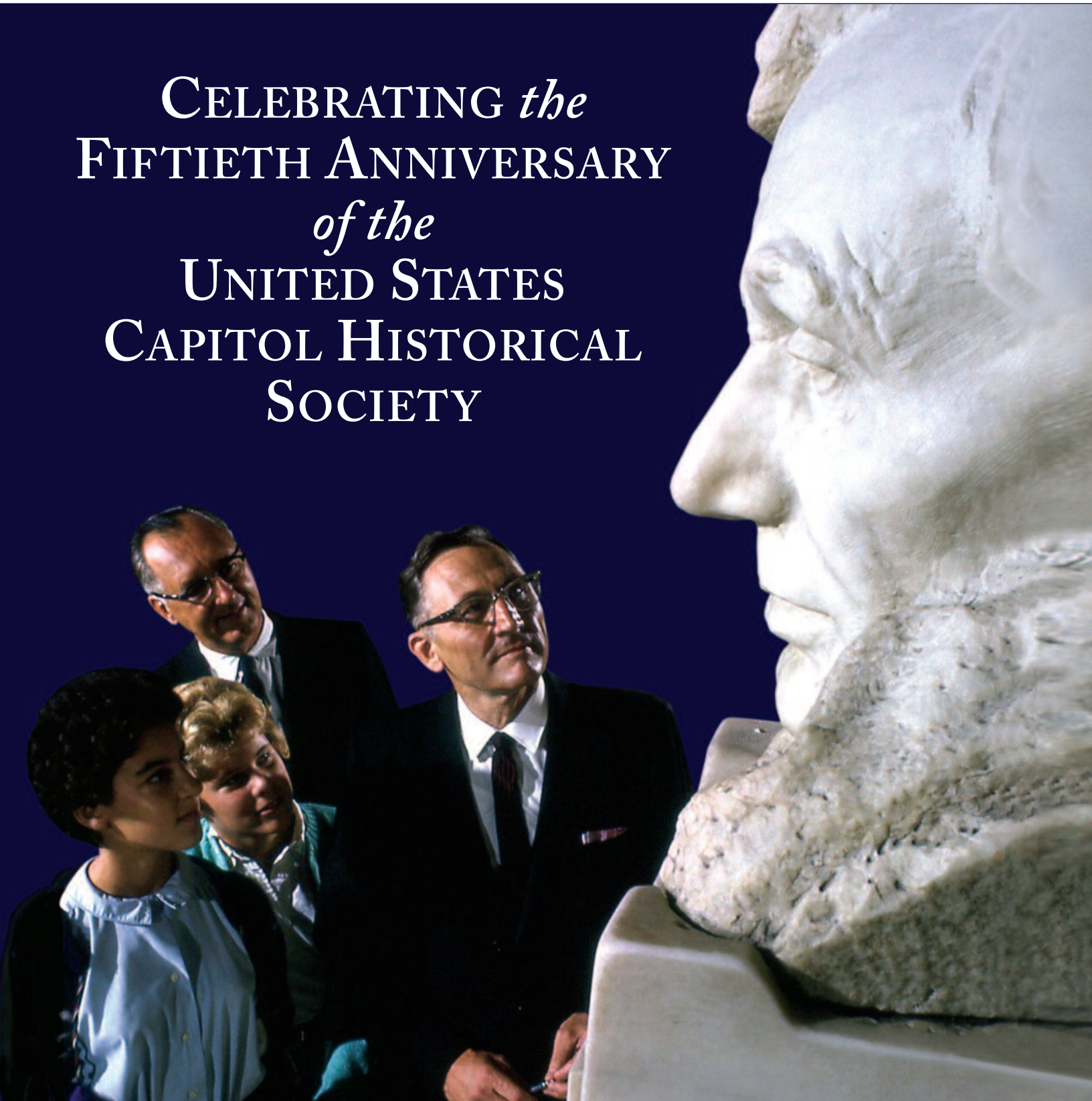


SPECIAL EDITION

# *THE CAPITOL DOME*

CELEBRATING *the*  
FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY  
*of the*  
UNITED STATES  
CAPITOL HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY





Various U.S. presidents, including John F. Kennedy, Harry Truman, Herbert Hoover, Lyndon Johnson (then vice-president), and Dwight Eisenhower, congratulated or thanked Rep. Fred Schwengel on the founding of the U.S. Capitol Historical Society and the publication of its first book, *We, the People*.

DDE

GETTYSBURG  
PENNSYLVANIA  
Palm Desert, California  
March 11, 1963



THE VICE PRESIDENT  
WASHINGTON

September 2, 1963

Dear Fred:

Dear Fred:

I have just learned  
in the history of  
have organized a  
I have a definite  
of this beautiful  
I am sure, by now  
a Society has been  
be to make available  
many colorful  
place there --  
to the people of

I wish great success  
development of

Honorable Fred  
United States  
116 House  
Washington

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

July 30, 1962

Dear Congressman:

I am most pleased to hear of the plans for the  
formation of a Capitol Historical Association.

Such a group can do much to research and provide  
information on the historical background and traditions  
of the legislative branch of our government. The great  
interest which has been aroused through the work of  
the White House Historical Association gives ample  
evidence of the desire of the people of this country  
to learn more of their Nation's heritage.

I wish the new group every success in their  
work.

Sincerely yours,

The Honorable Fred Schwengel  
Member of Congress  
House Office Building  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Schwengel:

The personalized, leather-bound  
has just arrived and I wish to thank you  
for remembering me with it.

It is a beautiful book and I am delighted to have it for  
my Library. It was kind and thoughtful of you to send  
it to me.

Sincerely yours,

Honorable Fred Schwengel  
President

for your thought-  
ful statement  
of the statement  
of the United  
States Society.

statement, I would  
outstanding job  
circumstances, and  
you soon will have

"We, the People"  
shall look forward

My regards to you.

Sincerely,

Capitol Historical  
Society

Cori-Astoria Towers  
Box 22, New York  
City, 10014  
1964

the beautiful  
United States  
I thank you for  
sending it to me.

opportunity to wish  
you a Happy New Year.

Yours faithfully,

The Honorable Fred Schwengel, President  
United States Capitol Historical Society  
U. S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D. C.

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For more information on our newest  
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#### *About the Authors*

**Jeffrey Hearn** is a Washington, D.C.-based historian and research consultant. A former research assistant of Fred Schwengel's at the U.S. Capitol Historical Society, he is currently working on a biography of Schwengel.

**Donald Kennon** is chief historian and vice president for Scholarship and Education with the United States Capitol Historical Society. He joined the staff in 1981 as associate historian. He has served under all three of the society's presidents and he has witnessed three-fifths of the organization's history.

#### *Editor's Note*

This special edition of *The Capitol Dome* celebrates the U.S. Capitol Historical Society's fiftieth anniversary. The main article begins with an examination of the life of our founder, Rep. Fred Schwengel, and continues with a history of the Society from its founding through 2012. Our appreciation goes out to all those who have helped us fulfill our mission over the last fifty years: in short, educating the public about the history of the Capitol and Congress.



*Cover: Congressman Fred Schwengel, the founder of the United States Capitol Historical Society, leads a tour group through the Capitol rotunda, pausing at the marble bust of Abraham Lincoln by Gutzon Borglum. Schwengel's love of history and his involvement in commemorations of the life of Lincoln led to the founding of the society in 1962.*



# THE U.S. CAPITOL HISTORICAL SOCIETY REACHES FIFTY

## PART I

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### FRED SCHWENGEL AND THE FOUNDING OF THE UNITED STATES CAPITOL HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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*By Jeffrey Hearn*

**B**Y THE TIME FRED SCHWENGEL arrived on Capitol Hill in 1955 as a freshman member of the U. S. House of Representatives from Iowa, he had already worn a great many hats in the course of a life filled with interesting experiences and interesting people. He was a joiner, a ready volunteer, and a tireless booster. He was an entrepreneur and a promoter. He loved his country and he loved its history, his passion for each inseparable from the other. And all this helped prepare him for the role he would eventually play as the driving force behind the founding of the United States Capitol Historical Society in 1962.

#### **HORATIO ALGER ON THE MIDDLE BORDER**

THE SON OF IMMIGRANT PARENTS, Schwengel was born in 1906 and raised in a German Baptist farming community in north central Iowa, near Sheffield, in Franklin County, surrounded by a large extended

family and neighbors who had come to America from a farming community in northwest Germany not many years before. With only German spoken at home, and church services delivered in German as well, he rarely heard the English language spoken as a young child, and did not learn to speak English himself until he began to attend school at the nearby one-room schoolhouse.

Many of the most important lessons he learned were taught at home, however, at the kitchen table, by his father. "Often," Schwengel would recall, "he would talk to the family about how fortunate he was that he came to America so we could be born in this great country. He talked about being involved." His father applied for citizenship immediately after he arrived in the United States, and passed the exam as soon as he could take it. "He was as proud as he could be to be a citizen. He told us about that very often."

Staying in school long enough to get a high school education was not always easy

when a big, strong son could be of great assistance at home on a small family farm, but Schwengel continued to pursue his education, often at great sacrifice, and graduated from high school in 1926. He had proven to be a talented athlete by this time; his exploits as a literal one-man track team earned him multiple college scholarship offers. At Northeast Missouri State Teachers College he excelled at both football and track and field, and, in addition to his classes and the jobs he worked to help pay his way through school, he helped found a college fraternity, joined the dramatic society and the history club, and dabbled in campus politics.

Graduating from college in 1930 with the storm clouds of the Great Depression looming on the horizon, he landed a job as a high school teacher and athletic coach in tiny Shelbina, Missouri. While there he discovered a talented schoolgirl athlete in a nearby town and developed her into a world record-setting discus thrower who delivered a silver medal-winning perform-



*Fred Schwengel (back row, second from right) in a family photograph with his brothers Carl, Harrold, Herbert, Forrest, sister Helene, and his mother Margaret and father Gerhardt.*



ance at the 1932 Olympic Games in Los Angeles. His own teams at the high school also outperformed expectations, and his coaching success made it possible for him to move on after two years to a bigger job with the school district back in his college town of Kirksville, Missouri. There, in addition to getting married to his college sweetheart Ethel Cassidy and beginning a family, Schwengel kept busy with a never-ending whirl of civic, religious, fraternal, and political activities.

He was active in his church, and launched a breakfast Sunday school program in 1933 for local newsboys that attracted Kansas City and St. Louis newspapermen to town to write about it. He served as "Dad" for the local Masonic DeMolay youth chapter and as an officer in their statewide athletic association. As a charter member of a new business and professional men's club in Kirksville he sponsored a recreational playground program. He served his college fraternity as its national president for four years in the

early 1930s and continued on after that as national secretary for many more years.

When the Young Republicans organized in the county in 1936, Schwengel became a township president. He attended that year's Republican National Convention in Cleveland, and then went to presidential nominee Alf Landon's acceptance speech in Topeka, Kansas, where he tracked down the chairman of the congressional campaign committee and persuaded him to make a financial contribution to the campaign of a candidate back in Missouri that party leaders in Washington considered a lost cause. With that money to work with, the race became a competitive one and Schwengel only narrowly missed an opportunity to go to Washington, D.C. as his candidate's congressional aide. His summers were filled with temporary jobs while school was out, graduate courses at the University of Iowa, and Missouri National Guard duty.

In addition to all this, by 1937 he was serving as the district president of the state

high school coaches association and had been promoted to supervisor for physical instruction for the entire school district. That same year, as director of the annual May festival, an event involving 1,300 school children, he integrated the festival for the first time by having children from the segregated black schools participate alongside the white children.

It was a busy life he met with boundless enthusiasm and a seemingly endless supply of energy. But with a growing family to support in hard times, when a small-town teacher's salary could only stretch so far, Schwengel eventually decided it was time to leave the teaching profession and look for better opportunities elsewhere.

In 1937 he moved to Davenport, Iowa to begin a new career in the insurance business. There he worked hard to establish himself in his new profession, eventually becoming his company's general agent for the region, and once again plunged into a wide variety of activities, just as he had in Kirksville. He remained active in his





*A natural athlete, Fred Schwengel excelled in football and track at the Teachers College in Kirksville, Missouri (now Truman State University).*

PICKLER MEMORIAL LIBRARY, TRUMAN STATE UNIVERSITY (ALL)

church and played an important role in interfaith activities in the community. He became more deeply involved at the Masonic Temple than ever before and also joined the Moose lodge. He joined the Junior Chamber of Commerce, became president of the Davenport chapter, and then went on to win election statewide as president of the Iowa Jaycees. And somehow he found the time to lend a hand when needed to the local Red Cross, the Community Chest, and the Boy Scouts as well.

Schwengel was also devoting more time than ever to politics. As president of the Scott County Young Republicans, he helped breathe new life into the local GOP after the New Deal had dealt Old Guard Republicans a losing hand in Davenport. He ran unsuccessfully for alderman in 1940, but four years later was persuaded to run for state representative and won, going on to serve five terms in the Iowa General Assembly before an opportunity to run for an open seat in Congress presented itself in 1954. By then eyeing a run for state governor, Schwengel needed to be persuaded to shift direction and make the

run for Congress, but in the end he entered the race for Iowa's First District and won.

Alongside all these different activities and interests, however, there was one more that had been becoming an ever larger part of his life through the years: a love of history, and, in particular, a passionate interest in Abraham Lincoln. Indeed, it is fair to say that by the time he took the oath of office as a Member of Congress, in addition to everything else, Fred Schwengel was not only an ardent "Lincoln nut" and history buff, he was well on his way to becoming an amateur historian himself.

## DISCOVERING HISTORY

THE BEGINNINGS of Schwengel's interest in history go back at least as far as his college days, when he found himself on a road trip with the football team one morning in Kansas City with some time to kill before the team had to get back on the bus. He happened upon a used bookstore with a box of books out front and a sign that read "Help yourself for a dime." A biography of

Abraham Lincoln caught his eye, and, having just heard an interesting lecture about Lincoln in his political science class, he decided to buy the book. Once he started reading it he found that he could not put it down.

Soon after, Carl Sandburg, who had published *Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years* just two years before in 1926, came to town to speak at a teachers meeting. Encouraged by a professor to attend the talk, Schwengel went and was able to meet Sandburg. He mentioned that he had just bought a Lincoln book himself, written by a fellow named J. G. Holland. Sandburg told him that the Holland book was a good book, one of the best ever written about Lincoln. "Hang onto that book," Schwengel recalled him saying. "It will be worth more than a dime someday." And then Sandburg suggested that if he had an interest in history, he would find Lincoln to be an interesting subject and he might want to get some more books on Lincoln and keep reading about him.

Another chance meeting four years later, this time with a future president of the United States, would further stimulate



Schwengel's growing interest in history. In 1934 Harry Truman, then running for U.S. senator, came to Kirksville to speak at a meeting at the Masonic Temple; Schwengel was in charge of refreshments. Truman's host for the evening was Dr. Willis Bray, a dean at the college. "Brother Schwengel," Bray told Truman, was a historian. Truman grabbed Brother Schwengel by the coat, repeated some of the things he'd said in his speech, and then said "You gotta know your history, young man, if you want to be a good citizen." Like Sandburg's suggestion regarding Lincoln, it was advice Schwengel would take to heart and remember for the rest of his life.

In Davenport, Schwengel soon met Judge James Bollinger. Bollinger was a history buff and Lincoln collector. In fact, he had the largest collection of Lincolniana in the state of Iowa, and every year he traveled to Springfield, Illinois with a carload of friends from Iowa to attend the annual Abraham Lincoln Association banquet celebrating Lincoln's birthday, where he would routinely host an elaborate dinner of his own the night before, followed by a reception back at his hotel room. Schwengel was invited by Bollinger to come along to Springfield with him as his guest and thereby met many of the leading Lincoln aficionados of the day. He became friends with Ralph Newman, for instance, who had opened the Abraham Lincoln Book Shop in Chicago just a few years before and would be a founder of the first Civil War Round Table in 1940. Schwengel was also able to renew his acquaintance with Sandburg in Springfield one year, and let him know that he had taken his advice and begun to add many a Lincoln volume to his bookshelves alongside "the Holland book."

Judge Bollinger was also responsible for getting Schwengel started on a long career as a public speaker by arranging to have him give a patriotic address on Flag Day for the local Women's Relief Corps

auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic, the Civil War veterans group, something he would go on to do annually for many years to come. Schwengel was also active alongside Bollinger in Davenport's History Roundtable, where he served as the club archivist, saving copies of the papers that were delivered by guest

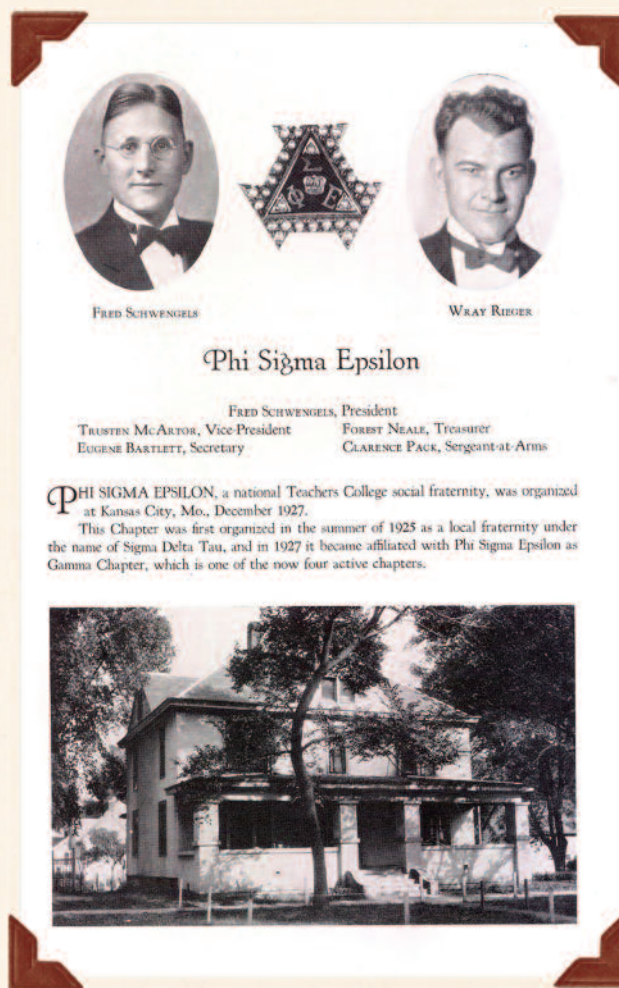
Sanitary Commission during the Civil War who took up the cause of soldier's orphans, and later became the first president of the Women's Christian Temperance Union—with the intention of one day writing a book about her.

