A History of The State Library and Offices H351



















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 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.

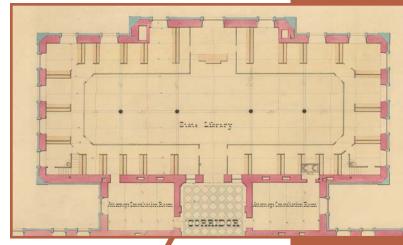
When the Capitol first opened in 1879, it was state government's only active office building, where all three branches of government were housed. The executive branch, including the Governor, State Treasurer, Secretary of State, State Librarian, Auditor General, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, 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.

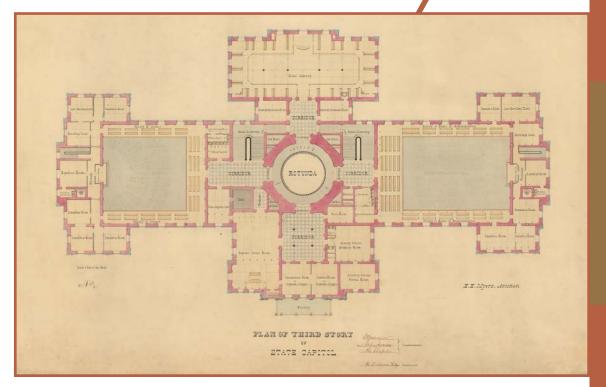
The State Library and the **Attorneys' Consulting Rooms**

The Capitol's west wing housed one of the largest and most architecturally interesting spaces in the building, the State Library. Founded in 1828 during the territorial period, the Library was home to roughly 30,000 volumes by the time it moved into the present Capitol building in 1878. Architect Elijah E. Myers provided the Library with a three story space capable of housing 100,000 volumes—a vast improvement over its previous crowded locations The books stood neatly on custom walnut shelves located on the main (second) floor and four perimeter galleries overhead. A wonderful description of the space appeared in the

1879-1880 Michigan Manual:

"The State Library occupies the second, third, and fourth floors, with two intermediate galleries, in the west wing of the capitol. The dimensions of the rooms and galleries are as follows: 100 feet in length, 45 feet wide at the center, and open from main floor to ceiling, a height of 59 feet. The galleries and upper floors are attained by two spiral stairways which occupy the northeast and southeast corner of the room. The first and second floors and the galleries are also connected by a book elevator.





The Capitol's original hand inked floor plans still survive in the Archives of Michigan. cases that linked the balconies together in the corners of the

Image Courtesy of the Archives



Michigan State Capitol Directory.

LEFT. RIGHT. First Floor. EAST CORRIDOR. Auditor General. State Treasurer. WEST CORRIDOR Superintendent of Public Instruction. Board of Health. ner of Railroads. SOUTH CORRIDOR. Inspector General. Adjutant General. Quartermaster General. Auditor General (Tax Department) Commissioner of Insurance, Sup't of State Property. NORTH CORRIDOR Board of Auditors, Secretary of State. Swamp Land Office. Second Floor. FAST CORRIDOR. Private Secretary. Post Office. Governor. WEST CORRIDOR, State Library. SOUTH CORRIDOR Senate Chamber. NORTH CORRIDOR. Representative Hall. Third Floor. EAST CORRIDOR.
Justices' Rooms. Attorney Gen'l. Justices' Room,
WEST CORRIDOR,
Law Liorary,
Consultation Room. SOUTH CORRIDOR.
Clerk of Supreme Court.
Senate Gallery NORTH CORRIDOR. Representative Hall Gallery. Fourth Floor. Pioneers' Amlience Room. Reporter Supreme Court. WEST CORRIDOR. Basement. EAST CORRIDOR.

Board of State Charities. Auditor's Working Rooms. Auditor's Working Rooms. State Armory Pomological Society. State Board of Agriculture. Military Store Rooms. With Compliments of A. L. Bouns, Superintendent of State Property

"The first two floors and the galleries contain 30 cases each, with shelf capacity for 80,000 volumes. The cases are arranged in pleasant, well-lighted alcoves. The first floor and gallery cases are provided with doors.

"The first floor is devoted to legislative, reference and miscellaneous works. The center of the room is inclosed [sic] with a neat iron balustrade running from the entrance door each way around the entire floor to the Librarian's desk, which occupies a point opposite the main entrance. Entrance to the alcoves is reached through eight iron gates. The Librarian's desk is a semi-hexagon. In the large alcove back of the Librarian's desk, is placed the working desk.

