Complex.

Brunner designed and built the South and North Office Buildings in 1921 and 1929 respectively.

The Forum Building, containing the Forum auditorium and the State Library, opened in 1931.

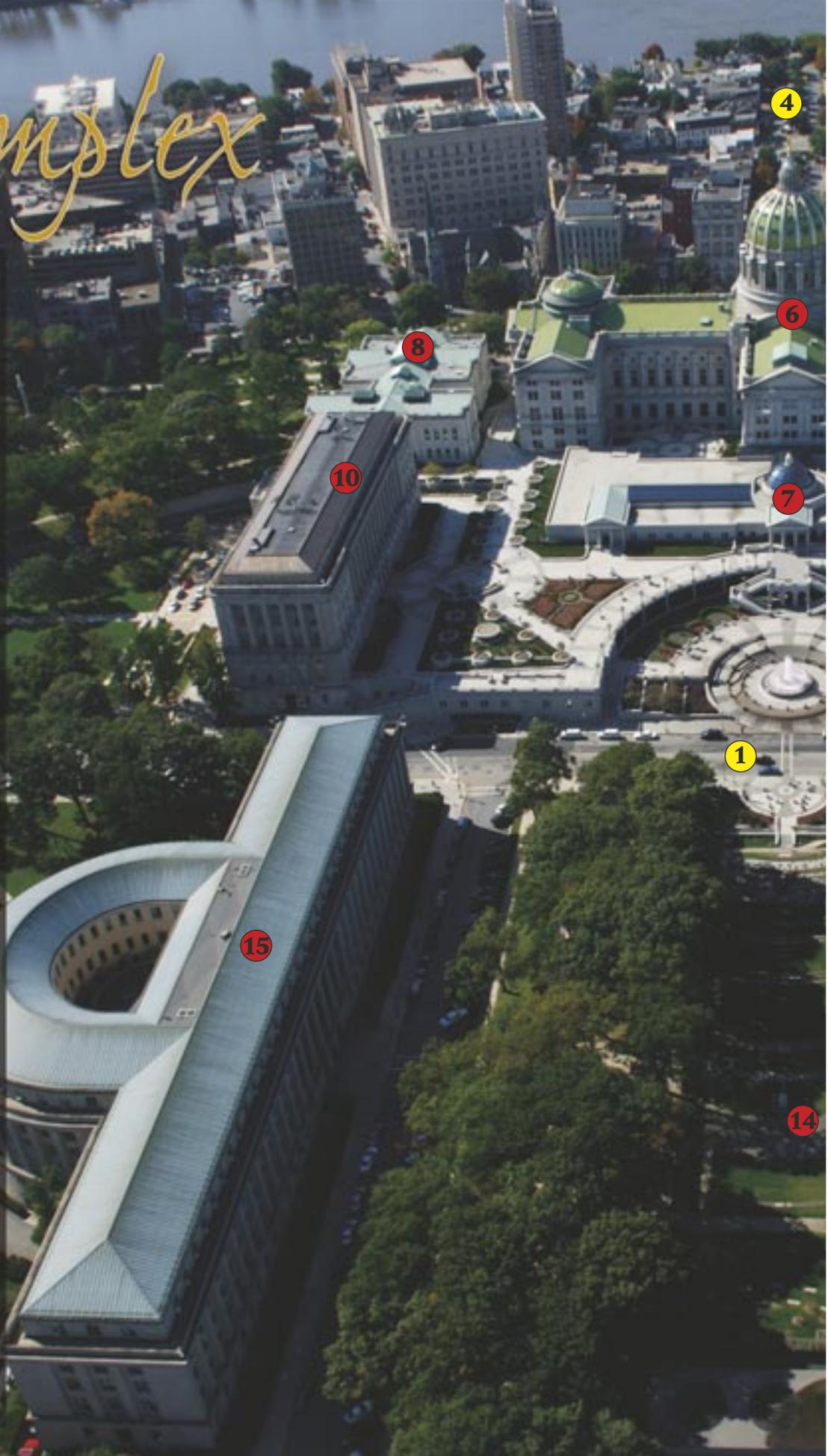
The Finance Building, the Northwest Building and Fisher Plaza were also completed shortly thereafter.