By the late 1940s, Schwengel's interest in history increasingly intersected with his

work as a legislator in the Iowa General Assembly. When the organizers of the Herbert Hoover Birthplace Society came to the state legislature looking for help in acquiring land for a park at the Hoover boyhood home in West Branch, Iowa, it was Schwengel who wrote the legislation that secured the funding. He also authored a bill that renamed the Iowa State Orphan's Home in Davenport the Annie Wittenmyer Home, in honor of the woman he was fast becoming an authority on.

The idea for a study of the life of Wittenmyer had been suggested to him by the State Historical Society of Iowa (SHSI). He became friends with a research associate there, William

Petersen, and, according to one source, it was Schwengel, an increasingly influential member of the state legislature, whom Petersen worked with as much as any other as he attempted to "pack" the SHSI's Board of Curators with members who would look favorably upon his promotion to supervisor of the society, which indeed did occur in 1947.



***A natural leader, Fred Schwengel was president of his college fraternity, Phi Sigma Epsilon.***

speakers through the years. He got his first taste of what it was like to be a historian himself by writing and publishing a short history of the Masons in Davenport. And his book collecting began to grow beyond an interest in just Lincoln to include books on women in the Civil War. By 1945 he had begun researching the life of Annie Wittenmyer—a member of the Iowa State





*Schwengel also served on the student council. Note that in these images from his collegiate days, his name was spelled "Schwengels." At some point, he dropped the final "s."*

## CONSENSUS HISTORY ON THE PRAIRIE

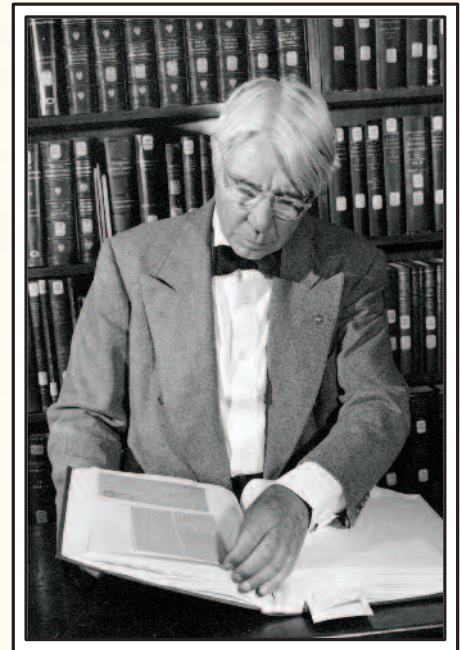
These post-war years were a time when many academic historians were abandoning the interpretive approach of earlier "progressive" historians, who had emphasized the theme of conflict in American history. In the progressive historians' place emerged a "consensus" school of historians who were more interested in what Americans had in common than what divided them, in enduring accomplishments, instead of a recurring battle between the forces of reform and the forces of reaction. It was a way of thinking about the past that encouraged a more celebratory, patriotic approach to the nation's history, very different from the reform-oriented approach it superseded within the discipline, especially when wedded to a focus on good old-fashioned storytelling at a time when many academic historians increasingly thought of their work not as one of the humanities, but as a variety of social science.

Allan Nevins, a two-time Pulitzer Prize-

winning biographer then working on *Ordeal of the Union*, his eight-volume history of the Civil War, was the leading exemplar of this more accessible, narrative approach to history writing at mid-century. Though a professor of history at Columbia University, Nevins was a journalist by training and more concerned with reaching a broad popular audience than engaging in an arcane scholarly conversation with other professional historians. According to Nevins biographer Gerald L. Fetner,

Nevins used narrative not only to tell a story but to propound moral lessons. It was not his inclination to deal in intellectual concepts or theories, like many academic scholars. He preferred emphasizing practical notions about the importance of national unity, principled leadership, liberal politics, enlightened journalism, the social responsibility of business and industry, and scientific and technical progress that added to the cultural improvement of humanity.

In 1939, Nevins and other similarly inclined historians founded the Society of American Historians (SAH) to promote "literary distinction in the writing of history and biography." *American Heritage* magazine, launched in 1954 with Pulitzer Prize-winning Civil War historian and former journalist Bruce Catton at its helm, was sponsored in part by the SAH and dedicated to bringing "good historical writing to the largest possible audience." This was history for history buffs, for amateur enthusiasts, not the "dry-as-dust" (Nevins' term) product of academicians, and Nevins, Catton, *American Heritage*, and the like were all riding high in the 1950s, being eminently more suitable for consumption by a growing middle-class in a time of increasing affluence and Cold War-fueled demands for political consensus than anything that would have been found on the cutting edge of the scholarly world.



CARL SANDBURG HOME NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

*Meeting the American poet and Lincoln biographer Carl Sandburg in 1928 had a profound impact on Schwengel's interest in American history and Abraham Lincoln. In this photograph from a later time in his life, Sandburg is seen examining the Lincoln Papers.*



This was also the kind of history that Schwengel loved, and in Iowa he found something very similar being practiced by the state historical society. William Petersen's own approach to history, and to running a historical society, was very much in tune with the times. He was noted for his interest in making history accessible to a popular audience, in part through the SHSI publication *Palimpsest*. Originally designed for use by history teachers and their students, Petersen sought to attract a broader readership with editorial changes to the magazine such as the inclusion of a greatly expanded number of illustrations and by organizing each month's issue around a common theme. He was also a skilled promoter of the society and succeeded at growing its membership through such activities as his popular steamboat trips on the Mississippi River. "Steamboat Bill," as he was widely known, was a important early scholar of Upper Mississippi River studies and he not only provided members with an enjoyable afternoon on the Mississippi, he regaled his guests with tales of the river and afforded them an opportunity to hobnob with public figures such as his good friend, up-and-coming State Representative Fred Schwengel. By 1960 Petersen's State Historical Society of Iowa had enrolled more members than the historical societies of Illinois, New York, California, and Texas combined, and Schwengel had a ringside seat from the beginning that enabled him to see exactly how Steamboat Bill did it.



HARRY S. TRUMAN LIBRARY AND MUSEUM

*As a young teacher in Kirksville, Schwengel met Harry Truman, then campaigning for the Senate in Missouri. Although Schwengel was a Republican and Truman a Democrat, they shared a passion for history.*

## MR. SCHWENGEL GOES TO WASHINGTON

ONCE IN WASHINGTON, Schwengel's interest in Lincoln and the history of the Civil War soon led him to a new circle of friends who shared his passionate interest in the past. A couple of weeks after he was sworn in as a member of Congress, an item on Schwengel appeared in Drew Pearson's syndicated column *Washington Merry-Go-Round* that described him as "an admirer of Abraham Lincoln and an authority, from his school-teaching days, on the history of the Civil War." Immediately afterwards Schwengel received a visit from Victor Birely, a D.C. investment banker and past president of the Lincoln Group of the District of Columbia, who signed him up as a member of the group. He wrote Ralph Newman to ask whom he should contact

in order to join the D.C. Civil War Round Table. And before that first month in office was out he was on a first name basis with David Mearns, chief of the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress and noted Lincoln scholar, and was already peppering him with queries related to Abraham Lincoln, the Civil War, Annie Wittenmyer, and other historical matters.

He also wasted no time in beginning to explore the seemingly endless historical attractions the area offered. In a letter that spring to a friend back home he said

On the weekends, we go out and see the sights; we have been traveling around quite a bit—Mt. Vernon, Fredericksburg, Manassas, Richmond, Annapolis, Baltimore, and then, of course, seeing a lot of things in Washington, D.C. You are right—this city is full of



history, and in that respect, I am having the time of my life.

In time Schwengel would begin to find his way to historical nooks and crannies far off the beaten path. At the Capitol he found his way down a manhole into a lost corner of the sub-basement and discovered ovens that had been used to bake bread during the Civil War. He counted the number of steps up to the Capitol

Lincoln's birthday, or in Ford's Theatre on the anniversary of Lincoln's death, or at the Battleground National Cemetery in Washington, D.C. on Memorial Day. He continued giving his annual Flag Day addresses for the Women's Relief Corps, only now he gave them on the steps of the Capitol. He spoke at Valley Forge on "Washington, Lafayette, Truth and Liberty" and on the House floor he reminded his colleagues of the 200th anniversary of

tives and Related Events Since 1857." At the conclusion of Schwengel's presentation, his colleague, Rep. Paul Cunningham of Iowa, observed

I have known for some time that the gentleman has been greatly interested all of his life in the history of America. As a citizen of the state of Iowa, he did much in the way of research about our country. He has made speeches to many great organizations all across the United States as well as his home State about the history of this great land and this great Government of ours. So I was really not surprised when the gentleman came to Congress to find him turn his attention to one of the greatest things about our country, the Capitol, these buildings, and the background of them.

New members rarely get noticed in Congress, unless it is for the wrong reasons. The conventional advice has always been that one should keep a low profile, learn the ropes, pay one's dues, and bide one's time. It was best to be a workhorse, not a show horse. But Fred Schwengel had begun to carve out an unusual niche for himself. He played by the rules in his committee work, and within his party caucus, but the past was a policy realm where the usual rules did not always apply in quite the same way. Others who were interested in history were generally happy to have another join their ranks. History provided Schwengel with a means to be both a workhorse and a bit of a show horse at the same time, and it would allow him to gain influence in a sphere that was important to him at a speed the seniority system would never have allowed in any other part of his work as a congressman.



*As an insurance businessman in Davenport, Iowa, Schwengel became active in a variety of civic and political organizations, including the Jaycees, whose meetings must have been entertaining to judge from the fellow at Fred's right elbow.*

dome, and the number of columns holding up the upper portion of the dome, to see if popular lore checked out. (It did not.) He discovered there was a cavernous space below the Lincoln Memorial that had been left empty when construction had been completed and began promoting the idea of establishing an enormous Lincoln museum there.

He could also be found giving speeches to the Iowa General Assembly on

British Gen. Braddock's defeat near Fort Duquesne, a "defeat that gave the colonists confidence to rise up and throw off the shackles of colonialism" and as such, an event worthy of annual remembrance.

Early in his second term, in recognition that it was the 100th year that the House of Representatives had met in the same Chamber, he took to the House floor for an hour one day to present a "Brief Story of the House of Representa-



## THE CIVIL WARS

AS SCHWENGEL WAS BEGINNING his new job as a Member of Congress and immersing himself in the history he found all around him in his spare time, one thing, more than any other, was on the minds of those in the history community he was associated with: the coming centennial of the Civil War.

By the mid-1950s, popular interest in the Civil War was reaching new heights. As automobile tourism grew in the post-war years, the Civil War battlefields in the National Park System attracted more visitors than ever. Battle reenactment groups like the North-South Skirmish Association organized and sought to bring the military history of the war back to life. Chicago's Civil War Round Table discussion group spread to dozens of new cities, and Ralph Newman established the Civil War Book Club in 1955 to help the growing audience for such books find their way to the best of them. And a variety of efforts were underway by 1955–56 to ensure that a fitting observance of the centennial of the war would take place.

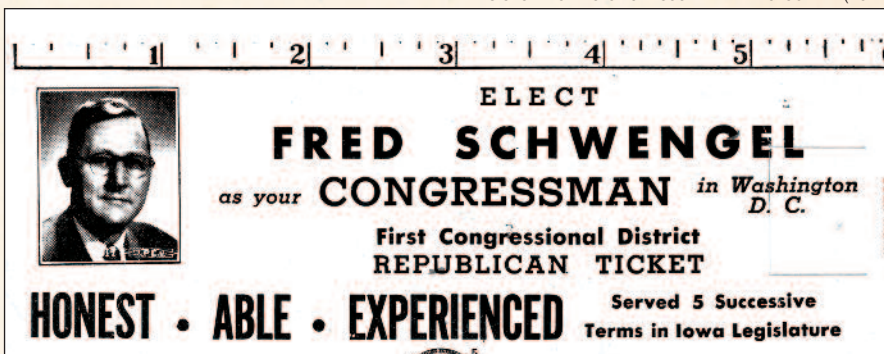
In 1953, the Civil War Centennial Association had been organized by leading members of the original Civil War Round Table, such as Newman and Sandburg, and historians of the Civil War, such as Nevins and Catton. Devoted to the idea of bringing good history to a wide audience, the approach to the commemoration they began lobbying for in 1955 envisioned it as an educational event, a grand national seminar on the history of the war, open to more than just academics, but still dignified and scholarly, hosted by an appropriate university, and privately funded.

At the same time, the National Park Service was developing a ten-year plan for capital improvements—Mission 66—to meet the growing demands that were

being placed on the nation's parks, and by June 1956 the thinking at the National Park Service was that what was needed for the Civil War centennial was a federally-funded commission, ideally located within the Department of Interior, that would

the Civil War centennial were introduced in the House in early 1957, but only two received serious consideration. In February, Rep. William Tuck introduced a resolution to establish a Civil War Centennial Commission that had been drafted by

U.S. CAPITOL HISTORICAL SOCIETY FILE PHOTOGRAPH (BOTH)



*After serving a decade in the Iowa legislature, Schwengel ran for election to the United States Congress in 1954. Ever practical, he campaigned using literature such as this combination ruler and bookmark.*

coordinate the event in a manner consistent with their Mission 66 agenda, which is to say, in a manner that would encourage tourism to historic sites such as the Civil War battlefields in their care.

A similar approach was adopted by the D. C. Civil War Round Table, which established a special committee in August 1956 to pursue the idea of organizing an official centennial agency. They unveiled a plan a few months later for a federally-funded commission that would serve as the chief promoter and coordinator of a more decentralized commemoration than the one sought by the Civil War Centennial Association. By reaching out to civic, patriotic and historical societies, as well as the business community, to encourage the organization of state and local centennial groups across the country, their plan would produce a more elaborate and multifaceted event that would be more like a national history pageant than a national seminar, as entertaining as it was educational, and as good for business as anything else.

A series of joint resolutions concerning

members of the D. C. Civil War Round Table and a National Park Service staffer, and at the last second, just as hearings were about to be held by the House Judiciary Committee on the legislation. Schwengel introduced a resolution embodying the approach favored by the Civil War Centennial Association. The final version of the legislation, which Schwengel helped shape into its final form, amended Tuck's resolution to incorporate a variation on the Schwengel/Civil War Centennial Association call for a National Assembly of Historians and was signed into law on September 7, 1957.

Schwengel received an appointment to the commission, as did historians and Civil War Centennial Association members Bruce Catton and Bell Wiley, historian and Chicago Civil War Round Table member Avery Craven, and Lincoln scholar David Mearns, representing the Library of Congress, but they occupied a minority position of a sort on a commission dominated by members of the D. C. Civil War Round Table—Chairman Ulysses S. Grant III, Vice Chairman



William Tuck, Executive Director Karl Betts, and Assistant Executive Director Pat Jones—and their agenda. Schwengel's primary role in the beginning was to serve

Schwengel's congressional office, a resolution was adopted urging the creation of a United States Abraham Lincoln Sesquicentennial Commission for the purpose of

July, and, finally, with only a few days left in the session before adjournment, a resolution calling for the creation of the commission passed both the Senate and



*As chairman of the congressional committee on the observance of the sesquicentennial of Lincoln's birth in 1959, Schwengel was master of ceremonies at the dinner held at the Statler Hilton Hotel in Washington, D.C. at which President Eisenhower spoke.*

as chairman of the commission's Legislative Committee, which would monitor legislation of interest to, and draft legislation on behalf of, the commission.

## ABE, CARL, SAM, AND FRED

AS PREPARATIONS FOR THE Civil War centennial were being made, a related project was developing in the local Lincoln community—the promotion of a nationwide celebration of the 150th anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's birth—and Fred Schwengel was right in the middle of the planning for this event as well.

Schwengel was already serving on the Board of Governors of the Lincoln Group of D.C., alongside Victor Birely, the past president who had invited him to join the group just two years before, and David Mearns. In February 1957 he was elected first vice-president of the Lincoln Group, and at the April meeting of the board of governors and executive committee, held one evening in

organizing, planning, and carrying out an appropriate nationwide observance of Lincoln's birth in 1959.

A special committee was appointed to act as a liaison between the Lincoln Group and any official organization which might be set up to promote the observance, and the leaders of the committee began working with Schwengel and Rep. Leo Allen to draft a joint resolution that could be introduced in Congress. A resolution calling for the establishment of the commission was introduced in both the Senate and the House in early June, and four more similar resolutions were subsequently introduced, including one by Schwengel himself, while the Lincoln Group set to work lobbying Members of Congress to get behind the idea of a Lincoln Sesquicentennial Commission and encouraging members of the Lincoln community across the nation to ask their representatives to support the legislation as well. Hearings were scheduled for the end of

the House, and on September 2, 1957 was signed into law.

