

President Abraham Lincoln signed the act creating Idaho Territory in 1863. The territorial capital moved from Lewiston to Boise in 1865. In 1886, at a cost of \$80,000, the Territorial Capitol building was completed. The Norman-style building was made of red brick, had five floors, and had no indoor plumbing. The Territorial Capitol was razed for construction of the east wing of the new State Capitol.

Idaho became the 43rd state in the Union in 1890; President Benjamin Harrison was in office at the time. In 1905 the Idaho State Legislature created the Capitol Building Commission with the power to issue bonds, negotiate and sign

## TERRITORIAL BEGINNINGS

contracts, and approve architectural plans for Idaho's State Capitol. The commission was responsible for acquiring the site and overseeing construction of the building.



Idaho's Constitution gives our state three branches of government. For many years, all three had offices in the Capitol.

The executive branch carries out the laws. With seven elected officers, including the Governor, and seventeen departments, this branch



works to enact or execute laws. The legislative branch makes the laws; they might make new or change old laws. The legislature is comprised of senators and representatives. The judicial branch interprets laws and settles disputes. The trial and appeals courts interpret laws in criminal and civil trials. The Supreme Court of Idaho is the state's highest court.

### Idaho's Territorial Capitol



ISHS 276-1383.8; Lincoln; ISHS 477-47; seal; ISHS 63-5.188

The design, acquisition of materials, and construction of Idaho's capitol was conducted over a 15-year period. The first phase of construction began in 1905 and



SHS 23 47



SHS 64 52 20 4

## CONSTRUCTION OF OUR STATE CAPITOL

included the central portion of the State Capitol and the dome.

Described by architect J. E. Tourtellotte as neoclassic, it is patterned after the United States Capitol in Washington, D.C. When the central section and dome were completed in 1912, Tourtellotte and Charles Hummel of Boise were



SHS 18 24 4



SHS 76 11 4 9

**J. E. Tourtellotte surveys the city from the State Capitol.**

contracted to design the wings for the building. Construction on the wings began in 1919 and was completed in 1920. The Central School building was demolished to make way for the west wing, much as the Territorial Capitol building was razed for construction of the east wing.



Above: gang saw cutting stone for the central portion of the Capitol building.



Right: Nick Sionis and his State Capitol construction crew, 1904-1905.

## A SOLID FOUNDATION

The building's deep foundation rests upon river gravel more than 15 feet below ground. The concrete foundation holds a granite base which was shipped from Vermont. Barre (pronounced berry) granite has large grain, is hard, and has a notable salt-and-pepper appearance. Native sandstone from nearby Table Rock is the material used for most of the superstructure. Sandstone blocks weighing up to ten tons were transported by Idaho Penitentiary convicts from the state-owned Table Rock quarry.

These tools belonged to a mason who worked on the State Capitol.





## MARBLE AND SCAGLIOLA

Four different types of marble were used in creating the interior of Idaho's State Capitol. The red marble is from Georgia, while the black you see is Italian marble. The green swirled marble decorating the walls is from Vermont, and the grey marble comes from Alaska. You may be surprised to learn the pillars are not made of marble at all! Rather they are composed of scagliola (pronounced skalyola)—a mixture of gypsum and glue, marble dust and granite dyed to look like marble. Scagliola came from a special plastering art which originated in Italy during the sixteenth century. Polished marble was popular for building interiors; however, it was inconvenient to use due to

cost and weight. An imitation form of the stone came into use. This special art was crafted for the Capitol's columns by an Italian family who traveled to Idaho from New York. In 1976, the pillars were repaired by drilling holes and injecting a liquid adhesive. A polyurethane finish was then applied to the surface for protection.

The sixty-foot-high columns are adorned with Corinthian capitals featuring acanthus leaves. Doric and Ionic columns are also found throughout the building. The three styles represent different time periods of Greek architecture.



Doric



Ionic

There are many impressive features to be seen on the first floor of the State Capitol, such as the symbolic sundial. Designed and donated by Gys Jansen van Beek, the sundial symbolizes Idaho's abundance of natural resources and its major industries.

