The Capitol most eye-catching feature, the OREGON PIONEER, stands atop the Rotunda. The 23-foot bronze statue is gilded with gold leaf and designed to symbolize early Euro-American settlers. The statue faces north, looks west, and can be seen from miles away.

The relief sculpture on the pedestal at left depicts LEWIS AND CLARK LED BY SACAGAWEA. The overland exploring party led by Lewis and Clark reached the Columbia River in 1805 in search of a water route to the Pacific Ocean. The sculpture reflects the style popular in the 1930s and is coupled with a map of the Expedition’s route on the reverse side.

The relief sculpture on the pedestal at right depicts THE COVERED WAGON, designed to celebrate families who crossed the continent by the Oregon Trail. The trail was used by as many as 400,000 new settlers to the area. The route is mapped on the reverse.

The Capitol was dedicated in 1938. Many of the symbols, sculptures, and paintings created for the original building celebrate a narrow version of Oregon history focused on Euro-American settlement. These images reflect the social, political, and historical context of the era in which they were developed. While many symbols endure, others may no longer be truly reflective of Oregon and Oregonians today.
Oregon became an official territory of the U.S. in 1848 and the Seal was adopted a year later. The beaver was a nod to the past influence of the fur trade and the sailing ship a reference to commerce. The Latin motto means, “She flies with her own wings.” Oregon would not become a state until 1859.

In 1977, the Capitol was expanded to include the GALLERIA, hearing rooms, and new legislative offices (designated as the Senate and House Wings). The expansion remains true to the building's style and features matching Vermont marble. Here, tour the EXHIBITS to learn about the legislative process, key legislative acts, and Oregon history.

The ROCK AND MINERAL COLLECTION displays Oregon sunstones, our state gem, and thunder eggs, our state rock, as well as a number of rocks and minerals collected from throughout the state.

The Oregon State Seal features imagery symbolic to early Oregon statesmen. Seal features imagery symbolic to early to the Union. On the Rotunda floor, the State Seal was adopted a year later. The beaver was a nod to the past influence of the fur trade and the sailing ship a reference to commerce. The Latin motto means, “She flies with her own wings.” Oregon would not become a state until 1859.

In 1977, the Capitol was expanded to include the GALLERIA, hearing rooms, and new legislative offices (designated as the Senate and House Wings). The expansion remains true to the building’s style and features matching Vermont marble. Here, tour the EXHIBITS to learn about the legislative process, key legislative acts, and Oregon history.

The ROCK AND MINERAL COLLECTION displays Oregon sunstones, our state gem, and thunder eggs, our state rock, as well as a number of rocks and minerals collected from throughout the state.

The Oregon State Seal was adopted in 1857 on the original State Seal in 1857 in anticipation of Oregon becoming a state. Since then, many versions of the seal have been issued. Governor Tom McCall declared this version the official State Seal to end confusion over the story of Oregon. 1859 represents the year Oregon was admitted to the union.

Thirty-three stars represent Oregon as the 33rd state. An eagle with olive branch and arrows symbolizes peace through strength. Two ships—one American arriving and one British ship leaving—symbolize Oregon becoming part of the United States. Timber, grain, pickax, and plow symbolize Oregon’s economic activities and the covered wagon symbolizes pioneers on the Oregon Trail, while the mountains and elk symbolize our unique natural environment.