

A History of
The State Treasurer's Office
1814



By Valerie R. Marvin

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Michigan's present Capitol, the state's third, opened on January 1, 1879, to great acclaim.

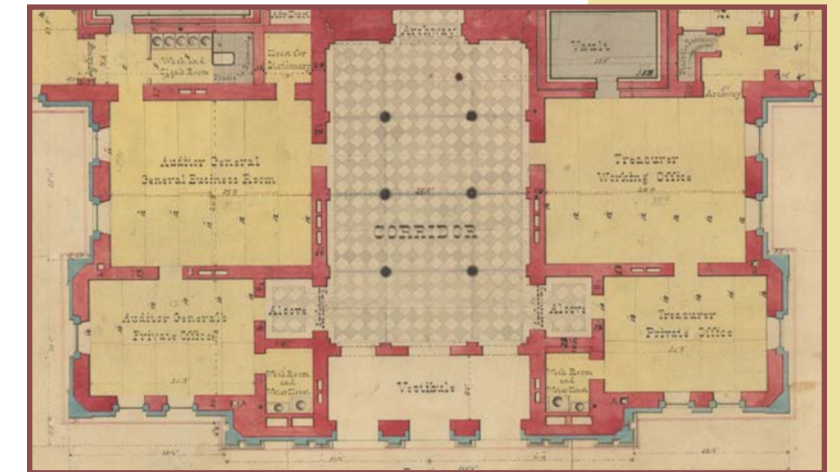
Image Courtesy of the Archives of Michigan

The State Treasurer

Original floor plans show that Capitol architect Elijah E. Myers devoted some of the most prominent office space in the building to the State Treasurer and his staff. Myers chose to place the Treasurer's office in the east wing on the first floor, near the main entrance. This did three things. First, it made the office easy to find and access for anyone coming to transact business with the Treasurer and his staff. Second, it reflected the prestige of the Treasurer's position within state government. And third, it placed the Treasurer just across the hall from the Auditor General, with whom he frequently worked on financial matters.

The original design of the office included four rooms. The Treasurer's private office was located along the front façade of the east wing, providing him with a beautiful view of Capitol Square. Right next to his office was a small personal wash room and water closet. The next major room was the business office, where most of the day-to-day interaction with the public occurred. And, finally, around the corner in the north corridor was another office for the use of the Deputy Treasurer.

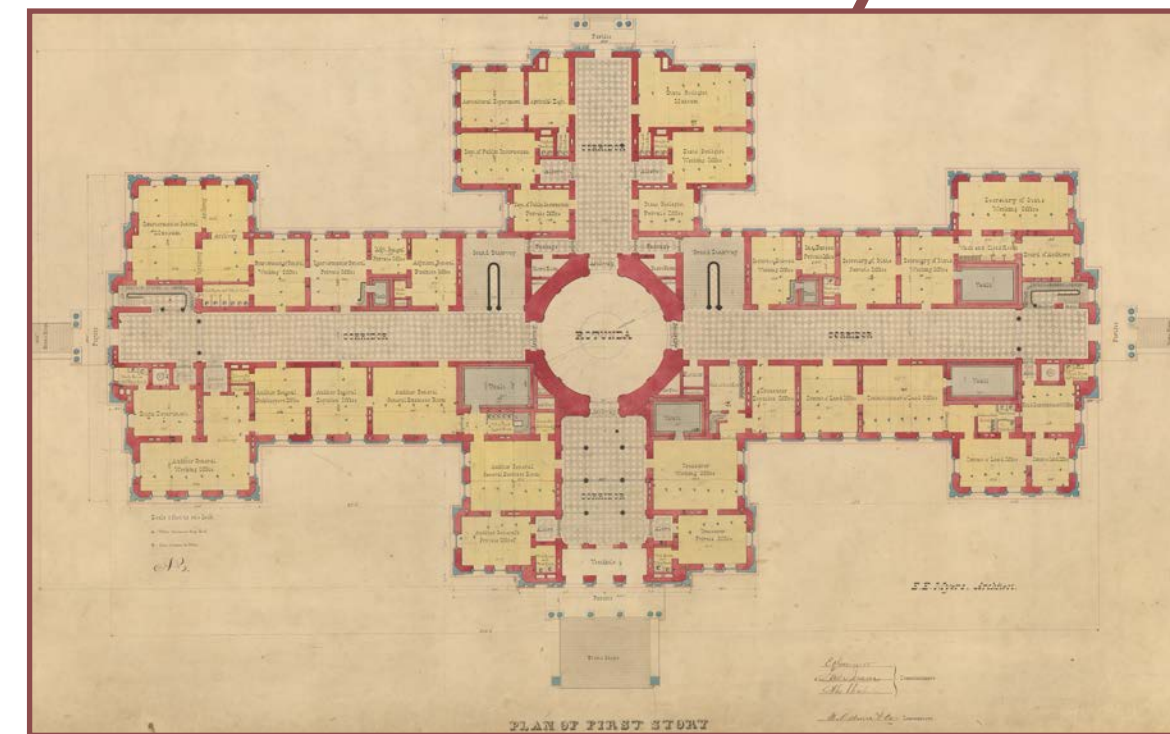
The office also contained a massive vault in which was stored a large safe. Together the two pieces weighed several tons, necessitating a novel design solution by Myers. Showing great caution, he chose not to put an open room underneath the vault,



The Golden Age of Capitol Construction

The Michigan State Capitol was built during the golden age of Capitol construction in the years following the American Civil War. From its inception, the building was designed to serve several functions and roles for the state. First, and most importantly, it is the official seat of government for the State of Michigan. It is a public forum where people can express their opinions, and a symbol of governmental traditions and the state itself. Yet the Capitol is also, at its very essence, an office building, where the day to day functions of government have played out for well over a century.