- The statue of a miner, entitled "The Patriot," was sculpted with a welding torch by miner Kenneth Lonn of the Silver Valley. It is dedicated to the men and women of Idaho's mining industry in memory of the 91 miners who lost their lives in the 1972 Sunshine Mine disaster. The statue is on loan from the

## 1ST FLOOR

Bunker Hill Mining Company in northern Idaho.

- Displays located in the east and west wings of the first floor highlight the diversity of the state and the talents of its people.



- Step into the center of the rotunda on the ground floor, and look upward to view the breathtaking interior of the dome. Look down to see the compass rose beneath your feet.

- The office of the State Treasurer is in the east wing. An original vault containing a large safe made by the Manganese Steel Safe Co. of New York is still in use. Legislative Services also occupies office space in the east wing. The Division of Financial Management occupies offices located in the west wing.

After walking up the stairs, you will see an equestrian statue of George Washington. This beautiful statue, crafted by German immigrant Charles Ostner, was carved from pine. According to popular folklore, it took Ostner four years to carve the figure using a postage-stamp likeness of Washington as reference. The statue was painted bronze and presented to the Territory of Idaho in 1869. It stood on display on the Capitol grounds until 1934 when it was brought inside to prevent further weather damage. It was refinished, covered with gold leaf, and placed in its glass case in 1966.

Moving around the rotunda, you will see a replica of the "Winged Victory of Samothrace." The original marble statue was found on the

## 2ND FLOOR

island of Samothrace in the Aegean Sea in 1863 and is estimated to have been sculpted around 300 B.C. It now stands in the Louvre in Paris, France. In 1949, France sent 49 box cars laden with

gifts to the capital cities in the United States. The "Merci Train" gifts were a gesture of thanks to the U.S. from France following World War II. Idaho's "Merci Train" gifts were distributed among the state's 44 counties. The boxcar itself is on exhibit at the Old Idaho Penitentiary.



The George Washington statue dedication is shown in this drawing by Charles Ostner, in the white hat at right below the statue.

The Governor's suite of offices is located in the west wing on the second floor of the State Capitol. The Governor's official portrait may be seen here. A portrait gallery of all previous governors of the state is displayed in the hallway outside the offices.

Notice the display on the wall opposite the offices. It holds flags representing Idaho regiments in France during World War I. Each flag was carried in a different offensive. Also on this side of the hall is a display containing a setting of the Governor's official china. All 26 place settings of the china, silver, and crystal were donated to the state by various groups and individuals.



## 2ND FLOOR

The Lieutenant Governor's office is located in the west wing opposite the Governor's office. Flags flown by the First Regiment Idaho Infantry in the Philippines during the Spanish American War are presented in this office. The flag with the blue background and a seal similar to our state's was designed by these soldiers and was the inspiration for the Idaho flag.

The office of the Secretary of State is in the east wing. The "official copy" of the Great Seal of the State of Idaho is kept in the reception area.

The second floor also houses the Attorney General's suite

of offices. These offices were used by the Idaho Supreme Court until the new Supreme Court building and library were built in 1970. A devastating fire occurred in this portion of the Capitol on January 1, 1992. Nearly all of the Attorney General's suite was destroyed. Restoration of the offices took two and a half years. Great attention was given to reproducing all of the building elements with historical accuracy. Mahogany

woodwork and decorative plaster cornices are present throughout the structure.

**Exterior damage from the 1992 fire.**



State Historic Preservation Office, Idaho State Historical Society

On the third floor of the State Capitol are the legislative chambers, the Senate in the west wing and the House of Representatives in the east wing. Committee rooms and offices surround each chamber.

The House has 70 members and the Senate has 35 members. All are elected for two-year

**The 1929-30 Idaho Judicial Council meets in the Supreme Court Chamber.**



ISHS 62-8658

## 3RD FLOOR

terms. The legislature is in session three months each year.

The large room on the north side of the rotunda once housed the Idaho Supreme Court Chamber. It is now the committee room for the Joint

Finance-Appropriations Committee. The dark green marble and mahogany bench at the front of the room was originally the seat of the Supreme Court justices.

