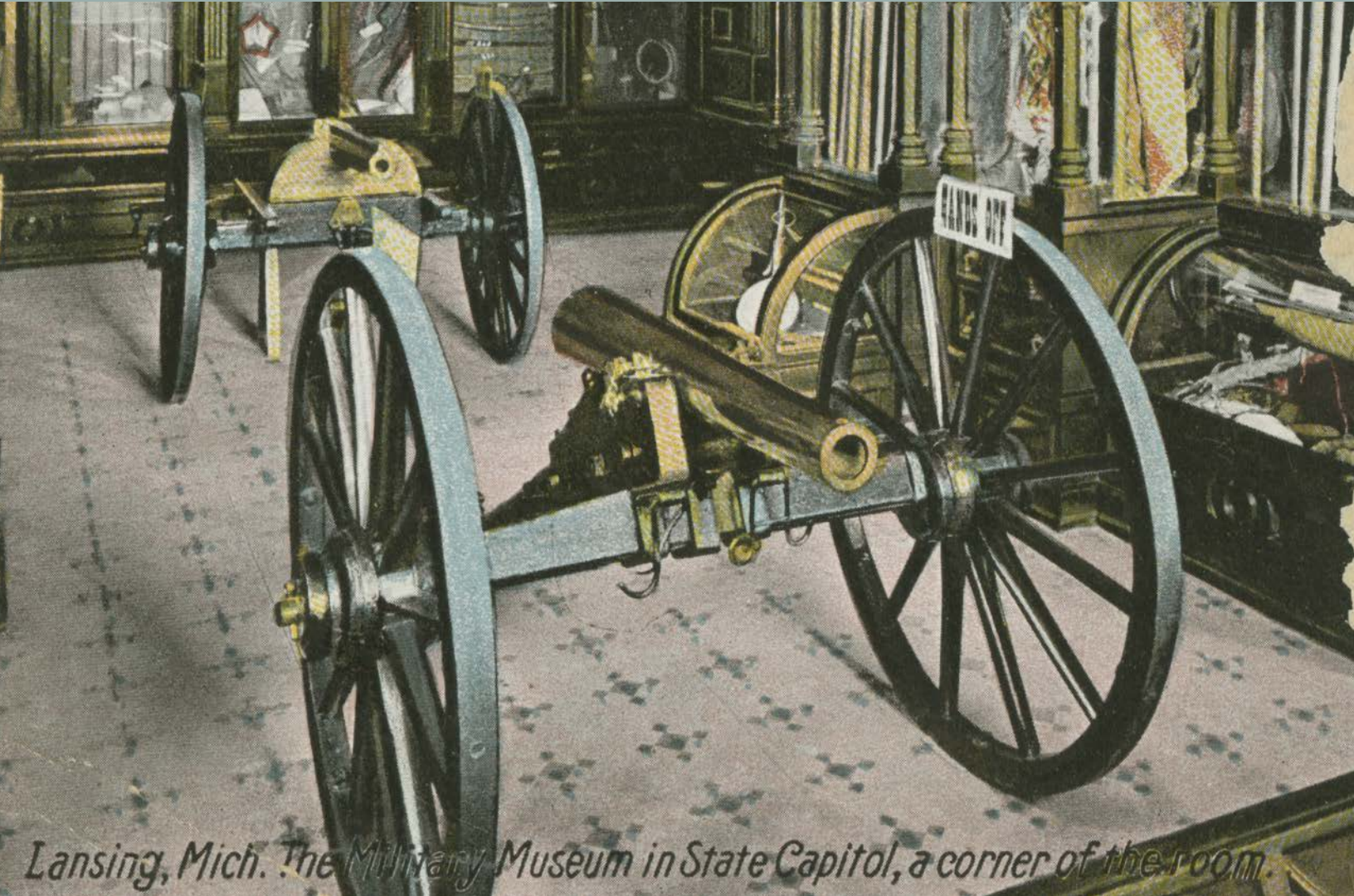


A History of
**The Office of the Adjutant, Quartermaster,
and Inspector Generals**
SI05



Lansing, Mich. The Military Museum in State Capitol, a corner of the room.



