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# What's under the Golden Dome?

A Children's Guide  
to the Massachusetts  
State House

UMASS/AMHERST



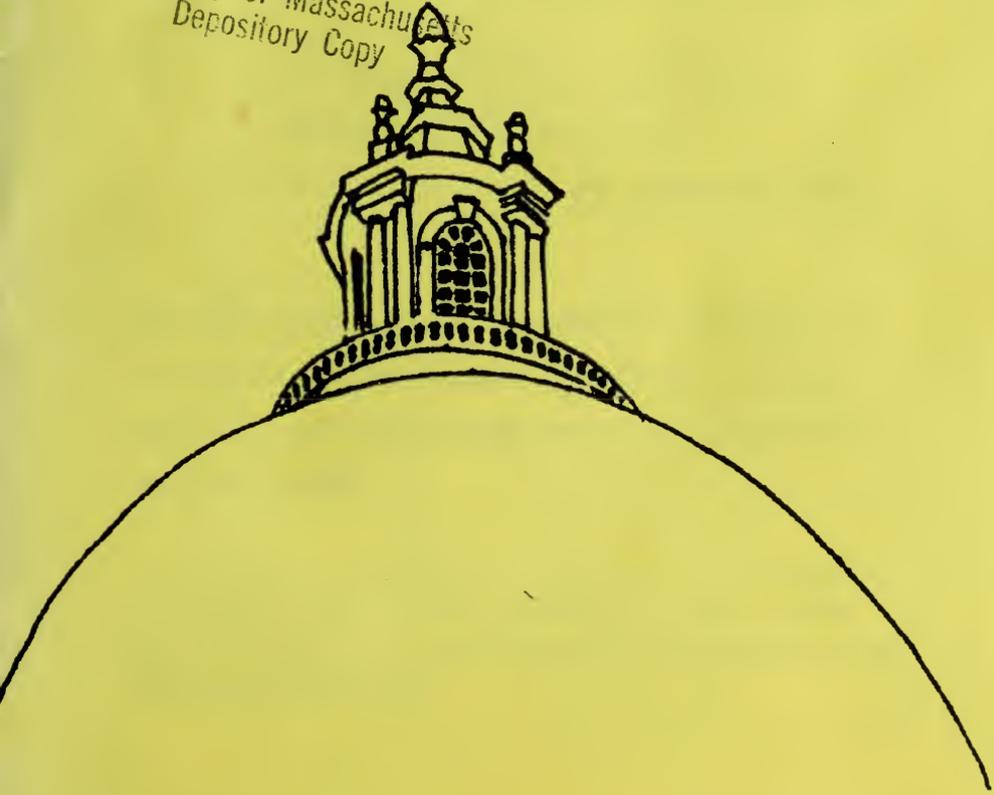
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# Welcome to your State House!



This book takes you on a tour of one of the oldest and historic State Houses in our nation.

The State House is the workplace of the Governor, Legislature, and constitutional officers. There is always things to see and do there.

