

# Capitol Building Tour

A Tour of our Magnificent Building and Extension

# Capitol Video

Before we begin, you might want to see a video about the history of our Capitol. The building you see today isn't the only building we have had on this site. You might also be surprised by how we paid for this place--without money! You can also see some secret places that you can't go in person. If you are a fan of Matthew McConaughey, he narrates the video. See the video [here](#).

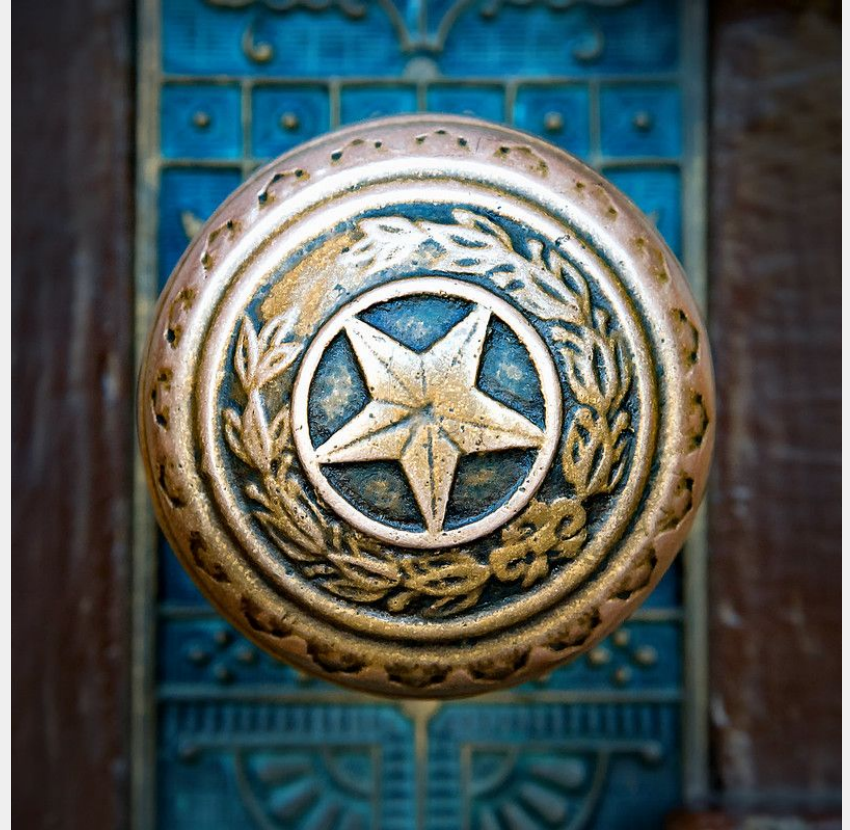
# South Entrance and Rotunda

We usually enter at the South Entrance of our Capitol, located near what I call the front yard. This is a photo of this side of the building. The building has a slight pink color because it is made of Sunset Red Granite, donated by the Lacy family of Marble Falls. The Lacy family also invented our state dog, the blue Lacy. You can learn more about them [here](#).



# The Door

One thing you should notice on our tour is EVERYTHING is designed to honor Texas and our history. Even this door knob has our state seal, which you will see everywhere. It's even in some of the bathrooms! To learn more about the seal click here for a short [video](#).



# Door Hinge

Even the door hinges are beautiful!  
When you walk in the door you notice that nothing is made without extra thought. If you want to look at some photos of some of the other architectural details, click [here](#).



# South Foyer

Once we make it past security, we usually stop and look at some of the artwork in this entry room. Some of the most famous art pieces are in this room. There is also a doorway to the former Texas State Treasury here. If you go to the Capitol today, you can sign up for a tour in this office. If you want to see a 360° view of the office, click [here](#).



# South Foyer Paintings

One of the most famous paintings in this room is *Surrender of Santa Anna*, painted by William Henry Huddle. You can see an up-close guide of the people in this painting [here](#). This scene depicts Santa Anna, in his borrowed uniform, being presented to Sam Houston. Houston is being treated by a doctor after an injury in the Battle of San Jacinto. Don't forget to tell your parents how they knew who Santa Anna was. If you don't remember, click [here](#) (at the bottom of that page).



# David Crockett

Across the room from *Surrender of Santa Anna*, you will see another painting by William Henry Huddle, *David Crockett*. Perhaps one of the most well-known heroes to die at the Battle of the Alamo, Crockett is pictured here with his coonskin cap in his hand.





# Stephen F. Austin

Two famous statues are also located in the South Foyer. Both of them were created by Elisabet Ney, an artist from Germany that lived in Austin around the time this Capitol was built. You can actually visit her home in Austin and see some of her other sculptures. You can learn more about her [here](#). This is the statue of Stephen F. Austin.



Photo Credit: Wally Gobetz [CC BY-NC-ND 2.0](#)

# Sam Houston

This is the statue of Houston that Ney created. Austin and Houston stand guard over the door to the next room we will tour, the rotunda. Many people criticized the statues because the Houston statue is taller than Austin. They thought that made him seem more important. Since Ney made the statues life-sized, she said people should complain to God if they didn't like it because he made Houston bigger in the first place.



# South Foyer Bonus

Before we move onto the next room, click [here](#) to view a 360° view of the room. Make sure to pan down and see the floor. Every battle fought on Texas soil is engraved somewhere on the floors of our Capitol. See how many you can recognize here!

Also, look at the photos in the frame behind Austin. This a collection of photos of African American statesmen from the 1900's. You can see a close up [here](#) if you scroll to the bottom and click on it. There are empty spaces where photos haven't been located yet.