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

"The trusses in the second and third floors and the ceiling trusses are supported by four Corinthian pillars of three sections each: each section corresponding to the height of the story

in which it is placed. The base of each on the first floor is surrounded by a low desk 6x7 feet in size, furnished with extension drawers on either side to accommodate large volumes.

"The alcoves are furnished with desks, chairs, etc. for the use of those wishing a quiet place for study. The main floor is also furnished with a revolving book-case (for encyclopedias, dictionaries, etc.), tables and chairs for the use of visitors.

"The numerous pictures hanging from the balustrade surrounding the gallery and the beautiful linoleum on the floor add much to the beauty of the Library.

"The furniture and cases in the entire Library are made of black walnut, beautifully designed and highly finished. There are also three electric clocks and numerous call bells.

"The Library is well lighted and ventilated. There are three chandeliers in the ceiling containing 25 burners each, and there are also 200 other burners.

"The Library, when fully furnished, will contain not less than 100,000 volumes."

The first floor is devoted to legislative, reference and miscellaneous works.

The first person to work in this magnificent space was Harriet Augusta Edgerton Tenneythe first woman appointed a State Officer (the equivalent of a modern department director) in Michigan. Governor H.P. Baldwin named Tenney Michigan's new State Librarian in 1869, making her only the third female State Librarian in the country. Originally from Vermont, Harriet embraced her library duties and more than doubled the collection during her twenty-two-year tenure. A self-described lover of books, she conducted exchanges with libraries around the English-speaking world, penned the Library's first card catalogue, moved the entire collection twice, and, in 1874, convinced the Legislature to establish the Michigan Pioneer Society, which operated a small historical museum in rooms on the east side of the Capitol's fourth floor for many years.

The Library, when fully furnished, will contain not less than 100,000 volumes.

Perhaps not surprising, given its mission and nature, the Library left a substantial footprint in early Capitol era records. In addition to the previously quoted lengthy description, the 1879 *Michigan Manual* also contained a full list of rules for using the Library and its collection. Open six days a week, from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. during Legislative and Supreme Court sessions, the Library welcomed anyone, regardless of position or status, to visit, consult, and read the books and magazines held within, as long as the Librarian (or her assistant) was present.



A view of the new State Library from the second floor, circa 1879. Corinthian cast iron columns supported iron beams that ran through the open center of the room at the third and fourth floor levels. These beams supported the weight of the balconies and bookshelves bordering the room on the upper floors.

Image Courtesy of the Archives of Michigan

Only Legislative members and officers, State Officers and clerks, and Supreme Court Judges enjoyed the privilege of actually checking materials out—and even they had to promise to keep everything in Lansing, refrain from checking items out for other associates or friends, and return the volumes within two weeks. And, if anyone lost a book or failed to return it before the end of session, his or her pay would be docked to cover the cost of a replacement.²

The Library's third floor housed the State's Legal Collection. This portion of the Library was referred to as the Law Library, though it was, in fact, only one section of the larger State Library. In keeping with this arrangement, architect Myers placed two consultation rooms for attorneys on either side of the third floor entrance. Exactly which attorneys used the rooms remains unclear, as other documents of the period suggest that the Law Library was the frequent haunt of not only the Attorney General's staff, but also of local Lansing lawyers who were eager to use mid-Michigan's only significant legal collection.

Early Changes

As might be expected, changes in the Library, the Attorneys' Consulting Rooms, and the Capitol in general, 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 those in the west wing, was transformed by artists who stenciled, grained, marbled, and striped beautiful motifs on the walls and ceilings.

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. Not surprisingly, the survey reveals a law department packed with bookcases, caned and wooden chairs, tables, waste baskets, cuspidors (spittoons), pairs of steps, ink wells, and sponge and mucilage cups.³ (Mucilage was a type of adhesive.) Interestingly, the two Attorneys' Consultation Rooms are not listed in the inventory.

