

II. CONSTRUCTION HISTORY

The Utah State Capitol is a powerful symbol of government, community and tradition. Strategically located on the State Street hilltop, it commands Utah's most populated valley and overlooks its principal city. Architecturally, its Neo-Classical dome is a familiar symbol of American democracy. For centuries it has inspired the minds and hearts of freedom-loving American leaders and citizens.

STATE CAPITOLS: AN EVOLVING TYPE

In his monumental work, *Temples of Democracy*, Henry-Russell Hitchcock wrote that "Thomas Jefferson's [1800] design for the Virginia Capitol was the world's first adaptation of an ancient Roman temple to a complex modern purpose." Early on, the colonnade, Greek pediment, symmetrical plan and overall formality of design and concept became the basic architectural vocabulary of democratic government. Although not a literal lifting from Greek prototypes, each new combination of parts helped the vision of republican government to live in concrete form. The capitol dome had its antecedents in the Renaissance, in particular Bramante's Tempietto located in Rome. Intended to be a demonstration of the highest ideals of Renaissance architecture, Tempietto's elegant proportions and harmony of design, colonnaded base and ribbed dome topped by a distinctive lantern were imitated by countless architects in Bramante's wake. Superimposed upon the horizontal, rectangular massing used frequently in state capitol buildings, the dome is reminiscent of the philosophical and artistic legacy it holds.²

UTAH FIGHTS FOR STATEHOOD, BUT NOT FOR A STATE HOUSE

When the Mormon pioneers first came to the Great Basin in 1847, they based their settlement efforts on information gathered by explorer John C. Fremont as well as by fur trappers, mountain men, and other travelers who had moved through the region. Within two decades they had colonized more than three hundred towns laid out in orderly, gridded plans, irrigated fields and built sturdy homes lining streets on lots near town centers. Organized first as the "State of Deseret," Utah originally included nearly all of Utah and Nevada and parts of California, Arizona, Idaho, Colorado and Wyoming. Brigham Young was the first governor as well as church president of this Great Basin empire.