On the south side, the Information Center allows the public and media to find up-to-the-

minute news during the legislative session. The Information Center also oversees distribution of information from the public to the legislators. Pages work from this location.

**The first women were elected to the Idaho Legislature in 1898.**



ISHS 752

Balcony entrances to the Senate and House galleries are located on the fourth floor. The gallery areas are usually open to the public and provide an interesting view of our lawmakers at work. The annual session begins in early January and usually continues through March. Hallways leading to the galleries are

## 4TH FLOOR

lined with photographs of past Idaho legislators. The fourth floor also houses meeting rooms for committees and legislative staff.

In the rotunda area of the fourth floor are the Idaho



**Artist Dana Boussard used painted fabric to create the Statehouse murals.**

Historic Statehouse Murals titled “A Legend of Dreams.” These murals pay tribute to communities and individuals who have shaped the state’s history and culture. Using symbols, the murals tell Idaho’s story—past, present, and future. Interpretive signs are located next to each mural.

**The Idaho House chamber once had drapes covering the space beneath the gallery; now this area is walled off.**



## ON THE CAPITOL GROUNDS

1. Near the west entrance of the Capitol is the **Grand Army of the Republic (The Union Army) Monument**.

Donated in 1935 by the Ladies of the Grand Army of the Republic, it honors the men of the Union Army “who saved the union of the states” in the Civil War.

2. On the southwest corner is a “**Model 1840**” cast iron cannon.

It is a seacoast gun used by the Confederacy in the Civil War. This piece was obtained by State Treasurer S. A. Hastings with the help of Senator William Borah to decorate the Capitol grounds.

3. Directly across from the main entrance of the Capitol in Capitol Park is the **Steunenberg Statue**. The statue honors Governor Frank

Steunenberg, who served Idaho from 1897 to 1900. He was assassinated in 1905. The people of Idaho dedicated the monument in 1927 in grateful memory of his devotion to public duty.

4. At the bottom of the ceremonial entrance staircase is a **replica of the Liberty Bell**.

It was presented to Idaho as a gift from the United States Treasury to promote the U.S. Savings Bond independence drive of 1950. The bell doesn’t have the famous crack of the original Liberty Bell, but the tone, dimensions, and

symbolism are identical.

5. On the southeast corner of the lawn is the **Pioneer Monument**. 2,777 Boise schoolchildren donated funds for the monument to perpetuate the memory of the Old Oregon Trail and the pioneers who followed it. It was erected in 1906.

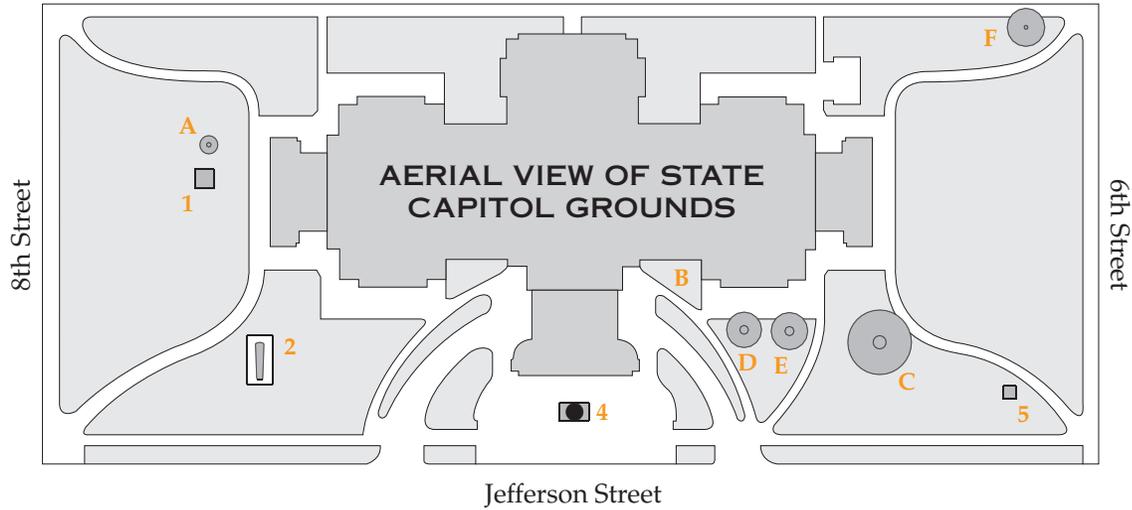


## PLANTS OF DISTINCTION

A. On the west lawn is the **Tree of Guernica**, brought to Idaho in 1981 from the Basque region in northern Spain. It was planted by representatives of Idaho’s Basque community.