When the Capitol first opened in 1879, it was state government's only active office building, where all three branches of government were housed. The executive branch, including the Governor, State Treasurer, Secretary of State, State Librarian, Auditor General, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, and the Adjutant General, claimed most of the rooms within it. The judicial branch was represented by the Supreme Court, which occupied offices and an elegant chamber in the east wing of the third floor. The legislative branch used the House and Senate chambers, the largest and most impressive rooms in the Capitol, as well as offices for the Secretary of the Senate, the Clerk of the House, and a few committee rooms. There were no offices for individual legislators, who, when in Lansing for brief part-time legislative sessions, worked from their desks on the chamber floors.



The Capitol's original hand inked floorplans still survive in the Archives of Michigan. The first floor plan included suggested locations for each departmental office—some of which were ultimately changed.

Image Courtesy of the Archives of Michigan



instead specifying that this area should, on both the ground floor and the subbasement levels, “. . . be filled in solid between the walls, from the earth line to the bottom line of the iron joints of the first story floor, with boulders grouted with cement mortar.”¹

The purpose of the large vault was, of course, to guard Michigan’s “treasure.” The Board of State Building Commissioners, who oversaw the Capitol’s construction, sought to make sure that the state’s funds would not be at risk. “The completed building is a great success in every particular,” they reported in late 1878. “Every portion of it is strictly fire-proof. The vault in the State Treasurer’s department is so constructed that the most expert burglar could not penetrate it between the hours of closing business on one day and its resumption on the following day.”²

The office also attracted the attention of the press. Right after the Capitol opened in 1879, an *Allegan Journal* reporter visited the building and wrote,

“I made a visit to the state treasurer’s office yesterday [January 3] and paid my respects to the retiring and incoming state treasurers, General McCreery and Pritchard by whom we were shown the inside of the mammoth safe [note: the reporter probably meant the vault] of our state where all the public monies and securities were kept. It is big enough for an editorial office and worse ventilated. They showed me a few packages of U.S. bonds numbering three hundred thousand dollars, something we had never seen before, the mere sight and possession of which would tempt the most reprobate Greenbacker. The whole bonded indebtedness of the state will not exceed \$150,000.”³

The men of whom the reporter wrote were General William B. McCreery, who held the office of Treasurer from 1875 to 1878, and his successor Benjamin D. Pritchard, who served from 1879 to 1882.⁴ An Ohio native, Pritchard moved to Michigan in 1856 and studied law at the University of Michigan. He served with distinction in the Civil War as the Colonel of the Fourth Michigan

Cavalry, and led the capture of Confederate President Jefferson Davis in the spring of 1865. Upon returning home to Michigan he resumed his law practice and was elected first the Commissioner of the Land Office, and then State Treasurer. Pritchard was assisted in his office by a deputy state treasurer, a bookkeeper, and three clerks.⁵

Like the rest of the Capitol, this suite was designed to be both functional and beautiful, as befitted a growing and prosperous state. “The offices throughout are elegantly fitted up,” a reporter wrote following his visit on January 1, 1879, for the Capitol’s official dedication. “All of the doors are massive in finish, and fitted with locks specially made to order and being on bronze hinges, and bearing the arms of the state.”⁶ Passing through the main doorway, visitors stepped onto a colorful Brussels wool wall-to-wall carpet, laid in strips and carefully sewn together by hand. Sturdy and tasteful polished walnut desks, chairs, tables, and bookcases stood at attention, ready for use. Tall windows, framed by crisp wooden pocket shutters, ushered in natural light, while elegant new gas chandeliers, purchased from the Mitchell Vance Company in New York, gleamed overhead.



The 1909 vault door bears a number of decorative floral etchings. In the 1960s Treasury staffers cashed the paychecks of state workers out of this vault.

Image Courtesy of the Michigan State Capitol Collection



The offices throughout are elegantly fitted up . . .

Michigan State Capitol Directory.

LEFT.	CENTRE.	RIGHT.
First Floor.		
EAST CORRIDOR.		
Auditor General.		State Treasurer.
Board of Health.	WEST CORRIDOR.	Superintendent of
Commissioner of Railroads.		Public Instruction.
SOUTH CORRIDOR.		
Auditor General		Inspector General.
(Tax Department).		Adjutant General.
Commissioner of Insurance.		Quartermaster General.
Sup't of State Property.		
NORTH CORRIDOR.		
Board of Auditors.		Deputy Treasurer.
Secretary of State.		Land Office.
		Swamp Land Office.
Second Floor.		
EAST CORRIDOR.		
Post Office.	Private Secretary.	Governor.
WEST CORRIDOR.		
	State Library.	
SOUTH CORRIDOR.		
	Senate Chamber.	
NORTH CORRIDOR.		
	Representative Hall.	
Third Floor.		
EAST CORRIDOR.		
Attorney Gen'l.	Justices' Rooms.	Supreme Court.
WEST CORRIDOR.		
Attorneys' Consultation Room.	Law Library.	Attorneys' Consultation Room.
SOUTH CORRIDOR.		
Clerk of Supreme Court.	Senate Gallery.	
NORTH CORRIDOR.		
	Representative Hall Gallery.	
Fourth Floor.		
EAST CORRIDOR.		
Pioneers' Audience Room.		Pioneers' Office.
Reporter Supreme Court.		
WEST CORRIDOR.		
	Library.	
Basement.		
EAST CORRIDOR.		
Board of State Charities.	Auditor's Working Rooms.	
SOUTH CORRIDOR.		
Auditor's Working Rooms.		State Armory
Pomological Society.		and
State Board of Agriculture.		Military Store Rooms.

