

November 16th, 1915 - November 16th, 2015

COMMEMORATIVE CATALOG



Written 100 years ago on the occasion of the capitol cornerstone laying.

A ponderous block of polished granite, a legend carved upon its gray face, rests on the eminence that lies three miles northeast of the busy marts of Oklahoma City. Yesterday morning it was a chunk of stone — that and nothing more; today it is a sacred thing, a living thing, almost an immortal thing to the hundreds and hundreds of thousands that live and labor and love and — sometimes — suffer in this fair commonwealth; hundreds and hundreds of thousands to whom the green and golden acres, the bounteous earthen chambers and the thriving cities, towns and villages are as dear as the name of Oklahoma is sweet and soft to the ear.

A few hours ago it was little more than common earth. Now it is hallowed by the spirit of the pioneer, by the patriotic love of earnest men and earnest women, by the faith of little children, by all the hopes and all the prayers of hearts striving for the sweetest, purest, noblest things in life.

It is the symbol of the life of the great heart of Oklahoma. It is the cornerstone of the state capitol, the statehouse, wherein the laws of the commonwealth are to be enacted and whence they are to be proclaimed, wherein the high court is to administer justice, wherein the diverse and manifold activities and duties of the government of the state are to be carried forward. —The Daily Oklahoman, Nov. 17, 1915, Page 1A.



On the cover: The Masonic Grand Lodge of Oklahoma led ceremonies for laying the Capitol cornerstone on Nov. 16, 1915. Photo — Oklahoma Publishing Co. Photography Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society



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LAYING OF THE CORNERSTONE

It began, as many great things do, with a parade. On Nov. 16, 1915, the eighth statehood day parade started at Broadway and Third Street in Oklahoma City and wound through downtown streets as thousands watched. Delayed only by an ill-timed freight train, the 5,000 person procession carried waving flags, drove glistening motor cars and was headed by the military circumstance and pomp of three National Guard companies.

As it approached the state Capitol, the front of the procession parted and from the rear the Masons and other dignitaries made their way to the granite block suspended over the foundation of the Oklahoma Capitol's southwest corner.

Before the dignitaries arrived, a steam-pressure crane had moved the 4-ton block of Tishomingo granite into place. Guards had protected the cornerstone, ensuring publicity seekers could not carve their names on it with pocket knives — a somewhat common attempt with stones of great interest, according to the contractors.

Gov. Robert L. Williams and Oklahoma City Mayor Ed Overholser had issued half-day holidays for government workers. Many Oklahoma City businesses had also closed for the ceremony. Estimates put the crowd at nearly 15,000 people battling a cold south wind on a bright day to watch the historic Mason-led ceremony.

Bands played "Oklahoma" and the national anthem, dignitaries spoke and then Gov. Williams handed an engraved silver trowel to the Mason's Most Worshipful Grand Master Almer E. Monroney. Suspended 3 feet above its bed, the cornerstone dropped a foot at a time. Masons clapped three times, left hand over right, after each movement. The Masons placed a box holding 50 historical items beneath the cornerstone. The cornerstone consecrated, more addresses to the crowd given and the audience joining in singing "America," a closing benediction was given. The building of Oklahoma's Capitol would continue until completed in 1917.

"It is a safe guess that the building will be there when this and several other generations have gone, unless it is attacked by Zeppelins, and I do not think there is much danger of that," said Arthur Neal Leecraft, secretary of the Capitol Building Commission, upon the laying of the cornerstone.

Today, Oklahoma continues the work begun more than 100 years ago with a massive Capitol renovation project to ensure many more generations can enjoy the people's building as it's returned to its original splendor for centuries to come.



