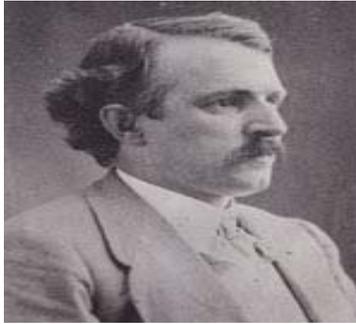


**THE STAR DAY FOUNDATION
FIRST PIONEERS AND LEADERS
OF THE STATE OF TEXAS
HALL OF HONOR**



**ELIJAH E. MYERS
(1832-1909)**

On December 29, 1832, John and Elizabeth Myers welcomed the birth of their first child, Elijah E. Myers. Myer's parents were of German and Welsh descent, and they raised their family in Frankford, a suburb of Philadelphia. At the time, Philadelphia, a center for textile, carpet, and garment manufacturing, was the second largest city in the United States.

Sometime during his adolescence, Myers likely left Frankford for Philadelphia to study. Various accounts cite that Myers trained in either carpentry or masonry while in the city. Later in his career, Myers often claimed to study at the Franklin Institute, a school for the mechanical arts. His architectural training likely came in the office of one of Philadelphia's numerous master architects. Many historians have suggested that Myers apprenticed in the office of Samuel Sloan, a prolific architect of numerous schools and hospitals throughout the East.

On March 24, 1860, Myers wed Mary Haines, the daughter of a locally prominent businessman, John Haines. The Myers family raised five children. In 1863, Elijah and Mary decided to move westward. They settled in Springfield, Illinois, where they would make their home for the next nine years. Myers was also said to have been employed by the construction department for the United States Army during the Civil War. In 1872 he moved to Detroit, Michigan, where he established a successful practice.

In 1881, under the pseudonym Tuebor, he won the competition for the best design for the new state Capitol to be built in Austin, Texas. He was hired as the project's architect for \$12,000. Eight architects submitted eleven different designs using imaginative pseudonyms before Myers was chosen as the winner. His resulting 148 original architectural drawings, including this hand-colored watercolor of the south façade, show the exquisite detail for this monumental structure. Dedicated in May 1888, the Capitol measured over 566 feet by 288 feet and cost

more than \$3.7 million to build.

Myers made several major revisions of his original plans, including a change from a square dome to a round one. However, his slow follow-up and his feigned and psychosomatic illnesses made him very difficult to deal with. The Capitol Board, which was overseeing the project, fired him in 1886, two years before the Capitol was completed. Gustav Wilke completed the project using Myers's plans. Extensive renovations of the Texas Capitol were undertaken in the late 1980s, with much attention given to Myers's plans. A fire that came dangerously close to destroying the Capitol in 1983 led to the creation of the Texas State Preservation Board. Its mission, is to "preserve, maintain and restore the Capitol, the General Land Office Building, and their contents and grounds"

In addition to the Texas Capitol, Myers designed the Michigan Capitol building in the 1870s and the Colorado Capitol building in the 1890s. Both of these buildings underwent considerable renovation in the 1980s. Myers also designed the Idaho territorial capitol (now demolished) and a Utah capitol building that was never built. His other works included the parliament buildings in Rio de Janeiro, the asylum building in Mexico City, and numerous courthouses, hospitals, churches, and city halls throughout the United States.

Elijah E. Myers died on March 5, 1909, at his home in Detroit, Michigan. Such was his fame that his obituary ran the next day in the New York Times. Myers was buried in Detroit's Woodlawn Cemetery. Today a plaque detailing his many accomplishments marks his grave.

NOTE: The photograph of Elijah J. Myers (1832-1909) was drawn from the State of Michigan archives. The primary text of the biographical sketch was drawn from an article written by Valerie Marvin and Barbra Thumudo of the Michigan Capitol Tour and Information Service. Additional text was drawn from an article written by Vivian E. Smith and published in the Handbook of Texas Online. Myers was nominated for honorary induction by "The Texas Capitol Student Study Group" sponsored by The STAR DAY Foundation as an 7th and 8th grade after-school student enrichment program to explore and discover the history of the Capitol and plan visits. Myers shall be formally inducted during "THE SPIRIT OF STAR DAY 2013 CELEBRATION" conducted on STAR DAY, Tuesday, February 19, 2013 beginning at 12 noon in the Texas State Capitol Rotunda to celebrate the 167th birthday of the State of Texas with music and featured speakers. The event is sponsored by House District 82 State Representative Tom Craddick and Senate District 31 State Senator Kel Seliger.

THE STAR DAY FOUNDATION

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