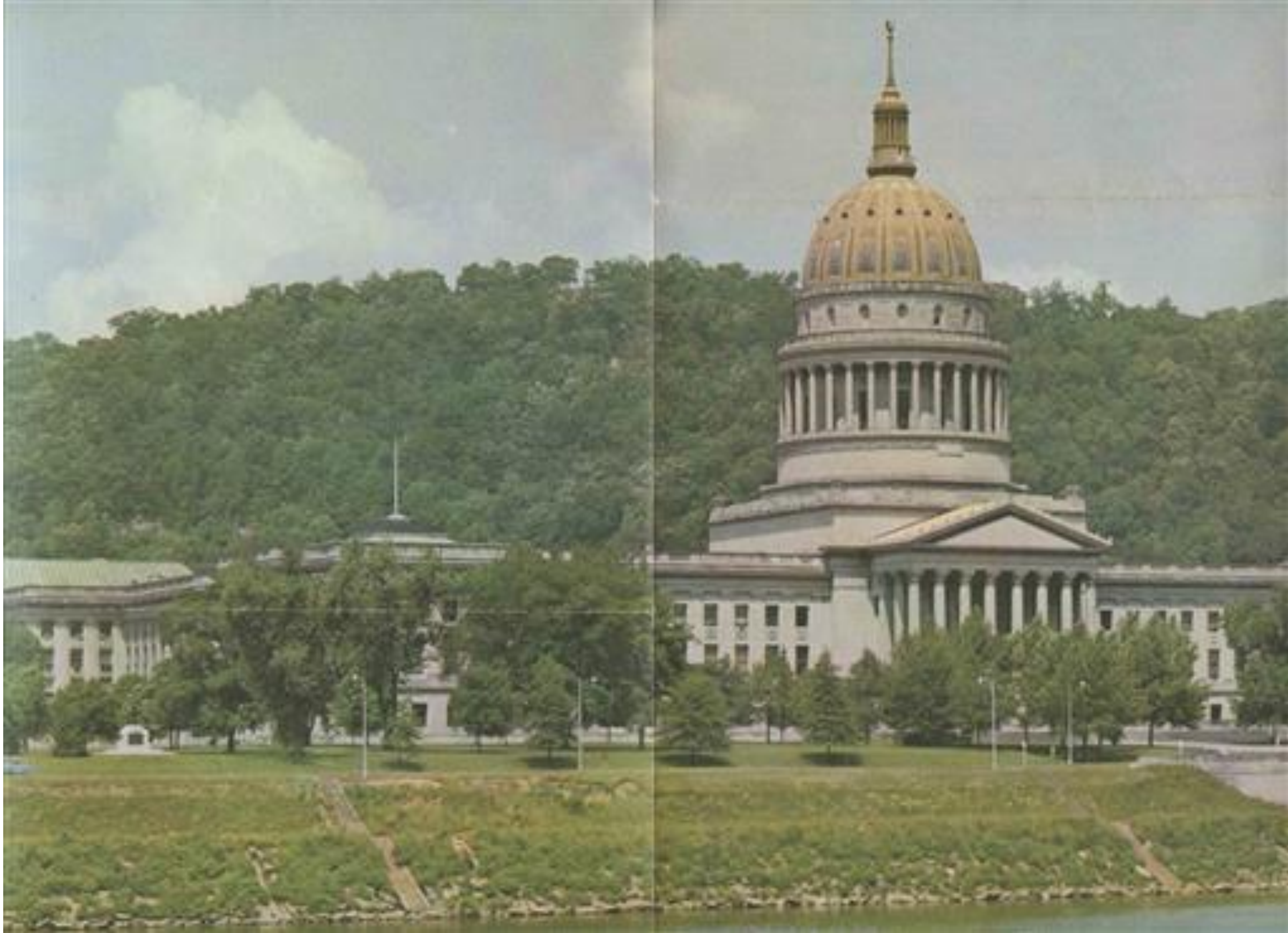


West Virginia Capitol Brochure - History - Facts - Mansion - Museum – (1950's)



History of the Capitol

The massive columns and imposing chambers of West Virginia's Capitol seem today to form a perfect picture of permanence and stability. As if immune to time and weather, the giant structure stands erect and stately on the banks of the Kanawha River.

It is difficult to conceive that at one time, when West Virginia was in its infancy, the seat of government moved at intervals between Wheeling and Charleston, in opposite ends of the State.

West Virginia's first Capitol was the Customhouse on Market Street in Wheeling. It was here that the Constitutional Convention was held in November, 1861. This building also served as headquarters for Francis H. Pierpont's Restored Government of Virginia until 1863, when the new State of West Virginia was admitted into the Union.

The Capital's travels began in 1870, seven years after the first Governor was inaugurated in Wheeling. The State Legislature designated that Charleston would become the Capital, effective April 1, 1870. Citizens of the newly chosen seat of government provided a packet for the transportation of State officials and archives down the Ohio River and east on the Kanawha River to Charleston. Offices were established in churches, schools and other buildings while a new three-story Capitol was being completed.

