

*Rehabilitated from 1995-1997, the Governor's Reception Room has undergone several transformations over the years. As part of architect Thomas Fuller's original 1867 plans for the New York State Capitol, the area was designed to be beneath an open tower.*

*The 50 foot tower envisioned by Isaac Perry for the Capitol was never completed.*

By 1894, capitol architect Isaac Perry had enlarged the design to feature a 50 foot tower capped by a dome. The tower's base was built but its completion was postponed indefinitely under Governor Theodore Roosevelt's administration (1898-1900) in order to rein in costs and complete the building's construction. By 1900, floor levels had been inserted into the vertical tower space and offices were created on all of the upper levels.

The renewed spirit of patriotism that emerged after the first world war generated an interest in honoring New York State residents who had served in the military. A plan was conceived during Governor Alfred E. Smith's first term (1918-1920), to create a flag room housed beneath a 40 foot high rotunda. Flag Rooms in state capitols traditionally display the colors of regimental troops presented to the government at the close of the hostilities. The Flag Room proposed for the New York State Capitol required removal of a major portion of the second floor to create a monumental space for a war memorial.

In October 1920, the state commissioned a prominent New York City muralist, William deLeftwich Dodge, to paint ceiling murals that would illustrate the room's

military theme. The elaborate murals took five years to complete and were installed by Dodge and his assistant Melio Bellisio in 1929.

Because the murals were designed to be viewed from 40 feet below, and since the floor was never removed, they appear at a disadvantage. Nonetheless, Dodge's murals are magnificent examples of the American mural painting tradition and chronicle important events in New York State military history.

Since 1900, this room has housed military memorabilia, offices, a secretarial pool, and has been used for both storage space and meetings.

In 1997, the room was dedicated by Governor George E. Pataki as the Governor's Reception Room.

