

SELF-GUIDED WALKING TOUR

MISSISSIPPI STATE CAPITOL

---A National Historic Landmark---

THE HONORABLE DELBERT HOSEMANN
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

THE HONORABLE TATE REEVES
GOVERNOR

THE HONORABLE PHILIP GUNN
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE

- BUILT:** 1901-1903, in 28 months, on the site of the old State Penitentiary.
- INITIAL COST:** \$1,093,641. Built with funds awarded to the State of Mississippi from a lawsuit against the Illinois Central Railroad for back taxes. The decision from the lower courts was upheld by the United States Supreme Court.
- ARCHITECT:** Theodore C. Link of St. Louis, Missouri.
- ARCHITECTURE:** Beaux Arts style, popular in the United States from the 1890s to the 1920s. The Oxford Dictionary of Architecture defines it as “scholarly, self-confident, grand, and lush.”
- GOVERNMENT:** The Legislative Branch and the Governor’s legislative session offices are located in the Capitol. The Governor’s full-time office is in the Walter Sillers Building, and the Judicial Branch is located in the Carroll Gartin Justice Building, both located to the north across High Street.
- EXTERIOR:** The exterior walls consist of Indiana limestone resting on a base of Georgia granite. The main dome is a glazed terra cotta drum surrounded by a limestone colonnade. The eagle is solid copper covered in gold leaf. It is 8 feet high with a wingspan of 15 feet.
- RESTORED:** 1979-1982, at a cost of \$19 million.
- LIGHTS:** 4,750 original light fixtures; 750 of which are in the Rotunda.
- FIRST FLOOR:** Hall of Governors. The portraits are hung in the order in which the governors served.
- SECOND FLOOR:** The original Supreme Court Chamber is at the end of the east corridor. It now serves as a Senate Committee room and is open to the public when not in use. A bust of former Lt. Governor Evelyn Gandy, the first woman to hold that office and multiple statewide elected offices, stands inside, and a restored 1899 lithograph of all the Supreme Court justices hangs on the opposite wall. Among the justices pictured is L.Q.C. Lamar, the only Mississippian to serve on the United States Supreme Court. The former State Library at the end of the west corridor now holds offices and committee rooms for the House of Representatives.
[Please view former State Library from corridor only.]
- ROTUNDA:** The walls are Italian white marble with Belgian black marble molding. The eight columns are man-made art marble called scagliola (pronounced skal-yoh-luh). The blindfolded Lady Justice represents fairness and honesty in law. The balustrades are cast iron accented with architectural motifs. In the dome, four painted medallions portray scenes from Mississippi’s history.

- GRAND STAIRCASE:** The staircase is typical in Beaux Arts-style buildings, but the use of decorative consoles and corbels to form flanking walls is unique. On the landing, three stained glass windows represent the Native American, Mother Mississippi, and the Pioneer Settler. All of the stained glass and leaded glass in the building was crafted by the Louis J. Millet Company of Chicago.
- THIRD FLOOR:** Houses the offices of the Speaker of the House, the Governor, the Lt. Governor, and House and Senate Chambers. The Lt. Governor presides over the Senate and the Speaker over the House of Representatives.
- SENATE:** The Senate Chamber is at the end of the east corridor. In the foyer are three arched, leaded glass windows positioned above a long oak bench, all original to the building. Inside the chamber, the supporting columns, wall panels, and wainscoting are composed of several types of scagliola. The flowing lines of the Art Nouveau design are evident in the stained glass of the dome, and near its most interior circle of lights is the inscription: “The people’s government – made for the people – made by the people – and answerable to the people.” The members’ desks were replaced in the 1940s. The Mississippi Senate has 52 members.
[Please refrain from the desk or podium areas while inside the Chamber.]
- HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:** The House Chamber is at the end of the west corridor. The walls of the vestibule are of Tennessee pink marble with the base and trim of Tennessee Knoxville marble. The walls of the chamber are Sienna scagliola with a wainscoting of Belgian black marble. The members’ desks are original. The original rostrum, clerk’s desk, and well are embellished with fruit carvings, flutings, and moldings. The State’s Coat of Arms is featured at the top of each arch and on the original brass fixture behind the Speaker’s chair. The Mississippi House of Representatives has 122 members.
[Please refrain from the desk or podium areas while inside the Chamber.]
- FOURTH FLOOR:** Glass cylinders in the corridor floors allow light to pass through the floor and illuminate the stained glass panels in the ceiling of the third floor. The galleries are open for visitors to view the House and Senate Chambers.
- GROUNDS:** Located on the south side of the Capitol: The Liberty Bell is one of 55 replicas commissioned in 1950 by the United States Treasury to be given to states and territories for display. The Women’s monument, dedicated in 1912, was sculpted by Belle Kinney of Nashville, Tennessee, and cast by Tiffany Studios. Between the bell and the monument is a plaque honoring the designation of this Capitol as a National Historic Landmark by the National Park Service in 2016. Located on the north side of the Capitol: At the east within the parking area is the figurehead from the bow of the second USS *Mississippi* (Battleship No. 23), given to the State by the United States Navy in 1909. The ship was sold to Greece in 1914. At the east near High Street stands the “Capitol Rally” marker as part of the Mississippi Freedom Trail. It commemorates the “March Against Fear” that began in Memphis and ended at the Mississippi State Capitol in 1966. It is estimated to be the largest civil rights demonstration in Mississippi’s history. Among the variety of trees located on the grounds is the magnolia, which is Mississippi’s state tree and flower.
- CAPITOL HOURS:** Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. until 5 p.m., for self-guided tours. Guided tours are offered at 9:30 a.m., 11 a.m., 1 p.m., and 2:30 p.m. Group tours are available by reservation with Visitor Services at 601-359-3114 or tours@house.ms.gov. The Capitol Gift Shop hours are 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.