Schwengel was not appointed to the Lincoln Sesquicentennial Commission; the active members chosen from Congress were all from the Lincoln-associated states of Kentucky, Indiana, and Illinois. He would, however, be made an Honorary Member of the commission, and he introduced the legislation calling for a joint session of Congress to honor Lincoln on the anniversary of his birth. He was then named a member of the Joint Committee of Arrangements that was subsequently established to organize the event, the only member of the committee not from a state that Lincoln had been born, raised, or lived in. When the Joint Committee met, Schwengel was chosen to serve as its chairman, in spite of the fact that he was a member of the minority, a Republican in a Congress controlled by the Democrats. This rare honor came as a surprise to him, and to understand how it came about it is necessary to mention Schwengel's role in



the controversy over the proposed extension of the east front of the Capitol, which was coming to a head at the same time.

The idea of adding an extension to the east front of the Capitol had been around since the Civil War, and a detailed proposal for how to do it had been on the table for over fifty years, but there had always been opposition to the idea, and the debate between the two sides had never been resolved. In 1955, however, the Democrats regained control of the House and Sam Rayburn, who supported the idea of an east front extension, once again became Speaker. The Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 had led to a need for new committee hearing rooms and additional office space for congressional staff. At the same time, the sandstone exterior of the Capitol was not aging well. It was worn, and covered in 36 layers of paint. Pieces of stone and concrete from previous repair work, sometimes very large pieces, were breaking off and falling to the ground below. Rayburn believed the extension was an answer to both problems and decided it was time for the debate to end and action to be taken.

Rayburn, working in the House, and Majority Leader Lyndon Johnson, working in the Senate, saw to it that the Legislative Appropriations Act of 1956 included five million dollars to “provide for the extension, reconstruction, and replacement of the Central Portion of the United States Capitol.” But while action was now being taken, the debate did not end. Alarmed at what they believed to be drastic and unnecessary plans for change to the Capitol, the American Institute of Architects, joined by historic and patriotic societies wishing to preserve a site of such historical significance, actively opposed the changes that were underway. And likeminded members of Congress introduced several bills seeking to put a stop to the planned extension. Fred Schwengel was the author of one of those bills.

As he would later explain from the House floor

Since I have been here, and because of my special interest in history, it has been an unusual and great pleasure and thrilling experience to explore and study the rich history of this the world's greatest and finest symbol of freedom and liberty—our Capitol. The Capitol of these United States. So, when this discussion of the Capitol extension project started, I had more than a casual interest in it. And like so many I responded to the strong sentiment that is evident in so many places against extension.

Wishing to learn as much as he could to enable himself to better defend his position, he undertook a personal inspection of the central portion of the Capitol to see for himself just what condition it was in. He spent several weeks researching the history of the construction of the Capitol, with special attention paid to the kinds of changes that had been made to the building through the years. And what he learned as a result of his inspection tours and research convinced him of something. He was wrong.

Schwengel went to see Rep. Ben Jensen, a senior Republican from Iowa who served as a mentor to Schwengel when he first arrived in Congress, explained the situation to him, and asked what he should do. Jensen suggested he arrange to speak during Special Order one day when the House would be mostly empty, go on record regarding how he was wrong about the issue, and ask unanimous consent to have his bill withdrawn. The day Schwengel spoke, there were only a dozen members or so present, but instead of keeping it short, he made the most of the hour he had been given, not only explaining in detail how he had come to

change his mind about the matter, but going on at even greater length to “present the case to indicate the urgency and need of immediate consideration and immediate action” on the legislation authorizing the east front extension that Rayburn had pushed through in 1955.

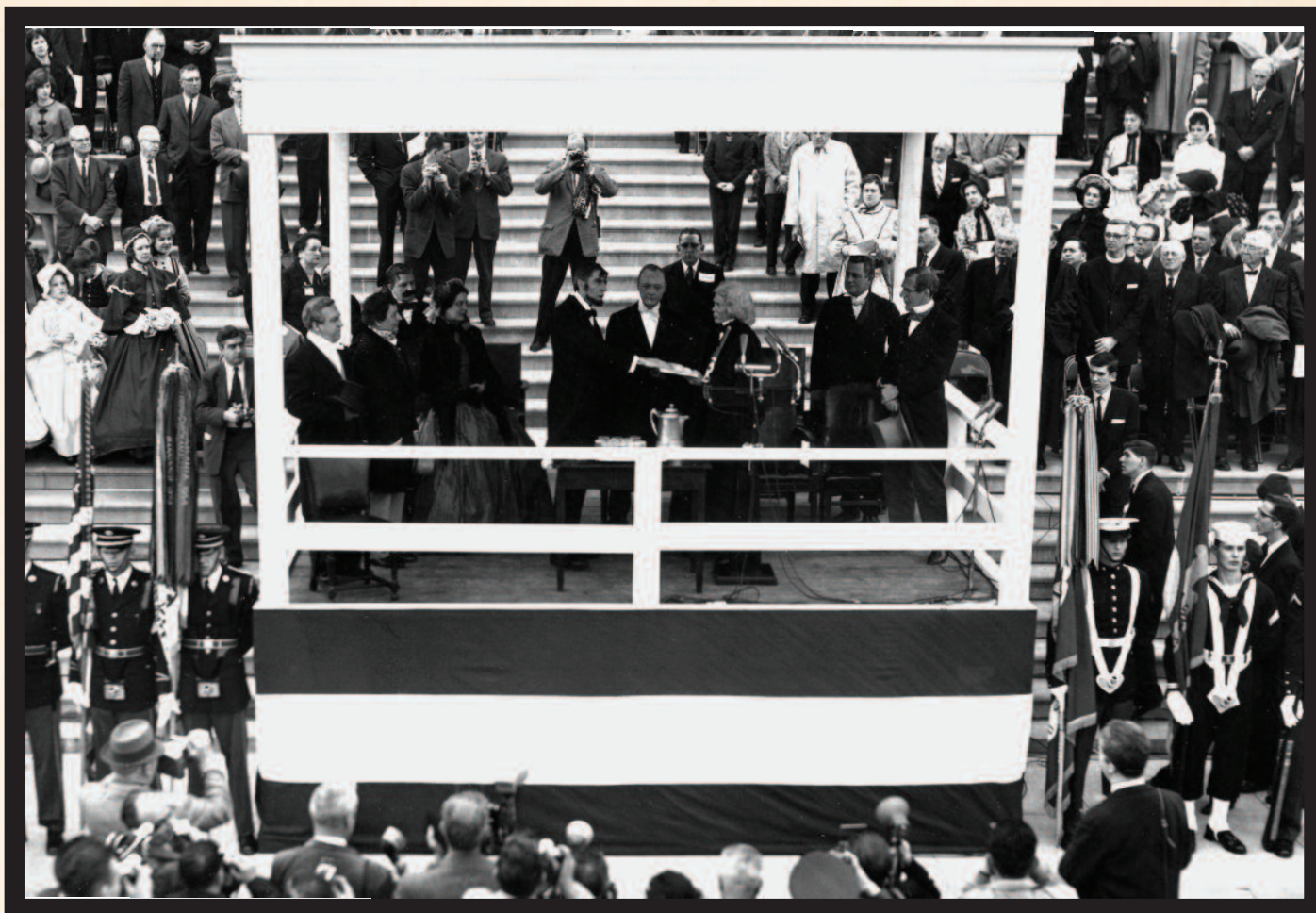
When he was finished, Rayburn asked him to yield the floor and then proceeded to make news by taking the opportunity to complain about the manner in which he had been made “the whipping boy, in a way, on this thing” by the opponents of the extension. He also sent a page over to Schwengel with a note that read “When you get through with your remarks you see me in my office,” and there, in the Speaker's office afterwards, Schwengel would recall, “[Rayburn] made a great to-do about my ‘statesmanship’ and so on, and we became great friends.”

That August, as the last potential legislative roadblock to the extension was voted down in the Senate, Schwengel took the floor in the House to attempt to set the record straight one more time in light of the American Institute of Architect's vote to reaffirm their opposition to the extension at their annual convention the month before and to demand that the AIA apologize to Rayburn for making him “the brunt of their attack.”

Just days later, Schwengel's bill calling for the Joint Session for the Lincoln Sesquicentennial was signed into law. He went to see Rayburn about it and was told that since he was the author of the bill, he ought to get the members of the committee together and get it organized. Being a member of the minority, he was not so sure he should be the one calling the meeting, but “[Rayburn] said, ‘You do what I tell you, don't you?’ with a glint in his eye,” so Schwengel called the meeting.

Now, it was a Democratic Congress, and I assumed the chairman of the committee would be a Democrat.





But, when the members met in my office, Vance Hartke nominated me for the chairman. I said, "There must be other nominations." But there were none, so I was elected by acclamation.

I said to Sen. Hartke afterwards, "How come you nominated me? This is a Democratic Congress."

Hartke replied: "I know enough about this place to know that you do what Sam Rayburn tells you. And Sam Rayburn asked that you be the chairman."

It was a kindness that Schwengel was soon able to repay. The committee invited Carl Sandburg to speak at the joint session and he delivered an especially moving address. Afterwards, Schwengel escorted Sandburg to the Speaker's office. As they entered the room, Schwengel felt

*Schwengel also chaired the congressional committee for the centennial of Lincoln's First Inaugural in 1961, which included this reenactment. Schwengel can be seen just to the right of the second post from the right. Carl Sandburg gave a memorable speech on this occasion to a joint session of Congress in the House Chamber.*

a tug at his elbow. It was Rayburn. "Young man," he said, "this is the most dramatic time in my experience in this place, and your resolution made it possible. I thank you."

A bond had been formed between Rayburn and Schwengel. On Saturday mornings Rayburn would often eat breakfast at the Capitol, and Schwengel, who also headed for Capitol Hill many a Saturday morning when he was in town so that he could spend time in the Library of Congress studying Lincoln, would often see Rayburn at breakfast and be waved over to join the Speaker at his table. "I would spend hours with him,

talking about his experiences, about his reminiscences, his counsel and advice."

They also talked about an idea that was increasingly on Schwengel's mind: the need for a historical society devoted to the U. S. Capitol. It was a conversation Schwengel was having with others by 1959, too, starting with Stephen V. Feeley, a Capitol Hill staffer who, while still a newspaper correspondent, had published *The Story of the Capitol* in 1957, a history of the building that was in some ways similar to *We, the People*, the best-selling guide that the USCHS would later publish. "By damn, let's do something about it!"





*Following the reorganization of the Civil War Centennial Commission, President Kennedy greeted the commission members, including Schwengel, at the White House.*

Schwengel recalled Rayburn saying when they talked about the idea. For the moment, however, the historical society remained an idea whose time had not yet come.

## THE GATHERING STORM

IN THE MEANWHILE, the anniversary of the Civil War continued to draw nearer. And though much of the work of the Civil War Centennial Commission was concerned with organizing a commemoration that would give a back seat to the activities that Schwengel and the professional historians on the commission believed were most important, in January 1959 a Committee on Historical Activities was added by Commission Chairman Grant, composed of the members who most favored a dignified, and scholarly, commemoration: Wiley (Chair), Craven, Mearns, and Schwengel. This allowed them some latitude to work within the commission to accomplish their goals for the centennial, but their frustration with the direction the commission, and thereby the centennial, was taking continued to grow nevertheless.

Outside of the commission, in Congress, Schwengel took inspiration from the success of the Joint Session celebrating Lincoln's Sesquicentennial and arranged for two hours to be set aside in the House on May 18, 1960 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the nomination of Abraham Lincoln as a candidate for president. Schwengel and several other Members took the floor, seeking "to use this House and take advantage of every opportunity to recall our heritage and the great blessings that have been ours because we were fortunate to have such men in the crucial times in our history," as he put it. In his own opening remarks on the day of the anniversary, Schwengel spoke of the lessons the study of history could impart, echoing the advice he had received so many years before from Harry Truman.

I know of nothing that the people of our country need more than an intelligent and understanding patriotism.

I believe that the study of history can be not only the most effective teacher of patriotism, but maybe the only teacher of real patriotism.

... the more we know about the struggles of our Nation, the great men who initiated great ideas and led it, and the better we understand the principles that sustain its people in periods of crises, the deeper will be our feeling for our country.

With 1960 being an election year, he hoped to "to discover what lessons the canvass for 1860 may impart to all of us, whatever our allegiance, 100 years later as we approach another critical, another climactic campaign."

The subsequent anniversary of Lincoln's first inaugural would provide Schwengel with an even larger stage from which to articulate the belief that the Civil War centennial should be approached in a sober and thoughtful manner as an opportunity to reflect upon and learn from a tragic, but important, time in our nation's history. As had been the case with the Joint Session of Congress for the Lincoln Sesquicentennial, the original idea had not been his, but he would take the lead in organizing the event within Congress and in large measure make it his own.

The idea of reenacting Lincoln's first inaugural had originally been presented to the D.C. Civil War Round Table by Paul Sedgwick in 1957. When the D.C. Civil War Centennial Commission was established in 1958, Sedgwick became chairman, a Lincoln Inaugural Centennial Committee was established, and the next two years were spent laying the groundwork for the reenactment. Sedgwick announced their plans in October 1960. On March 4, 1961, there was to be a parade up Pennsylvania Avenue to the Capitol, leading to an address before a joint session of Congress and a reenactment of the inauguration ceremony, with actor Raymond Massey delivering Lincoln's inaugural address. This would be followed by a luncheon and commemorative



program at the historic Willard Hotel and then a costume inaugural ball that evening. A reenactment composed of “parades and pageantry outdoing the actual event 100 years earlier,” said the Washington Post, as it reported on Sedgwick’s announcement.

Just days before the Kennedy Inauguration was to take place, Schwengel introduced a joint resolution calling for the creation of a Joint Committee on Arrangements for the Lincoln Inaugural reenactment, and the project became a collaboration between the national Civil

but this was going to require an act of Congress and their efforts to this end were going nowhere fast. Then, plans for the joint session of Congress were abandoned, as was the idea of holding an inaugural ball. Raymond Massey’s participation fell through, too. In fact, Speaker Rayburn was not at all convinced that there was enough time for the Capitol portion of the proceedings to be organized and suggested that they abandon the commemoration of the first inaugural and focus instead on planning a reenactment of Lincoln’s second

inaugural because it suggested that some angels were better than others, the legislation finally passed the House on February 23d and the Senate on February 24th. With no time to waste, Schwengel convened a meeting of the still unofficial joint committee and staff in his office the next day, a Saturday, and it was not until March 1st, three days before the event was to take place, that the bill—the first signed by President Kennedy—would become law.

In the rush of those last few weeks, Paul Sedgwick’s Lincoln Inaugural reenactment turned into Fred Schwengel’s Lincoln Inaugural reenactment. Once again, Schwengel was not only named a member of the Joint Committee on Arrangements, the only member not from Lincoln’s Kentucky, Indiana, or Illinois, but also chosen to be the committee’s chairman. The committee staff was composed almost entirely of friends of his from the Lincoln community. The Joint Committee did not adopt Sedgwick’s suggested program at the Capitol (which he felt “should not be prolonged”), nor did it accept his offer to serve as the master of ceremonies there, and, as Sedgwick would point out to Schwengel when the report of the committee was being prepared for publication, he “was omitted from all of the official photographs, pictures and candid shots—those taken at the Capitol, later at the White House and elsewhere.”

Schwengel himself would serve as master of ceremonies and use the opportunity to stress the idea that:

This experience, if properly understood and commemorated, can do much in our day to help us along our difficult way as we prepare ourselves to contend with the struggles of our day.

On a pillar to the entrance of the Archives Building here in the District of Columbia are inscribed these words:

“The heritage of the past is the



*Founding members of the U.S. Capitol Historical Society met in the summer of 1962 to determine the Society’s purpose and elect its officers. From left to right, Fred Schwengel, Sen. Carl Hayden, and Victor Birely sign the organization’s statement of purpose.*

War Centennial Commission, the D.C. Civil War Centennial Commission, and the Lincoln Group of D.C. (where Schwengel was serving as president). It was not immediately clear, however, that they were going to be able to pull it off. First, Schwengel and Sen. Paul Douglas of Illinois attempted to keep the speaker’s platform and radio-television and photographers’ stand from the Kennedy Inaugural from being torn down, so they could be used for the Lincoln Inaugural reenactment as well,

inaugural in four years. With only a few weeks left in which to pull the event together, it looked as if it was not going to work out.

But Schwengel would not give up. After a dispute in the House Rules Committee, where Chairman Howard Smith, a southern Democrat, complained about the number of “whereas” clauses used in the joint resolution, and went on to suggest that a reference to “the better angels of our nature” (a quote from Lincoln himself) was



seed that brings forth the harvest of the future.”

There is no place in our heritage from which we can take more or better kernels of wisdom and example to plant in the hearts of people now with better prospects for good results in the future than from the life and experience of our most American—American Abraham Lincoln.

Celebration vs. commemoration. Parades and pageantry vs. dignified reflection upon the lessons to be learned. The divide that existed in the Civil War Centennial Commission between the differing approaches to the centennial proposed by the D.C. Civil War Round Table and the Civil War Centennial Association had never gone away. It had only grown larger. And it was about to become worse.

## THE CIVIL WARS, REVISITED

THE CONTENDING FACTIONS within the Civil War Centennial Commission had one thing in common. They shared the orthodox nationalist interpretation of the Civil War that saw it as a sad and painful, but ultimately positive, unifying national experience. The divisively partisan postwar understanding of what the war was about had faded with the end of Reconstruction and the passing from the national scene of the radical Republicans and others who were intent upon “waving the bloody shirt” to gain political advantage. In time, veterans of the conflict would begin to hold joint reunions on their former fields of battle, blue and grey alike accepting that each had fought honorably for a cause they sincerely believed in. Similarly, the dominant view of the war that had emerged by the end of the nineteenth century among historians made room for southern as well as

northern perspectives, and emphasized the manner in which the war had unified the nation and laid the foundation for its future greatness. The lessons everyone at the Civil War Centennial Commission expected to be drawn from the commemoration, therefore, were the lessons that consensus history had to teach.