By Valerie R. Marvin

Michigan State Capitol Historian & Curator





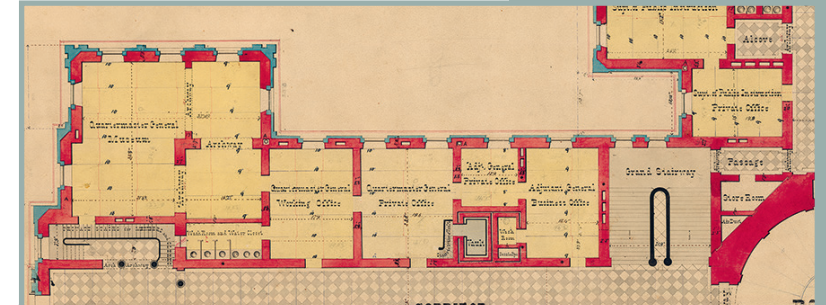
Michigan's present Capitol, the state's third, opened on January 1, 1879, to great acclaim.

Image Courtesy of the Archives of Michigan

The Adjutant, Quartermaster, and Inspector Generals

The office of the Adjutant, Quartermaster, and Inspector Generals was designed to be one of the largest and most unique spaces within the new building. Architect Elijah E. Myers located the suite on the west side of the south corridor on the first floor. The Capitol's original floor plans indicate that the entire suite originally contained seven rooms, plus a fireproof vault in which important documents were stored. Beginning at the northernmost end of the suite, the first three rooms were designated as the Adjutant General's Business Office, the Adjutant General's Private Office, and a small washroom. Next came the Quartermaster General's Private Office, the Quartermaster General's Working Office, another washroom, and finally the large Military Museum. Exactly who actually used each room is open to debate, as Myers's plans didn't always translate into actual practice. A recently rediscovered "Michigan State Capitol Directory" compiled by Allen Bours, the Superintendent of State Property, around 1879, noted that this suite also contained an office for the state's Inspector General, another military officer.

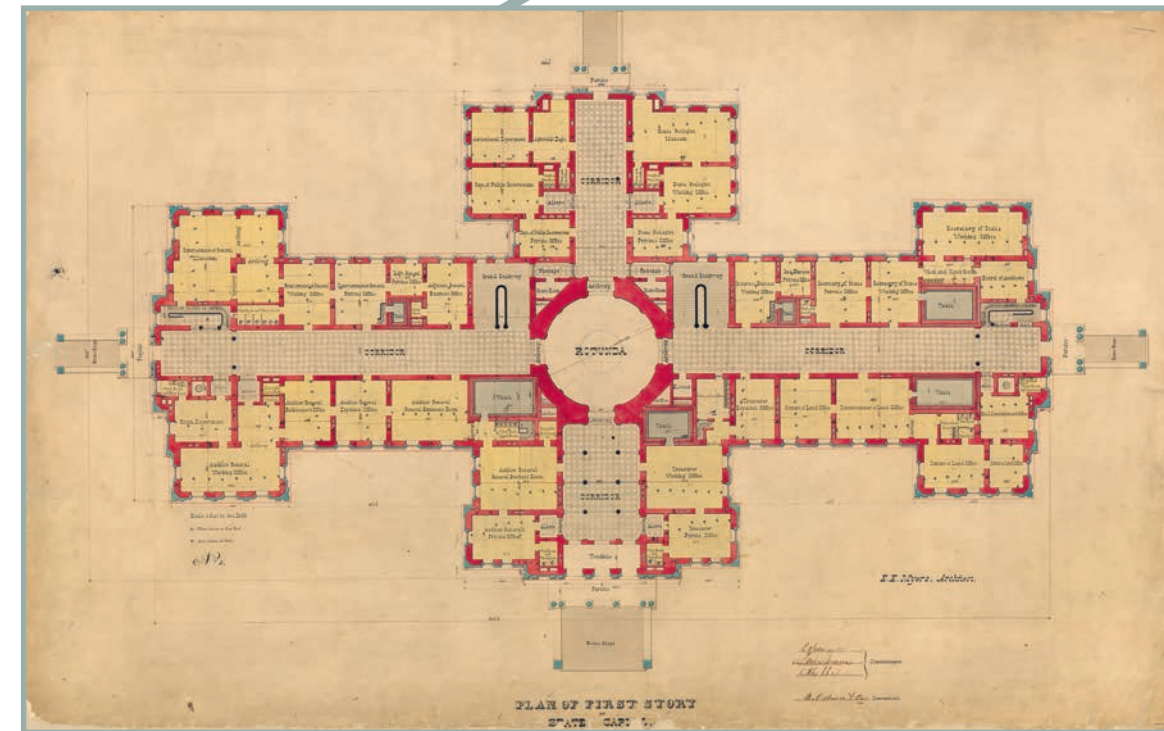
The first men to work in these new Capitol offices were Quartermaster General Lemuel Saviers, Inspector General Lewis W. Heath, and Adjutant General John Robertson. Scottish born, Robertson, a very important figure in Michigan military history, immigrated to the United States in 1833 and immediately joined the U.S. Army. After enjoying a successful career in military related positions, he was appointed to the office