*William Francis Galvin*

William Francis Galvin

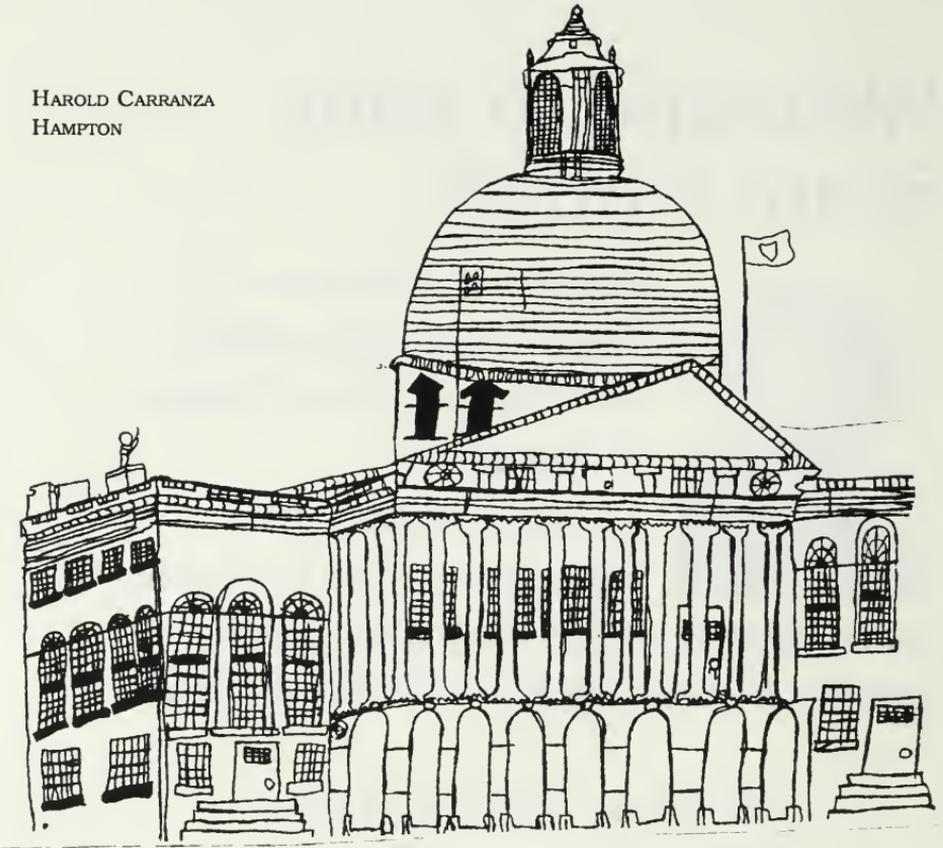
Secretary of the Commonwealth

P.S. Be sure to look carefully at the many portraits of our former governors in the halls... don't their eyes seem to follow you as you pass?

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*Note: Most of the drawings and all of the poetry in this little book were drawn and written by school children who visited the State House.*

HAROLD CARRANZA  
HAMPTON



# The Capitol

**A very talented man  
named Charles Bulfinch  
designed the State House  
and it wasn't a cinch.**

CAROLYN MULCAHY  
WINTHROP

The Massachusetts State House is the capitol building of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the very heart of state government.

It is the second state house Massachusetts has had. You can still see the Old State House at the corner of State Street and Washington Street. It was built in 1712. Before the Revolution, it was the home of the Royal government of the colony of Massachusetts; after the Revolution it became the home of the government of the state of Massachusetts.

By 1795, twenty years after the Revolution, the citizens of Massachusetts decided that the old State House was too small.

To design a new, larger state house they chose Charles Bulfinch. He was a famous Boston architect who designed some of the most beautiful homes and churches in Boston, most of which are still in use today.

DIANE RICHARD  
HAMPDEN





MICHAEL STONE  
HAMPDEN

*Paul Revere Painting The Dome* The Bulfinch State House was a dignified red brick building with white columns, topped by an impressive dome. It was built at the top of Beacon Hill looking out over all of the city, on land that had been John Hancock's cow pasture.

It is still the central part of the State House today, but many rooms have been added.

## The Golden Dome

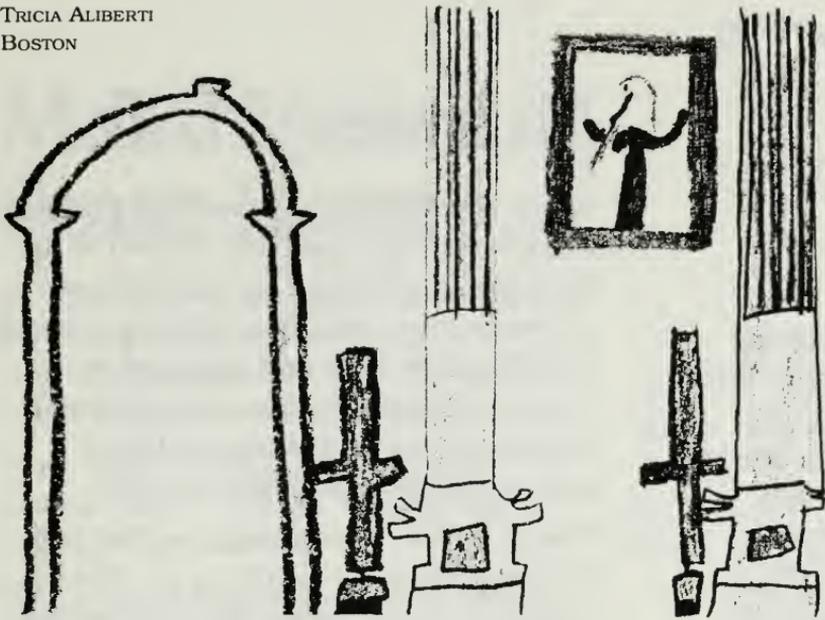
Charles Bulfinch designed the dome which crowns the State House, but when it was built, the dome was not gold – it was shingled! In just a few years, the dome began to leak in rain and snow, so the company of Paul Revere was hired to cover the dome with copper to make it water-tight. Later, in 1872, the dome was gilded with real gold leaf, and, as you know, still glows with gold today.