But not everyone took the same lessons away from the War. In the white South, a belief in the “Lost Cause” of the Confederacy endured, fueling sectional pride at the expense of national unity while the rest of the country largely looked the other way. The African-American community retained a counter-memory of its own regarding the meaning of the war as well, but in Cold War America, and especially in the Jim Crow South (or, for that matter, within the profession of history), such dissenting voices were not welcome and were largely ignored, or worse. And one result of the decentralized approach to the organization of the commemoration of the war favored by those in power on the commission was that the Civil War some chose to commemorate was not quite the Civil War the commission thought it was commemorating.

Sometimes the differences were merely matters of emphasis that bothered some on the commission more than others. To Schwengel and the professional historians, the celebratory, festive air that many events took on suggested an insufficiently serious response to the meaning of the war, and so even when they themselves were personally involved in historical reenactments, such as the commemoration of Lincoln’s first inaugural, for instance, they sought to ensure that the events were more than merely entertaining historical pageants. But other times it was not simply a question of whether people were having too much fun to learn from a commemorative event; it was a question of what they were learning. In the still segregated South it was a fundamentally segregated centennial, where

what was often being commemorated, if not celebrated, was not the Civil War exactly, but the Confederacy. And the state centennial commissions of the North were not really any more integrated than those in the South. It was difficult to find an African-American member anywhere; there were only two in the entire country. Not that this concerned those in charge of the national commission, however. Commission Vice Chairman (and Executive Committee Chairman) William Tuck and Assistant Executive Director Pat Jones were both committed segregationists. And as historian Robert J. Cook has put it, “[a]s well as being ideologically predisposed toward white southern concerns over race, [the Commission Chairman, Gen.] Grant and [Executive Director Karl] Betts believed they were indebted to the powerful southern Democrats in Congress” who controlled their annual appropriation.

But alongside the planning and organizing for the Civil War centennial had come *Brown v. Board of Education*, the Montgomery bus boycott, and the sit-ins at segregated lunch counters in the South. The center, whether in the form of the orthodox nationalist interpretation of the Civil War or contemporary thought regarding the state of the nation, could not hold in the face of growing tensions over race relations. The civil rights movement was finding its voice. Conflict was about to give the lie to consensus. And the Civil War Centennial Commission, and Fred Schwengel, would, for a time, find themselves right in the middle of that conflict.

The commission’s national assembly for 1961 was to be held in April in Charleston, South Carolina, during the anniversary of the attack on Fort Sumter, which signaled the beginning of the war. Accommodations were still segregated there, and the New Jersey delegation, which included an African-American member, made an issue of it, threatening to lead a boycott of the





*The founding members posed for a group photograph following the signing of the Society's founding document.*

meeting. The meeting was moved to the Charleston Naval Base, but then an inflammatory speech brought the luncheon banquet to an abrupt end when the New Jersey delegation demanded to be allowed to respond, and Grant refused their request and declared the banquet adjourned. The next day Charleston celebrated the centennial with a parade, a reenactment of the final negotiations between the commander of Fort Sumter and the Confederates who were poised to begin shelling, and an elaborate fireworks display. But for the commission, the fireworks had only just begun.

The Charleston meeting brought nothing but bad press in its wake, much of it raising doubts about the wisdom of the centennial itself. In Congress moves were made to cut the commission's appropriation by three-quarters, but Schwengel and others managed to stave off the attempt. Wiley, Schwengel and Mearns came to the conclusion that the ultimate source of the troubles the commission was facing was their "staff problem," by which they meant Executive Director Betts; "too much emphasis on celebrations and reenactments—too much Hollywood," Schwengel

would later say, and not enough emphasis on "development of interest in the history of the Civil War."

## A CHANGE IN COMMAND

WITHIN WEEKS OF THE Charleston debacle Wiley and Schwengel were pressing Grant for a special meeting of the commission to address the situation, but getting nowhere. Their desire for a change in leadership received a boost in July when William Tuck resigned and Schwengel became vice chairman of the commission, but they would have to force their special meeting to demand Betts' removal by submitting a petition signed by commission members that Grant could not legally ignore. At the end of August the commission met in executive session. Betts was forced out, but Gen. Grant and another Betts loyalist, Adm. Stuart Ingersoll, who had succeeded Tuck as chairman of the executive committee, resigned as well and followed him out the door. In his parting shot to the press, Betts would sum up the divide within the commission from his

point of view. The limited funds available to the commission "prohibited the employment of scholars to brood and muse on our premises." Instead, the commission had "approached the centennial celebration from a businessman's standpoint," he said. "I think the centennial was good for the American economy. It was good for tourism and business."

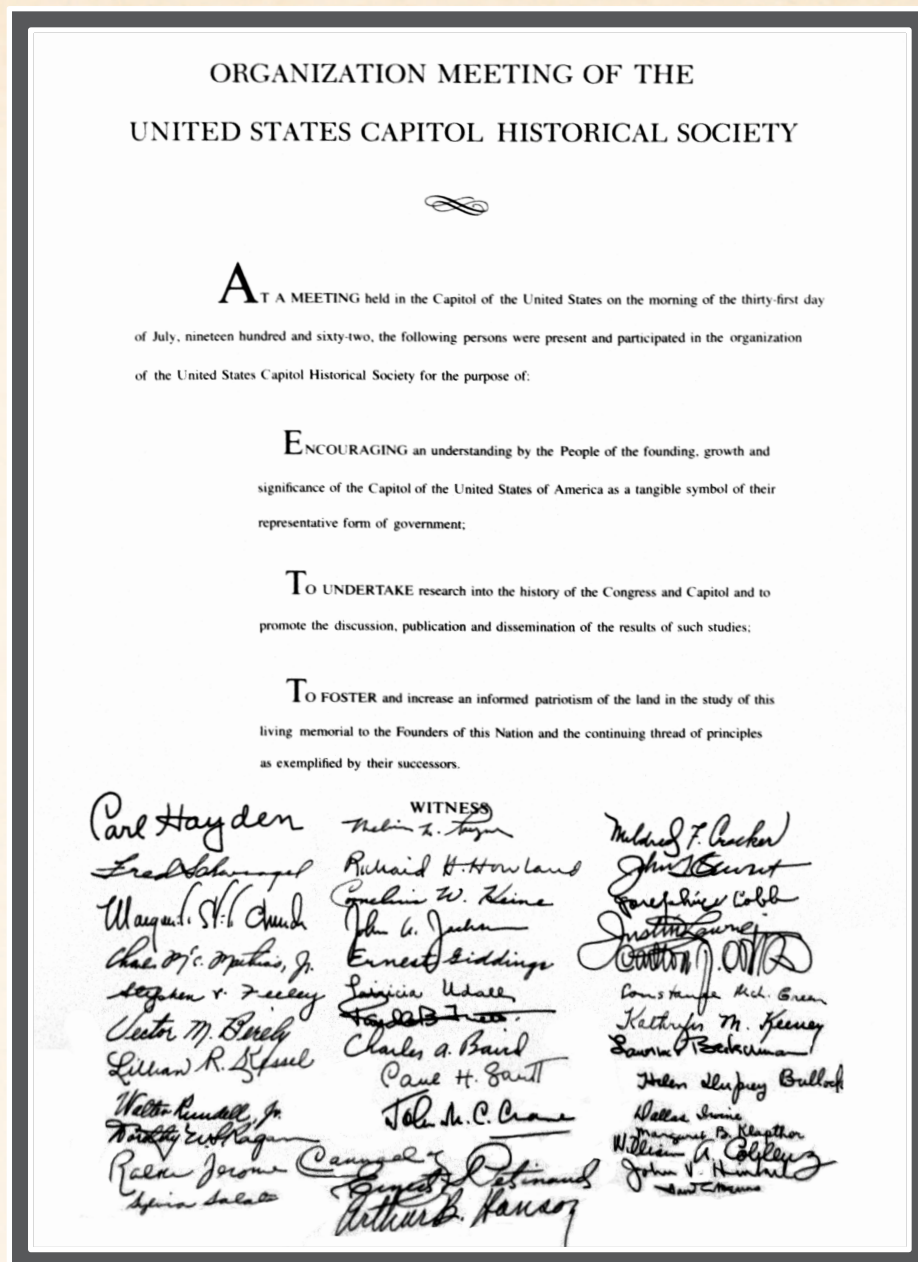
As vice chairman, Schwengel stepped in to serve as interim chairman for a few months, and he had his hands full trying to keep the commission from falling apart in the wake of all the discontent that had been generated around the Charleston meeting. A joint meeting between the national commission and representatives of the state commissions was scheduled for January in hopes that a clearing of the air would calm things down, and a committee was formed to begin the search for a new executive director. Schwengel also got the ball rolling for an observance of the centennial of the Emancipation Proclamation in 1962 that the national commission would take the lead in organizing. But when President Kennedy appointed Allen Nevins to the



commission and he came on board as the new chairman in December, Schwengel was more than happy to hand over the gavel. At the same time, James I. Roberson, Jr., editor of the journal *Civil War History*, was hired as executive director and Bell Wiley became chairman of the executive committee. The professional historians were no longer in the minority on the Civil War Centennial Commission; they were now in charge.

Schwengel would continue to take the lead on legislative matters, such as arranging to have the archivist of the United States made a member of the commission, or monitoring the progress of the commission's annual appropriation, but after Nevins' arrival he was once again just a member of the team. He did continue to be centrally involved in the planning for the Emancipation Proclamation centennial however, and he even came up with a project of his own related to the centennial to work on.

As a freshman member of Congress in 1955 Schwengel had noticed that a piece had been broken off of Vinnie Ream's 1871 statue of Lincoln in the Capitol rotunda; that missing piece was the Emancipation Proclamation that Lincoln was supposed to be holding in his right hand. He began searching "in all the recesses and the store-rooms and all the other likely places where such a piece might be found," but he never found it. So, with the centennial of the Emancipation Proclamation now approaching, he decided it was time to get the statue repaired. He wrote the chairman of the House Administration Committee's Subcommittee of the Library, who had jurisdiction over such matters, and asked him to take the necessary steps to repair the damage. He also wrote the Italian ambassador to see if his government might provide a piece of the same Carrara marble that had been used in the original sculpture for use in the repair. The Library Subcommittee chairman signed on to the project,



*The Society's statement of purpose bearing the signatures of the founders set forth the organization's guiding philosophy.*

the architect of the Capitol found the money to pay for it, and less than three months after Schwengel had made the original request, the Vinnie Ream statue received its second official unveiling in an elaborate ceremony in the rotunda, where, according to the *Washington Post*, "Schwengel ... received nearly as many laudatory words from his Congressional colleagues as did the 16th president."

## AN IDEA WHOSE TIME HAD COME

BY 1962, THEN, FRED Schwengel had watched a friend take charge of a state historical society and make it grow and had presided over a smaller one himself and helped it do the same. He had gotten to know the leading Lincoln scholars and



some of the most celebrated historians of the day. He had moved swiftly to the center of historical activity in the Congress, immersed himself in the history of the Capitol, come to be thought of as an authority on it, and spent a few years thinking seriously about the need for a historical society devoted to it. But when the final spur to action came that motivated him to set in motion the founding of just such a society, ironically, it did not come from Capitol Hill. It came from the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue.

Jacqueline Kennedy made it her mission as First Lady to turn the White House into a virtual museum, in which the interiors would be filled with historically appropriate furnishings of the highest possible quality. A Fine Arts Committee was appointed to help acquire desired items and raise the funds needed to pay for them, an Advisory Committee composed of leading scholars in the decorative arts was recruited to add further expertise to the enterprise, and a curator was hired at the White House who would be responsible for the collection. The White House Historical Association was founded at this time as well, and set to work producing a first-rate history and guidebook for the White House in association with the National Geographic Society. Through the course of the "redecorating" the press reported on every antique shopping trip, every carpet purchase, every rearrangement of the paintings on the walls. And the First Lady herself led the nation on a tour of the restored White House in a television program that was broadcast in February 1962.

Among those taking note of developments at the White House were Members of Congress who understood that there was a need to be doing the same thing at the Capitol. The Old Senate Chamber was in sad shape after years of use for every-

thing from conference committee meetings to cocktail parties, and the Old Supreme Court Chamber below it had been subdivided into office space for committee staff. Senator John Stennis had introduced legislation in 1961 calling for an historic restoration of the spaces, but it failed to gain traction. While there had once been a curator at the Capitol, the position had been left vacant for a generation, and things had a way of disappearing when there was no one minding the store. According to Sen. Mike Mansfield,

The distinguished First Lady has set an example in enhancing the historic significance of the White House which is worthy of emulation. The Capitol also houses a collection of art and antiquities of priceless historic value. There are rooms, paintings, statues, furniture and other objects in this building which bear witness to the dramatic story of the Nation from the earliest days.

This heritage of the Capitol has long been abused and neglected. The collection of art and antiquities has not been adequately safeguarded, maintained, and exhibited. This is not said in any derogatory sense with respect to those who have had responsibilities in connection with the collection. The real problem is that we have paid too little attention to this irreplaceable asset.

In an attempt to remedy the problem, Mansfield introduced legislation calling for the establishment of a Capitol Commission on Art and Antiquities and the hiring of a curator for the Capitol on June 6, 1962; it passed the Senate on July 18th.

In the meantime, the White House

Historical Association had published *The White House: A Historic Guide*. It went on sale on the Fourth of July at the East Wing of the White House and people lined up to buy it. One of those waiting in line was Fred Schwengel. As Nash Castro of the White House Historical Association would later recall,

Schwengel came through there and bought a whole basketful of the books, and said, "I'd like to talk to you." And I said, "Well, any time, Mr. Schwengel." The next Monday he was in my office. He took up my whole morning wanting to know how we did this and so forth.

## GETTING ORGANIZED

ON WEDNESDAY, JULY 11, 1962, Schwengel sent out letters inviting "a few interested persons," or their representatives, to a breakfast meeting the following Tuesday, July 17th, in former Speaker Joe Martin's dining room (F18), "to consider the formation of a United States Capitol Heritage Institution or Society." He had, he said, "been exploring this idea with people who have a kindred interest in conjunction with my interest with the historical aspects of the Capitol." But "additional impetus has been given to the further exploration of this idea since the recent publication by the White House Historical Association." He believed that "a comparable publication on the Capitol would meet with a similar public response," and it might even surpass it. He went on to say

I do not view our efforts to be limited purely to the history of the Capitol and its environs but rather to bring to the people of the United States, without cost to taxpayers, in graphic form a dramatic presentation for use by all of the media of



communications not only the historical side of the Capitol Hill area but to provide an understanding and realization of the great labor which goes on in their behalf in these hallowed halls.

Fourteen people attended that first organizational meeting on July 17th. Some of them were members of Congress, such as Sen. Carl Hayden, Rep. Marguerite Stitt Church, and Schwengel. Others were Hill staffers: John A. Jackson, executive secretary to Sen. Leverett Saltonstall; John Holton, legislative counsel to Speaker John McCormack; Charles Baird, executive secretary to Rep. Charles Hallack; Steve Feeley, clerk to the Subcommittee on Public Buildings and Grounds of the House Public Works Committee; and Schwengel's secretary Sylvia Salato. Members of the local historical community included David Mearns, chief of the Manuscript Division, Library of Congress; Richard H. Howland, head curator, Department of Civil History, Smithsonian Institution; Lillian Kessell, head of Research and Information Division, Architect of the Capitol's Office; John Crane, historian and author; and Victor Birely, collector and vice chairman of the Executive Committee of the Lincoln Sesquicentennial Committee. Also in attendance were Arthur Hansen, general counsel, American Newspaper Publishers Association; and Melvin M. Payne, executive vice president and secretary of the National Geographic Society, who had been centrally involved with the production of the White House Historical Association's guidebook.

In his opening statement, Schwengel said that the story of the Capitol, "its construction and meaning, has not been noted as it could or should have been," and even the story of what has happened there, though in the history books, "needs telling with feeling." He added:



*Schwengel presented Melvin Payne of the National Geographic Society with his membership certificate in the U.S. Capitol Historical Society. Payne would be instrumental in gaining the assistance of NGS in publishing the *We, the People* guidebook to the Capitol that became the Society's first project; its sales put the new organization on a strong fiscal foundation.*

It seems to me that the millions of people, adult and youth, who come here need somehow to be helped while they are here to catch something of the fire that burned in the hearts of those who walked and talked in these halls—Jefferson, Adams, Clay, Webster, Lincoln, Rayburn and all the rest. True lovers of liberty they were. They put cautious and firm action with reasoned conviction to protect and promote ideals.

It seems to me that we must try to do better job of educating our people on these things. This can be done with publications, producing films, better identification of pictures and statues and through organized effort. The development of a wider and more avid interest in

this place we proudly call our Capitol will be good for America.

There was some discussion of what legal form the organization might take, and what its membership structure might be like. Howland proposed that the name be the United States Capitol Historical Society and this was unanimously approved. Hayden was asked to become honorary chairman and accepted. Finally, a steering committee was established, with Schwengel as chairman, to come up with suggestions regarding the permanent form of the organization, its officer structure, and objectives and purpose.

The Steering Committee met a week later in the Senate Dining Room. Schwengel, Birely, Church, Hansen, Howland, Jackson, Kessel, Mearns, Payne, and Salato were joined by Walter





*Schwengel, Sen. Hubert Humphrey (also a vice president of the Society), and Melvin Payne posed for the camera while examining the first edition of the We, the People guidebook.*

Rundell of the American Historical Association and John Stewart of the American Political Science Association. Press coverage was noted and membership possibilities and officer structure were discussed, as was the purpose and scope of the organization. A subcommittee was appointed to draft a statement on purpose and scope and met the next morning to hammer it out; a membership committee met two days after that.