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 offices 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 floor plans 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

of Adjutant General by Governor Austin Blair in 1861, just before the fall of Fort Sumter. This positioned him to lead the state's military department throughout the entire Civil War. Widely admired, Robertson was reappointed by subsequent Governors Crapo, Baldwin, Bagley, Crosswell, Jerome, Begole, Alger, and Luce, serving until his death in 1887.¹

In these offices a bevy of clerks kept the military records of Michigan's veterans and militia members. Among the papers under their watchful eyes were the records of the 90,000 soldiers who served during the War of the Rebellion, as the conflict was then known. These records would eventually be compiled and published as Michigan's forty-six "Brown Books," which are still heavily used by historians today. Here also, Robertson penned *Michigan in the War*, chronicling the Wolverine State's contributions to the Civil War.

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."² 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 museum of military artifacts and relics, located at the far south end of the suite, was a popular public destination for Capitol visitors, veterans, and their descendants. Robertson wrote that the museum inspired "recollections of past victories and defeats, of friends lost and a country saved," by those who visited.³ Not long after the Capitol opened, the *Detroit Free Press* published a description of the museum and its contents.

"The Military Museum has become an attractive point. The torn and tattered battle-flags of Michigan regiments are conspicuously displayed in large glass cabinets. Many rebel flags and banners and an infinity of articles of many descriptions captured from the enemy, or used in some matter by our forces during the war of the rebellion, are displayed in cases. Among the rest there has recently been commenced by Adjutant-General Robertson a collection of portraits of Michigan soldiers. The photographs are displayed near the flags under which the originals served. They represent all ranks and men of all arms, from the dusty private, whose picture has been hastily taken in the camp gallery, to the elaborate steel engraving of the general officer."⁴

Early Changes

As might be expected, change in these offices, and in the Capitol in general, was 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 suite belonging to the Adjutant, Quartermaster, and Inspector Generals, was transformed by artists who stenciled, grained, marbled, and striped beautiful motifs on the walls and ceilings.

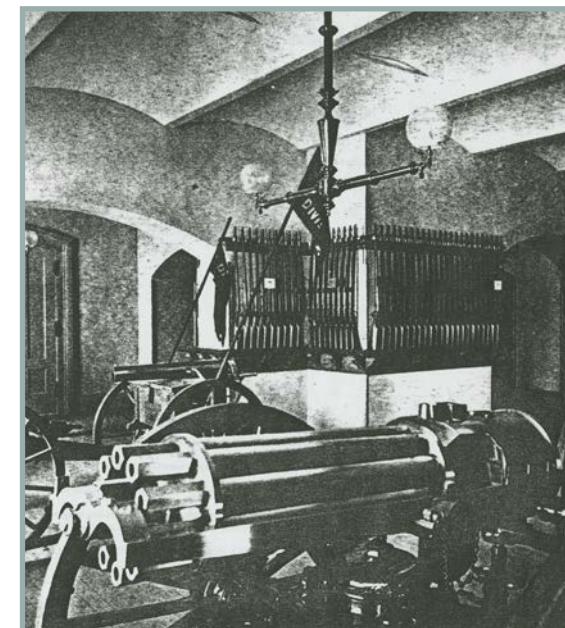
This early twentieth century postcard featured a rare color image of the Military Museum, where the state's silken battle flags, arms, photographs, and other relics were displayed. Even the blue and gold star motif on the ceiling reflected the patriotic nature of the space.

Image Courtesy of the Michigan State Capitol Collection



In 1892, the State Board of 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. The inventory indicates that the Adjutant General's

office contained three file cases, three bookcases, one letter press with stand, one leather covered lounge, seven tables, two desks, ten chairs, one pair of scales, one step ladder, one drop light, four rugs, one folding bed and furnishings, five cuspidors (or spittoons), three waste baskets, and one Caligraph No. 2 (an early typewriter) with stand and cover. The Quartermaster's and Inspector's offices contained mostly similar items as well as one electric clock.⁵



The rooms below the Military Museum served for many years as an armory where a Gatling gun and other Civil War era weapons were stored and displayed.