With Compliments of A. L. BURNS, Superintendent of State Property.

This early Capitol Directory survives in the Jenison Collection, a series of six scrapbooks compiled to record the Capitol's construction by historian and collector O.A. Jenison.

Image Courtesy of the Archives of Michigan



Early Changes

It must have been exciting for the Treasurer and his staff to move into the new Capitol. The building was larger and certainly more spacious than the state's previous capitol and office building. Unfortunately, however, it was built with little thought for future growth. Not long after the Capitol opened, the departments began to seek space elsewhere, including on the ground floor (then called the basement). Most, like the Treasurer, acquired the rooms directly below their respective suites. Within a few years Treasury had a small but busy workroom on the ground floor.

As might be expected, changes to these offices, and the rest of the Capitol, were constant. Two major improvements were launched in the 1880s, only a few years after the building opened. First, starting in 1885, electricians began wiring the Capitol for a new technology—electric lights. Prior to this, the Capitol was lighted entirely by gas fixtures. That same year, painters began to decorate the Capitol's plain white plaster walls with an array of rich colors and ornate designs. Slowly, every room, including the Treasurer's Office, was transformed by artists who stenciled, grained, marbled, and striped beautiful motifs on the walls and ceilings.

In 1892, the Board of State Auditors directed the Superintendent of the Capitol to survey the building and its contents. He recorded his findings in their annual bound report, which survives to this day. By this time the suite contained a large leather easy chair, a leather couch, office chairs, desks, book-cases, stools, tables, a hat rack and mirror, two umbrella holders, clocks, a dictionary case, waste baskets, three thermometers, a water tank on a shelf and two water pails, a rug, eleven cuspidors (or spittoons), and, for the use of the Treasurer, a folding bed. The last object serves as a reminder that most of the Treasurers did not live in Lansing, and in some cases, served as somewhat absent figureheads. Instead, their deputies, who were often local men, administered the office and oversaw its staff.⁷

New Vaults and Safes

Changes also came in the form of a series of vaults, vault doors, and safes used by the Treasurer's staff. Most of the office suites in the Capitol contained document vaults—large, brick, windowless rooms created to serve as safe, fireproof storage repositories for state records. These vaults were secured by metal doors fitted with a combination lock. The Treasurer's Office contained a second kind of vault—a large, walk-in secure area with metal plated walls that held a safe designed to hold checks, cash, bonds, and other state assets. This type of vault featured a much more complex metal door with multiple combination locks and other security features.



The men and women of the Treasurer's Office took a break from their work one day to pose for a photograph on the Capitol's steps. By the 1920s women formed the majority of the workforce in many departments, holding all but the top tier of jobs.

Image Courtesy of the Charles Blair Collection, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan

For many years it was believed that the vault door currently located in room H41 on the ground floor, made by the Diebold Safe and Lock Company of Canton, Ohio, and sold by the Detroit Safe Company, was original to the Capitol. However, a recent examination of the back of this Diebold vault door revealed that two components of the door are marked with a patent date of 1885—seven years after the original vault door was installed.

This discovery inspired a search through previously untapped Treasury Department records in the Archives of Michigan. These leather bound volumes contain copies of hundreds of letters sent from Treasury, including two letters to the Detroit Safe Company in 1909 in which the delivery and installation of a new vault door is discussed. These letters, combined with Auditor General's reports and related newspaper articles, suggest that the door currently on display was actually purchased in 1909, and is, therefore, the Capitol's second treasury vault door.⁸ The fate of the original door, used between 1878 and 1909, is unknown.

During this period, the following State Treasurers worked in this space.⁹

1879-1882	Benjamin D. Pritchard
1883-1886	Edward H. Butler
1887-1890	George L. Maltz
1891-1892	Frederick Braastad
1893-1894	Joseph F. Hambitzer
1894-1896	James M. Wilkinson
1897-1900	George A. Steel
1901-1904	Daniel McCoy
1905-1908	Frank P. Glazier
1908	John T. Rich

The Twentieth Century

The installation of a new vault door in 1909 spoke to the ongoing and evolving threat posed by safecrackers and thieves, who, by the early twentieth century, were using dynamite as their tool of choice. Vaults had long protected their contents using a combination of armored walls and tightly fashioned doors closed by increasingly complex locks. But for every advance, safecrackers (called yeggs) quickly figured out a way to get around it. In response, vault companies began offering a wide array of alarms and ingenious secret devices.

The Capitol's second massive vault door hid a secret, patented anti-theft device that consisted of two fragile glass vials containing tear gas. Should a yegg attempt to open the vault with dynamite, the vials would break and release gas into the air, which would cause the safecracker to be overcome by the fumes, or flee from fright.

Even if yeggs succeeded in breaking open the vault door, there was another obstacle: inside the vault was a very heavy safe. Fitted with large double doors, the safe measured 6 feet high by 5½ feet wide, and weighed four to five tons. Inside, it contained a multitude of drawers for records, cash, bonds, and other assets. By the 1920s this safe held several millions of dollars in cash.¹⁰

There is no record of Diebold's "anti-theft device" ever being put to the test. By the 1920s, however, the state treasurer had something new to worry about. Safecrackers were abandoning dynamite in favor of a new invention: the cutting torch. Acetylene torches, which could cut through steel in a matter of minutes, were used in over 200 bank robberies in 1924 alone.