The second meeting of the United States Historical Society took place on July 31st, with thirty-five people in attendance. A letter from President Kennedy was read, in which he stated "such a group can do much to research and provide information on the historical background and traditions of the legislative branch of our government," and wished it every success. There was a report on the first meeting for those who had not been there, and reports from the committees on questions such as the

proposed Articles of Incorporation, Statement of Purpose and Objectives, and membership, and discussion followed. Schwengel was empowered to appoint committees on Constitution and By-Laws, Plans and Programs, and Nomination of Officers, and to appoint a temporary secretary and treasurer. Finally, Mel Payne presented a scroll that had been made up for all present to sign, with Honorary Chairman Hayden being the first, and National Geographic Society photographers on hand to document the scene.

There was one other development that became apparent by the time of the July 28th meeting. Whereas on July 17th, the day before the Mansfield legislation passed the Senate and was sent to the House for consideration, Schwengel anticipated "working closely" in the future with the proposed Capitol Commission and curator, in the reporting on the Society's July 31st meeting, the Capitol Commission was described as the

"Senate rival organization," and it was said, "[a] spokesman for the CHS" now says it might appoint its own curator," which was an idea that had indeed been raised at the meeting. And the fact that "Schwengel's CHS" would be privately funded, while the "Senate favored one" would be funded by the government was cited as "a major difference between the two historical groups."

It would appear that Schwengel had come to the conclusion that the two ideas, first thought to be complementary, were now in direct competition with each other. They did not have to be. There could easily have been a division of labor that allowed them to coexist, just as the White House Historical Association coexisted with the White House Fine Arts Committees and Office of the Curator. But a turf war had broken out around Mansfield's legislation and Schwengel seems to have decided he had to take sides. Mansfield's Capitol Commission on Arts and Antiquities



proved to be dead on arrival in the House Administration Committee. Chairman Omar Burleson did not like it. "Some members," he was quoted as saying, "feel it is something of an intrusion on the legislative branch itself to have some outsider come in here and tell us where to hang pictures." So Burleson was not going to consider it. Speaker McCormick was reported to be against it as well. So was the architect of the Capitol. According to former Senate Historian Richard Baker, Schwengel had allied himself with Florian Thayne of the Architect's office in opposition to the idea of a Capitol Commission and curator, both thinking that they were doing just fine without one, and the House leadership, by now accustomed to listening to Schwengel's advice on history matters, "said 'no thanks' to Senator Mansfield's proposal."

Still, organizational work on the Society kept moving forward at a blistering pace. Articles of Incorporation in the District of Columbia were signed on August 8th, and at the third meeting of the Society, on August 19th, with forty-seven people in attendance, a constitution was adopted and officers were chosen. Schwengel was elected president; Payne, Church, Sen. Hubert Humphrey, Allen Nevins, and Carl Haverlin were chosen vice-presidents. Kessell was elected secretary, and Birely, treasurer. Groundwork began to be laid for a major promotional effort and fundraising efforts were discussed, as well as the projects that the Society was looking to take on. A documentary about the Capitol was a possibility (Schwengel reported that "several major television networks" were interested in producing a program like the First Lady's tour of the White House in which a tour of the Capitol would be featured), but first and foremost on the agenda was the publication of a Capitol guidebook similar to the one that had been published for the White House.

## FIRST STEPS

THE INITIAL PLAN of action was to get a grant of money from somewhere, hire staff, undertake a membership drive on Capitol Hill and beyond, and use the money from those founding memberships to launch the publications program. For the moment, however, there were more plans than action. The rush of business in Congress at the end of the session left Schwengel with little time to devote to the Society, and then he headed home to campaign for reelection. Society Vice President Payne was delegated to act in his place on any Society matters requiring immediate attention until his return in January.

In December, just in time for Christmas, Payne wrote Schwengel with unexpectedly good news.

So convinced is [the National Geographic Society] Board of the noble purposes of your Society and the potential it has for great public service that, at its meeting of December 6th, the Board enthusiastically and unanimously voted a grant of \$10,000 to provide funds for the critical early phase of your Society, to establish it on a sound basis for its planned broader operations, and to "get it off the ground" in the direction of its lofty and idealistic aims.

By February, work was beginning in earnest on the guidebook. Lonnelle Aikman, a staff writer for *National Geographic*, would write the text for the book as well as an article for the magazine that would help publicize the book. Schwengel not only led her on a tour of the Capitol the likes of which few have ever seen, he also made his personal library available to her to help with the research

and met with her regularly to work on the manuscript.

Outside of the guidebook project, however, there was little progress being made. Writing to Society members in late August, Schwengel would apologize for the "delay in keeping you as well informed as we would like, which has been due to the lack of funds, office facilities, and staff, which problems are acute at this time." Moreover, deadlines were approaching that would have to be met if the guidebook were to be published in time to take advantage of the enormous sales Christmas would be certain to bring, and the Society still had not landed the foundation grant it would need to be able to pay for the publication of the book. There was a risk that publication would have to be postponed. With time running out, Melville Bell Grosvenor of the National Geographic Society made a decision. To ensure publication in time for Christmas, the National Geographic would advance the Society an interest-free loan sufficient to cover the costs of publication that could be paid back later, as the sales of the book generated income for the Society. And if the book fizzled and the Society was unable to pay back the loan, the National Geographic Society would suggest to its Board of Trustees that the loan be considered a grant to the Society "in view of the historical significance of the book and its contribution to geographic knowledge."

The extraordinary depth of National Geographic's commitment to the Society would ensure that *We, the People* would be published on time, and it proved to be an immediate success. Before long, not only had the loan been repaid, but the Society had enough money coming in that it could begin to look towards the future with confidence. The United States Capitol History Society had survived its wobbly first steps and was finally on sure footing, ready to begin making some history of its own.



# THE U.S. CAPITOL HISTORICAL SOCIETY REACHES FIFTY

## PART II

### GROWTH FROM 1964 TO 2012



*By Donald Kennon, Ph.D.*

#### “A YOUNG, ENTHUSIASTIC ORGANIZATION”: YEARS OF GROWTH 1964–1977



**S**ALES OF THE FIRST EDITION of *We, the People* had proven that the United States Capitol Historical Society could succeed on an independent privately-financed basis. Over the following decade and a half the leadership built an institutional structure and expanded the Society's programs and publications. From an enterprise that had initially operated out of Representative Schwengel's congressional office with a staff consisting of the president and a secretary, the Society developed into a

mature organization with a suite of offices on Capitol Hill, an information center in the Capitol, and a staff that included an executive director, staff historians, secretaries, and a sales force. Publications ranging from a coloring book for children to a scholarly bibliography for academicians were added to the Society's booklist. Historical items were acquired for donation to the Capitol; a film was produced for visitors to the national capital; and the Society began its major Capitol mural project.

*The offices of the U.S. Capitol Historical Society moved into the Veterans of Foreign Wars Memorial Building on Capitol Hill in April 1967. The Society became the second tenant to occupy offices in the building, succeeding the offices of the staff of the Warren Commission (the President's Commission on the Assassination of President Kennedy).*



## STAFFING AND FACILITIES

RANDLE B. TRUETT BECAME executive director of the Society on a part-time basis early in 1964. Although he served for only a few months, Truett helped to define the role of executive director. Paul E. Ertzinger, a retired FBI special agent, was appointed executive director on July 8, 1964. At the same time, Earl Schenck Miers was appointed chief historian and editor for future publications, and he was asked to write a definitive two-volume history of the Capitol, all of which he had to decline due to poor health.

By the fall of 1965, the Society's office staff consisted of Executive Director Ertzinger, office manager Muriel Biggs, assistant office manager Florence Miller, and James V. Murfin, who in June had become the Society's first staff historian. Murfin's first assignment was to work on the compilation of a bibliography on the Capitol. By this time the organiza-

tion had taken office space at the National Geographic Society building at 1146 16th Street, N.W. The offices were offered rent-free on a year-to-year basis beginning in

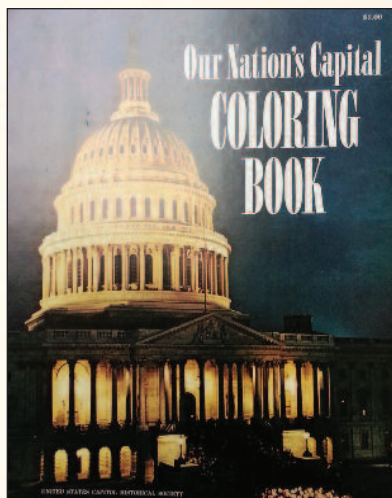


*The Society operated an information and sales center on the ground floor of the Capitol near the Crypt area in the East Front extension from 1968 until construction began on the Capitol Visitor Center.*

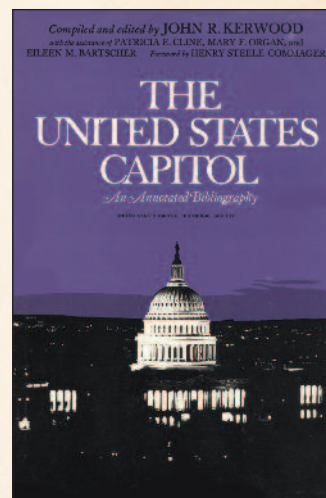
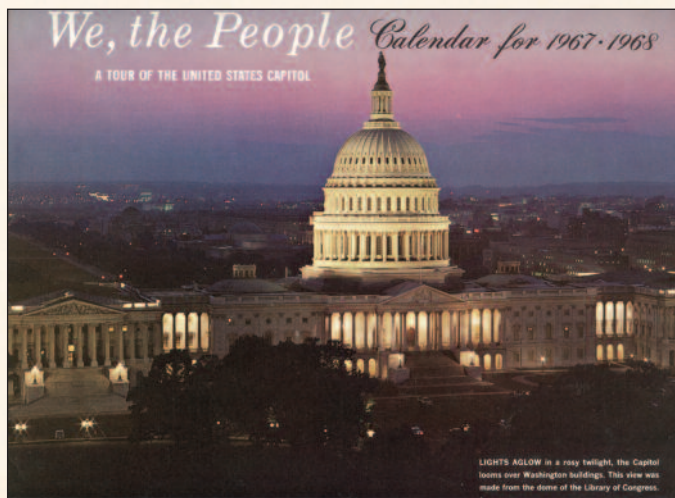
tion had taken office space at the National Geographic Society building at 1146 16th Street, N.W. The offices were offered rent-free on a year-to-year basis beginning in 1964. On April 1, 1967 the offices were moved to their current location on Capitol Hill in the Veterans of Foreign Wars Memorial Building, 200 Maryland Avenue, N.E. The move to a location near the Capitol was a more conven-

ient arrangement for officers and staff.

One of the principal attributes of the VFW building was that it provided storage space within easy delivery distance to the Capitol. *We, the People* remained a popular bestseller at the Capitol, sold from portable desks set up just outside the rotunda. Rep. Schwengel had worked for some time to persuade Congress to establish a visitors center at the Capitol. His efforts finally succeeded with passage of Public Law 90-264 on March 12, 1968, which authorized creation of a visitor center to provide information and materials about the Capitol. The center was constructed on the ground floor near the crypt area in the East Front extension. The Society was granted the privilege to operate the center subject to the approval of the Architect of the Capitol and the Congress. All items displayed and sold at the center had to be approved by a review committee composed of the Architect of the Capitol and representatives from the appropriate congressional committees.



*Early USCHS publications: The Society's second publication (left) was aimed at children—a coloring book with stories about historic Washington, D.C. landmarks. In 1967 the Society began publication of its popular *We, the People* annual calendar (center), featuring daily notations of events in American history.*



*The Society's first scholarly publication (right) was a bibliography of books, articles, and government documents related to the history of the United States Capitol. The Society's staff historian, John Kerwood, compiled and edited the book, which was published by the University of Oklahoma Press in 1973.*



## NEW PUBLICATIONS

THE SOCIETY'S FIRST publication after *We, the People* was aimed at children. Produced in a two-month period in 1965, "Our Nation's Capital Coloring Book" featured color-by-the-numbers illustrations of notable Washington landmarks. The Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge honored the coloring book with the George Washington Honor Medal for 1965. In presenting the award, foundation President Kenneth Wells commended the Society's recognition "that in order to meet the minds of our youth it must bend to the child's own media. The result was a combination coloring-history book that is now being used in classrooms all over America."

The following year the Society inaugurated publication of the *Capitol Dome* newsletter for the membership. The first issue, dated March 1966, featured an editorial, "We Cannot Escape History," on the organization's purposes that stated in part:

Historical societies are coming into their own. No longer are they stuffy museums of dusty books, yellowed papers and artifacts rusting under glass. And one of the leaders of this new surge of interest in American history is the United States Capitol Historical Society, a young, enthusiastic organization dedicated to the premise that "no citizen can understand the present and adequately prepare for the future without a

thorough knowledge of the past."

. . . The Capitol Historical Society is carrying on an active campaign to see that people do know something of their past. Contrary to the popular conception of historical societies, it is immensely successful.

In 1966 Historian and Editor Murfin developed a proposal to create a *We, the People* calendar that would include twelve illustrations relating to the Capitol and Washington, D.C., and historical

notations for every day of the year. His successor, John R. Kerwood, continued the work and the first *We, the People* calendar was advertised in the June 1967 issue of the *Dome*. The calendar

*On March 9, 1967, the Society made its first major donation to the Capitol when Vice President Rep. Marguerite Stitt Church (second from right) presented a sofa that had been owned by Benjamin Henry Latrobe, the second architect of the Capitol, to W. Pat Jennings, the clerk of the House of Representatives. Members of the Latrobe family joined in the presentation ceremony in National Statuary Hall.*



*Two armchairs first used in the House of Representatives in 1857 were donated in 1968. Speaker of the House John McCormack accepted the donation.*



*William M. Maury (at right) became chief historian in 1971 and teamed with his assistant, Maier Fox (at left) to edit the Society's Capitol Studies journal. They are pictured here with President Schwengel and editorial assistant Mary Organ.*





was initially offered in two forms, a school year version (September 1967-August 1968) and a calendar year version (January-December 1968).

Historian Kerwood continued work on the bibliography of the Capitol begun by Murfin. Kerwood and his research assistants reviewed books, articles, and government documents pertaining to the Capitol. Some 2,290 entries were included in the bibliography published by the University of Oklahoma Press in 1973,

architectural history of the Capitol. In 1980 the title of the journal was changed to *Congressional Studies* to reflect an increased emphasis upon congressional history. Following the departure of Maury and Fox from the historical staff in 1981, the responsibility for editing the journal was transferred to the Center for Congressional and Presidential Studies at American University, where it was renamed *Congress and the Presidency*. The Center subsequently assumed sole

item presented to the Capitol was a steel engraving of Henry Clay addressing the U.S. Senate during the Compromise of 1850 debates. The engraving was donated to the Society by Mr. and Mrs. Tudor E. Lewis of Pennsylvania through their congressman.

President Schwengel transferred the engraving to J. George Stewart, Architect of the Capitol, on August 12, 1964.

In 1967 and 1968 the Society made two major donations. The first was an



*President Schwengel presided over the Society's seventh annual meeting on September 23, 1969, held in the Rayburn House Office Building. The featured speaker, Prof. James I. Robertson of Virginia Tech (seated at Schwengel's right), spoke about the Old Capitol Building that served as a prison during the Civil War.*

*The United States Capitol: An Annotated Bibliography*, with a foreword by noted historian Henry Steele Commager.

Kerwood left the Society in 1971 to accept a position with the American Association for State and Local History. His successors were William Maury as editor and historian and Maier Fox as his assistant. Maury and Fox established a journal for the Society entitled *Capitol Studies*, whose initial issue appeared in the spring of 1972. The journal featured interdisciplinary articles on the history of Congress and the art and

sponsorship and responsibility for publishing the journal.

## ACQUISITIONS AND DONATIONS

ONE OF THE SOCIETY'S major functions is the acquisition of art and historical artifacts for donation to the Capitol (a complete list of contributions can be found on the Society's web site, [www.uschs.org](http://www.uschs.org)). These items have either been purchased by or donated to the Society to be given to the Capitol. The first

empire sofa that had originally been owned by Benjamin Henry Latrobe, the second architect of the Capitol. The sofa was given through the Society by its last owner, the Reverend E. Albert Rich of Ellicott City, Maryland. The Latrobe sofa was presented to the Congress in ceremonies on March 9, 1967, and it was placed in what was then known as the Congressional Ladies Retiring Room (now the Lindy Claiborne Boggs Congressional Women's Reading Room).

The second presentation came on July 18, 1968, when the Society donated two



chairs that had originally furnished the House of Representatives in 1857. The Victorian carved oak open armed chairs were accepted by Speaker of the House John W. McCormack.

Several other items were acquired during these years, including Paul Norton's original watercolors of the east and west fronts donated in 1971 and 1977, respectively; Charles McVicker's painting of Carpenter's Hall presented in 1974; and Samuel F. B. Morse's 1841 painting "Old Hall of the House," which the Society arranged through a grant from the Cafritz Foundation to be permanently loaned by the Smithsonian Institution to the Capitol.

One of the more colorful events sponsored by the Society was held on February 27, 1969, when the organization hosted a luncheon honoring members of Congress whose relatives had once served in Congress. Georgia Congressman Robert G. Stephens, Jr., for example, recalled his great great uncle Alexander H. Stephens, who in addition to serving 26 years in the House had also been vice president of the Confederacy. Representative J. J. (Jake) Pickle of Texas claimed descent from Tennessee Congressman Davy Crockett of Alamo fame: "It's distant," he stated of the relationship, "but it's legal."

## "CITY OUT OF WILDERNESS"

THE FULFILLMENT OF THE society's goal to create a film for visitors to the capital required several years of planning and fund raising. After reviewing applications from several film companies, the firm of Francis Thompson, Inc., of New York was contracted in 1972 to produce the film. Thompson and producer Byron McKinney created a stirring 28-minute film, "City Out of Wilderness," that provided an historical overview of the development of the nation's capital,



*Several of the Society's annual meetings were held in the Capitol's historic Old Senate Chamber following its restoration in 1976.*

utilizing historical prints and photographs as well as contemporary motion picture footage. The film premiered in the Eisenhower Theater of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts on January 26, 1975. President Gerald Ford told the audience, "I have a feeling that we may be out of the wilderness but not out of the woods." "City Out of Wilderness" was the first film officially recognized by the American Revolution Bicentennial Administration, and it was recognized with an Oscar nomination for best documentary short subject in 1975.