Image Courtesy of the Archives of Michigan

Michigan State Capitol Directory.

LEFT.	CENTRE.	RIGHT.
First Floor.		
EAST CORRIDOR.		
Auditor General.		State Treasurer.
WEST CORRIDOR.		
Board of Health.		Superintendent of
Commissioner of Railroads.		Public Instruction.
SOUTH CORRIDOR.		
Auditor General		Inspector General.
(Tax Department)		Adjutant General.
Commissioner of Insurances.		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.		Governor.
WEST CORRIDOR.		
		State Library.
SOUTH CORRIDOR.		
		Senate Chamber.
NORTH CORRIDOR.		
		Representative Hall.
Third Floor.		
EAST CORRIDOR.		
Attorney Gen'l.		Supreme Court.
WEST CORRIDOR.		
Attorneys'		Attorneys'
Consultation Room.		Consultation Room.
SOUTH CORRIDOR.		
Clerk of Supreme Court.		
NORTH CORRIDOR.		
		Senate Gallery.
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. Beck, Superintendent of State Property.		

This early Capitol Directory survives in the Jenison Collection, a series of six scrapbooks compiled to record the Capitol's 1872-1878 construction by historian and collector O.A. Jenison.

Image Courtesy of the Archives of Michigan

During this period, the following Adjutants, Quartermasters, and Inspectors General worked in this space.⁶

Adjutants General

1861-1887	John Robertson
1887-1891	Daniel E. Ainger
1891-1893	Judson S. Farrar
1893-1895	Charles L. Eaton
1895-1897	William S. Green
1897-1899	Edwin M. Irish
1898-1900	Fred H. Case
1901-1905	George H. Brown
1905-1911	William T. McGurrin

Quartermasters General

1877-1881	Lemuel Saviers
1881-1883	Nathan Church
1883-1885	William Shakespeare
1885-1887	George A. Hart
1887-1889	Sherman B. Daboll
1889-1891	George M. Devlin
1891-1893	Frederick B. Wood
1893-1895	George M. Devlin
1895-1897	James H. Kidd
1897-1899	William L. White
1900	O'Brien Atkinson
1901-1911	James H. Kidd

Inspectors General

1877-1881	Lewis W. Heath
1881-1883	William G. Gage
1883-1885	F.S. Hutchinson
1885-1887	J.H. Kidd
1887-1891	Frank D. Newberry
1891-1893	Henry B. Lothrop
1893-1895	Frank J. Haynes
1895-1897	Joseph Walsh
1897-1898	Fred H. Case
1898-1899	Arthur F. Marsh
1900-1905	Fred W. Green
1905-1911	Carl A. Wagner

The Attorney General Moves In

The early twentieth century brought dramatic change to this large and prominent office space. As the number of departments, boards, and commissioners working in the Capitol increased, political jockeying for more office space grew increasingly intense. A series of office shifts started in 1903 when the Legislature increased the size of the Supreme Court from five justices to eight.⁷ This meant that the justices, who had previously shared two of the four rooms located directly next to the Supreme Court Chamber, would need more space. After several attempts to provide the justices with additional office space in a series of failed Capitol additions, the court simply looked next door, to the offices occupied by the Attorney General, for room to grow.

Where, then, would the Attorney General go? In 1909, desperate for room, the Attorney General petitioned the State Board of Auditors to turn the women's washroom near the Senate gallery into offices for staff.⁸ This, however, was not enough. Within just a few years, the Attorney General's staff moved down to the first floor and into the Adjutant General's suite. As part of this arrangement, the Adjutant General and his staff were relocated to the State Office Block, an office building located on the southeast corner of Capitol Avenue and Allegan Street built to house some of the state offices during the construction of the current Capitol building.⁹

Initially, the proposal also included relocating the contents of the Military Museum, including the beloved flags and other artifacts. Following vocal protests by veterans' organizations, state officials quickly retreated from this plan.¹⁰ Under an eventual compromise, the Adjutant and Quartermaster Generals offices left, but the flags and the other military artifacts stayed in the Capitol. As a part of this deal, the flags were placed under the control of the Board of State Auditors, the entity that managed the Capitol, removing them from the jurisdiction of the Adjutant General.¹¹ The flags were displaced in new steel and glass cases in the Capitol's first floor rotunda, while other artifacts were moved to smaller cases located in the ground floor rotunda.

... the Adjutant General and his staff were relocated to the State Office Block ...