That same year, Michigan State Treasurer Frank Gorman turned to the Mosler Safe Company of Hamilton, Ohio, for help in combating the new threat. Records that survive in the company archives show that the State Administrative Board ordered a new bank vault budgeted to cost \$35,500, a sizable amount of money. The safe was to be "installed and ready for use on or before the eighth day of November, 1924."¹¹ Furthermore, if the work was not completed on time, the company was required to pay the state \$200 for each day's delay.



The sleek, streamlined 1924 Mosler vault door is both a symbol of governmental strength and an object of beauty from the Art Deco era.

Image Courtesy of the Michigan State Capitol Collection

Before the installation of the new vault, vault door, and safe could begin, the current vault and safe had to be removed and relocated to the ground floor level, where a Treasury workroom was situated. Preparing this area meant removing the boulder and cement mixture that had previously supported the vault above. Then, the interior of the vault previously located on the first floor had to be disassembled, removed, and reinstalled down below. In addition, the heavy vault door and the safe formerly stored within the vault had to be removed from the first floor office (probably via crane through a window) and installed on the ground floor level. A copy of the Mosler Safe Company's contract indicates that they played a major part in this complex process.¹²

Once this task was completed, work on the new vault began. Mosler lined the first floor vault room with large metal plates measuring three inches thick. The plates were made from special patented steel called Donalite, considered resistant to acetylene torches. Then Mosler installed a so-called day gate, which allowed staff to enter and exit the vault securely without having to lock and unlock the door itself each time. Finally there was a new sixteen-inch-thick, fifteen-ton vault door, complete with a time clock, two combination bank locks, and its own secret deterrent: a core of Donsteel, (another product developed by Mosler). This Donsteel core, crafted of a patented copper-steel alloy sandwiched between layers of open hearth steel, was the latest thing in vault door technology. When heated by an acetylene torch, Donsteel would melt and flow, but, as soon as the heat was removed, it instantly hardened and resealed any holes.

The State Treasurer's safe and vault again became objects of interest only fifteen years later, in 1939, when Treasurer Miller Dunckel decided to add yet another layer of preventative security for the holdings in the Capitol's safe. A new bandit barrier was erected in front of the vault door, serving as a sort of protective screen between Treasury employees and members of the public.¹³ It was carefully placed to run parallel to the wall containing the vault door, meaning that employees could enter and exit the vault without fear of interference. The barrier contained bulletproof glass windows, behind which individual employees could count, sort, and handle cash, checks, and bonds. It was topped by large spikes that, when touched, activated a burglar alarm and gave the offending party a jolt of electricity carrying 1,500 volts of power. This would stun the burglar and render him or her incapable of movement until security arrived.

While the new bandit barrier did much to protect both the vault and the Treasurer's employees, it was seen as largely a daytime preventative measure. To ensure that the vault and safe remained undisturbed at night, Dunckel had a new state-of-the-art system from the ADT (American District Telegraph) company installed. Founded in 1874, ADT developed a simple but effective way of protecting homes and businesses. A call box connected by telegraph lines to a central district office was installed next to the vault in the

"Miller Dunckel, state treasurer, is here pointing to the new "bandit barrier" being built in front of the state's vault. The installation will cost \$4,300 and save taxpayers about \$3,500 every year from now on, by an immediate reduction in the burglary and holdup insurance premium which has amounted to about \$11,000 a year. The state treasurer is showing Lee C. Richardson, department of state official, the spikes which, if touched, sound a burglar alarm and incidentally send 1,500 volts through the body of the intruder. Behind the bullet-proof glass of the cage is Joe S. Kiwala, cashier, and Miss Hattie Bode, deputy treasurer."

Image Courtesy of The State Journal



State Treasury's 'Bandit Barrier' Cuts Insurance Cost





Treasurer's Office. The night watchman regularly checked the vault and sent a signal to the district office that all was well. If the district office didn't receive the scheduled signal, they assumed something was wrong, and the police were dispatched to investigate. Just how effective these precautions were remains unknown, as no record of any attempted burglaries survive. Together, these two new security measures cost the state about \$3,700. As Dunkel was quick to point out, the system paid for itself within only one year, as the state's burglary insurance rates subsequently dropped by \$3,800.¹⁴

Modifications in technology were not the only changes occurring in the Treasurer's Office. Sometime after 1914, the Treasurer obtained another room, located in the north wing, that was previously used by the State Land Office.¹⁵ This change is seen on a 1941 floor plan and survey created by the Treasurer's staff, in which they inventoried the number of people, pieces of furniture, and machines in the building. The survey showed sixteen people working in the suite, using seventeen desks, four tables, twenty-two files, one machine, and one bookcase. The spaces in which they worked bore the identifiers 101, 102, 110, and 111.¹⁶

Two years later Treasury repeated the exercise. This time, they included not only the number of people, pieces of furniture, and machines housed in each office in 1943, but also in 1940. When compared with the numbers from 1941, they show an office in flux, due in part, perhaps, to the heavy demands of the war. The 1943 survey counted seventeen people working in the Treasurer's suite, an increase of only one person from 1940. The number of desks declined from seventeen to fourteen, while the number of tables, files, machines, and bookcases all rose.¹⁷

The safety of Treasury's many staff members once more became an issue in 1956 when Treasurer Sanford A. Brown expressed fears for the men and women who were going in and out of the vault each day. What if one of them happened to get locked in? This fear purportedly caused Brown great distress, which only worsened when he was told that there was only enough oxygen in the vault to last an average person about 20 minutes. He quickly decided to take matters into his own hands, and arranged for a five-inch communication tube to be inserted in the four-foot-thick wall adjoining the vault. This tube would allow for communication between the interior of the vault and someone on the outside, as well as being large enough for food or water to be passed through in case of emergencies.¹⁸

... a five-inch communication tube to be inserted in the four-foot-thick wall adjoining the vault ...