At the very top of the dome is a sculpture carved of wood. Many people think it is a pineapple, but it is not. It is a pine cone, put there to remind everyone of the importance of the pine trees which provided wood to build our houses, churches and commercial buildings. The wood for the State House came from the northern part of Massachusetts, which, in 1820, became the state of Maine.

**Dome golden,  
bright sparkles  
reflects  
shines  
atop the State House**

JOHN MCPHEE  
GERALD SOMERS  
GARY WILLS  
BOSTON

TRICIA ALIBERTI  
BOSTON



# Doric Hall

Doric Hall is named for the ten tall columns in the room (Doric is the name of the design). In this very room, Governor John Andrew passed out guns and ammunition and flags to the men who had volunteered to fight in the Civil War. The first military unit to arrive in Washington to help President Abraham Lincoln were part of the Sixth Massachusetts Division. Inside the room you will see a painting of Abraham Lincoln, a statue of George Washington, historic cannons, and copies of gravestones.

It is interesting to know that the main doors of Doric Hall are only opened on two special occasions – when the President of the United States comes to visit, and when a Governor leaves the State House for the last time.

**I went on a State House tour  
and opened a side door  
to see a marble floor.**

JAMES PASSA  
BOSTON

# Nurses' Hall

**The fighters bold  
pledged flags of old  
marching along  
when days were cold.  
Down the lane  
in pouring rain  
some held flags  
with aching pain.  
Flags have stars of blue  
red and white stripes too  
carried for America.  
This we all knew.**

LISA OHMAN  
NORTH WEYMOUTH

When you walk out of Doric Hall and into Nurse's Hall you have left the part of the State House designed by Bulfinch and entered a "new" addition which is quite old now. Built in 1895 and designed by Charles Brigham, it has a very different feeling with its ornate mosaic floors, marble columns, and large murals.

One of the most inspiring sculptures in the State House is in this room. It is a statue of a nurse and a wounded soldier which was carved to honor the women who served as nurses during the Civil War.

In this room, too, are paintings of Paul Revere's ride and the Boston Tea Party.

# Hall of Flags

The Hall of Flags is a very special room. It was built just to preserve and display the flags brought back from war by soldiers from Massachusetts. There are flags from the Civil War, the Spanish-American War, World Wars I and II, the Korean War, the Berlin Emergency, and the Vietnam War.

In the center of the stained glass window in the ceiling is the Massachusetts state seal, surrounded by the seals of the twelve other original colonies.

DEAN DARR  
LEOMINSTER



# Making State Laws

The chambers of the House and Senate are where the men and women who represent you meet to make the laws for all the citizens of Massachusetts.

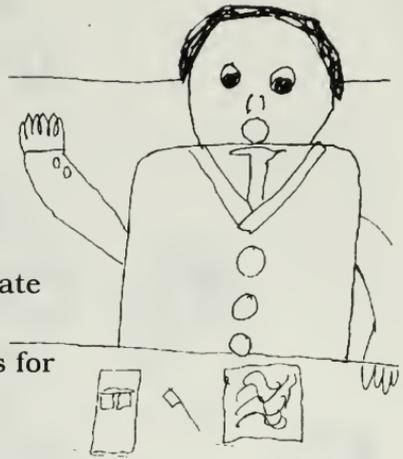
There are forty senators. They are elected every two years. Their leader is the Senate president.

The House of Representatives is much larger – but not as large as it used to be. Today, there are 160 representatives – in 1812, there were 749! Their leader is called the Speaker of the House.

Together, the House and Senate are called the General Court.

Of course, making a law is harder than this. But Massachusetts is a special state. Every person here has what is called the Right to Free Petition. This means that anyone who thinks the state needs a new law can take his or her idea to a state senator or representative and ask them to present it to the legislature. The idea is called a petition or bill. After many discussions and meetings and votes, the bill can become a law.