# The Rotunda

Perhaps the most stunning feature of our Capitol is the rotunda. Take a minute to view the 360° photo [here](#) before moving on. If you skipped the others, this one is worth seeing. Just soak it in, then move on to learn more about this room. Make sure you use your mouse to look up at the ceiling and drag around to see all sides of the floor.



# The Dome

The first thing you want to do when you enter the rotunda is look up at the dome. Imagine the echoing sound of all the voices and feet in this room. It is 218 feet from the floor to the top. The star looks little from the floor, but it is actually 8 feet across!



# The Floor

The floor contains the seals of the six countries to claim Texas. The seal of the Republic of Texas is in the middle. If you pretend this circle is a clock, at one o'clock is the Confederate seal, three o'clock is Mexico, six o'clock is France, nine o'clock is Spain, and eleven o'clock is the United States.



# The Walls

See those paintings on the walls? Those go all around the rotunda, all the way from the bottom floor to the very top one. At the top, the paintings are of the Presidents of the Republic of Texas. After that, all the former Governors of Texas are represented in paintings in order from first to last. The most recent governors are on the ground floor. You can see the paintings [here](#).



# Hallways

After leaving the rotunda, we would walk down one of the hallways, take the stairs, and head up to the floor above the rotunda to the House of Representatives. Some other battles are on the floor in the hallways. Notice the beautiful doors and molding. You can see the 360° view [here](#).





# House of Representatives

This is the biggest room in the Capitol and one of the most important. This is where one half of the Texas Legislature meets every odd year to help make laws for our state. You can view a 360° view [here](#). The desks are the same desks used when it opened in 1888. However, there are some modifications to the desks. If you look closely, you will see three buttons. The next slide will tell you a little more about those.



Photo Credit: Wally Gobetz [CC BY-NC-ND 2.0](#)

# Voting in the House

The three buttons on each desk are to help each representative cast their vote on a law. One button is to vote yes, one is for no, and one is for abstain. To abstain just means they aren't going to vote at all. The results of each vote is displayed electronically on large boards at the front of the room. Since there are 150 representatives, this saves them a lot of time.



Photo Credit: Wally Gobetz [CC BY-NC-ND 2.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/2.0/)

## Special Features

Just like the rest of the building, the details in this room are spectacular. The Texas star lights are one of my favorite things in this room. You can also find many paintings of famous people, including Governor Hogg and Sam Houston. Not only that, but the San Jacinto flag is here too! Click [here](#) to view some of the paintings.



# The Senate

The Senate is the place where the other half of the Legislature meets to make laws. Remember that the Senate and House must agree before a law can be sent to the governor to sign. The Senate has a smaller room because there are not as many people that meet there. There are only 31 senators. They vote by using hand signals instead of an electronic system. They show one finger for yes, two fingers for now, and three fingers to abstain. You can see a 360° view [here](#). Don't forget to look up. The ceiling is beautiful.



# Senate Artwork

At the front of the room is the oldest painting in the building. It is a portrait of Stephen F. Austin. Perhaps the most famous paintings in the room are [\*Dawn at the Alamo\*](#) and [\*Battle of San Jacinto\*](#). These two large paintings were both done by Henry Arthur McArdle. You can click on the blue links above to zoom in on both paintings.



See if you can find Santa Anna running away on Old Whip

## Underground Extension

When you look at this photo of the extension, it looks like just a regular hallway with windows. It is actually underground. The designers of the underground extension worked very hard to get natural light into this part of the Capitol. There is a floor one and floor two underground. They are mostly offices, but there is also a parking garage, which I accidentally found once when lost. To keep from being lost, use [this](#) map of the extension.



# Reverse Seal

You know about the state seal already, but this is the reverse seal. The reverse seal is not used on official documents. One of the few places you will see it is in the Capitol extension. It is similar in size to the state seals on the floor in the rotunda. It has the six flags that have flown over Texas. It also has the Alamo, the cannon from Gonzales, and Vince's Bridge (the bridge burned at San Jacinto).



# The Reverse Rotunda

This is my favorite part of the underground extension. It is designed to look like the rotunda in the main building, but upside down....and underground! The best part is you can go in the backyard of the Capitol and stand around the reverse rotunda and look down at the star instead of up. You can see it a little better [here](#).





Another cool thing about the reverse rotunda is that you can actually sit or stand on the star. The reverse rotunda has also been in a movie you might have seen. Have you seen *Spy Kids 2: Island of Lost Dreams*? There is a scene that was filmed in the reverse rotunda. You can see it [here](#). The reverse is especially noticeable towards the end.



# The Elevators

After we finished the tour of the extension and Capitol, we would take the elevators up to the backyard. It should be no surprise that the elevators have the state seal on the doors.



# Bullock Museum

After leaving the Capitol, we would head out to the Bullock Museum. If you get a chance to go in the future, make sure you check out *The Star of Destiny* show. For now, head on over to their website and check out some of their free virtual tours. The one about La Belle is my favorite. [Here](#) is the direct link to La Belle. Here is a link to the list of all the [shows](#).



# The End of the Tour--Bonus Material

I know this tour wasn't exactly what you planned for your field trip this year. It certainly wasn't what I planned, but I know we can still have lots of fun. Don't forget to join us for the games and Zooms today. See the master schedule for times and link information. Here are some other fun things you can do on your own:

See a video tour of the Governor's Mansion. It is actually better than the real life tour!  
See the video [here](#).

Explore the area around the Capitol using Google Maps. Click [here](#) for a video that explains how. If you enjoy using Google Maps, you can also tour other famous places around the world on your own.