But what about security? Well, *The State Journal* reassured its readers, the crank to open the tube could only be operated from within the vault. And, if it was ever activated, it would automatically trigger an alarm system connected to both the outer Treasurer's office and the Lansing Police Department. Would-be burglars were

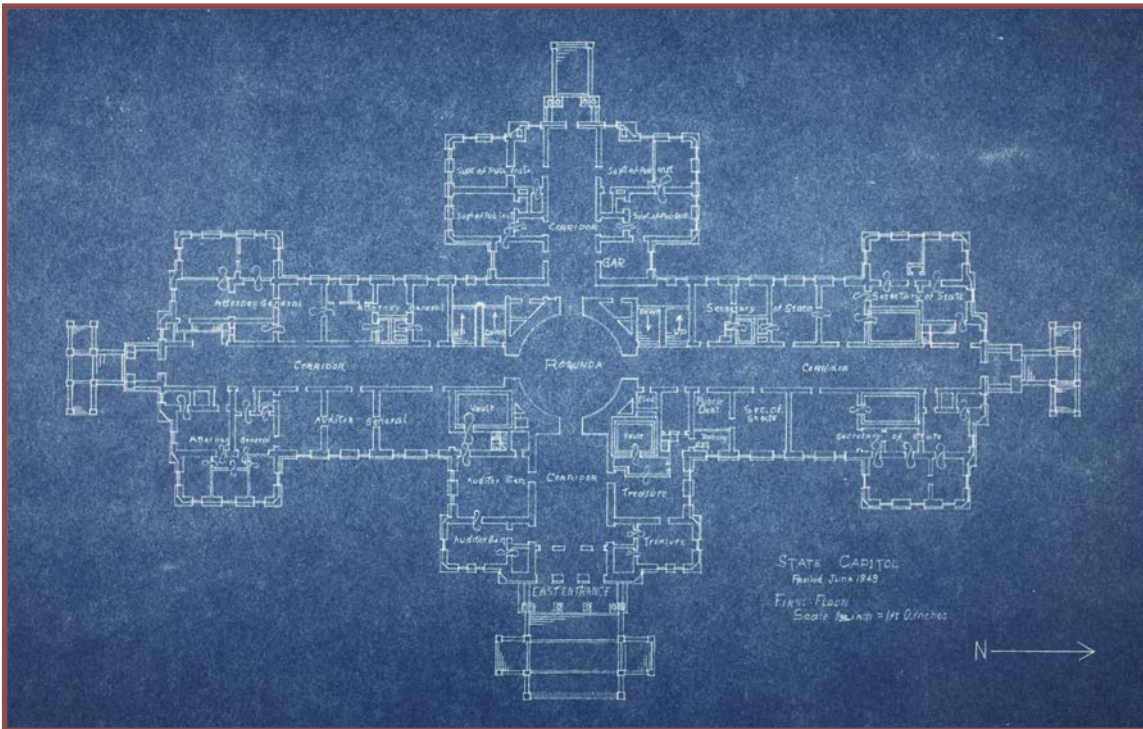
also warned that the process of creating the hole—which meant drilling through four feet of masonry wall, a 1½” cast iron plate, grout, another 1½” cast iron plate, more grout, and a 1” solid copper plate—took the workmen three days of effort. Whether or not the tube was ever used remains unknown.

In 1957, architect George R. Page prepared another set of mid twentieth century drawings for the Buildings and Construction Division of the Michigan State Administrative Board. Page's drawings indicate that the Treasurer's suite bore new identifiers, 101, 104, 106, 107, and 107A (the later three rooms being on the east side of the north corridor). Interestingly, Page also noted that part of room 107A now contained a mezzanine, or balcony level.¹⁹

As the years passed, even larger changes were coming to the Capitol, and to the Office of State Treasurer. In 1963, the state adopted a new constitution that no longer called for the statewide election of a treasurer. The Office of State Treasurer became an appointed position, to be filled by the Governor. Following this change, Treasurer Brown left and was replaced by Allison Green, the former Acting Auditor General and onetime Speaker of the House.²⁰

Green would be the last Treasurer to work in the Capitol, as, by the 1960s, the state was hard at work developing a new state office complex behind the Capitol. These new buildings would accommodate the state's rapidly expanding departments, leaving the Capitol for the now full-time legislature and the Governor. After almost ninety years in the Capitol, the State Treasurer was moving out of his traditional office into the new, modern structure.

The move to the new building meant that, for the first time, the contents of the office would need to be completely cleared out. Along the way, some treasures—of the non-monetary sort—were rediscovered. “A ‘gold mine’ of information about yesteryear Michigan government has been uncovered by the Michigan Historical Commission in a dust-laden vault in the State Capitol,” *The State Journal* reported.²¹ The article went on to list an eclectic assortment of papers found in the Treasurer's document vault, including a set of rules written for the staff of the Auditor General in 1909. There were also letters informing Governor Stevens T. Mason that he had been overpaid in 1837, a problem that he quickly rectified.



By the 1940s, space in the increasingly crowded Capitol was at a premium. Only the largest, most powerful departments retained their Capitol suites, while smaller divisions used rooms in the State Office Building, or in rented quarters downtown.