The Mid-Twentieth Century

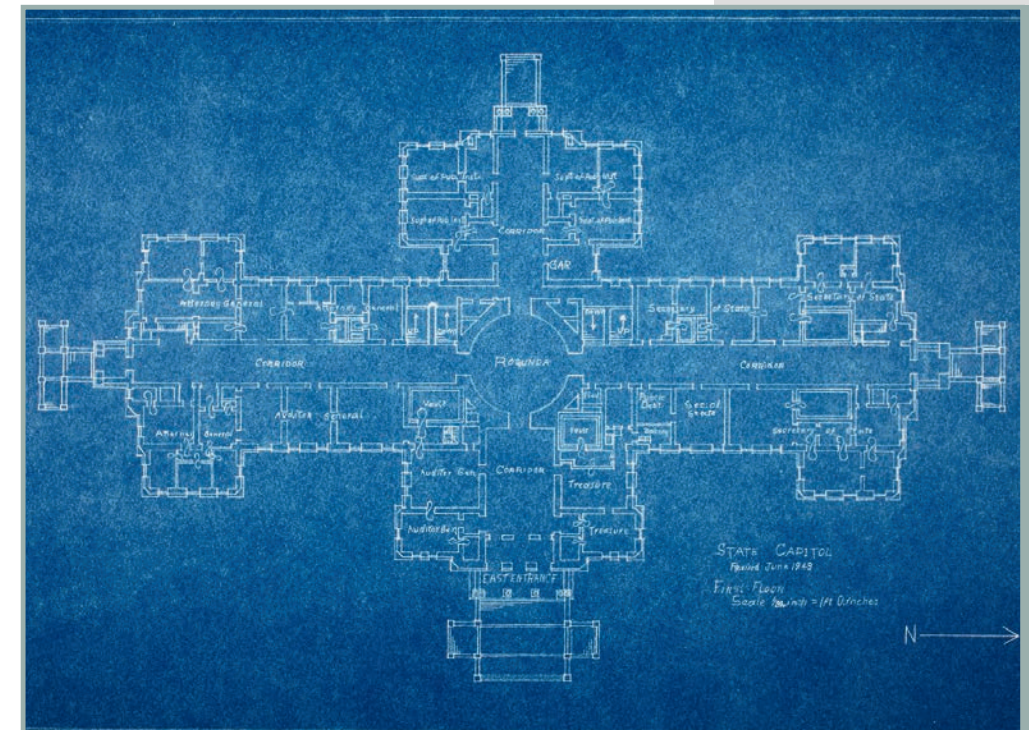
The next time the office appears in the known historical record is in 1941, when the State Treasurer's office surveyed the Capitol and inventoried the number of people, pieces of furniture, and machines in the building. The accompanying floor plan shows that the Attorney General had subdivided some of the rooms in the former Adjutant General's suite into smaller offices. This was necessary, no doubt, given the increasing number of people working in the space, and the evolving nature of its use. The spacious Military Museum was sectioned off into three different rooms, one of which became a corner office for the Attorney General himself. Other subdivisions were likely executed in order to better divide staff and allow for smoother organization. These subdivisions are evident in the new numbering system used to identify the spaces. The suite contained, beginning at the northernmost end, rooms 131, 131A, 132, 132A, 132B, 133, 134, 134A, and 134B.¹²

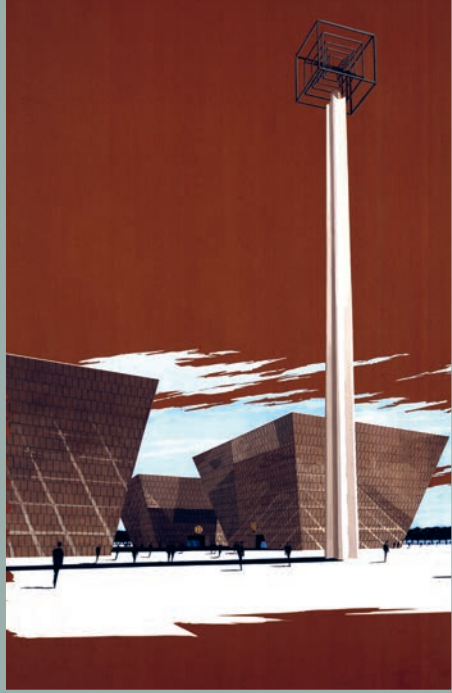
Yet this was still not enough. By 1941, the Attorney General had also managed to acquire the southernmost block of offices on the east side of the south corridor, identified as 135, 135A, 135B, 135C, and 136. In total, rooms 131-136 housed thirty-seven people, including twenty clerical staff, three people in reception, ten secretarial staff, two people in reference, the Attorney General, and the Assistant Attorney General. Together they used thirty desks and three tables, and stored documents and volumes in twenty-six files and over twenty-eight bookshelves. A glance at the remainder of the first floor reveals that only the powerful Secretary of State used more rooms and employed a larger staff.¹³

