

Collection #  
P 0044

**INDIANA STATE CAPITOL  
ARCHITECTURAL ILLUSTRATIONS, CA. 1831, 1834**

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## COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	1 OVB Graphics box
COLLECTION DATES:	Ca. 1831, 1834
PROVENANCE:	Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1926; Florence Baker Holliday (Mrs. J.S.), 1946.
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RELATED HOLDINGS:	
ACCESSION NUMBER:	1926.0801, 1946.0516
NOTES:	This is an artificial collection from different sources.

## HISTORICAL/BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

In 1831 the Indiana General Assembly authorized construction of a new state capitol building at Indianapolis and a competition was held to select a design. The General Assembly chose the stately Greek Revival design submitted by New York architects Ithiel Town and Alexander Jackson Davis. Construction began in 1831 and was completed in December 1835 at a final cost of seventy thousand dollars.

Resembling a Grecian Doric temple, the building was modeled after the Parthenon in Athens, Greece. At 180 feet long and 80 feet wide it rested on a platform with Doric columned porticos at both the north and south ends, and pilasters along the east and west walls. A controversial Renaissance style ribbed dome sat atop the roof. Critics at the time noted that Greek temples were not known for their domes.

It was constructed of brick and wood with an exterior of lath and stucco that resembled stone. The wooden dome sat on an octagonal base and was built over a brick rotunda with the roof and dome both covered with zinc. The House and Senate chambers flanked the rotunda on the second floor; the legislative committee rooms, governor's office, state library, and other offices occupied the first floor.

By the 1860s the legislature had outgrown the building and the building had also begun to deteriorate. It was razed in 1878 and the present capitol building was completed on the site in 1888.

### ARCHITECTS:

**Town and Davis:** Established in New York from 1829–1835 Town and Davis were one of the earliest architectural partnerships in America. They were known for their Greek Revival Style public buildings, including the Indiana State Capitol at Indianapolis (1831–1835). Their designs influenced civic, institutional, and academic buildings in America during the early part of the nineteenth century.

**Ithiel Town** was born in Thompson, Connecticut, October 3, 1784. He worked largely in the Greek Revival style and was the designer of numerous public buildings in New York City. He was granted a patent for a truss bridge in 1820 and became famous as a bridge builder. His partnership with Alexander Jackson Davis lasted from 1829 to 1835 when Town retired from the firm. Besides his career in architecture Town devoted himself to collecting and assembled a library relating to architecture and the fine arts in America. He wrote on mathematics, the building of schools and in 1835 published a plan for establishing a school of fine arts in New York City. He died in New Haven, Connecticut June 13, 1844 and is buried there in Gove Street Cemetery.

**Alexander Jackson Davis:** the son of Cornelius and Julia Jackson was born in New York City on 24 July 1803. He left school at sixteen and became a typesetter in a printing office. At age twenty he returned to New York and studied art at several schools. He was a skilled architectural draftsman and partnered with Ithiel Town to form the firm of Town & Davis from 1829–35. Davis started his own firm in 1835 and concentrated on country

houses. He illustrated books, designed homes, and was an active participant in the intellectual and aesthetic world of his day. One of the founders of the American Institute of Architects, he was an exponent of classic and gothic styles. Taste in architecture changed in the latter part of nineteenth century and his influence declined. He died West Orange, 14 January 1892.

Sources:

*Encyclopedia of Indianapolis*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994.  
Reference Room Collection: F534.I55 E4 1994

Indianapolis News, Wednesday, February 5, 1936, pg. 29

Newton, Roger Hale. *Town & Davis Architects, Pioneers in American Revivalist Architecture 1812–1870*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1942. Indiana State Library: NA737.T6 N4

## **SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE**

The collection is comprised of two architectural renderings of the first Indiana Statehouse at Indianapolis. They are stored with graphic works in one OVB size box.

The illustration in Folder 1 was drawn by Alexander Jackson Davis. The rendering is done on paper in graphite pencil, pen, and light watercolor “en grisaille” (gray tones). The drawing is 8 ¼ x 10 ¾ inches and is matted. Written across the bottom in pencil: “A.J. Davis~Del., Ithiel Town~Architect, State House~Indianapolis, Indiana”

The architectural illustration in Folder 2 appears to be a print of two drawings that were created ca. 1834. It shows two ink drawings of the Statehouse on one sheet of paper enhanced with a watercolor wash. The image at the top shows an exterior view of the statehouse, the drawing at the bottom of the paper shows a floor plan for the principal floor of the statehouse.

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**Title:** *State House-Indianapolis Indiana*

**Date:** ca. 1931

**Delineator:** Alexander Jackson Davis

**Architect:** Ithiel Town

**Place:** Indianapolis, Indiana

**Size:** 8 ¼ x 10 ¾ inches

**Media:** graphite pencil, pen, and watercolor on paper

**Note on verso:** "Property of Indiana Historical Society, presented by Museum of Fine Arts, Boston 8-6-'26, 334 State House"

**Title:** *Capitol of the State of Indiana. I. Town & A.J. Davis, Architects, 1834.*

*Capitol, Indiana, Plan of Principal Floor.*

**Date:** 1834

**Architects:** I. Town, A.J. Davis

**Place:** Indianapolis, Indiana

**Size:** 18 ½ x 15 ¼ inches

**Media:** print, watercolor on paper

### CONTAINER

OVB Graphics:  
Box 1, Folder 1

OVB Graphics:  
Box 1, Folder 2