During this period, the following State Librarians worked in this west wing space:⁴

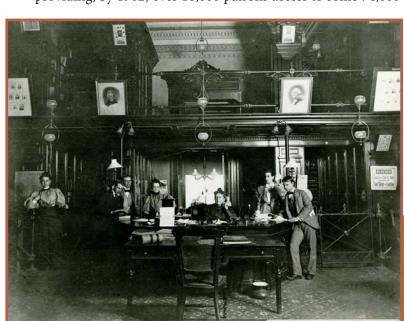
1869-1891 Harriet A. Tenney **1893-**

1893-1923 Mary C. Spencer

1891-1893 Margaret C. Calhoun

The Twentieth Century

The State Library experienced unprecedented growth under the visionary leadership of Mary C. Spencer, Tenney's protégé, who led the institution for thirty years. In 1895, Spencer successfully lobbied the Legislature to dramatically expand services across Michigan through two new programs: traveling libraries and associate libraries. Each traveling library consisted of an oak box filled with about fifty different titles. The State Library packed and shipped these crates across the state to rural communities, organizations, clubs, and schools until they were providing, by 1902, over 16,000 patrons access to some 74,000 books. The associate library program formed alliances



between the State Library and public libraries holding at least 1000 books across the state. Upon becoming an associate library, institutions gained the right to draw books from the State's collection (now fully open to the public), obtain training on basic library skills and services, and receive shipments of free state government documents.⁵ Over one hundred years later, the fruits of these programs still endure.

State Librarian Mary Spencer and her staff posed for this photograph in 1895. In addition to books, the Library also collected art, including prints and etchings of famous American and Michigan citizens and political figures.

Image Courtesy of the Archives of Michigan

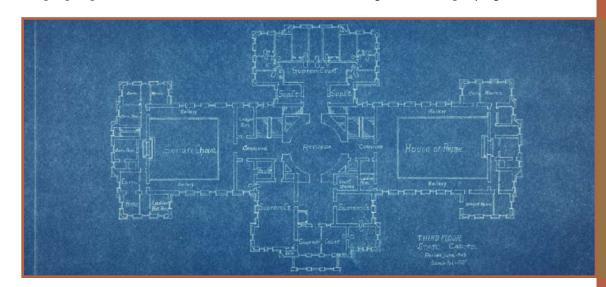
And as the programs grew, so did the collections. By the turn of the century new proposals for additions to the Capitol or the construction of a new state office building sprang up regularly—and nearly all of them included a larger home for the Library, which now contained about 300,000 volumes. Finally, in 1916, the Michigan Library Association issued a report that caught the attention of the legislature. "The committee made a tour of the capitol library yesterday,' said Mr. Ranck . . . 'and the horrible conditions that we find on the top floor are a menace to life, a menace to the valuable collection of historical books, and a menace to the entire property itself." Six years later, in 1922, the Library moved into a new, more accommodating—if less attractive—home in the aptly named State Office Building (now known as the Elliott-Larsen Office Building).

Over 100 hunderd years later, the fruits of these programs still endure.

Not everything related to the Library left the Capitol. The State Library was, after all, still tasked with serving the Legislature, the Supreme Court, and State Departments. Ignoring Spencer's pleas that the collection remain intact, the Legislature broke off the Legal and Legislative Reference Service divisions and relocated them from the third to the second floor, where they occupied all three rooms in the west wing.⁷

Upstairs, State Architect Leon Fry built solid floors across the old Library on the third and fourth floor levels and removed the third floor's mezzanine balcony. After spending many years crowded into the offices adjoining the courtroom (now the Senate Appropriations Committee Room) and, according to one newspaper article, "the attic," Supreme Court Justices moved eagerly into this new space. The fourth floor, the *Lansing State Journal* reported, "will provide a large general room for the accounting division force and also private offices for the officials connected with that work."

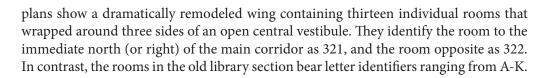
The next time these rooms appear in the known historical record is in 1941, when the State Treasurer's office surveyed the Capitol and inventoried the number of people, pieces of furniture, and machines in the building. The accompanying floor



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



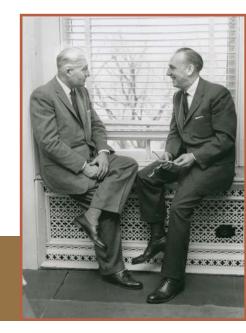


The key to understanding the actual use of these individual spaces lies in the accompanying inventory, which identifies each rooms, and the number of people, pieces of furniture, and machines housed in them. By this point, all eight justices and their personal staff occupied quarters in the west wing. Each Justice enjoyed his own private office, while their eight secretaries and clerical staffers shared five rooms—which still wasn't bad by Capitol standards. These spaces contained, on average, one or two desks and tables, no files or machines, and enough bookcases to fill each room. In contrast, the east wing offices adjoining the courtroom (now the Office of the Chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee) housed three court criers and six clerks using a similar number of desks and tables, one room full of files, one machine, and more bookcases.⁹