Two years later, in 1943, Treasury repeated the exercise. This time they included not only the number of people, pieces of furniture, and machines housed in this office in 1943, but also in 1940. As was true in many facets of state government during the war, the number of people working for the Attorney General temporarily declined. In 1940, the office housed thirty-seven staff, whereas only twenty-four people worked there by 1943. These shifts were probably due to male employees enlisting in the armed forces and women moving into defense-related industries. As might be expected, the number of desks in the office also decreased, whereas the number of tables and bookcases increased. And for the first time, the index stated that the office was home to seven machines.¹⁴

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





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

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 Attorney General continued to occupy the same rooms as in the previous decade. These spaces now bore new identifiers, ranging from 120-123B on the west side of the hall, and 124-125C on the east side of the hall. Interestingly, Page also noted that some of the rooms included mezzanines, or half-floors, another symptom of the Capitol's increasingly overcrowded conditions. These spaces correspond perfectly with earlier subdivisions listed on the 1941 plans, suggesting that these offices may have been overfloored at an earlier date.¹⁵

During this period, the following Attorneys General worked in this space.¹⁶

1910-1912	Franz C. Kuhn	1935-1936	David H. Crowley
1912	Roger I. Wykes	1937-1938	Raymond W. Starr
1913-1916	Grant Fellows	1939-1940	Thomas Read
1917-1920	Alexander J. Groesbeck	1941-1944	Herbert J. Rushton
1921-1922	Merlin Wiley	1945-1946	John R. Dethmers
1923-1926	Andrew B. Dougherty	1946	Foss O. Eldred
1926	Clare Retan	1947-1948	Eugene F. Black
1927-1928	William W. Potter	1949-1950	Stephen J. Roth
1928-1930	Wilber M. Brucker	1951-1954	Frank G. Millard
1931-1932	Paul W. Voorhies	1955-1957	Thomas M. Kavanagh
1933-1934	Patrick H. O'Brien	1958-1961	Paul L. Adams
1935	Harry S. Toy	1961-1998	Frank J. Kelley

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 reconfigure the Capitol's offices and committee rooms? The timing seemed ideal, as several of the building's longtime departmental occupants, including the Attorney General's office, were moving out of the Capitol and into other office buildings in downtown Lansing.

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

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.

Office Occupants

By the publication of the 1973-74 *Michigan Legislative Handbook*, this suite of rooms was being used as Senate member offices. A survey of the handbooks indicates that the following members and one committee 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.*¹⁷

1973-1974

Sen. Basil W. Brown	6th District	Highland Park	Rm. 120
Sen. Jerome T. Hart	34th District	Saginaw	Rm. 120
Sen. James D. Gray	27th District	Lansing	Rm. 120 MZ
Sen. John T. Bowman	26th District	Roseville	Rm. 121
Sen. John E. McCauley	11th District	Grosse Ile	Rm. 121
Sen. Charles N. Youngblood	2nd District	Detroit	Rm. 121
Sen. William S. Ballenger	30th District	Lansing	Rm. 122 MZ
Agriculture & Consumer Affairs Committee			Rm. 122 MZ
Health & Social Services Committee			Rm. 122 MZ
Sen. Robert VanderLaan	31st District	Grand Rapids	Rm. 123
Committee on Committees			Rm. 123

1975-1976

Sen. Bill S. Huffman	16th District	Madison Heights	Rm. 120
Sen. Gary G. Corbin	25th District	Clio	Rm. 120 MZ
Sen. James De Sana	11th District	Wyandotte	Rm. 120 MZ
Colleges and Universities Committee			Rm. 120 MZ
Corporations & Economic Development Committee			Rm. 121
Sen. John R. Otterbacher	32nd District	Grand Rapids	Rm. 121 MZ
Health, Social Services, & Retirement Committee			Rm. 121 MZ
Sen. Kerry Kramer	17th District	Pontiac	Rm. 122 MZ
Veterans' Affairs Committee			Rm. 122 MZ
Sen. John T. Bowman	27th District	Roseville	Rm. 123
Taxation Committee			Rm. 123