**In the State House, the Senators and Representatives have their offices, hold meetings, and think about people's comments, advice, and questions. Then they vote on bills. When the governor signs them, they become the laws we live by. Everyone needs special rules to live by or else we would have many problems now. We should be glad that here we make and choose our own laws.**

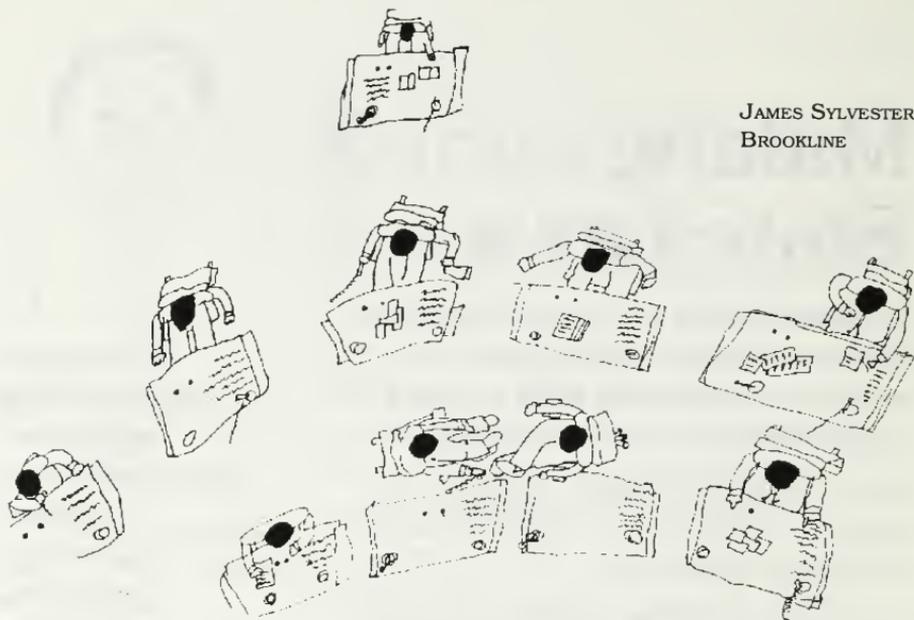


ANNY MERCURE  
HAMPDEN

**I went to the State House  
up on a hill  
I made up a bill  
and it came our a law.**

KENNY McMASTERS  
DORCHESTER

JAMES SYLVESTER  
BROOKLINE



## House of Representatives

**Buttons,  
red or green.  
House of Representatives  
to vote yea or nay.**

KEVIN PITTS  
BOSTON

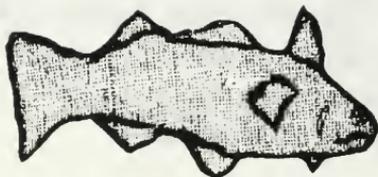
In this room, shaped like a theatre, the men and women who represent the citizens of Massachusetts meet and talk and vote, and make important decisions about state government.

At the front of the room are two large boards, part of an electronic roll call system, which list the names of the representatives. When a vote is taken, lights on the boards show how each representative voted.

Hanging over the visitor's gallery is the famous "Sacred Cod". It is a symbol of Massachusetts' earliest business – fishing.

**On one fine day the cod came in  
with gleaming tooth and shining fin.**

DENNIS MARISSEY  
WELLESLEY



# The Senate Chamber

In the blue and white Senate Chamber, the senators work at a circle of desks facing the rostrum, where the Senate President sits under a golden eagle.

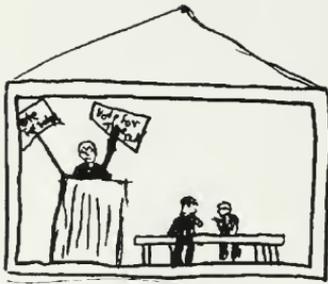
This room is famous for its domed ceiling (which is right below the golden State House dome) and the symbols in the ceiling.

Across the hall is the Senate Reception Room where you will see the portraits of some former Senate presidents.

**The Senate Chamber is big and blue  
it has a lot of nice things too.**

LEANNE DiCARLO  
REVERE





THOMAS LEBIECKI  
NORTHAMPTON

# The Governor's Office

The Governor's Office and the Governor's Council Room across the hall are on the third floor of the State House. On the walls of the Governor's room are sculptures which symbolize the arts, freedom, executive power and Massachusetts.

In the hall between two offices is a copy of the painting of George Washington, which is on the dollar bill.

The Governor's Council Chamber is a very unusual room because it is a perfect cube – its height, width, and depth are all the same.

# The People at the State House

In the wide wide hills of the State House you may see the people who work here – the governor, lieutenant governor, secretary of state, attorney general, treasurer, and auditor – who are all constitutional officers, elected by all the voters in the state.

You will also see some of the many others who help to make state government work – senators and representatives and their legislative aides, court officers, carpenters and painters, lawyers, secretaries, tour guides, librarians, and capitol police.

And, of course, you'll see lots of other people who are visiting the State House just like you.

THIRD GRADE CLASS  
BIGELOW SCHOOL  
SOUTH BOSTON









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