Image Courtesy of the Archives of Michigan



During this period, the following State Treasurers worked in this space.²²

1909-1912	Albert E. Sleeper	1933-1938	Theodore I. Fry
1913-1916	John W. Haarer	1939-1940	Miller Dunckel
1917-1919	Samuel Odell	1941-1942	Theodore I. Fry
1919-1924	Frank E. Gorman	1943-1954	D. Hale Brake
1925-1930	Frank D. McKay	1955-1965	Sanford A. Brown
1931-1932	Howard C. Lawrence	1965-1978	Allison Green

The Legislature Moves In

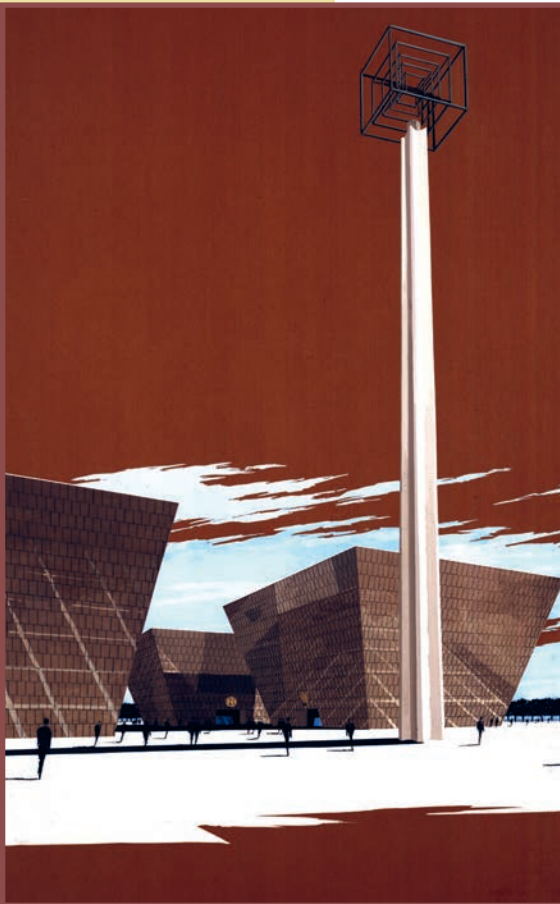
The late 1960s and early 1970s were times of great change in the Capitol building. After ninety years of shuffling, squeezing, and relocating, the decision was made to dramatically remodel many of the offices in the Capitol. The action was motivated by a number of factors, including the state's move to a full-time legislature. This had dramatic repercussions for the Capitol building, where the pace of business in both House and Senate spaces increased significantly. As the number of legislators spending every week in Lansing rose, the call for additional office space reached a fever pitch. In order to accommodate all of these members, space had to be found—preferably in the Capitol. Governor Romney's preferred solution called for the construction of a new Capitol. While significant steps were taken towards this ambitious goal, ultimately the project was tabled over cost and aesthetic concerns.

When it became clear that a new Capitol was not to be, another solution was proposed. Why not dramatically remodel the Capitol's offices and committee rooms? The timing seemed ideal, as several of the building's longtime departmental occupants, including the State Treasurer, were moving out of the Capitol and into other buildings in downtown Lansing.

A scheme was developed to capture new space in the old building by subdividing the rooms in half to create two ten-foot tall offices, one above the other. From 1969 to 1972, almost every office on the Capitol's first, second, and third floors received an overfloor (sometimes called half floors or mezzanines). At the same time, offices were modernized by adding drop ceilings, fluorescent lighting, and institutional carpeting and furnishings. Original decorative paint had already been covered by layers of overpaint, paneling, and wallpaper. Almost every vestige of the Capitol's original elegance and character had disappeared.

Several of the plans considered for the new Capitol in the 1960s contained three buildings—designed to house and symbolize the three branches of government—and a central pylon.

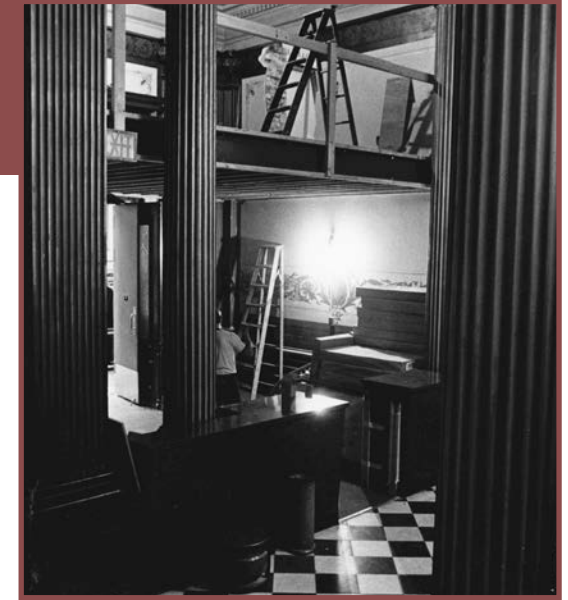
Image Courtesy of the Michigan State Capitol Collection



Offices, corridors, and even the lobby into the House Chamber, seen here, were sliced in half horizontally to create additional office space in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Image Courtesy of the Michigan State Capitol Collection

What then became of the 1909 Diebold vault door and safe? Or the 1924 Mosler vault door? Since they were too heavy for the State Treasurer to move, his legislative heirs had to figure out how to work around the vaults and their massive doors. Some used the vaults as small, claustrophobia-inducing offices. Others turned them into storage closets, filling the safe with paper clips, folders, pens, and pencils.