## CONCLUSION

BY THE END OF 1977, the Society could point with pride to several notable accomplishments. The Capitol bibliography, the journal, the newsletter, the calendar, and "City Out of Wilderness" were each successes in their own right. Taken as a whole, they constituted an admirable record of achievement. These were not all of the contributions in this period, however, for the Society had also embarked upon a major art program to adorn the halls of the House of Representative corridors in the Capitol with historical murals.



# THE ALLYN COX MURAL PROJECT

## 1970-1993

CAPITOL CORRIDORS and ceilings in the Senate wing had been ornately decorated with murals by Italian-American artist Constantino Brumidi in the nineteenth century, but the walls in the House wing corridors had been left plain. President Schwengel, believing that the artistic enhancement of these halls was long overdue, discussed the possibility of a mural project with several art experts, including John Walker, then director of the National Gallery of Art, and J. Carter Brown. They recommended Allyn Cox, a past president of the National Society of Mural Painters, who was at that time engaged in cleaning and restoring Brumidi's rotunda mural, "The Apotheosis of Washington." The Executive Committee agreed with the recommendation and on January 2, 1970 authorized Cox to prepare a project proposal.

Allyn Cox was well-suited to the task of creating an historical mural program for the Capitol. Both of his parents, Kenyon and Louise King Cox, were artists. Among his father's accomplishments were murals at the 1893 World's Columbia Exposition and the Library of Congress. Allyn Cox won the *Prix de Rome* in 1916 and spent four years studying at the American Academy in Italy, as well as assisting the Red Cross during World War I. After returning to the United States, he became noted for his murals in public buildings and private homes.

Cox had already developed an affinity for the Capitol. One of his most famous murals was *George Washington Laying the Cornerstone of the Capitol* for the George Washington National Masonic Memorial in Alexandria, Virginia, painted between



*Photographed with brushes and palette in hand, Allyn Cox posed while applying finishing touches on the scene of George Washington and L'Enfant conferring on the site location for the United States Capitol.*

1948 and 1956. In 1953 he completed a 32-foot section of the Capitol Rotunda frieze that had been left unfinished since 1888. He later painted the portrait of Henry Clay on the wall of the Senate Reception Room as part of the five great senators series, and he added a lunette scene of the 1969 moon landing in the Brumidi corridor on the ground floor of the Senate wing.

### THE HALL OF CAPITOLS

COX'S DESIGNS FOR MURALS on the north-south corridor leading to the House Restaurant were unveiled on December 17, 1970. The mural, referred to as the



ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL

*Cox prepared full-size "cartoons" of his designs prior to applying them to the walls and ceiling. These charcoal sketches provided the outline for painting the scenes on canvas affixed to the walls and ceiling.*

Hall of Capitols, consisted of subjects chosen from the history of the Capitol. It included depictions of all the buildings that have housed Congress and its predecessors, portraits of all of the architects of the Capitol, and eight historic scenes from the building's history. The latter consisted of the burning of the Capitol in 1814, the





ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL

*This scene from the Hall of Capitols depicts the House of Representatives in 1838. Cox researched old prints and documents to authenticate his designs.*

provided by the Society, the Art and Reference Division of the Architect's Office, the Library of Congress, and other reference libraries to ensure the mural's historical authenticity. Because the mural was designed to fit on the curved and arched ceiling of the corridor, Cox and his assistants had to overcome a unique problem of perspective so that

Capitol as a hospital during the Civil War, Washington and L'Enfant discussing the site, the laying of the cornerstone, the inauguration of Andrew Jackson, Lincoln observing construction of the Dome, the Old House Chamber in 1838, and the passage of the 1866 Civil Rights Bill.

The Hall of Capitols mural posed challenges that the muralist fully appreciated. The corridor stretched 124 feet by 10 feet wide, and the area to be covered by the mural encompassed 5,000 square feet. Even more daunting than the size of the mural were the breadth of its theme and the significance of its location and sponsorship. "There are few great themes left to inspire artists," the 78-year-old artist told an interviewer in 1974, "and few sponsors to support work on this scale." Cox approached the task with his characteristic humility and gentleness, committed to preserving "the warm and human quality that sets the Capitol apart from all other great monumental buildings—rich without being intimidating, classically grand but not cold."

Congress agreed to accept the Hall of Capitols mural as a gift completely financed by the United States Capitol Historical Society. Much preparation was required before the actual painting in the Capitol began. Research assistance was

the painting did not appear distorted when viewed from below.

Following classical mural techniques, Cox first drew his human figures in the nude and then draped them with the appropriate clothing.



*President General Mrs. Wakelee R. Smith (third from left) of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution presents a check to Speaker of the House of Representatives Carl Albert in 1976 to finance production of the Great Experiment Hall mural. The DAR contributed a total of \$150,000 for this project.*



*This scene of the Mayflower Compact, 1620, illustrates how Cox's design incorporated decorative elements, flanking vignettes, and historical quotations into his overall scheme.*

He composed “cartoons”—detailed sketches—in his studio of each component of the mural. The tracings were temporarily affixed to canvas that had been hung on the walls, and were then pounced with powdered charcoal to leave an outline of the drawing on the canvas. Using the lines as a guide the painting was then completed in oils by Cox and his associates Cliff Young and John Charles Roach.

The Society purchased special scaffolding which was erected by personnel of the Architect of the Capitol. Working atop the scaffolding, often late at night to avoid interfering with and being interrupted by the crowds in the Capitol, the artists completed their time-consuming task between February 14, 1973 and July 22, 1974.

## GREAT EXPERIMENT HALL

THE SUCCESS OF THE HALL of Capitols mural convinced the Society to continue the mural project. The Daughters of the American Revolution generously contributed \$150,000 toward a second series of murals, with work beginning in 1976, as a contribution to the Bicentennial of the American Revolution. These murals were slated for the central east-west corridor of the ground floor of the House

wing. For this project Cox chose as his subject the growth of American democracy and free enterprise from the Mayflower Compact to women's suffrage.

Great Experiment Hall, as the mural was named, consisted of 16 main panels: Mayflower Compact 1620, Albany Congress 1754, Continental Congress 1774, Declaration of Independence 1776, Constitutional Convention 1787, First Federal Congress 1789, Washington's Inauguration 1789, Washington's Farewell Address 1796, Monroe Doctrine 1823, Lincoln's Second Inaugural 1865, Smithsonian Institution 1855, Library of Congress 1897, Steam Powered Amphibious Boat 1804, Iron Foundry ca. 1850, Theodore Roosevelt ca. 1904, and Women's Suffrage Parade 1917.

A major component of both the Hall of Capitols and Great Experiment Hall was the inclusion of historical quotations in the overall scheme. Seven carefully chosen quotations were added to the Hall of Capitols and 16 were selected for Great Experiment Hall. President Schwengel was

largely responsible for the addition of these inscriptions to exemplify what he referred to as “the companionship of art and literature.” Among the quotations are such well-known sayings as Daniel Webster's “Liberty and union, one and inseparable,” as well as lesser known passages such as William Henry Harrison's “The only legitimate right to govern is an express grant of power from the governed.”

Allyn Cox turned 80 as the second phase of the mural project began in 1976. He realized that his age might prevent him from completing the mural. Two years into this phase of the project he told a reporter, “I expect it will take six to eight years to finish the whole project. I have a feeling that if it is completed it will probably be by someone else.” Cox again chose Cliff Young as the assistant whom he believed could carry on the project if necessary. Young was a talented muralist and teacher in his own right who had previously completed a mural project after the original artist had died. Cox once referred to Young as “the most perfect assistant anyone ever had.”



ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL

THE ONLY LEGITIMATE RIGHT  
TO GOVERN  
IS AN EXPRESS GRANT OF POWER  
FROM THE GOVERNED  
WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON 1841





*First Lady Nancy Reagan joined in the celebration of Cox's birthday at the Capitol in 1981.*

## WESTWARD EXPANSION CORRIDOR

FOLLOWING THE DEATH OF Cliff Young, Architect of the Capitol George M. White conducted a thorough search to find an artist capable of fulfilling Cox's vision for the final Westward Expansion Corridor of murals. The search ultimately led to the 1992 selection of EverGreene Studios of New York City (now EverGreene Architectural Arts) under the leadership of artist Jeffrey Greene.

Progress on the second hall of murals was slowed by Cox's declining health. A special motorized lift was installed to carry the artist up and down the scaffolding. After devoting over a decade to the project, Cox retired in 1982 and turned over the responsibility for finishing Great Experiment Hall to his chosen successor. Congress honored the venerated artist's retirement with a special ceremony in Statuary Hall on September 21, at which Speaker of the House Thomas P. O'Neill, Sen. Howard Baker, President Schwengel, and others presented tributes. Cox died soon after, on September 26, 1982.

Cliff Young completed Great Experiment Hall and began preliminary work for a third phase of murals that Cox had planned to depict the westward territo-

rial expansion of the United States. This set of murals was slated for the western north-south corridor of the ground floor of the House wing. Preliminary sketches showed a series of maps of the territory of the United States at different time periods with scenes characteristic of each era. Young's health, however, worsened and he died on February 22, 1986, before this final phase of the mural project could begin.

Greene and his fellow artists studied the notes, sketches, and schemes left by Cox and Young and prepared full-scale cartoons for approval by the architect of the Capitol. Seven large maps extending across the curvature of the ceiling trace the westward expansion of the nation. Each map features two illustrative scenes of the time period and the maps are presented in the cartographic style of each era. Four groin vaults in the corridor

*Senator Howard Baker praised Cox's creation of "instant history" at the National Statuary Hall ceremony honoring the artist on his retirement in 1982. Also on the dais (from left to right) are Rep. J. J. Pickle, Baker, Cox, President-General of the DAR Mrs. Richard Denny Shelby, and President Schwengel.*







*Jeff Greene (seated with palette) and three of his colleagues—Terry Brackenberry, Dean Kalomas, and Doug Shelton (from left to right)—pause for a photograph while at work on the Westward Expansion Corridor.*

contain vignettes that depict such characteristic activities as “drying cod,” “hunting game,” and “clearing land,” and historical matters such as the pony express, the golden spike ceremony marking the completion of the transcontinental railroad, a land grant college, and the covered wagon.

The artists worked individually and in groups in a collaborative manner so that, as Greene explained, “you can’t tell one artist’s hand from another . . . you’re part of something larger, and the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.” Since the artists were striving to match the style of the existing Cox murals, they attempted to “take on the persona of that artist.” The entire project was completed in 1993 and dedicated in September 1993 in the 200th anniversary year of the laying of the Capitol cornerstone.

*The westward expansion of the nation is depicted in a series of maps; this one shows the territory from Texas to the Pacific Ocean.*

ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL



*This vignette from Westward Expansion illustrates a Hawaiian dance.*

ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL





# THE SYMPOSIA SERIES 1978-1993

**T**HE NATIONAL celebration of the Bicentennial of the American Revolution in 1976 provided the incentive for the Society to authorize a series of twelve annual historical conferences. President Schwengel had two main concerns that led to the genesis of the symposia series. He believed that not enough had been done to support scholarship during the Bicentennial, and he wanted to enhance the standing of the Society in the intellectual community.

President Schwengel first consulted with Professor Walter Rundell of the University of Maryland. Rundell had been present at the organizational meeting of the Society on July 31, 1962, and he had continued to be an advisor to the Society's programs. He was largely responsible for recommending the creation of the Society's *Capitol Studies* journal as a member of the Executive Committee. In December 1976, Rundell prepared a tentative outline of thirteen topics for annual conferences that could be held between 1977 and 1989.

The discussions with Rundell and Society Historian William Maury culminated in a proposal for a bicentennial symposia series to run through 1989. Rundell suggested Ronald Hoffman, an associate professor of history from the faculty of the History Department at the University of Maryland, as an appropriate candidate to administer the program. Hoffman had earned his doctorate in 1969 at the University of Wisconsin, where he had studied under Merrill Jensen. A specialist in the field of the history of the American Revolution, he had written an important monograph on the Revolution in Maryland. Rundell wrote Schwengel of Hoffman that "He is an expert in the field and can exert real leadership."

Schwengel and Hoffman conferred on May 31, 1977, at which time it was agreed that he would plan twelve annual conferences from 1978 to 1989. The agreement also authorized Hoffman to conduct the first symposium sometime in January through March of 1978. The topic for the first conference was to



*Professor Ronald Hoffman of the University of Maryland directed the Society's first symposia series from 1978 to 1993.*

be the Franco-American Alliance of 1778.

The first symposium was held on March 15 and 16, 1978 in the elegant Senate Caucus Room of the Russell Senate Office Building. Morning and afternoon sessions were conducted on each day, free of charge and open to all interested persons. Alexander DeConde, William Stinchcombe, Jonathan Dull, and Orville T. Murphy presented papers at the four sessions. Professor Lawrence Kaplan gave the concluding address at a dinner held in the Senate Reception Room in the Capitol.

The conference provided the opportunity for communication between professional historians and the public. One of the partici-



*Students and teachers from Maryland posed with Senator Paul Sarbanes at the student awards luncheon held during the 1982 symposium program.*





**President Schwengel presents award certificates to student winner Andrew Morris Lewis and teacher Becky Ottinger from Loudoun County High School at the award luncheon of the 1982 symposium.**

pants expressed his gratitude to President Schwengel: "Washington has few scholarly meetings on the history of Congress or on the founding and early development of the country. . . . It was a pleasure to me to talk to so many people interested in history both as amateurs and professionals. Through such exchanges as the recent conference both groups will benefit."

To make the scholarship presented at the conference available to the scholarly community, the Society entered into an agreement with the University Press of Virginia to publish a volume of essays resulting from each conference in a series entitled "Perspectives on the American Revolution." The first volume, *Diplomacy and Revolution: The Franco-American Alliance of 1778*, edited by Hoffman and his assistant Peter J. Albert, was published in 1981.

The Society expanded the program in 1979 to include an awards program for secondary schoolteachers and students as part of the agenda for the second symposium. President Schwengel, himself a former history teacher, insisted upon the program as a means to recognize, reward, and encourage history in the schools. Outstanding history students and teachers

were chosen from several local school districts, including the District of Columbia; Alexandria, Arlington, Fairfax County, and Prince William County in Virginia; and Howard County, Montgomery County, and Prince George's County in Maryland. In later years the program expanded to include school districts as far away as Baltimore and Delaware.

In 1986 the Society's participation made possible a special symposium honoring Martin Luther King, Jr., to coincide with the installation of the bust of the great civil rights leader in the Capitol. The Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Non-Violent Social Change cosponsored the conference

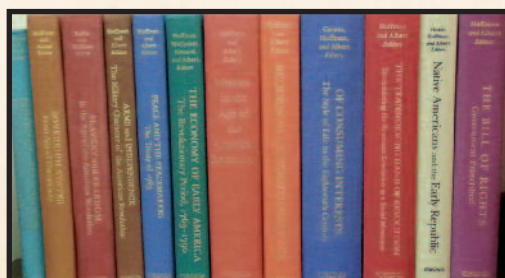
held on October 15 and 16, which was planned and led by the Society's symposia director. The conference featured papers by noted scholars Clayborne Carson, David J. Garrow, Cornel West, and others. Eminent historian John Hope Franklin

provided the concluding lecture. The essays resulting from the conference were published for the Society by Pantheon Books.

***Sixteen volumes of symposia papers were published for the Society by the University Press of Virginia.***

**The annual symposium became a regularly scheduled event in the Society's calendar, held each March since 1978. The original series was extended to continue through 1993. The topics of the conferences were:**

- 1978:** *Diplomacy and Revolution:*  
*The Franco-American Alliance of 1778*
- 1979:** *Sovereign States in an Age of Uncertainty*
- 1980:** *Slavery in the Age of the American Revolution*
- 1981:** *Arms and Independence: The Military Character of the American Revolution*
- 1982:** *An Uncivil War: The Southern Backcountry during the American Revolution*
- 1983:** *Peace and the Peacemakers:*  
*The Treaty of 1783*
- 1984:** *The Economy of Early America:*  
*The Revolutionary Period, 1763–1790*
- 1985:** *Women in the Age of the American Revolution*
- 1986:** *Of Consuming Interests:*  
*The Style of Life in the Eighteenth Century*
- 1987:** *"To Form a More Perfect Union":*  
*The Critical Ideas of the Constitution*
- 1988:** *Religion in a Revolutionary Age*
- 1989:** *"The Transforming Hand of Revolution":*  
*Reconsidering the American Revolution as a Social Movement*
- 1990:** *Launching the "Extended Republic":*  
*The Federalist Era*
- 1991:** *The Bill of Rights: Government Proscribed*
- 1992:** *Native Americans and the Early Republic*
- 1993:** *A Republic for the Ages*





# CHANGE AND CONTINUITY 1978–1993

**T**HE HISTORY OF THE Society in its second 15-year span was marked both by change and continuity. In spite of staff changes, a new congressional charter, and litigation over the sales tax issue, the Society retained a clear focus on its mission. Existing programs such as the *We, the People* guidebook, the calendar, the symposia series, and the mural project continued unabated. New programs and publications were added in the fields of congressional history and the study of the art and architecture of the Capitol. As the period drew to a close the Society chose a new leadership team to direct the organization into a challenging future.