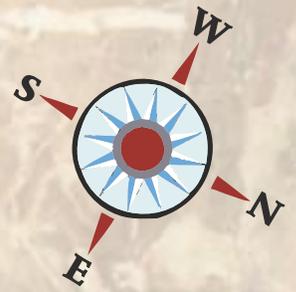
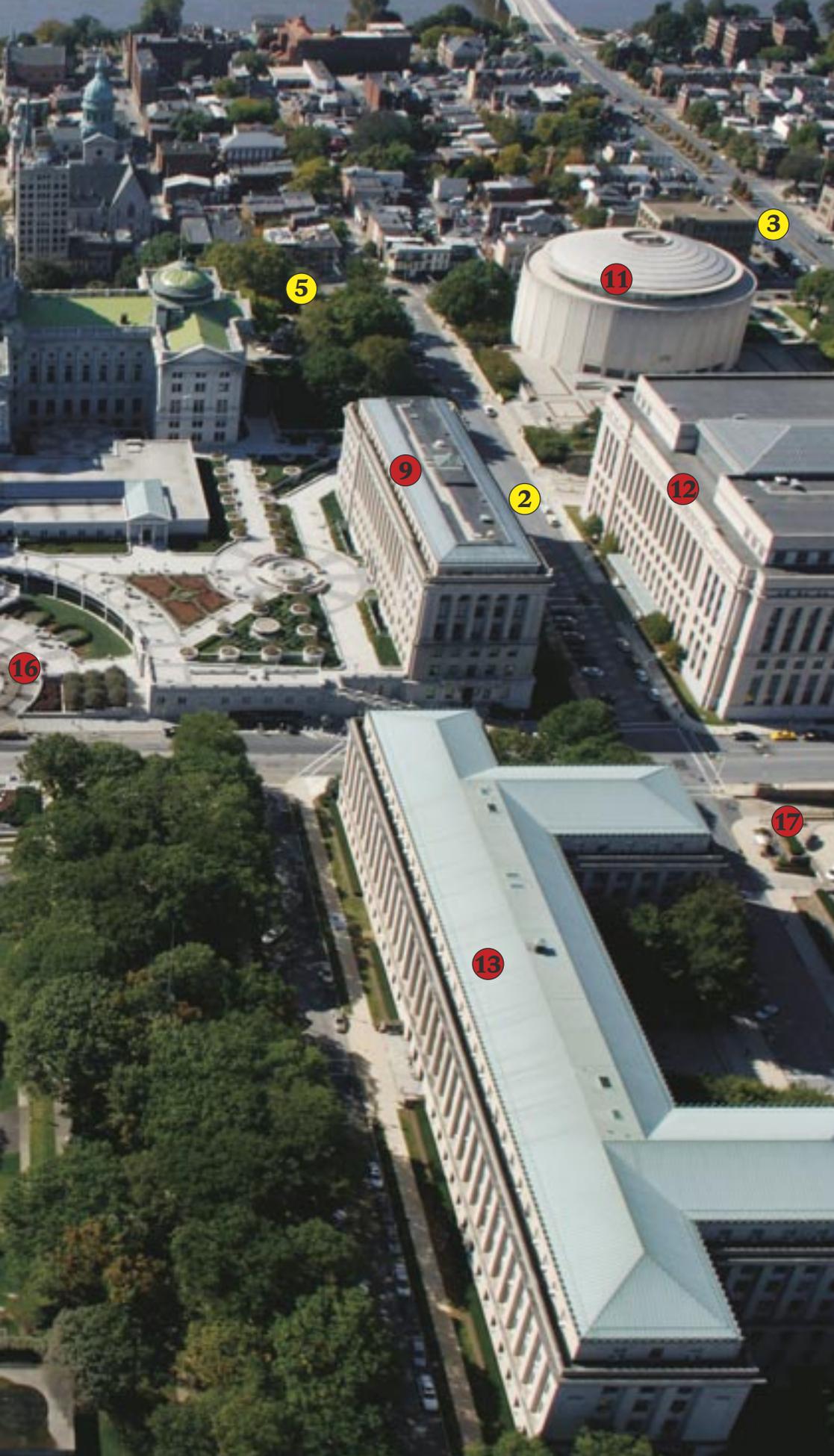
The Labor and Industry Building, Health and Welfare Building, State Museum, and Transportation and Safety Building were completed throughout the 1950s and 1960s.

