

IDAHO STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

REFERENCE SERIES

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By act of March 3, 1905, the provision was made for a Capitol Building Board—the Governor, Secretary of State, and State Treasurer—who, with two public-spirited citizens, became the Capitol Building Commission which organized March 20. The original appropriation was for only \$250,000 because much of the cost of the building was paid out of the sale of public lands allowed to the state by the Idaho Admission Act of 1898 for that purpose. An agreement to purchase Central School, which stood in the block next to the territorial capitol (completed in 1886) was decided upon. Arrangements were made with the City of Boise to enlarge the site of the building by closing the street between Capitol Square and Central School. Finally, a heating plant site behind the building was also purchased.

On June 3, Herbert E. Quigley was employed as superintendent of construction, and after various architectural plans had been submitted, those supplied by J. E. Tourtellotte and Company were adopted, June 29. The successful design was in the standard neoclassic state capitol style. The Capitol Commission decided to serve as its own contractor, and much of the heavy construction equipment was acquired by the State. Subcontracts for various portions of the building were let as construction progressed. By the summer of 1906, work began on the first floor, and finally the problem of obtaining sandstone for the outside finish was solved when the Commission purchased the Jellison Brothers' stone quarry at Tablerock, October 26, 1906. The site was handy for use of prison labor, and the Commission regarded the purchase of the quarry as a sound investment. Granite and marble from Vermont also were featured in the building.

Originally, the design was only for the central section and the dome; construction on that took more than six years before that part was completed late in 1912. Meanwhile, on August 29, 1912, Tourtellotte and Hummel were awarded a contract to design wings for the building. Actual construction of the wings was delayed until the legislature authorized completion of the building in 1919. The additions got underway, September 25, 1919, and the entire structure was finished at the end of 1920. When completed, the building cost \$2,098,455.05, with another \$130,833.10 for furnishings. The floor area of the building, when completed, was 201,720 square feet; the height of the building, including the dome with the eagle on top, is 208 feet.