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. The assignments of the rooms remained consistent, though the number of people working in them decreased by one from sixteen to fifteen. The number of desks and tables increased marginally, bookcases continued to fill the rooms, and, for the first time, files and machines appear in the area.¹⁰

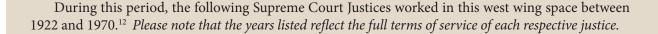
In 1957, architect George R. Page prepared another set of mid-twentieth-century drawings for the Buildings and Construction Division of the Michigan State Administrative Board. Page's drawings indicate that the tenancy of the west wing remained unchanged. The rooms now bore new identifiers, starting with room 306 on the north side of the corridor, and wrapping around counterclockwise to room 319 located on the southern end.¹¹

In 1957, architect George R. Page prepared another set of mid-twentieth-century drawings...



By the mid twentieth century only a few original decorative elements survived, such as the ornamental cast iron grates.

Image Courtesy of the Archives of Michigan



1938-1941

Thomas Francis McAllister

1896-1925

1090-1923	Joseph B. Moore	1930-1941	THOMAS PLANEIS MCAINSTEI
1910-1922	John Wesley Stone	1940-1956	Emerson Richard Boyles
1910-1928	John E. Bird	1941-1946	Raymond Wesley Starr
1911-1927	Joseph Hall Steere	1944-1956	Neil Edwin Reid
1917-1929	Grant Fellows	1945-1963	Leland Walker Carr
1919-1935	Nelson Sharpe	1946-1971	John Robert Dethmers
1919-1933	George M. Clark	1952-1953	Clark Jayno Adams
1921-1945	Howard Weist	1954-1971	Harry Francis Kelly
1922-1933	John Samuel McDonald	1955-1961	Talbot Smith
1926-1927	Ernest Albert Snow	1956-1973	Eugene Francis Black
1927-1928	Richard Charles Flannigan	1956-1960	John Donaldson Voelker
1928-1937	Louis Henry Fead	1956-1962	George Clifton Edwards Jr.
1928-1940	William W. Potter	1958-1975	Thomas Matthew Kavanagh
1927-1952	Walter Harper North	1960-1968	Theodore Souris
1929-1955	Henry Magnus Butzel	1961-1967	Otis Milton Smith
1933-1933	Thomas Addis Emmett Weadock	1962-1962	Paul Lincoln Adams
1934-1955	George Edward Bushnell	1963-1969	Michael Doyle O'Hara
1934-1957	Edward MacGlen Sharpe	1967-1973	Thomas E. Brennan
1935-1936	Harry S. Toy	1969-1985	Thomas Giles Kavanagh
1937-1943	Bert D. Chandler		

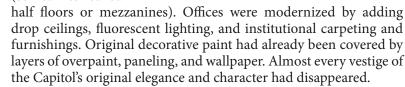
The Legislature Moves In

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 occupants, including the Attorney General, the Supreme Court, and the Law Library, were moving out of the Capitol and into other buildings in downtown Lansing.

Inspired, perhaps, in part by the old Library's mezzanine balconies, 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



By the early 1970s, the space that had formerly served as the State Library, and then the offices of the Supreme Court Justices, was overfloored and adapted into House Member offices. A survey of the Legislative Handbooks of this era suggests that the rooms were once again renumbered as 319 (probably the north room), 320 (a catchall for the rooms that bordered the central lobby), and 321 (for the south room). At any one time, at least ten legislators and additional staffers worked in this area.

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

Image Courtesy of the Michigan State Capitol Collection



Capitol in the 1960s contained three buildings-designed to house and symbolize the



Several of the plans considered for the new three branches of government—and a central

Image Courtesy of the Michigan State Capitol

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 Library.

Fully restoring the old Library, however, simply wasn't practical. After much study and discussion, preservation architects recommended retaining the floors at the second, third, and fourth levels, while removing all the associated overfloors. Next, the large spaces were subdivided into a limited number of offices and committee and meetings rooms that incorporated original architectural details, including the beautiful, structural cast iron Corinthian columns. Finally, decorative finishes originally found in the main portions of the Library were carried through all three levels, hinting at their shared past.