In 1998, the Transportation and Safety Building was demolished to make way for the Keystone Building, completed in 2000.

In May 2003, the South Office Building was renamed the Speaker K. Leroy Irvis Office Building in honor of Irvis, a 30-year House member from Allegheny County who served as Speaker from 1977 to 1978 and again from 1983 to 1988. He was the first African-American Speaker of the House in any state in the nation.

In 1989, the New York Times called Pennsylvania's Capitol Complex "one of the finest groupings of classical buildings in the United States."





Key Streets

- 1** Commonwealth Avenue
- 2** North Street
- 3** Forster Street
- 4** State Street
- 5** Third Street

State Buildings and Landmarks

- 6** Main Capitol Building
- 7** Capitol East Wing
- 8** Ryan Office Building
- 9** North Office Building
- 10** Irvis Office Building
- 11** William Penn Museum
- 12** Keystone Building
- 13** Finance Building
- 14** Soldiers' Grove
- 15** Forum Building
- 16** Veterans' Memorial Fountain
- 17** Judicial Center

The East Wing

The Capitol's East Wing was opened in 1987, adding nearly 400,000 square feet to the building. Its award-winning design was intended to meld with the American Renaissance style of the 1906 structure.

When the Capitol opened in 1906, it had three magnificent front entrances but only a service entrance at the back. Architect Joseph Huston's rationale for this decision was that he envisioned the addition of a companion building or plaza on the Capitol's east side.

That idea was finally realized in 1987 when the East Wing was opened, adding almost 400,000 square feet of functional space to the Capitol. Today, the East Wing houses nearly 100 legislative offices, rooms for public hearings and a large public cafeteria, as well as the Capitol's interactive "Welcome Center" and a gift shop.

The structure, designed by Thomas C. Celli of Pittsburgh, won the Classical America Award for architecture in 1986 and was praised by the New York Times in 1989 as "perhaps the most ambitious work in the classical mode in the United States in a generation."

On January 17, 1995, Governor Tom Ridge was the first to hold a gubernatorial inauguration on the East Wing plaza.



The Welcome Center

Located in the East Wing, the General Assembly's newly renovated, 1,850-square-foot Welcome Center features interactive and multimedia exhibits designed to give the Capitol's many visitors an educational and entertaining overview of the State Capitol.

The focal point of the new visitor's area is an 8-foot replica of Lady Commonwealth made from Lego blocks. The statue is surrounded by four interactive games that children can play to learn more about the state's symbols, famous Pennsylvanians, and facts about state government and its history. Another nearby exhibit includes holograms of two state legislators discussing state issues. On the opposite side of the center are two enhanced features – a voting booth and a three-dimensional display of the Capitol Complex.

The Welcome Center at the State Capitol is a self-guided area featuring exhibits that are independent of one another and do not have to be viewed in sequence. The center is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. throughout the year. Capitol tours for school groups or individuals can be scheduled through the offices of state legislators or by calling 717-787-6810.



Soldiers' Grove



Soldiers' Grove is a park that extends from the east side of the Capitol at Veterans' Memorial Fountain to the twin pillars that honor the Commonwealth's military men and women at the end of the State Street Bridge.