*Speaker Thomas P. "Tip" O'Neill signed the Society's Congressional charter in 1978.*

## ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES

IN RECOGNITION OF THE services the organization had performed, Congress awarded the Society a Congressional Charter by an act of Congress signed by President Jimmy Carter on October 20, 1978. Public Law 95-493 was passed unanimously and provided "certain and important authori-

ties to preserve and improve the Capitol, research, publish, create items, medals, and material of historical interest and to cooperate with congressional committees and federal agencies in the work of the Society and the distribution of its products." The Congressional Charter reiterated the Society's founding purposes, but it also added a key provision in section 3 paragraph (d), by requiring the Society "to mutually cooperate with the standing



*The Society's executive secretary, Cornelius W. "Con" Heine, like President Schwengel, provided expert guided tours of the Capitol to Society members and groups.*



committees of the Congress, the Library of Congress, the Architect of the Capitol, and the relevant departments and agencies of the executive branch of the Federal Government. “

The Society had been cooperating with these congressional and executive offices over the years. The charter merely codified an existing relationship. Much of the responsibility for consulting with congressional committees and the Architect of the Capitol rested upon the executive secretary, who coordinated the production of new editions of the *We, the People* guidebook and the annual *We, the People* calendar. The Society’s executive secretary since 1974 had been Oliver Patton, a retired Army general. Gen. Patton retired from the Society in early 1979 to concentrate upon his literary career.

Cornelius W. Heine was appointed executive secretary in the fall of 1979, following a distinguished career in the National Park Service, where he had directed the historical research project that led to the restoration of Ford’s Theatre. In addition, Heine had served for eight years as a vice-president of the Columbia Historical Society [now known as the Historical Society of Washington, D.C.], and for four years he was editor of their annual records. He had also been present at the organizational meeting of the USCHS on July 31, 1962 as a founding member. As executive secretary from 1979 until his retirement in 1994, Heine excelled in a public relations role, giving tours of the Capitol and coordinating the production of an educational video, “A Place of Resounding Deeds.”

Following the resignation of Historian and Editor William Maury early in 1981, Dr. Richard Striner became acting head of the History Department. As chief historian from 1981 through 1987, Striner supervised the production of five major projects—the completely rewritten and redesigned second edition of *Washington Past and Present* which he coauthored, a



*President Schwengel congratulated Society Chief Historian Richard Striner and Associate Historian Donald Kennon upon receipt of awards in 1984 from Freedom’s Foundation for authoring *Washington Past and Present*.*

## COMMEMORATIVE MEDAL PROGRAM

**The Society’s Congressional Charter authorized the issuance of commemorative medals. The first in the series was issued in 1978 commemorating both the bicentennial of Valley Forge and the adoption of the United States Flag. The medal was designed by Frank Gasparro, Chief Engraver of the U.S. Mint in Philadelphia, and it was offered in gold, silver, and bronze. Fourteen medals comprised the entire series:**

- 1978:** *Valley Forge Commemorative Medal*
- 1979:** *John Paul Jones Commemorative Medal*
- 1980:** *James Madison Commemorative Medal*
- 1981:** *Surrender of Cornwallis Commemorative Medal*
- 1982:** *George Washington Commemorative Medal*
- 1983:** *Treaty of Paris Commemorative Medal*
- 1984:** *350th Anniversary of Maryland Commemorative Medal*
- 1985:** *Women of the American Revolution Commemorative Medal*
- 1986:** *Benjamin Franklin Commemorative Medal*
- 1987:** *Signing of the Constitution Commemorative Medal*
- 1988:** *Ratification of the Constitution Commemorative Medal*
- 1989:** *Bicentennial of the United States Congress Commemorative Medal*
- 1990:** *The Judicial System of the United States Commemorative Medal*
- 1991:** *The Bill of Rights Commemorative Medal*

**Informative historical booklets were included with each medal to enhance the item’s educational value to collectors.**





*President Schwengel, Congressmen Barber Conable (second from left) and J.J. Pickle (far right), along with sculptor Marcel Jovine present President Ronald Reagan with a complete set of the Society's 1987 Signing of the Constitution Commemorative Medals.*

booklet on the Allyn Cox murals, a series of Statuary Hall pamphlets that were also published as a collection in book form, the completion of a scholarly bibliography on the Speakers of the House of Representatives, and research on the speeches delivered before Congress by visiting foreign dignitaries. Striner resigned in December 1987 to resume a career in teaching. He was succeeded as chief historian by Donald Kennon.

Mary Lee Kerr, who had joined the staff in 1984, completed the publication of *Foreign Visitors to Congress* in 1989. She also edited the *Capitol Dome*, adding several improvements in style and substance to the newsletter prior to her return to North Carolina in 1989. Kerr's role as editor of the *Dome* was assumed by Rebecca Rogers, who had originally been

hired in 1987 as principal researcher for the history of the Committee on Ways and Means project.

The Society had never collected local sales tax at its sales outlets in the Capitol building, operating on legal advice of counsel that local taxing authority did not extend to federal property. The District of Columbia government in 1979, however, presented the Society with a bill for \$740,000 in back sales taxes on what it contended were sales of "commercial items." The *Washington Post* backed the city's effort, referring to the Society in an editorial as "a dutyfree PX."

Congress and the United States District Court agreed with arguments presented by the Society's counsel and by the Justice Department that the Society was an instrumentality of the federal government and

therefore exempt from taxation. Congress passed a bill to retroactively exempt the Society from local sales taxes, and Judge Charles R. Richey of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia ruled September 2, 1982, that: "Having held that the USCHS is a federal instrumentality the Court necessarily must conclude that the USCHS is exempt from taxation."

## PUBLICATIONS AND PRODUCTIONS

THE SOCIETY ADDED several new publications and productions to its record between 1978 and 1992. Four new editions of *We, the People: The Story of the United States Capitol* were produced, and the *We, the People* calendar continued on an annual basis. A commemorative medals series was



instituted between 1978 and 1991 (see page 35). Most new publications, including the volumes mentioned earlier, centered on congressional history.

The Society also sponsored a major celebration of the bicentennial of the House Ways and Means Committee in 1989. The Society's Oral History Program made an auspicious beginning with the presentation of the first transcript to the Library of Congress in 1978. Other Society productions focused on the Capitol, including a booklet on the Allyn Cox murals, "A Place of Resounding Deeds" video, and an art and architectural history fellowship.

## ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

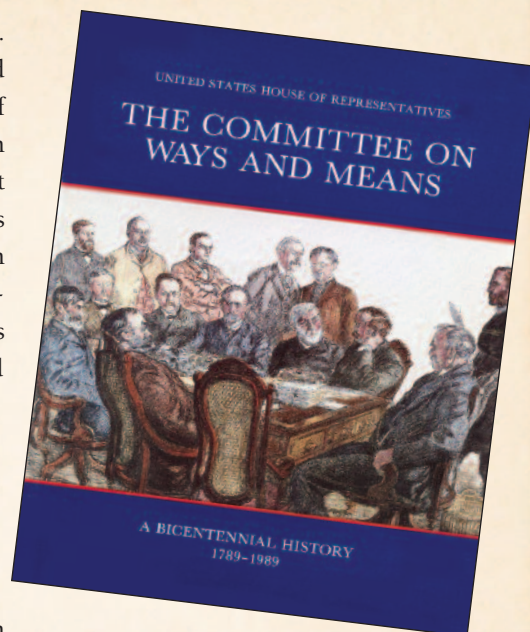
PRESIDENT SCHWENGEL and Frank van der Linden presented the first transcript produced by the Society's Oral History

Congress and other government officials. Frank van der Linden, a respected journalist and historian with years of experience covering Congress, was chosen to direct the program. The first transcript deposited in the Library of Congress consisted of 151 pages of interviews with former Sen. Hugh Scott. Others interviewed over the years included Senators Robert C. Byrd, Jennings Randolph, and Albert Gore, Sr., Representatives Carl Albert and Tom Steed, Society President Fred Schwengel, and artist Allyn Cox. In 1989 the program was expanded to allow van der Linden to interview participants involved in current breaking events. Military and civilian leaders and Members of Congress recorded their views on Operation Desert Storm in 1991, for example.

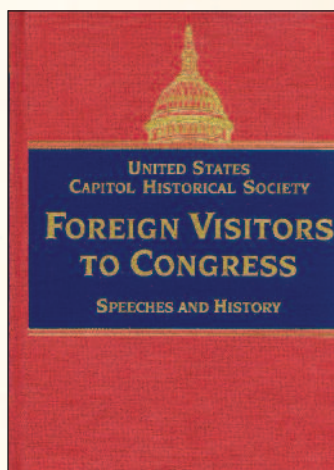
## BOOKS, FILMS, AND FELLOWSHIPS

THE SOCIETY PRODUCED an entirely new edition of *Washington Past and Present* in 1983, coauthored by Society staff historians Richard Striner and Donald Kennon. The book was designed and edited by a freelance team of National Geographic Society personnel following the same formula and format as *We, the People* to produce an attractive guidebook to the nation's capital. It was awarded the George Washington Honor Medal by the Freedom's Foundation at Valley Forge in 1984.

A freelance team from NGS also assisted with the publication in 1986 of *The American Story in Art: The Murals of Allyn Cox in the U.S. Capitol*, which was produced by the Society and the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution. Richard Striner supervised the preparation of the text written by Society intern Robert Schwengel. The 48-page booklet provided a guide to the Cox murals, with schematics and illustrations of the murals as well as an interpretive text.



*The Society produced the first comprehensive history of the House Committee on Ways and Means for the committee's bicentennial in 1989.*



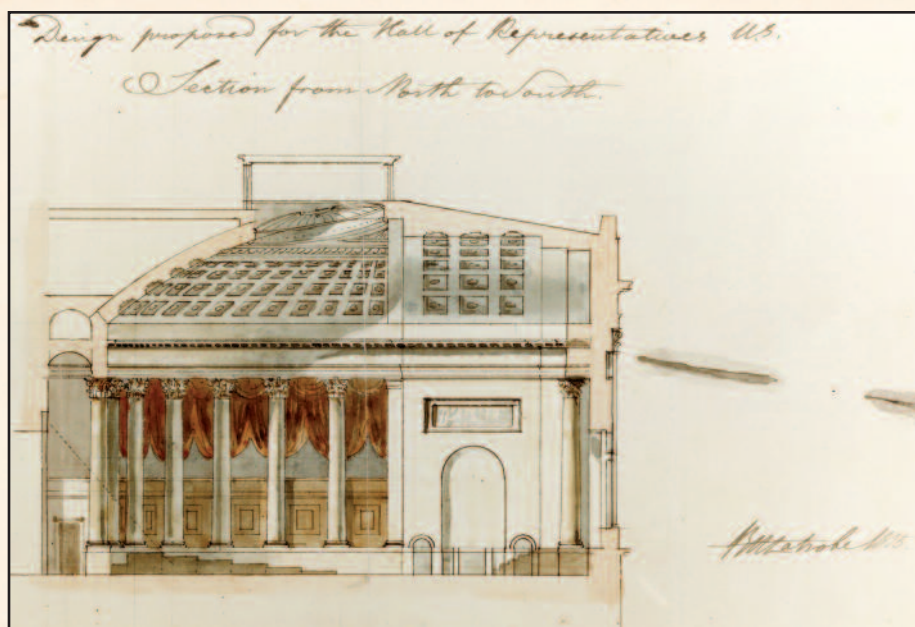
*Society Associate Historian Mary Lee Kerr compiled and edited the two-volume collection of speeches given by visiting foreign dignitaries to the United States Congress. The volumes were published in 1989.*

Program to the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress in 1978. The program was authorized in 1975 to record interviews with current and former Members of

That year also witnessed the publication of *The Speakers of the House of Representatives: A Bibliography, 1789-1984* by the Johns Hopkins University Press. The bibliography had been in preparation for a decade, with research performed at the Library of Congress. The publication marked the first scholarly reference work devoted to the Speakers of the House of Representatives. The book featured brief biographical sketches and categorized listings of more than 4,200 pertinent books, articles, dissertations, and manuscript collections. The first copy of the bibliography was presented to Speaker Thomas P. O'Neill by President Schwengel in a special ceremony in the Capitol on February 5, 1986.

The Society also announced in 1986 the creation of a research fellowship program in cooperation with the Office of the Architect of the Capitol. The fellowship offered modest stipends to assist research and publication on the art and architectural history of the Capitol. The program was





**Architect of the Capitol Benjamin Henry Latrobe's 1815 watercolor of his proposal for the redesign of the House chamber was one of the documents donated to the Capitol in 1983.**

administered by Dr. Barbara Wolanin, curator for the Architect of the Capitol, and the fellowship recipients were chosen by a panel composed of representatives of the Society and the Architect's office. A one-day symposium was held on March 15, 1990 that featured some of the scholarship supported by the fellowship. Since the first fellowship in 1987, the program has assisted the research of scores of scholars studying topics on a wide variety of art and architectural subjects related to the Capitol.

One of the most productive years in the Society's history was 1989, the bicentennial year of the United States Congress, which witnessed the production of two films, two major publications on congressional history and a booklet on the Flag. In 1987 the Society had begun plans to produce a book on the history of the House Ways and Means Committee for the 1989 commemoration. The chairman of the committee, Rep. Dan Rostenkowski (D-IL), asked the Society to cooperate with their plans for the event. The Society agreed, and together the two raised funds to produce both a

book and a film. Rebecca Rogers, an expert in researching congressional history, was hired for the project, and a freelance team was contracted to work on the book; the film project was assigned to Stephen York and Associates. *The Committee on Ways and Means: A Bicentennial History, 1789-1989* was published through the Government Printing Office

in both hardcover and soft cover versions. The first copies were distributed at the July 24, 1989 dinner held to commemorate the committee's 200th anniversary. The film, "The Committee: Taxation with Representation," was aired on the Public Broadcasting System and distributed on video through PBS Films.

Four months after the publication of the Ways and Means book, Kraus International Publications published the two-volume *Foreign Visitors to Congress: Speeches and History* edited by Associate Historian Mary Lee Kerr. This project had originated while President Schwengel had been a Member of Congress and had begun collecting speeches by foreign visitors to Congress. Mary Lee Kerr completed the collection, edited the speeches, and solicited introductory essays for each speaker from noted scholars. The two-volume reference work contained speeches by all 134 foreign dignitaries who up to that time had addressed either the House or the Senate or a Joint Meeting or Joint Session of Congress.

The Society also met a major need in 1989 with the premiere of an educational video on the Capitol, "A Place of Resounding Deeds."



**Architect of the Capitol George M. White (at left) and Sen. Charles McC. Mathias, Jr., (at right), Chairman of the Joint Committee on the Library accept the donation of the Latrobe documents from President Schwengel in 1983.**





*In 1985 the Society sponsored the donation of the bust, "Lincoln the Legislator," to the Capitol. Pictured at the unveiling are Senator Orrin Hatch, President Schwengel, and the sculptor, Avard Fairbanks.*

The 32-minute video, narrated by Executive Secretary Cornelius W. Heine, recreated the tour of the Capitol as it has been given by President Schwengel and Mr. Heine. The film premiered April 4, 1989 at the National Geographic Society Headquarters before a gala crowd.

## DONATIONS

THE SOCIETY CONTINUED to make contributions of artwork and memorabilia to the Capitol during this period. In 1981, for example, the Society sponsored the presentation of an inlaid wood coffer containing soil from the rose garden of

*The Society donated the official portrait of Architect of the Capitol George M. White in 1981. Pictured at the unveiling are (left to right): Architect White, artist William Draper, Mrs. White, and President Schwengel.*



repair damage to the Capitol following the War of 1812. The documents included delicate watercolor sketches as well as correspondence relating to the reconstruction of the Capitol. The official presentation of the Latrobe documents was made on January 26, 1984 to Sen. Charles Mathias, who accepted on behalf of the Congress. The Society also made possible the donation of the bust "Lincoln the Legislator" by Avard Fairbanks in 1985. In addition, the organization facilitated the donation of several portraits of congressional committee chairmen.

## A CHANGE IN LEADERSHIP

IN THE FALL OF 1991 President Schwengel suffered two mild strokes, prompting the organization's leadership to explore the possibility of finding a successor. The Executive Committee named a special search committee, which solicited suggestions from the Board of Trustees. The search committee recommended Clarence J. Brown, a former Member of Congress from Ohio who had been Deputy Secretary of Commerce from 1983 to 1988.



# EXTENDING THE MISSION INTO A NEW CENTURY 1993–2012

**C**LARENCE J. “BUD” BROWN, a former Member of Congress from Ohio (1965–82), served as president of the U.S. Capitol Historical Society from September 1992 until his retirement on January 1, 2000. His tenure was marked by a renewed emphasis on the national focus of the Society’s educational outreach and a redefinition of its fiscal model. From the 1960s through the 1980s, brisk sales of Society publications and products to tourists at the Capitol and congressional purchases of the annual calendar had provided a dependable revenue base for the Society’s operations. A downturn in tourism in the 1990s, however, reduced sales at the Capitol. New concerns about the calendar purchases as a congressional perk led the Society to market the calendar to congressional offices on a door-to-door basis rather than to rely upon the continuation of the bulk purchase of calendars through an annual legislative appropriation. Taken together, these changes caused a need for the organization to diversify its funding base.

Under Brown’s guidance in the 1990s, the Society began to re-identify its many

audiences, to refine its core message, and to make America’s national legislative heritage relevant to an ever more diverse public on the eve of the twenty-first century. Changes included a new emphasis on educational programs with a national scope, an aggressive foundation and corporate membership campaign, and an expanded merchandising program.

Ronald A. Sarasin succeeded Brown as president on January 3, 2000. A former Member of Congress from Connecticut (1973-79), Sarasin was a successful association president following his congressional career. He brought a talent for organizational management as well as



*Society President Clarence J. Brown (left) accepts a donation from G. Kent Banks, Corporate Vice President for Government Relations at General Dynamics Corporation, in 1997 for the Where Freedom Speaks program. As president from 1992 to 2000, Brown expanded the organization’s outreach for grant funding and program sponsorship.*

*Society President Ronald Sarasin (center) accepted the National Humanities Medal awarded to the Society in 2004 by the National Endowment for the Humanities. The presentation took place at the White House with President George W. Bush and First Lady Laura Bush.*



WHITE HOUSE PHOTOGRAPH





*Dan Nelson, vice president of Exxon Mobil's Washington, D.C. office, greets Alan Greenspan at the dinner held in 2004 by the Society to honor the history of the Senate Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee. Greenspan, then chairman of the Federal Reserve, was the featured speaker.*

a love for the history of Congress and the Capitol to his tenure as Society president. His management stabilized the Society's financial situation and enabled the organization to weather the loss of its sales outlet in the Capitol when the creation of the Capitol Visitor Center resulted in congressional operation of the CVC gift shops.