1977-1978

Sen. Bill S. Huffman Agriculture, Tourist Industry & Consumer Affairs Committee	16th District	Madison Heights	Rm. 120 Rm. 120
Sen. Arthur J. Miller Jr. Sen. Michael J. O'Brien State Affairs Committee	27th District 6th District	Warren Detroit	Rm. 120 MZ Rm. 121 Rm. 121
Sen. John R. Otterbacher Health, Social Services, & Retirement Committee	32nd District	Grand Rapids	Rm. 121 MZ Rm. 121 MZ
Sen. Kerry Kramer Sen. Daniel S. Cooper Commerce Committee	17th District 15th District	Pontiac Oak Park	Rm. 122 MZ Rm. 123 Rm. 123

1979-1980

Sen. James DeSana Sen. Michael J. O'Brien State & Veterans' Affairs Committee	11th District 6th District	Wyandotte Detroit	Rm. 120 Rm. 121 Rm. 121
Sen. John A. Welborn Sen. Stephen V. Monsma Sen. Joseph S. Mack Upper Peninsula Industrial & Economic Affairs Committee	21st District 32nd District 38th District	Kalamazoo Grand Rapids Ironwood	Rm. 121 MZ Rm. 122 MZ Rm. 123 Rm. 123

1981-1982

Sen. James DeSana Sen. Michael J. O'Brien State & Veterans' Affairs Committee	11th District 6th District	Wyandotte Detroit	Rm. 120 Rm. 121 Rm. 121
Sen. John A. Welborn Sen. Stephen V. Monsma Sen. Joseph S. Mack Upper Peninsula Industrial & Economic Affairs Committee	21st District 32nd District 38th District	Kalamazoo Grand Rapids Ironwood	Rm. 121 MZ Rm. 122 MZ Rm. 123 Rm. 123

1983-1984

Sen. James DeSana Appropriations and Retirement Committee	7th District	Wyandotte	Rm. 120 Rm. 120
Sen. Michael O'Brien State Affairs and Transportation Committee	5th District	Detroit	Rm. 121 Rm. 121
Sen. Joe Conroy Sen. R. Robert Geake Sen. Joseph S. Mack Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs Committee	25th District 6th District 38th District	Flint Northville Ironwood	Rm. 121 ½ MZ Rm. 122 ½ Rm. 123 Rm. 123

1985-1986

Sen. William A. Sederburg Higher Education and Technology Committee	24th District	East Lansing	Rm. 120 Rm. 120
Sen. Connie Binsfeld Sen. Gary G. Corbin Sen. Harmon Cropsey Local Government Committee	36th District 29th District 21st District	Maple City Clio Decatur	Rm. 121 Rm. 121 ½ MZ Rm. 122 ½ Rm. 122 ½
Sen. R. Robert Geake Senior Citizens and Social Services Committee	6th District	Northville	Rm. 123 Rm. 123

1987-1988

Sen. William A. Sederburg Health Policy Committee	24th District	East Lansing	Rm. 120 Rm. 120
Sen. Connie Binsfeld Sen. Michael J. O'Brien	36th District 5th District	Maple City Detroit	Rm. 121 Rm. 121 ½

1987-1988 (continued)

Sen. Harmon Cropsey Local Government and Veterans Committee	21st District	Decatur	Rm. 122 ½ Rm. 122 ½
Sen. R. Robert Geake	6th District	Northville	Rm. 123

1989-1990

Sen. William A. Sederburg Health Policy Committee	24th District	East Lansing	Rm. 120 Rm. 120
Sen. Connie Binsfeld Sen. Michael J. O'Brien Sen. Harmon Cropsey Local Government and Veterans Committee	36th District 5th District 21st District	Maple City Detroit Decatur	Rm. 121 Rm. 121 ½ Rm. 122 ½ Rm. 122 ½
Sen. R. Robert Geake	6th District	Northville	Rm. 123

1991-1992

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

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 Adjutants and Quartermasters Generals' suite.

Changes came swiftly. Overfloors and suspended ceilings were removed, returning the height of the rooms to their full twenty-two feet. Trades people rerouted and disguised ductwork, wiring, and sprinkler heads. Appropriate carpeting, designed using colors and patterns from the Victorian era, 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.



Several traditionally trained plasterers worked to repair and replaster the Capitol's walls, ceilings, cornices, and decorative arches during the restoration.