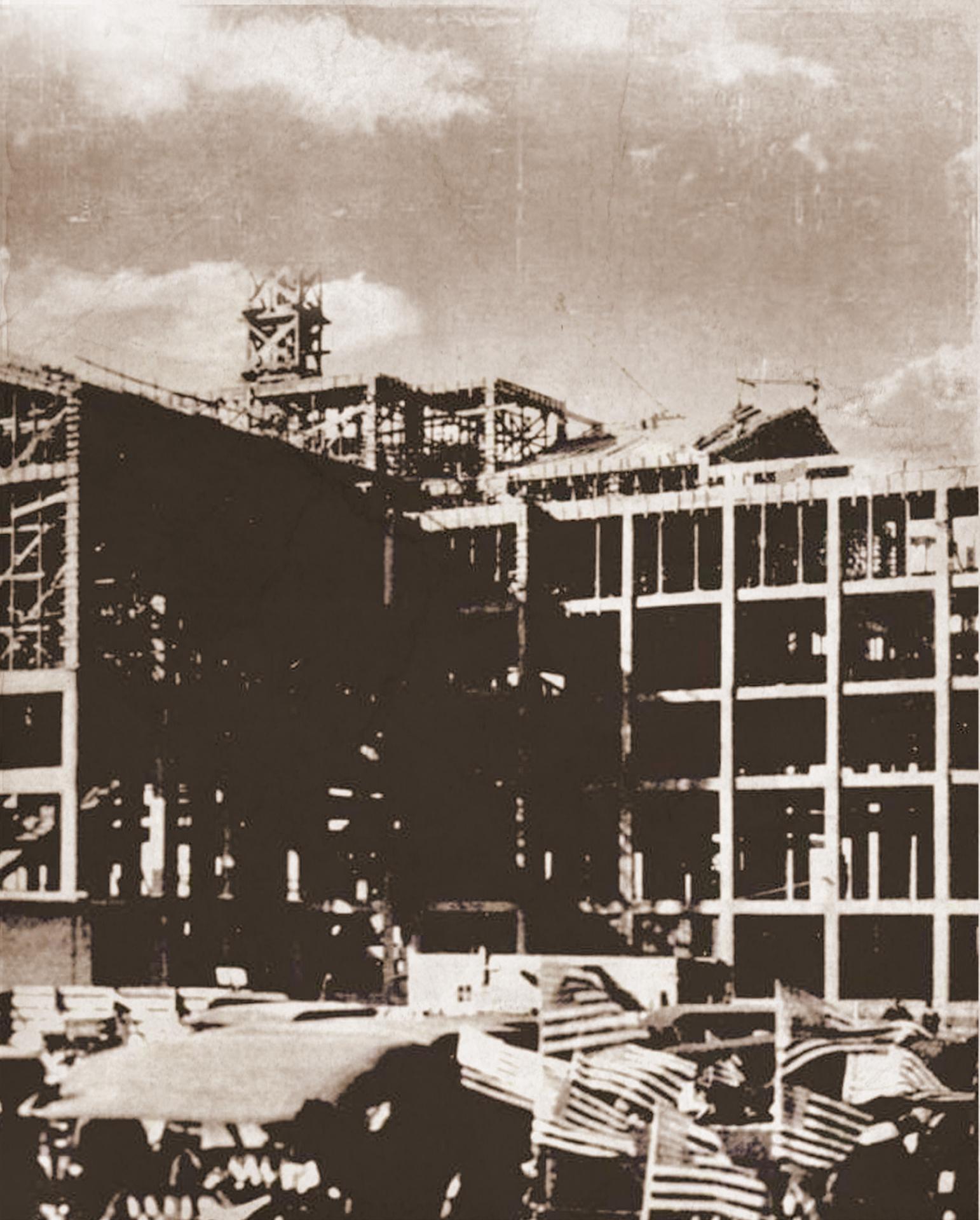
NOVEMBER 16th, 1915



Nearly 15,000 people gathered to watch as the Capitol cornerstone was laid Nov. 16, 1915. For days in advance, visitors from throughout Oklahoma had been arriving in the state's capital and preparations and plans for the large crowd — spectator seating and speaker stands on the Capitol grounds and extra security throughout the parade route — were finalized.

Photo: Oklahoma Publishing Co. Photography Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society





EVENT 1915

November 16, 1915

Parade - 1:30 p.m. O'Clock

From the Masonic Temple at Broadway and Third Street, then south to Grand, west to Hudson, north to Main, east to Broadway, north to Fourth, east to Harrison, northeast to Stiles Park, north to Twelfth, east to Lincoln, north to Capitol.

Program - 2:30 p.m. O'Clock

Music - Selection, India Temple Band

Invocation - Bishop Francis K. Brooke

Music - "Oklahoma," Apollo Club

Address - Gov. Robert L. Williams

Address - Oklahoma Supreme Court Chief Justice Matthew J. Kane

Address - Former federal judge Charles B. Stuart

Music - Selection, India Temple Band

Cornerstone to be laid by the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge Ancient Free and Accepted Masons

Invocation - Grand Chaplain R.W.W.W. Robinson

Music - "Star Spangled Banner," Apollo Club

Laying the cornerstone - M.W. Grand Master Almer E. Monroney

Reading of the list of memorials to be deposited under the cornerstone

Deposit of articles and treasure box

Trial of cornerstone

Consecration of cornerstone

Music - Selection, India Temple Band

Address of Grand Master - Monroney

Address of Grand Orator - Woodson E. Norvell.

Song - "America," entire audience

Benediction - Robinson

Items Placed Beneath Cornerstone

Fifty items — mostly documents related to the Masons, state government or other organizations — were placed in a box buried beneath the granite cornerstone. A full list of the items was read before the box was sealed and deposited beneath the cornerstone.

Among the items, presumably still in the box, are:

- Constitution of the Masonic Grand Lodge of Oklahoma.
- List of state employees in various departments.
- Histories of the Oklahoma Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, Oklahoma Women's Christian Temperance Union, Colonial Dames of America in Oklahoma, Oklahoma's Department of the Grant Women's Relief Corps.
- List of organized labor branches needed to construct the Capitol.
- Copies of various newspapers and educational texts.
- Copy of the Oklahoma Constitution and all amendments to date.
- Photograph of Oklahoma Secretary of State J.L. Lyon.
- Protestant Bible.
- List of teachers in Lincoln School in Oklahoma City.
- Photograph of cornerstone event taken just before the box was sealed.