Charleston remained the Capital for five years, until the 1875 Legislature voted for a temporary return to Wheeling. There, offices were located in the Linsly Building for a time, and then in an \$80,000 stone building, donated by grateful Wheeling citizens.

However, the 1877 Legislature decided to abolish the "Capitol on Wheels" once and for all. An election was ordered to be held on August 7 of that year to enable the citizens of West Virginia to select the site for their permanent Capital. Clarksburg, Martinsburg and Charleston were the leaders in the voting, and Charleston won.

A \$390,000 Capitol was opened on May 1, 1885. State officials and their staffs had been transferred by two steamers and a barge from Wheeling. The new Statehouse served for 36 years until its destruction by fire on January 3, 1921. A so-called "Pasteboard Capitol" was completed the following February, and was used until, on March 2, 1927, it too was destroyed by fire.

In make-shift quarters once again, the Legislature authorized construction of the present Capitol on the north bank of the Kanawha River. This building, of stone and marble, was designed by Cass Gilbert during a period of resurgent classical influence, and is one of the world's superb examples of Italian Renaissance architecture. It was completed in 1932 at a cost of \$10,000,000, and has been called one of the most beautiful of the State Capitols.

A Message from the Governor

To all those who visit West Virginia's beautiful gold-domed Capitol, I extend a cordial welcome.

The magnificent main building with its fountain and circle area, and the two modern State Office Buildings, are leading tourist attractions in our State. West Virginians have every right to point with pride to their seat of government.



For those of you who have been here before, you may notice certain improvements. We continually strive to enhance the beauty of the buildings and grounds in order that we may retain the opinion of so many who say, "West Virginia possesses one of the most picturesque Capitols in the world."

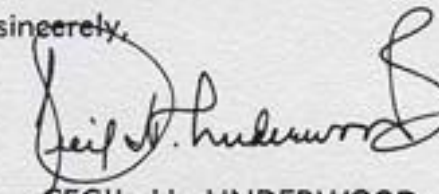
While you are here, I hope you will take advantage of the guided tour service we offer. Every significant aspect of the Capitol will be described and explained by competent guides. I would also recommend a visit to our State Museum for those who are interested in the history and culture of a bygone era.

To those who are visiting us from other states, it is my wish that your period of travel through the Mountain State will be sufficiently long to permit you to enjoy other outstanding places of interest. Throughout the State you will see impressive examples of our industrial progress and recreational development.

In a grandeur of mountainous beauty, West Virginia's State Parks and Forests, private tourist areas and numerous historic attractions make for an ideal vacation for the entire family.

I earnestly hope your visit to the Capitol is a pleasant one. You will be more than welcome each time you decide to return.

Very sincerely,


CECIL H. UNDERWOOD
Governor

Interesting Facts About West Virginia's Capitol

Architect—Cass Gilbert

Completed—February, 1932

Cost—\$10,000,000

Ground occupied—16 acres

Office space—333 rooms

Legislative chambers—Second floor, Main unit

Floor space—535,000 square feet

Outside walls—Buff limestone; 314,000 cubic feet, or over 700 carloads

Steel construction—4,640 tons, or 160 carloads

Interior—Imperial Danby marble

Dome—300 feet high, illuminated nightly

Chandelier in dome—Weight 4,000 pounds; 15,000 candle power; 180 feet from floor; gold chain 54 feet long; lowered by brake mechanism at a set speed, requiring 3½ hours to lower or return to stationary position

Chandeliers in House and Senate chambers—10,000 separate pieces of rock crystal

Rug in Governor's reception room—26 by 60 feet; weight 1,809 pounds

Columns in foyers—Solid marble; 34 tons each

Columns in porticos—86 tons each

Bronze doors on porticos—2,800 pounds each

Floors—White Vermont marble and Italian Travertine marble

Basement—Runs length of building; about 530 feet in length with two freight rooms measuring 90 by 70 feet each

Carving in halls leading to entrances to Senate and House chambers represents some of the state's history and progress. Subjects included are agriculture, art, education, engineering, Indian lore, justice, mining, patriotism, peace and religion

Carved heads on exterior walls represent these ancient Greek Gods: Ceres, Fortuna, Hercules, Juno, Jupiter, Mercury, Minerva, Neptune, Perseus, Prometheus, Vesta and Vulcan

The Capitol is 50 feet above the channel stage of the Kanawha River

The site of the Capitol is that of old Fort Clendenin—named for the one-time owner and first settler on the present site of Charleston

Cass Gilbert, designer of the Capitol, describes it as follows:

"The building is classic in style and what might be correctly termed as Renaissance; the architectural forms are Roman with the single exception of the Doric vestibule at the ground floor on the river side of the building.

"The porticos and colonnades of the exterior are distinctly Roman, the main porticos being of Roman Corinthian order, which was, of course, indirectly derived from the Greek precedent, and the other porticos or colonnades are of a modified Roman Doric type. The exterior of the dome closely follows the Roman precedent, although I know of none as high in proportion among Roman examples.

"The bell of the dome, which is of metal, was studied from certain Renaissance domes in Europe, of which there are a great number."