UTAH STATE CAPITOL SOUTH ELEVATION 1916

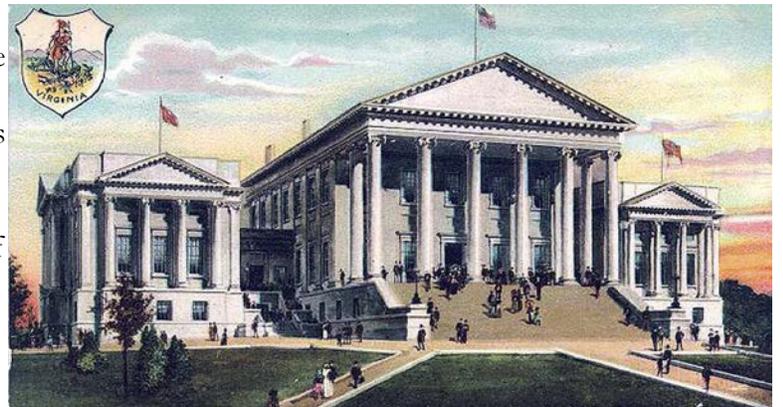


MINNESOTA STATE CAPITOL, CASS GILBERT, ARCHITECT, 1905

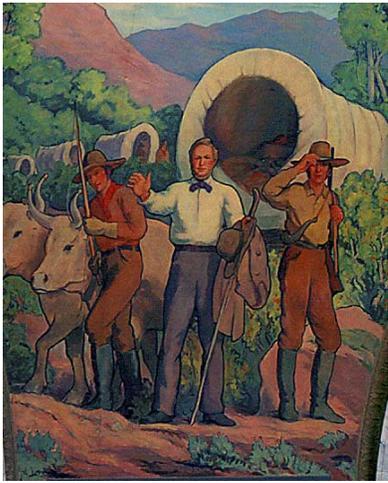


RHODE ISLAND STATE CAPITOL, MCKIM, MEAD & WHITE, ARCHITECTS, 1895-1903

TEMPIETTO, BRAMANTE 1502



VIRGINIA STATE CAPITOL, THOMAS JEFFERSON, 1800



ROTUNDA MURAL OF BRIGHAM YOUNG

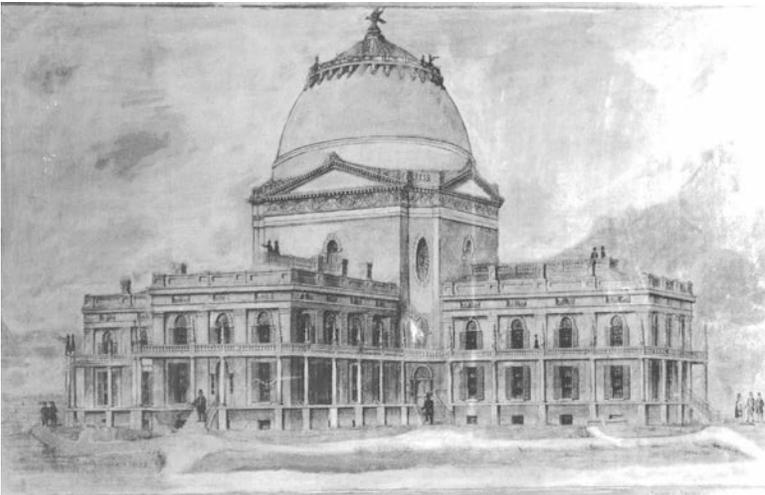
However, the United States Congress rejected the State of Deseret's petition for admission to the Union as a state. Instead, in 1850 the Congress created the Territory of Utah. The territorial assembly met in various buildings until they had a capitol building.

The first territorial legislature created Millard County and designated Fillmore City as the capital because of its central location in the would-be state. LDS church architect, Truman O. Angell designed the classically detailed capitol building, funded with an appropriation of \$20,000 from the United States Congress. Although limited by available materials, tools and technologies, the structure's stone and timbers were machine-sawn and trimmed as sophisticatedly as any Salt Lake City building of the period. Because of the amount of building being done in the territory, skilled craftsmen were limited. And regardless of subsequent requests for further funding, none was forthcoming. Therefore, only

one wing of the projected capitol structure was ever completed. As built in 1855, the finished capitol was a rectangular structure, rising 43 feet to the top of a parapet-concealed hip roof.

The Fifth Legislative Assembly was the only full session held in Fillmore. In 1856, the legislature designated Salt Lake City the territorial capital. Thus, territorial offices, both executive and judicial, were only briefly located in the Fillmore capitol. Despite Brigham Young's ambitions for central Utah, population growth and development there languished and it never became a prosperous center of agriculture or industry. Eventually the building

became the property of Fillmore City and locals used it as a school, jail, office building and even for religious services. The state assumed ownership of the historic building in 1927. Since that time it has been a history museum depicting aspects of the state's pioneer past.



TRUMAN ANGELL'S DESIGN FOR THE FILLMORE CAPITOL

Largely in reaction to evidence that the Mormons were practicing polygamy, but also in response to other tensions between local leaders and federal officials, President James Buchanan dismissed Young as governor and sent troops to Utah to establish a federal presence in the area. Young's replacement, Alfred Cumming assumed his office in 1860.



FILLMORE CAPITOL

The Salt Lake City Hall was first erected in 1866 at 110 South and State Street and then dismantled, moved and renamed The Council Hall in 1959-60. It is now located due south of the State Capitol. For a time the City Hall accommodated the Territorial Legislature and Salt Lake City's government as well as ecclesiastical activities of the Mormon church. Today the Council Hall houses the Utah Travel Council and the Utah Tourism and Recreation Information Center. The nomadic capitol was also located temporarily in the original Salt Lake County Courthouse, and Social Hall, which all formed backdrops to legislative action for the new territory.

On February 28, 1888, Heber J. Grant and a group of local business leaders proposed that Salt Lake City donate twenty acres of land to the state for a state capitol. The city council considered his proposal and by resolution responded on 1 March 1888, giving Utah Territory the land, a tract consisting of 19.46 acres north of the intersection of State and Second North Streets. The state made official receipt of the land on March 5 and Arsenal Hill became known from that time forward as Capitol Hill.³ Not long after, also in March, a special Capitol Commission selected architect E.E. Myers of Detroit, Michigan to draw plans and estimate construction costs. These plans were shipped to the Capitol Commission in 1891(their present location is unknown). Myers was the architect of three earlier state capitols--Missouri in 1873, Texas in 1882, and Colorado in 1886. Although the legislature had authorized \$120,000 to begin the work, it rejected his estimate of \$1,000,000 for construction and the project was postponed.



OLD CITY HALL, NOW CALLED THE COUNCIL HALL

By the time the next legislative session convened, the United States Congress had passed an Enabling Act which granted authority for a state constitutional convention in preparation for admittance into the Union. The fight to achieve statehood took precedence over the capitol building project.⁴ The State government was housed in several locations including the Salt Lake City and County Building from 1896 to 1916.