EVENT 2015

November 16, 2015

10:00 a.m.:

Southwest corner of the Capitol

Introduction:

*Bob Blackburn, executive director Oklahoma
Historical Society.*

Reenactment:

Masonic Grand Lodge of Oklahoma.

Address:

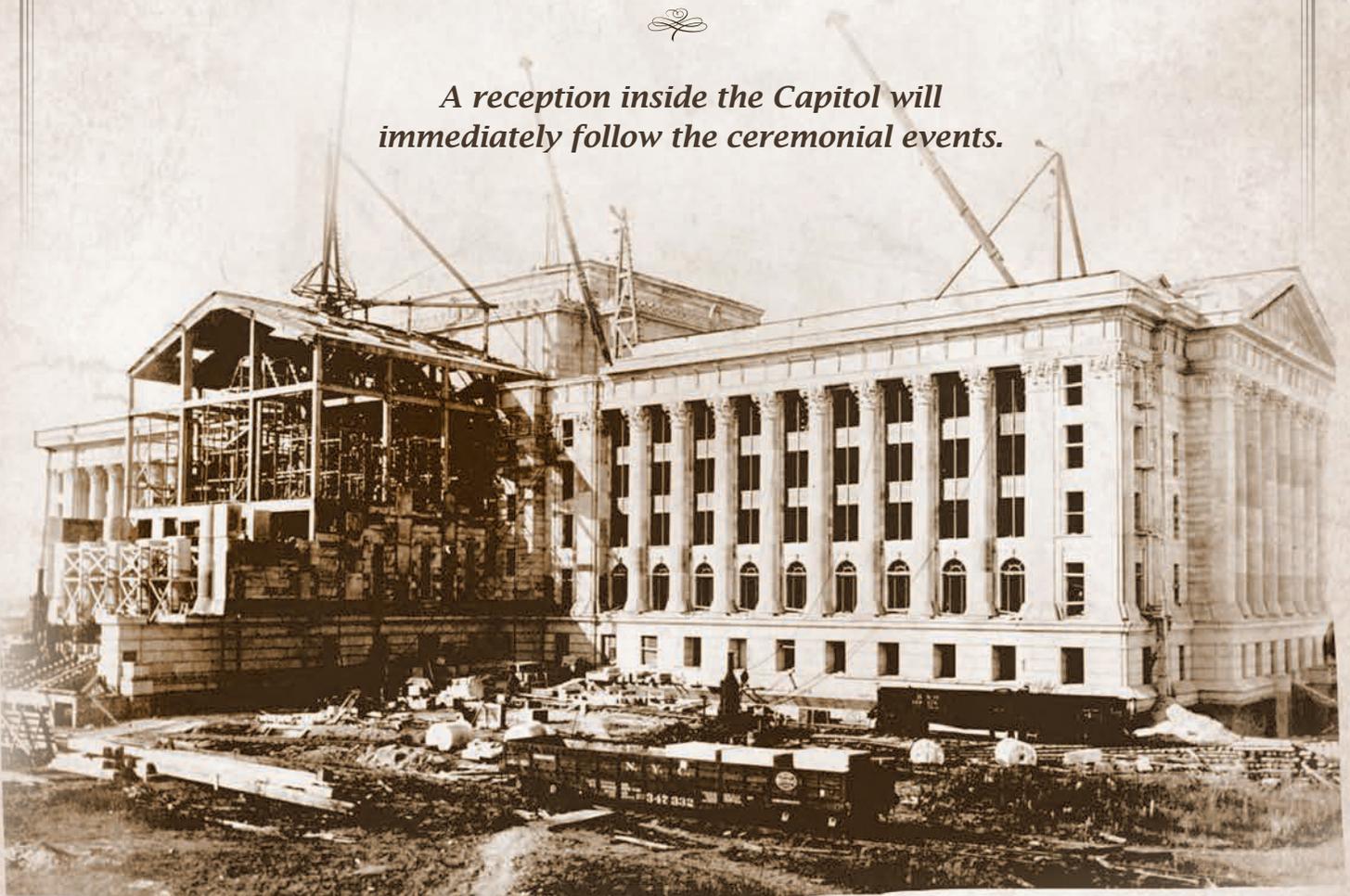
Oklahoma Treasurer Ken Miller.

Address:

*Oklahoma Secretary of Finance, Administration and
Information Technology Preston L. Doerflinger.*



***A reception inside the Capitol will
immediately follow the ceremonial events.***



*Photo: A year after the laying of the cornerstone, construction continued at a frantic pace.
Oklahoma Publishing Co. Photography Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society.*



The promise of the current Capitol restoration effort is in many ways as exciting as what was presented 100 years ago. That promise, as spoken by Oklahoma Supreme Court Chief Justice Matthew J. Kane Nov. 16, 1915, remains:

“This imposing pile of stone and brick and mortar is much more than a Capitol; it is a monument to law and order; it is a guarantee that the rights vouchsafed to the citizen by the constitution shall be protected and always held inviolate; it is an adamant vow that government for the people, of the people and by the people shall never perish from the earth.”

Source: The Daily Oklahoman, Nov. 17, 1915.