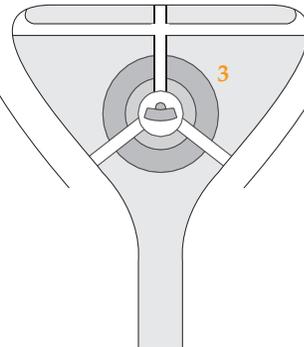
B. The **Ruth G. Moon Memorial Garden** is located in front of the Capitol building near the first-floor entrance. It honors the former state treasurer, who served the state from 1945-1946 and again from 1954 until 1959.

C. Presidential trees are located on the southeast side of the building near the sidewalk. A **Water Oak**, planted by President Benjamin Harrison in 1891, still stands. It was Harrison, by the way, who had one year earlier signed a proclamation for Idaho to become a state.



**D.** An **Ohio Buckeye** was planted in 1911 by President William Howard Taft.

**E.** A **Rock (Sugar) Maple** was planted in 1903 by President Theodore Roosevelt.



**F.** A **Sunset Maple Tree** is planted on the northeast corner of the grounds in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr. The tree was donated in 1985 by the Boise and Pocatello branches of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

Idaho's State Capitol has a total floor area of 201,720 square feet, including the four floors and basement. From the first floor to the tip of the eagle atop the dome, the building rises 208 feet. The corridors, floors, wainscoting, and base throughout the building consist of 50,646 square feet of artistically carved marble. The plot on which the Capitol sits is 4.69 acres, with a frontage of 680 feet. The original appropriation was for only \$250,000; however, when completed, the building cost \$2,098,455.05. Replacement cost at today's prices is estimated at over \$100 million; many materials, such as the scagliola, are irreplaceable.

- Idaho's capitol building is

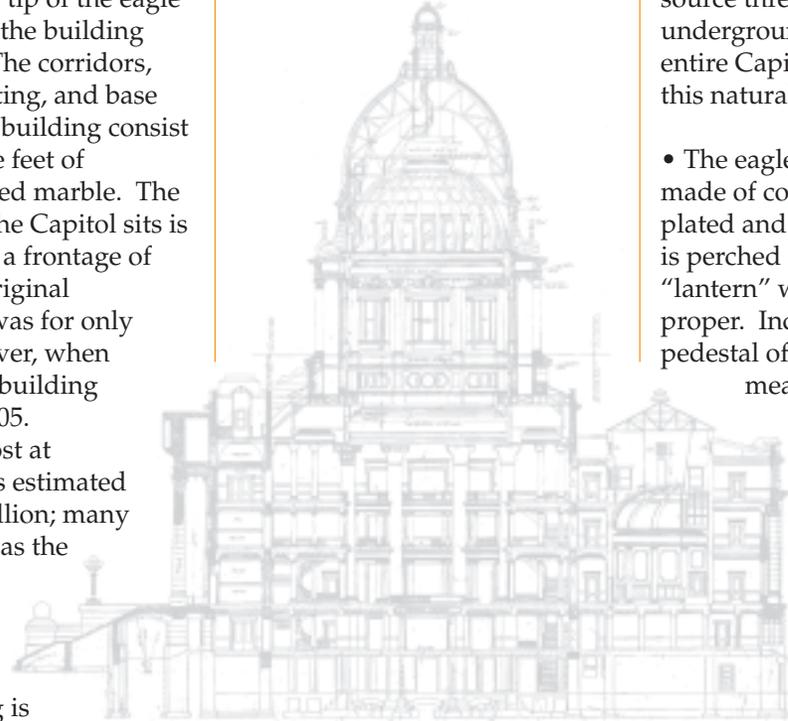
## UNIQUE FACTS

the only one in the United States heated by geothermal

water. Boise sits atop a large, naturally occurring geothermal resource. The hot water is tapped and pumped from a source three thousand feet underground. In fact, the entire Capitol Mall is heated by this natural aquifer.

