

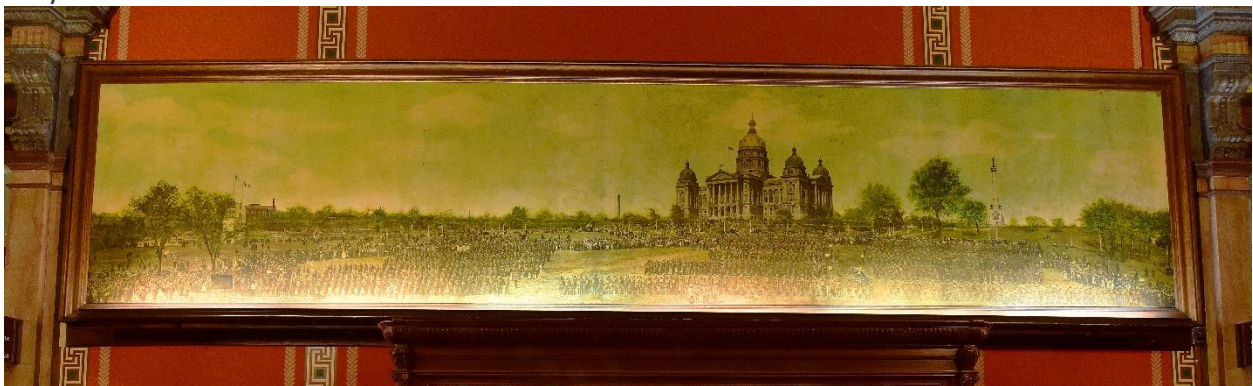


Pieces of Iowa's Past

Pieces of Iowa's Past, published by the Iowa State Capitol Tour Guides monthly, features historical facts about Iowa, the Capitol, and the early workings of state government. All italicized text/block quotes in this document are taken directly from historical publications with the actual spelling, punctuation, and grammar retained.

One Hundredth Anniversary of Capitol Display

May 2026



Hanging for the last 100 years on the east side of the south corridor of the Iowa State Capitol is the world's largest reproduction photograph of its time. It measures 26 feet long and 6 feet high and pictures Iowa soldiers of the 42nd Rainbow Division, 168th Infantry, after the division's return from France in 1919.

On May 15, 1919, Des Moines celebrated the Iowa soldiers' homecoming with a parade through the city, ending at the Iowa State Capitol where their photo was taken on the state Capitol grounds just before the regiment was mustered out of service.



This original panoramic photo was taken May 15, 1919, by photography firm Hebard-Showers Co. State Historical Society of Iowa archives.

PROGRAM

Welcome Home Celebration

168th Regiment Rainbow Division

Des Moines, Ia., May 15, 1919

8:00 A. M.

Troops detrain at the Union Station.

Checking: The regiment will leave all personal effects
under civilian guard at the Coliseum.

8:00 TO 11 A. M.

Devoted to meeting relatives and friends at the Army
Club, Ninth and Pleasant Streets.

11:30 A. M.

Dinner served by Red Cross and allied war workers
at Coliseum.

1:30 P. M.

Regiment forms for parade on East Walnut from
First to Fourth Street.

2 P. M.—PARADE.

East First street headed west to Fifteenth, north to
Locust, east through triumphal arch on Capitol Grounds.

PHOTOGRAPH.

After parade has passed reviewing stand, troops will re-
form at the arch or on the Capitol mall for the
official historical photograph.

6 P. M.

Box supper and dance at Coliseum.

7 P. M.—Dancing.

11 P. M.

Entrain Inter-Urban station for Camp Dodge.

168th men guests at all movie houses all day.

Western league baseball game—Des Moines vs. Wichita.

168th men guests.

**MAY THE END OF THE RAINBOW MEAN
HAPPINESS TO EVERY MAN OF THE 168TH!**

Mayor's Patriotic Committee, Des Moines

The Des Moines Register, May 15, 1919

On March 31, 1925, the Forty-first General Assembly passed an act appropriating \$3,500 for the Executive Council to purchase an enlarged photograph of the 42nd Rainbow Division, 168th Infantry, as a permanent memorial to be placed in the corridor of the Capitol. The contract was awarded to W.T. Showers of Des Moines

WHEREAS, the negative from which it was made is rapidly deteriorating and will soon be utterly useless and

WHEREAS, it is deemed desirable to perpetuate the memory of Iowa soldiery who served during the world war and to preserve for coming generations a picture of representatives of the men who withstood the shock of active service.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Iowa:

1 SECTION 1. The executive council is hereby authorized to contract
2 for and purchase an enlargement of the photograph taken of the
3 168th infantry on the capitol grounds on May 15, 1919, said enlarge-
4 ment to be approximately four feet by twenty-six feet in size and to
5 be suitably mounted and framed and to be placed on the wall in the
6 corridors of the capitol building.

1 SEC. 2. There is hereby appropriated from the unappropriated
2 funds in the state treasury the sum of three thousand five hundred
3 dollars (\$3500.00) or so much thereof as may be necessary to pay
4 the expenses authorized in the preceding section.

Approved March 31, A. D. 1925.

The original photograph measuring 45 inches long was reproduced and enlarged by a special process invented by Showers. Tinted with colored oil, the photo was accepted by the Executive Council on May 20, 1926, and placed in the House of Representatives chamber until it could be framed and hung on the wall of the south corridor of the main floor.

The reproduction took three months and required the work of 22 people. The frame was made by the Jaeger Manufacturing Co. and installed June 1926 by the Stoner-McCray System, a billboard company in Des Moines.

The photograph still hanging in the south corridor today was considered one of the world's largest reproduction photographs at the time of its creation and valued between \$6,000 and \$7,000. In 1987, it was cleaned and restored by restoration experts Dudley and McCarroll. Because it was too delicate and frail to be moved, the frame was not taken down from the wall. The project took four days to complete.



*Des Moines Register
photo*