The restoration also brought with it the need to upgrade the Capitol's fire exits. Until this point, the building relied on unsightly and dangerous exterior fire escapes attached to the stonework. One of the goals of the res-

Michigan's Capitol contains approximately nine acres of *band* painted art.

toration 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. After carefully studying floor plans, the restoration team decided to place one of two new interior fire exits in the southernmost room of the west wing. In a rather remarkable feat of deconstruction, a vertical shaft was opened that extended from the top of the building to the bottom for the new stairs.

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

Image Courtesy of the Michigan State Capitol





Other changes came quickly. Tradespeople removed suspended ceilings and 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.

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.



Decorative painters from across the country and around the world labored to recreate acres of decorative motifs. Much of the Capitol's most elaborate art can be found on or near the ceilings, which emphasizes the impressive height of the rooms.

Images Courtesy of the Michigan State Capitol Commission

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.

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 Chair of the House Appropriations Committee. 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 the modern suite consists of rooms H351, H352A, H352B, H352C, H352D, H352E, H352F, and H352G.

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

1993-1994	Rep. William R. Keith Rep. Richard A. Young	17th District 16th District	Garden City Dearborn Heights	Rm. H351 Rm. H351
1995-1996	Rep. Walter DeLange Rep. Timothy L. Walberg	72nd District 57th District	Grand Rapids Tipton	Rm. H351 Rm. H351
1997-1998	Rep. Joseph Palamara Rep. Kirk A. Profit	24th District 54th District	Wyandotte Ypsilanti	Rm. H351 Rm. H351
1999-2000	Rep. Terry Geiger ¹³	87th District	Lake Odessa	Rm. H351
2001-2002	Rep. Marc Shulman	39th District	West Bloomfield	Rm. H351
2003-2004	Rep. Marc Shulman	39th District	West Bloomfield	Rm. H351
2005-2006	Rep. Scott Hummel	93rd District	DeWitt	Rm. H351
2007-2008	Rep. George Cushingberry Jr.	8th District	Detroit	Rm. H351
2009-2010	Rep. George Cushingberry Jr.	8th District	Detroit	Rm. H351
2011-2012	Rep. Chuck Moss	40th District	Birmingham	Rm. H351
2013-2014	Rep. Joe Haveman	90th District	Holland	Rm. H351
2015-2016	Rep. Al Pscholka	79th District	Stevensville	Rm. H351
2017-2018	Rep. Laura Cox	19th District	Livonia	Rm. H351
2019-2020	Rep. Shane Hernandez	83rd District	Port Huron	Rm. H351

End Notes

- 1 *The Red Book for the Thirtieth Legislature of the State of Michigan.* W.S. George & Co., State Printers and Binders, 1879, p. 373.
- 2 *The Red Book for the Thirtieth Legislature of the State of Michigan*. W.S. George & Co., State Printers and Binders, 1879, p. 374.
- 3 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. 517-518.
- 4 Bartlett, Bernadette M. "'Serving Michigan since 1828 . . . 'Michigan's state library." *Wayne State University*, 2000.
- 5 Bartlett, Bernadette M. "'Serving Michigan since 1828 . . . 'Michigan's state library." *Wayne State University*, 2000.
- 6 "State Library is Menace to Workers' Lives," Lansing State Journal, October 12, 1916.
- 7 "Work of Moving Nearly 180,000 Books in State Library Nearing Completion," *Lansing State Journal*, March 13, 1922.
- 8 Ibid.
- 9 State of Michigan, Department of Treasury. "Capitol Space and Contents Survey," 1941.
- 10 State of Michigan, Department of Treasury. "Capitol Space and Contents Survey," 1943.
- State of Michigan, Michigan State Administrative Board Buildings and Construction Division. "Capitol Survey," George R. Page, 1957.
- 12 Chardavoyne, David G., and Paul Moreno. *Michigan Supreme Court Historical Reference Guide*. Michigan State University Press, 2015.
- In 1999 the House of Representatives moved into the new Cora Reynolds Anderson House Office Building. That fall, both members working in H351 moved into their new HOB offices. Under the direction of Speaker Chuck Perricone, Terry Geiger moved into H351, which subsequently became the office of the Chair of the House Appropriations Committee. Per an interview with House Business Manager Doug Simon on August 21, 2018.







Capitol.Michigan.gov