- The eagle atop the dome is made of copper and is bronze plated and gilded with gold. It is perched on a twenty-six foot "lantern" which tops the dome proper. Including the triple pedestal of sandstone, the eagle measures 5 feet 7 inches.

The architect's drawings had originally shown a flag atop the capitol dome, but in the course of construction an eagle was substituted.



## STATE ELECTED OFFICIALS

Governor.....Dirk Kempthorne  
 Lieutenant Governor.....Jim Risch  
 Secretary of State.....Ben Yursa  
 State Controller.....Keith Johnson

State Treasurer.....Ron Crane  
 Attorney General.....Lawrence G. Wasden  
 Superintendent of Public Instruction.....Marilyn Howard

## STATE SYMBOLS

**STATE SEAL** The Great Seal of the State came into existence in 1891, by act of the State Legislature. Originally designed by Emma Edwards Green, Idaho's is the only state seal designed by a woman. The translation of the Latin motto on the seal, "Esto Perpetua," is "May it endure forever."

**STATE SONG** Sallie Hume Douglas composed the music; it was copyrighted in 1915. In 1917 McKinley Helm, a student at the University of Idaho, wrote the verse which became the chorus. Albert J. Tompkins wrote a set of verses for the song, and in 1931 "Our Idaho" was adopted by the

Idaho Legislature as the state song, renamed "Here We Have Idaho."



### STATE FLOWER

The Syringa is a branching shrub with clusters of white flowers similar to mock orange. Blossoms

have four petals. Syringa grows on hills and along streams. It was adopted by the legislature in 1931.

**STATE HORSE** The Appaloosa was bred for centuries by the Nez Perce Indians. The breed was brought back from near oblivion beginning in 1938. The Appaloosa

is an intelligent, fast, hard-working breed. Its distinct coat ranges from white-blanketed hips to a full leopard. A sixth-grade class from Eagle, Idaho, asked the legislature to adopt the Appaloosa in 1975; it did!

**STATE TREE** The Western White Pine is abundant north of the Clearwater River. The tree can grow to over 200 feet in height and can live for hundreds of years (adopted 1935).

**STATE FOLK DANCE** The 1989 state legislature designated the square dance as the state's official folk dance. The square dance was

first associated with the American people, and it has been recorded in history since 1651.

**STATE INSECT** The Monarch Butterfly is a great migrator; some travel from Canada and the northern United States to Mexico. The monarch butterfly is black, orange, and white (adopted 1992).

**STATE BIRD** The Mountain Bluebird ranges throughout the West and as far north as Alaska. The Mountain Bluebird is about seven inches long and nests in hollow trees and rock crevices. It eats insects and weed seeds (adopted 1931).



**STATE FISH** The Cutthroat trout are native to Idaho. The Cutthroat's name comes from the

distinctive red to orange slash on the underside of its lower jaw. The 1990 legislature recognized the fish's role as an ideal environmental barometer. Recognition as the state fish can help build the public awareness and support necessary for thoughtful use of aquatic habitats and associated resources.

**STATE FOSSIL** The Hagerman Horse Fossil was discovered in the 1920's near Hagerman, Idaho. The area is now a national monument and one of the best Pleistocene-epoch fossil sites in the world. The Hagerman Horse fossil bed is about 3.5 million years old (adopted 1988).

**STATE FLAG** A silk flag, with a blue field, 5 feet 6 inches fly, 4 feet 4 inches on pike is bordered by a gilt fringe 2 inches wide. The State Seal of Idaho is in the center, and the words "State of Idaho" are embroidered in 2-inch gold block letters on a red band (adopted 1907).



**STATE GEMSTONE** The Star Garnet is Idaho's state gemstone. Normally the Star Garnet has four rays, but some have six.

The color is usually dark purple or plum and the star seems to glide or float across the surface. The Star Garnet is found only in Idaho and India (adopted 1967).



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