Image Courtesy of the Michigan State Capitol Collection



Michigan's Capitol contains approximately nine acres of hand-painted art.

When the restoration began in 1987, no one knew the extent of the art in the Capitol's offices. Decorative artists spent months investigating and revealing the original motifs and color schemes, all of which were carefully recorded and then repainted.

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.

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.



The Capitol's traditional woodgraining recipe calls for oil paints, umber pigment, and stale beer, which serves as the binder.

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 Senate Minority Leader. (No committees have met in this office space since the restoration.) 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. The Adjutants, Quartermasters, and Inspectors General's old suite was renumbered to S101 and S101A (commonly referred to as the Majority Leader's Conference Room since 1999), S103, S103A, S103B, S105, S107A, S107B, S107C, S109, and S109A, now the Senate Minority Leader's Office.

The following members have served in the Senate Minority Leader's Office since the Capitol's restoration.¹⁸

1993-1994	Sen. Arthur J. Miller Jr.	27th District	Warren	Rm. S105
1995-1996	Sen. Arthur J. Miller Jr.	10th District	Warren	Rm. S105
1997-1998	Sen. John D. Cherry Jr.	28th District	Clio	Rm. S105
1999-2000	Sen. John D. Cherry Jr.	28th District	Clio	Rm. S105
2001-2002	Sen. John D. Cherry Jr.	28th District	Clio	Rm. S105
2003-2004	Sen. Robert L. Emerson	27th District	Flint	Rm. S105
2005-2006	Sen. Robert L. Emerson	27th District	Flint	Rm. S105
2007-2008	Sen. Mark Schauer	19th District	Battle Creek	Rm. S105
2009-2010	Sen. Michael Prusi	38th District	Ishpeming	Rm. S105
2011-2012	Sen. Gretchen Whitmer	23rd District	East Lansing	Rm. S105
2013-2014	Sen. Gretchen Whitmer	23rd District	East Lansing	Rm. S105
2015-2016	Sen. Jim Ananich	27th District	Flint	Rm. S105
2017-2018	Sen. Jim Ananich	27th District	Flint	Rm. S105
2019-2020	Sen. Jim Ananich	27th District	Flint	Rm. S105



End Notes

- 1 *Journal of the House of Representatives of the State of Michigan 1887*. Vol. 1, Thorp and Godfrey, State Printers and Binders, 1887, p. 1050-1052.
- 2 *The Evening News*, January 2, 1879.
- 3 Robertson, Jno. *Michigan in the War*. W.S. George & Co., State Printers and Binders, 1882, p. 118.
- 4 “Michigan, Lansing, Proceedings of the One-Hundredth Day of the Session . . . Sights and Visitors at the State Capitol.” *Detroit Free Press*, 11 Apr. 1879, p. 7.
- 5 *Annual Report of the Board of State Auditors for the State of Michigan for the Year 1892*. Robert Smith & Co., State Printers and Binders, 1892, p. 516.
- 6 *Michigan Official Director and Legislative Manual for the Years 1913-1914*, p. 89-90.
- 7 Chardavoyne, David G., and Paul Moreno. *Michigan Supreme Court Historical Reference Guide*. 2nd ed., Michigan State University Press, 2015, p. 5.
- 8 *Annual Report of the Board of State Auditors for the Year Ending June 20, 1909*. Wynkoop Hallenbeck Crawford Co., State Printers, 1909, p. 9-10.
- 9 “New State Offices.” *Alma Record*, 8 December 1910.
- 10 “Stirs Up Hornet’s Nest in the G.A.R.” *Detroit Free Press*, December 8, 1910.
- 11 “No. 230. An Act to provide for the management and control of the military museum and old battle flags.” *Public Acts of the Legislature of the State of Michigan Passed at the Regular Session of 1911 Containing Concurrent Resolutions and Amendments to the Constitution*. Wynkoop Hallenbeck Crawford Co., State Printers, 1911, p. 399.
- 12 State of Michigan, Department of Treasury. “Capitol Space and Contents Survey,” 1941.
- 13 *Ibid.*
- 14 State of Michigan, Department of Treasury. “Capitol Space and Contents Survey,” 1943.
- 15 State of Michigan, Michigan State Administrative Board Buildings and Construction Division. “Capitol Survey,” George R. Page, 1957.
- 16 *Michigan Manual 1973-1974*, p. 89.
- 17 *Michigan Legislative Handbooks, 1973-1990*.
- 18 *Michigan Legislative Handbooks, 1993-2020*.



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