This peaceful setting features a series of sweeping walkways representing the nation's military conflicts. In each walkway, the names of Pennsylvania's Medal of Honor recipients are inlaid, allowing visitors who stroll through the memorial to contemplate the recipients' heroism and sacrifices.

Veterans' Memorial Fountain

Veterans' Memorial Fountain, located behind the East Wing and across from Soldiers' Grove, is a popular meeting spot for visitors and state workers, who enjoy its computerized water displays during warm months.



The Matthew J. Ryan Legislative Office Building

The Matthew J. Ryan Legislative Office Building, built in 1894, is the oldest structure on Harrisburg's Capitol Hill.

Designed by Philadelphia architect John T. Windrim, it originally housed the State Library and State Museum.

It also served as the Governor's Office from 1899 until 1906, following the fire that destroyed the Hills Capitol.

The State Museum, which kept the Commonwealth's collection of art treasures and historical artifacts, remained headquartered there until 1964. After the collections were moved to the newly constructed museum just up the street, the building housed legislative offices.

Unfortunately, the structure was modified and modernized through the years until much of its beauty was either masked or destroyed. In an effort to breathe new life into the old Capitol Annex, as it was known, a team of historic preservationists and artisans were commissioned in 1997 to undertake a complete restoration.

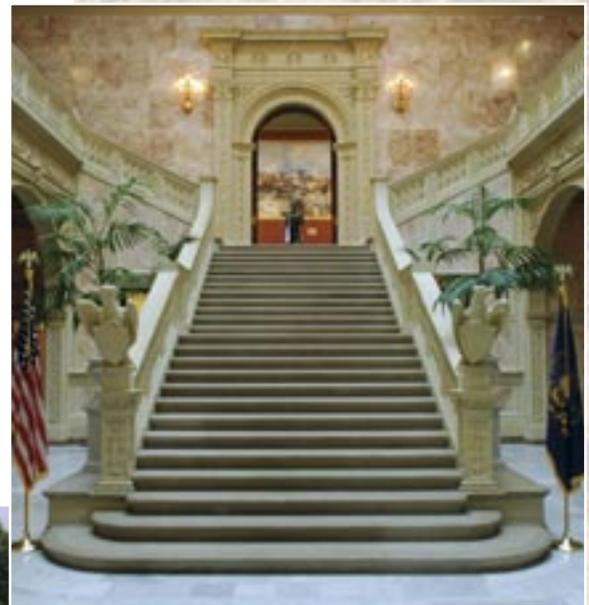
Along with uncovering much of the building's charm, they also discovered some unusual odds and ends, including a shoe dating to the Victorian era, an original glass positive image and several samples of historic wallpaper.

In 1999, the building was named for House Speaker Matthew J. Ryan of Delaware County, a rare honor for a living legislator. Ryan was a House member for 40 years, serving as Speaker from 1981-1983 and from 1995 until his death in 2003.

The structure's painstaking renovation won a 2000 commendation from the Victorian Society of America.

A sweeping staircase is the focal point of the Ryan Building's entrance. It is modeled after the 15th century Senator's Courtyard of the Doges Palace in Venice, Italy.

Pictured below, the staircase of the Matthew J. Ryan Legislative Office Building was modeled after a palace courtyard in Venice, Italy. The building was named for the late House Speaker, who served as a member for 40 years until his death in 2003. Ryan initiated the Capitol's restoration in time for its 100th birthday in 2006.





*Guided tours of the Capitol are offered every half-hour,
Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. through 4 p.m.*

Weekends and most holidays, tours are offered at 9 a.m., 11 a.m., 1 p.m. and 3 p.m.

*If your group numbers more than 10,
please call for advance reservations: 1-800-TOUR-N-PA or 717-787-6810.*

*The Welcome Center is available during the tour schedule.
The schedule is subject to change without notice.*

*The Pennsylvania Capitol Shop is located in the East Wing and is open
from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Monday through Friday.*

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