Governor's Mansion

The home of West Virginia's chief executives, at the corner of Kanawha Boulevard and Duffy Street, was rushed to completion in 1925 after it had been designed the previous year by Walter F. Martens. Outgoing Governor Ephraim F. Morgan, moved his family into the new mansion just one week before his term expired, thereby becoming its first resident.

The basic design for the building, located just west of the Capitol and overlooking the Kanawha River, follows the pattern of old plantation homes. It is of Georgian Colonial architecture, and the main entrance is set underneath a high portico supported by white Corinthian columns.

English living of the 18th Century has been authentically reproduced in the furnishings and decorations of the mansion. Crystal chandeliers and Chippendale couches, so typical of the reign of George I, keynote the elegant reception room.

The grandeur reflected in the ballroom's rich French decor would make even Marie Antoinette feel at home. The State dining room, scene of many important social occasions, has served former presidents and other distinguished guests from the world of government, arts and sports. The banquet table can seat up to 50 guests.

The stateliness of 18th Century architecture reflects the spaciousness of the main entrance hallway. Here, the highlight is the beautiful pair of wide, polished mahogany staircases leading to the Governor's private apartment on the second floor.

Three of the mansion's eight bedrooms, a small sitting room, a family room, kitchenette and bath make up the living quarters of the chief executive and his family.

Past Governors

Name and County	Term of Office
Arthur Ingram Boreman (R), Wood	June 20, 1863-Feb. 25, 1869
Daniel D. T. Farnsworth (R), Upshur	Feb. 26, 1869-Mar. 3, 1869
William Erskine Stevenson (R), Wood	Mar. 4, 1869-Mar. 3, 1871
John Jeremiah Jacob (D), Hampshire	Mar. 4, 1871-Mar. 3, 1877
Henry Mason Mathews (D), Greenbrier	Mar. 4, 1877-Mar. 3, 1881
Jacob Beeson Jackson (D), Wood	Mar. 4, 1881-Mar. 3, 1885
Emanuel Willis Wilson (D), Kanawha	Mar. 4, 1885-Feb. 5, 1890
Aretas Brooks Fleming (D), Marion	Feb. 6, 1890-Mar. 3, 1893
William A. MacCorkle (D), Kanawha	Mar. 4, 1893-Mar. 3, 1897
George Wesley Atkinson (R), Ohio	Mar. 4, 1897-Mar. 3, 1901
Albert Blakeslee White (R), Wood	Mar. 4, 1901-Mar. 3, 1905
William M. O. Dawson (R), Preston	Mar. 4, 1905-Mar. 3, 1909
William E. Glasscock (R), Monongalia	Mar. 4, 1909-Mar. 3, 1913
Henry Drury Hatfield (R), McDowell	Mar. 4, 1913-Mar. 2, 1917
John Jacob Cornwell (D), Hampshire	Mar. 3, 1917-Mar. 3, 1921
Ephraim Franklin Morgan (R), Marion	Mar. 4, 1921-Mar. 3, 1925
Howard Mason Gore (R), Harrison	Mar. 4, 1925-Mar. 3, 1929
William Gustavus Conley (R), Kanawha	Mar. 4, 1929-Mar. 3, 1933
Herman Guy Kump (D), Randolph	Mar. 4, 1933-Jan. 17, 1937
Homer Adams Holt (D), Fayette	Jan. 18, 1937-Jan. 12, 1941
Matthew Mansfield Neely (D), Marion	Jan. 13, 1941-Jan. 14, 1945
Clarence W. Meadows (D), Raleigh	Jan. 15, 1945-Jan. 16, 1949
Okey L. Patteson (D), Fayette	Jan. 17, 1949-Jan. 18, 1953
William C. Marland (D), Wyoming	Jan. 19, 1953-Jan. 13, 1957
Cecil H. Underwood (R), Tyler	Jan. 14, 1957-

State Office Buildings



Pictured above is the first State Office Building constructed adjacent to the Capitol. Until its completion there had been a great need for space to house State government departments and agencies in a central location near the Capitol.

This is an eight-story building located on the corner of Duffy and Washington Streets. Completed in 1952, this building has 275 rooms and 200,000 square feet of office space. The exterior is constructed primarily of Indiana limestone.



Pictured to the left is the second of the State Office Buildings used in housing State government departments and agencies. It is located on California Avenue, adjacent to the Capitol.

A seven-story building, it was completed in 1954. It has 118 rooms with 71,195 sq. ft. of floor space. The exterior of this building is also constructed primarily of Indiana limestone.

State Museum

Located in the State Capitol, directly under the executive suite, the State Museum is probably the best known of West Virginia's museums. Under the direction of the State's Historian and Archivist, the museum is illustrative of the history and science of the State and the social conditions and life of its people, past and present.

Included in the collections are several industrial exhibits, one of which contains relics of mine disasters. Implements used by the Indians and Mound Builders of a bygone era are displayed in several glass cases. In addition, there are mounted native birds and animals and a number of native fossils.

Other popular displays include Daniel Boone's rifle, Lewis Wetzel's rifle, Aaron Burr's spectacles, a model of James Rumsey's steamboat and a model of the Blennerhassett mansion.

The museum is open daily for the convenience of visitors.