Office Occupants

By the publication of the 1969-70 *Michigan Legislative Handbook*, this suite of rooms was being used as House member offices. A survey of the handbooks indicates that the following members and committees worked in this space over the years. *Please note that the district numbers in the table reflect those in use at the time each respective handbook was printed.*²³

1969-1970	Rep. Martin D. Buth	90th District	Comstock Park	Rm. 104
	Rep. William P. Hampton	65th District	Bloomfield Hills	Rm. 104
	Rep. Robert E. Waldron	1st District	Grosse Pointe	Rm. 104
1971-1972	Rep. Dennis Cawthorne	98th District	Manistee	Rm. 104
	Rep. Thomas G. Ford	91st District	Grand Rapids	Rm. 104
	Rep. James Heinze	45th District	Battle Creek	Rm. 104
	Rep. Clifford H. Smart	60th District	Walled Lake	Rm. 104
	Rep. Roy L. Spencer	78th District	Attica	Rm. 104
1973-1974	Rep. Martin D. Buth	90th District	Rockford	Rm. 104A
	Rep. Dennis Cawthorne	98th District	Manistee	Rm. 104A
	Rep. Clifford H. Smart	24th District	Walled Lake	Rm. 104
	Rep. Loren Anderson	60th District	Pontiac	Rm. 104 ½
	Rep. James Defebaugh	65th District	Birmingham	Rm. 104 ½
	Rep. James F. Smith	83rd District	Grand Blanc	Rm. 104 ½
1975-1976	Rep. Dennis Cawthorne	98th District	Manistee	Rm. 104
	Rep. George Prescott	105th District	Tawas City	Rm. 104 Mezz
	Rep. Robert Welborn	47th District	Kalamazoo	Rm. 104 ½
1977-1978	Rep. Dennis Carthorne	98th District	North Muskegon	Rm. 104
	Rep. George A. Prescott	105th District	Tawas City	Rm. 104 ½
	Rep. Robert A. Welborn	47th District	Kalamazoo	Rm. 104 ½



1979-1980	Rep. William R. Bryant Jr.	13th District	Grosse Pointe	Rm. 104
	Rep. Alan L. Cropsey	88th District	DeWitt	Rm. 104
	Rep. Mary Keith Ballantine	23rd District	Jackson	Rm. 104 ½
	Rep. Robert A. Welborn	47th District	Kalamazoo	Rm. 104 ½
1981-1982	Rep. William R. Bryant Jr.	13th District	Grosse Pointe	Rm. 104
	Rep. John G. Strand	78th District	Lapeer	Rm. 104 ½
	Rep. Robert A. Welborn	47th District	Kalamazoo	Rm. 104 ½
	Rep. L. Jean Willoughby	62nd District	Bloomfield Hills	Rm. 104 ½
1983-1984	Rep. J. Michael. Busch	100th District	Saginaw	Rm. 104
	Rep. Philip E. Hoffman	23rd District	Horton	Rm. 104 ½
	Rep. Robert D. McGee	24th District	Union Lake	Rm. 104 ½
	Rep. Margaret O'Conner	52nd District	Ann Arbor	Rm. 104 ½
1985-1986	Rep. J. Michael Busch	100th District	Saginaw	Rm. 104
	Rep. Lyn R. Banks	35th District	Livonia	Rm. 104 ½
	Rep. Doug Carl	26th District	Utica	Rm. 104 ½
	Rep. Jim Connors	109th District	Iron Mountain	Rm. 104 ½
	Rep. George C. Furton	75th District	Mt. Clemens	Rm. 104 ½
	Rep. Gregory G. Gruse	66th District	Madison Heights	Rm. 104 ½
	Rep. David M. Honigman	24th District	West Bloomfield	Rm. 104 ½
	Rep. Terrance London	76th District	Smiths Creek	Rm. 104 ½
	Rep. Judith R. Miller	65th District	Birmingham	Rm. 104 ½
	Rep. William Runco	31st District	Dearborn	Rm. 104 ½
1987-1988	Rep. Paul C. Hillegonds	54th District	Holland	Rm. 104
	Rep. Mat J. Dunaskiss	61st District	Lake Orion	Rm. 104 ½
	Rep. Joanne G. Emmons	99th District	Big Rapids	Rm. 104 ½
	Rep. David M. Honigman	24th District	West Bloomfield	Rm. 104 ½
	Rep. Susan Grimes Munsell	51st District	Fowlerville	Rm. 104 ½
Rep. Claude A. Trim	20th District	Waterford	Rm. 104 ½	
1989-1990	Rep. Paul C. Hillegonds	54th District	Holland	Rm. 104
	Rep. Dave Camp	102nd District	Midland	Rm. 104 ½
	Rep. Dave M. Honigman	24th District	West Bloomfield	Rm. 104 ½
	Rep. Susan Grimes Munsell	51st District	Howell	Rm. 104 ½
	Rep. Claude A. Trim	20th District	Waterford	Rm. 104 ½

1991-1992 *The office is not listed in the 1991 Legislative Handbook and Directory, as the offices were then undergoing restoration.*

Since they were too heavy for the State Treasurer to move, his legislative heirs had to figure out how to work around the vaults . . .

The Capitol's Restoration

In 1987, the Michigan Senate and the House of Representatives began the process of restoring Michigan's Capitol. Chief among their goals was to return the building to its original Victorian grandeur while modernizing the many outdated systems within it. They sought to make the Capitol a living, working museum, where the functions of government would continue to play out in a beautiful and inspiring historical setting. In order to carry out this mission, the restoration team, made up of supportive elected officials, architects, craftspeople, and artists, would need to touch every single space in the Capitol, including the old State Treasurer's suite.