After numerous failed attempts at becoming a state, the state constitutional convention framed a successful bid for statehood in 1895. Utah became the forty-fifth state on 4 January 1896. Salt Lake City was named the state capital and Heber M. Wells the State of Utah's first governor. But it was 1907 before Governor John C. Cutler requested that the legislature take action to build a capitol for the new state.⁵ It was not until two years later that then-Governor William Spry sent a proposal to the legislature to create a commission to select a design for a "suitable State Capitol."⁶ During that same legislative session, the group produced an appropriation bill to fund construction. The appropriation hinged on a popular vote needed to pass a one-mill property tax. Recognizing that in 1909 only Utah, Louisiana and North Dakota were without state capitols, Governor Spry proposed the levy to fund Utah's building. Voters rejected the idea on June 8 in a special election. The project then stood at a standstill until the next year.⁷ To bolster support, Spry sent a special message to the legislature on the subject of the capitol entitled, "An act creating a state board to be known as the 'Capitol Commission,' fixing the manner of appointment and the compensation of the members thereof; prescribing their powers and duties, and authorizing the erection of a state capitol."⁸

Three other bills which related to the capitol project were passed during that session of 1909. The first concerned the refund of the outstanding bonds of the Territory issued in 1892 "at the maturity thereof, by issuing in lieu thereof negotiable coupon bonds and directing that all moneys held in the redemption fund for the redemption of said bond issue maturing in 1912 be converted into the state treasury and devoted exclusively to the erection of a state capitol."⁹ The second bill required a special election to be held on the first Monday in June 1909 to determine the question of whether a tax should be levied upon all the taxable property of the state to raise money for the capitol. Finally, the third authorized the state Board of Loan commissioners to negotiate a loan of \$200,000 and to issue bonds to raise funds for the construction of the capitol.¹⁰

A measure passed which secured funds as well as issuing a resolution to propose an amendment to the state constitution. The amendment authorized the issuance of bonds in the amount of one and a half percent of the assessed valuation of the state for the state capitol. This resolution was passed and adopted in a general election

Lake Trail
 TAH, FRIDAY MORNING, MARCH 10, 1911.

MEXICAN

\$798,546 COMES TO UTAH
MRS. HARRIMAN PAYS TAX



Widow of Great Financier Sends Check, Complying With Inheritance Law.

CITY GENERAL SUCCEEDS

Legislative Class Recommends Money to Be Used to Build State Capitol.



Three quarters of a million dollars of the Harriman inheritance tax will go toward the construction of a new state capitol for Utah. This was decided upon at the caucus of the Republican members of the state legislature held in the state chamber Thursday night.

Governor William Bryer made the announcement at the caucus that the Harriman check for \$798,546 in payment of the inheritance tax, had been received by the state. The governor suggested that \$750,000 of this amount be appropriated for the construction of the new state capitol, and that the remaining \$48,546 be available for general appropriation.

The announcement of the governor was received with enthusiasm by the members of the caucus. On the governor's statement that if the \$750,000 were made available for the construction of the state capitol it would not be necessary to dispose of any of the bonds of the million-dollar bond issue for two years, the caucus voted to appropriate the three-quarters of a million for the state capitol.

Mrs. Mary W. Harriman and Attorney General A. B. Hanna.

NEWSPAPER
 ARTICLE ABOUT
 HARRIMAN
 INHERITANCE TAX

of 1910. The next year a bill was passed based on that vote. As it was originally proposed, the bond issue would be \$1,305,000, which was the amount available under the constitution. However, the amount was reduced to \$1,000,000 after it passed both houses.¹¹

In 1911 the legislature passed a bill authorizing the state Board of Loan commissioners to provide for and negotiate a loan of \$1,000,000 and to issue bonds to fund the capitol. The state capitol bill finally became law in that year and the board of commissioners was authorized to issue the bonds. After passing both houses and being signed by the governor, the bill ended a two year campaign for a new state capitol.

Unforeseen good fortune bolstered these efforts. Utah in general had benefited tremendously from the coming of the railroad in May 1869, but state government benefitted in unpredictable ways as well. The president of the Union Pacific Railroad, Edward Harriman, was an extraordinarily wealthy man. When the transcontinental railroad was completed at Promontory, Utah, Harriman invested \$3.5 million into an electrified trolley car system. Salt Lake City's Trolley Square, which in the mid-1960s was renovated into a shopping and entertainment center, was originally the trolley car barn complex. When Harriman died in 1910, the law required a five percent Utah inheritance tax which totaled \$798,546. This was the boost the state needed. The Utah State Legislature matched these unexpected funds with the aforementioned \$1,000,000 bond, and with this total funding, the capitol's future was secured.

No. 119

New York March 1 1911

Guaranty Trust Company of New York
 28 NASSAU STREET

Pay to the order of David Mattson, Treasurer State of Utah

Seven hundred twenty eight thousand five hundred forty six ⁸⁵/₁₀₀ Dollars

\$798,546. ⁸⁵/₁₀₀

Mary W. Harriman
 EXECUTRIX

Estate of E. H. Harriman

INHERITANCE TAX PAYMENT CHECK FROM MRS HARRIMAN