

## 1836: The First Session

<p>Video opens with period music and a series of drawings by John Deering of the Old State House under construction.</p> <p>Shot of 1836 House of Representatives as the 1<sup>st</sup> session is about to begin. Construction noises can be heard. Scaffolding still stands against one wall. Shots of the representatives and crowd gathered on the floor. Makeshift desks and chairs are being used, even boards stretched across barrels.</p> <p>One of the representatives tries to get the Speaker's attention.</p> <p>Speaker of the House John Wilson is at the podium. According to contemporary accounts he is a small, pugnacious, bantam rooster of a fellow with slightly psychotic eyes.</p> <p>Close up of representative.</p> <p>Speaker Wilson at the podium</p> <p>Close up of the representative. Shots of other representatives and citizens reacting.</p> <p>There is a strong reaction from the other representatives.</p> <p>Speaker Wilson raps the podium with his gavel and responds</p> <p>Representatives shouting approval</p> <p>Speaker Wilson bangs his gavel.</p>	<p><b>Narrator Voice Over:</b> In 1833 Arkansas Territory, then still largely a wilderness began constructing a new capitol they hopefully named the "State House."</p> <p>Though the structure was not completed when Arkansas was admitted to the Union in 1836, the State House was "fitted up" for the first session of the legislature.</p> <p><b>Representative:</b> Mr. Speaker...Mr. Speaker!</p> <p><b>Wilson:</b> The Chair recognizes the distinguished representative from Independence County.</p> <p><b>Rep:</b> Is it necessary that the workmen make that racket?</p> <p><b>Wilson:</b> I'm told construction will continue for some time.</p> <p><b>Rep:</b> Mr. Speaker, I move that the contractors be instructed to pursue less cacophonous endeavors while the General Assembly is in session or face being cited for contempt.</p> <p>(Cries from the representatives of "Here, here!"; "Second the motion"; "Call the question.")</p> <p><b>Wilson:</b> It has been moved that we throw these damned rascals in jail if they do not belay this noise. All in favor?</p> <p>(A chorus of "Ayes.")</p> <p><b>Wilson:</b> The motion carries. The</p>
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The representative rises tentatively.  
The Speaker is not to be deterred.

Several representatives offer their weapons. The representative takes one and departs. The representatives and the crowd talk loudly. Non-legislators crowd the aisles. Wilson begins to pound his gavel for order.

Sergeant at Arms will inform the contractors.

**Rep:** Sir, I don't think we have a Sergeant-at-Arms.

**Wilson:** Then you go...and take a pistol.

**Wilson:** Land speculators, hangers-on, and office-seekers will clear the aisles!  
The First Session of the General Assembly of the State of Arkansas is called to order this 13<sup>th</sup> day of September, 1836.