Contractors built protective boxes around antique objects—including this original fireplace—that remained in situ during the restoration.

Image Courtesy of the Michigan State Capitol Collection

Changes came swiftly. Overfloors and suspended ceilings were removed, returning the height of the rooms to their full twenty-two feet. Tradespeople rerouted and disguised ductwork, wiring, and sprinkler heads. Appropriate carpeting, designed using colors and patterns from the Victorian period, and period inspired furnishings, were crafted and installed. Skilled designers and craftspeople used photographs to recreate original gas lighting fixtures removed in the early twentieth century. New windows, neatly trimmed with appropriate wood shutters and draperies, replaced old.

Of particular importance to the restoration was the recreation of the Capitol's historic decorative artwork. Michigan's Capitol contains approximately nine acres of hand painted art. A variety of techniques were used in the building when it was decorated in the 1880s, including stenciling, striping, marbling, and gilding. Over the years, the artwork was painted over many times as styles changed. For the first time, careful research was undertaken to determine the original colors and decorative paint

motifs found in these rooms. These colors and motifs were then replicated by talented decorative artists who used traditional techniques to return the room to a proper late nineteenth century appearance.



This may be the last image taken of the open vault in the Treasurer's Office during the restoration. Note the decorative paint reveals to the right of the door, and the overfloor above.

Image Courtesy of the Michigan State Capitol Collection



One of the techniques used in this space is that of woodgraining. The original Capitol building commissioners made the decision to use white pine as the dominant wood throughout the building. White pine was relatively inexpensive and available in abundance in this period. They did not intend, however, for people to recognize the wood as pine. Once the pine was installed, it was woodgrained—that is, painted carefully to mimic a more expensive wood—by talented artists. In the Capitol, painters transformed yards of humble pine by painting it with the grain of walnut, the most fashionable (and therefore rather expensive) choice of the 1870s. The technique that they used was replicated by modern decorative painters during the restoration. They labored many hours to apply the necessary seven layers of paint needed to mimic the late nineteenth century process.



Much of the plaster in the Capitol's offices was too badly damaged to save. Instead, crews removed the old plaster, which was replaced with a modern, yet traditional, three step plaster system consisting of a scratch, a brown, and a finish coat.

Image Courtesy of the Michigan State Capitol Collection

The restoration also brought changes to the old vaults and safes. Until this project, the building relied on unsightly and dangerous exterior fire escapes attached to the stonework. One of the goals of the restoration was to increase safety systems in the Capitol, including installing interior fire stairs for the first time. This became an engineering nightmare, as there was simply no place to put them. Carefully studying floorplans, the restoration team noticed that there were stacked vaults one above the other on each floor. In a rather remarkable feat of deconstruction, a vertical shaft was opened that extended from the top of the building to the bottom, right through the former location of the stacked vaults. Modern, safe fire stairs were carefully installed inside the shaft. To preserve the history and appearance of the building as much as possible, the handsome old vault doors were simply sealed shut and left in place.

The restoration of the Capitol was completed in the fall of 1992. Rededication ceremonies held on November 19 and 20 of that year celebrated the success of the project, which won many significant state and national preservation awards. That same fall, the building was officially designated a National Historic Landmark, the highest honor accorded historic structures in America.

Artists from across the country and around the world labored to recreate acres of decorative motifs. In this image a decorative painter rolls color onto a small border stencil above the wainscot.

Image Courtesy of the Michigan State Capitol Collection

Post Restoration Use

The completion of the Capitol's restoration brought with it the need to resolve matters concerning the identification and future use of the Capitol's rooms, including this suite, which now serves as the office of the House Minority Floor Leader. A new numbering system, devised by Capitol Preservation Architect Richard C. Frank, was introduced indicating the ownership of the space (House, Senate, Executive, etc.) and the room's number. Today this suite is numbered H141, H141A, H141B, H141C, H143, and H143A. The old vault space, now part of the fire staircase, is H139.

The following members have served in this suite since the Capitol's restoration.²⁴

1993-1994	Rep. William R. Bryant Jr.	1st District	Grosse Pointe Farms	Rm. H141
1995-1996	Rep. William R. Bryant Jr.	1st District	Grosse Pointe Farms	Rm. H141
1997-1998	Rep. Donald H. Gilmer	63rd District	Augusta	Rm. H141
1999-2000	Rep. Kwame M. Kilpatrick	9th District	Detroit	Rm. H141
2001-2002	Rep. Gilda Z. Jacobs	35th District	Huntington Woods	Rm. H141
2003-2004	Rep. Mary D. Waters	4th District	Detroit	Rm. H141
2005-2006	Rep. Mary D. Waters	4th District	Detroit	Rm. H141
2007-2008	Rep. Chris Ward	66th District	Brighton	Rm. H141
2009-2010	Rep. Dave Hildenbrand	86th District	Lowell	Rm. H141
2011-2012	Rep. Kate Segal	62nd District	Battle Creek	Rm. H141
2013-2014	Rep. Pete Lund	36th District	Shelby Township	Rm. H141
2015-2016	Rep. Sam Singh	69th District	East Lansing	Rm. H141
2017-2018	Rep. Christine Greig	37th District	Farmington Hills	Rm. H141
2019-2020	Rep. Yousef Rabhi	53rd District	Ann Arbor	Rm. H141





End Notes

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- 23 *Michigan Legislative Handbooks*, 1973-1990.
- 24 *Michigan Legislative Handbooks*, 1993-2020.



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