Under the guidance of Clarence Brown and Ron Sarasin the Society continued and expanded its educational mission. New outreach programs included the Where Freedom Speaks elementary school program, which teaches students

about the history and heritage of the Capitol and Congress, and its distribution to schools across the nation; a series of Outstanding Members of Congress books aimed at high school age students and related youth forums about such topics as women, athletes, African Americans, and environmentalists in Congress; the We the People Constitution Program providing an educational tour to help 8th grade students understand the Constitution; annual symposia series on congressional history and the history of the art and architecture of the Capitol and the publication of those symposia proceedings by the Ohio University Press; traveling exhibits on topics from the history of the Capitol to the role of German Americans in Congress; and new

*The Great Hall of the Library of Congress was the impressive site for the dinner honoring the Senate Appropriations Committee in 2005.*





forays into the multimedia world of the internet with online oral history interviews, postings on Facebook and Twitter, and a blog of Capitol history.

The Society also sought increased national visibility and recognition through the observance of significant historical commemorations and the

of Congress and the farewell receptions for retiring or departing Members of Congress, and the congressional committee dinners.

The accomplishment of this ambitious program required the reorganization and expansion of Society staffing. To create a foundation, corporate, and annual

membership base and to seek sponsorship and grant funding, the Society created a new Development Department, first headed by Kim Brandow and since 1996 directed by Rebecca Evans. Marilyn Green joined the staff in 1998 to oversee Capitol Committee memberships and continues to direct that program today. The retirement of Executive Secretary Cornelius Heine in 1994 led to the redistribution of the functions he had performed to two new positions. An expanded Merchandise Department was established that since 1993 has been led by Diana Wailles, who developed the organization's catalog mail order and Internet sales outlets; Steve Livengood joined the staff in 1998 to

Educational Outreach Department, reflecting its enhanced responsibilities. The department head, Donald Kennon, remained responsible for its overall programming but a new position for educational outreach was created and filled by Andrew Dodge, Felicia Bell, and most recently, Joanna Hallac. A second historian position, with responsibility for administering the symposia and lecture programs and producing the newsletter, was held by Rebecca Rogers, Gwen Farrell, Beth Bolling, Matt Wasniewski, and most recently, Lauren Borchard.

## THE BICENTENNIAL OF THE CAPITOL CORNERSTONE, 1993

THE SOCIETY MARKED the 200th anniversary of the laying of the Capitol cornerstone with two days of commemorative events. On September 17, 1993, the last phase of the Cox murals program was unveiled with the presentation of the Westward Expansion mural to Architect of the Capitol George M. White and Speaker of the House Thomas Foley. Following the mural presentation, the Society's annual meeting heard a keynote address from Senate Historian Richard Baker and a panel discussion featuring Sen. Alan K. Simpson and Rep. James Corman. The day concluded with a gala dinner that included speeches by Senators Robert Byrd and Howard Baker and the presentation of the first Freedom Award to Gilbert M. Grosvenor, President and CEO of the National Geographic Society. The following day the bicentennial program concluded with a historical symposium, "This Designed Magnificent Temple: Historical Perspectives on the Bicentennial of the Laying of the Cornerstone of the United States Capitol," held at The George Washington University.

ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL



*One of the many donations made to the Capitol in this period was this oil painting of Progress by Constantino Brumidi, donated to the Society by Mrs. Sara Pratt in 1994. Architect of the Capitol*

creation of new annual or recurring programs. Chief among these were the 1993 Capitol Cornerstone Gala and the programs and events surrounding the Bicentennial of the Capitol in 2000. New annual and/or recurring programs included the Freedom Award, the National Heritage Lecture Program, the welcoming receptions for new Members

direct the Society's tour and volunteer programs within the development department. In addition, the Finance Department was placed on a stronger footing with the naming in 2000 of Paul McGuire, a certified public accountant, as the organization's vice president of finance. The existing History Department was rechristened the Scholarship and





## THE FREEDOM AWARD

THE U.S. CAPITOL Historical Society created its Freedom Award to recognize and honor individuals and organizations that have advanced greater public understanding and appreciation for freedom as represented by the U.S. Capitol and Congress. This award, named for the statue that graces the Capitol's Dome, is presented annually in recognition of the dedication of recipients to freedom, democracy, and representative government.

*Society President Bud Brown (far left, back to camera) took news reporters on a guided tour of the Capitol dome in 1997. The New York Times featured a front page pictorial essay on the tour.*



*Steve Livengood, seen here on the West Front Terrace of the Capitol, has directed the Society's tour and volunteer programs since 1998.*

## THE NATIONAL HERITAGE LECTURE

ON MARCH 3, 1994, THE Society hosted its first National Heritage Lecture. Established in 1991 by the U.S. Capitol Historical Society, the White House Historical Association, and the Supreme Court Historical Society, the National Heritage

### Freedom Award Recipients

- 1993:** *Gilbert M. Grosvenor, National Geographic Society*
- 1994:** *Sen. George J. Mitchell and Rep. Robert H. Michel*
- 1995:** *George M. White, Architect of the Capitol, 1971-1995*
- 1996:** *Sen. Bob Dole and Rep. Sonny Montgomery*
- 1997:** *C-SPAN and its founder, Brian Lamb*
- 1998:** *Officer Jacob "J.J." Chestnut and Special Agent John M. Gibson, Capitol Police (presented posthumously)*
- 1999:** *(no award presented)*
- 2000:** *Rep. Clarence "Bud" Brown, USCHS President, 1993-1999*
- 2001:** *Rep. Corinne "Lindy" Claiborne Boggs*
- 2002:** *U.S. Association of Former Members of Congress*
- 2003:** *Jim Lehrer, Journalist*
- 2004:** *Dr. Robert V. Remini, Professor Emeritus, University of Illinois at Chicago*
- 2005:** *Rep. Lee H. Hamilton*
- 2006:** *David Broder, Journalist*
- 2007:** *Rep. Tom Foley, former Speaker of the House of Representatives and Ambassador to Japan*
- 2008:** *Sen. Howard H. Baker, Jr., former Senate Majority Leader and Ambassador to Japan*
- 2009:** *Sen. George McGovern and Senate Historian Emeritus Richard A. Baker*
- 2010:** *Cokie Roberts, Journalist and author*
- 2011:** *Sen. Daniel Inouye and Rep. John Dingell*
- 2012:** *Ken Burns, Documentary filmmaker*





**Former Speaker of the House Thomas Foley accepted the 2007 Freedom Award in a ceremony in National Statuary Hall. Seen here at the presentation are (left to right) the Honorable Steny Hoyer, Foley, Nancy Pelosi, Robert Michel, Ron Sarasin, and Norm Dicks.**

Lecture was instituted to enhance the knowledge and appreciation of the American system of government and the principles upon which it was founded. Hosted in turn by each of the three historical societies, the National Heritage Lecture annually explores one of the three branches of government. Even though Congress is the first branch of government (established by the first article of the Constitution), the Capitol Historical Society hosted, appropriately, the last in the initial cycle of lectures. The 1994 event featured a panel discussion on "Changing Congress" with Morton Kondracke, Bob Schieffer, and Rep. Lindy Boggs.

In 1997, the National Heritage Lecture examined "Family Ties," with current and former Members of Congress whose relatives had also served in Congress. The panel included Sen. Howard Baker, Rep. Beverly Byron, Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchinson, Rep. Bob Livingston, and Rep. James Symington. Pulitzer Prize-winning author and historian Gary Wills delivered the 2000 National Heritage Lecture on the topic of "A

Necessary Evil or a Necessary Good: Two Centuries of American National Government." In 2004, Rep. John Lewis discussed the fortieth anniversary of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, enlivened by his own reminiscences of that period. The two most recent lectures were in 2008 by noted journalist and author Cokie Roberts, who spoke on



**National news correspondent and author Cokie Roberts delivered the 2008 National Heritage Lecture on the topic, "Ladies of Liberty: Then and Now: Political Women in Washington."**

"Ladies of Liberty: Then and Now: Political Women in Washington," and the 2012 National Heritage Lecture, held on December 5, featured a panel discussion on "Comity and Contention in Congress, 1962–2012."

## SYMPOSIA SERIES

SINCE THE SUCCESSFUL conclusion of the Society's first symposia series in 1993, the organization has conducted three new series. From 1994 to 2001, the Society conducted a series of conferences each spring on the history of Congress in its formative period (from 1789 to 1801) directed by Dr. Kenneth Bowling, co-editor of the Documentary History of the First Federal Congress Project at The George Washington University. Between 1994 and 2008 the Society conducted a series of conferences each fall on the art and architectural history of the United States Capitol, planned with the cooperation of the Curator of the Office of the Architect of the Capitol, Dr. Barbara Wolanin. Since 2004 the Society has conducted a major series of annual conferences on the important issues that confronted the national government in the antebellum, Civil War, and Reconstruction eras. Dr. Paul Finkelman, President William McKinley Distin-



guished Professor of Law and Public Policy at Albany Law School, directs the series. Ohio University Press publishes the volumes of essays that result from the conferences in each of these series. A complete listing of the annual symposia can be found at [www.uschs.org](http://www.uschs.org).

## TRAVELING EXHIBITS

THE SOCIETY'S OBSERVANCE of the 2000 Bicentennial of Congress moving into the Capitol in Washington, D.C., provided the opportunity for the production of the organization's first traveling exhibit, "Where Freedom Speaks: 200 Years of the United States Capitol." Curated by Pamela Scott, a leading authority on Washington, D.C. architecture, the exhibit consisted of six large 8x10 foot portable panels that tell the story of the creation, construction, expansion, and architectural and artistic meaning of the Capitol throughout its two centuries of existence. The exhibit debuted on April 24, 2000 in the rotunda of the Russell Senate Office Building and over the next several years traveled to state capitols, universities, libraries, and schools across the nation. An online version of the exhibit was also posted on the Society's website.

In 2005, the Society worked with Barbara Wolanin, curator for the Architect of the Capitol and an authority on Capitol artist Constantino Brumidi, to create an exhibit for the bicentennial of the artist's birth. The exhibit was displayed in the rotundas of the Russell Senate Office Building and the Cannon House Office

*The portrait of House Commerce Committee Chairman Thomas J. Bliley is one of many such portraits donated to Congress through the U.S. Capitol Historical Society.*

Building as well as at the City Museum of Washington, D.C. The following year, the Society produced a twelve-panel traveling exhibit, "From Freedom's Shadow: African Americans and the United States Capitol," that chronicled the role of African Americans from slave labor in the construction of the Capitol through representation in Congress and the creation of the Congressional Black Caucus. The exhibit opened February 2006 in Baltimore, Maryland at the Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History and Culture. Two sets of the portable exhibit were fabricated, and they continue to be exhibited across the nation in schools, libraries, and other public buildings.



The Society's most recent exhibit was a collaborative effort with the German American Heritage Museum to produce "Helping Shape America: German Americans in the United States Congress from 1789 to the Present." The exhibit

*Speakers at the 1996 symposium on Congress in the 1790s included, (front row, left to right) Joanne B. Freeman, Charlene Bangs Bickford, (back row, left to right) Jack Warren, Wythe Holt, William R. Casto, Kenneth R. Bowling, and John Ferling.*



*Panelists at the 2009 symposium, "Lincoln's Washington: Abraham Lincoln in Congress and the Presidency," listen intently to a question from the audience. Seen here (from left to right) are participants Daniel W. Stowell, Brooks Simpson, Jean Baker, and Symposium Director Paul Finkelman.*







*Director of Education Felicia Bell (at far left) stands next to teacher Amy Trenkle and her students at a showing of the “Where Freedom Speaks” traveling exhibition at Stuart Hobson Middle School in Washington, D.C.*

premiered in the rotunda of the Cannon House Office Building before being installed in the rotunda of the Russell Senate Office Building and the German American Heritage Museum.

## SCHOOL PROGRAMS

IN 1993 THE SOCIETY created Where Freedom Speaks, a pageant in which schoolchildren re-enact the laying of the first Capitol cornerstone in 1793. Working with board member Carmella LaSpada, the Society produced a videotape and lesson plans for distribution in classrooms across the country to help teachers produce the pageant. For high school students, *Outstanding Members of Congress*, a publication and youth forum series, introduces teenagers (in print and face-to-face) to former and current Members of Congress whose life stories reflect the characteristics of leadership and dedication necessary for public service.

Most recently, the Society joined with the National Archives, the White House Historical Association, the Federal Courts, the National Park Service, Children’s Concierge, Old Town Trolley Tours, and Sodexo to create the We the People Constitution Program. This day-long tour educates students about the first three



*Guests examine the “From Freedom’s Shadow: African Americans and the United States Capitol” exhibit at its February 2006 opening in Baltimore, MD.*

articles of the Constitution by visiting “monumental” Washington, ending at the National Archives where students view the original documents—the Constitution and Bill of Rights—that they have spent the day discussing. A Teacher Resource Guide, Student Activities Guide, and Constitution Challenge provide curriculum-based classroom materials and opportunities that extend and reinforce students’ experiential learning during the tour.

Since the 2005–6 school year, more than 10,000 students and teachers from more than 50 different public and public charter schools and educational centers in the District of Columbia have taken the We the People tour. Tours are conducted from November through early March. The tour is free of charge, provides door-to-door transportation, and includes lunch, also free of charge thanks to the generosity of program sponsors.





PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY WYNN SCHEER

*Students at the Labadie (Missouri) Elementary School performed the Where Freedom Speaks pageant in 1998. Social Studies teacher Wynn Scheer wrote that the pageant and its teaching materials were "an excellent learning experience for the participants and spectators."*



*Since 2005 the We the People Constitution Tour has taught more than 10,000 eighth graders about the fundamentals of national government through a guided tour of the major landmarks in the nation's capital.*



*Students line up in the Congressional Auditorium of the Capitol Visitor Center to ask a question of Rep. Norm Dicks at the 2010 Youth Forum.*

*Society member Joe Grano talks with incoming Senator Barack Obama at the Society's 2005 welcoming reception for new Members of Congress in National Statuary Hall.*

## THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY AND BEYOND

NOW IN ITS FIFTIETH YEAR, the United States Capitol Historical Society continues to reflect the vision of its founders as it endeavors to bring the history of the Capitol and Congress to the public through an ever-widening variety of public programs. The Capitol remains a beacon of liberty and the promise of representative self-government in trying times. Its history is a constant reminder of this organization's responsibility to transmit that promise to posterity.





# SOCIETY NEWS

## KEN BURNS RECEIVES 2012 FREEDOM AWARD

On the evening of September 20th, in the Congressional Auditorium of the Capitol Visitor Center, the U.S. Capitol Historical Society celebrated two milestones: the 50th anniversary of the Society and the 20th presentation of its distinguished Freedom Award.

The Freedom Award is presented annually in recognition of those who have promoted freedom, democracy, and representative government. In presenting the 2012 award, the Hon. **Ron Sarasin**,

USCHS president, remarked: "Congressman Fred Schwengel founded the U.S. Capitol Historical Society in 1962 so that people could 'catch something of the fire that burned in the hearts of those who walked and talked in [the Capitol's] halls.' **Ken Burns** approaches history similarly. His documentaries capture the human story of America, making our nation's political, cultural, and social history eminently accessible and engaging to millions."

### *Excerpts from Ken Burns' remarks:*

I have found it impossible in the more than thirty-five years of my professional life to turn my attention beyond American history. . . . I am interested in listening to the voices of the true, honest, complicated past, a complicated past that is unafraid of controversy and tragedy, but equally drawn to those stories and moments that suggest an abiding faith in the human spirit, and particularly the unique role this remarkable, but also sometimes dysfunctional, republic seems to play in the positive progress of mankind. That quite simply has been my creed, my mantra, the lens through which I have tried to see our history. . . . Each film asks one deceptively simple question, "Who are we? Who are those strange and complicated people who



*Ken Burns takes questions from the audience.*

like to call themselves Americans?" What does an investigation of the past tell us about not only where we've been, but where we are, and where we may be going? History is this delicious harbinger of our future and insurer of our future. If we don't know where we've been, we can't possibly know where we're going.

I have wanted to be a filmmaker since I was twelve years old. My mother died when I was eleven; there was never a moment in my life when I was not aware that she was desperately ill, and after she died my father had a very strict curfew for my younger brother and me. But he forgave it for me when, at night, we would stay up until one or two a.m. on a school night watching an old movie on TV, or he would take me out well past that bedtime and that curfew to see an old movie. And we watched together many, many films. We looked at *Vertigo* by Alfred Hitchcock and *Odd Man Out* by Sir Carol Reed. We looked at Buster Keaton films

ALL PHOTOS BY KATIE GARLOCK/PORTRAITIONS



# AND EVENTS



Rep. Hultgren asks a question.

.....

**L**ater, Rep. **Randy Hultgren** (IL) asked if Ken Burns had a favorite story about the Congress or the Capitol that he could “share with my constituents as I’m walking around.”

**Burns answered:** “This is the best one and it’s from Illinois. So, the *New York Times* had the greatest photographer named George Tames, and many of the older members here remember George and what a colorful character he was, not only

doing his job for the *New York Times*, but also behind the scenes. And he remembers this wonderful moment when Everett Dirksen was called out of the Senate because a group of women from Illinois had come to see him. And he walked out in that great breathy voice that he has and says, “My dear girls, I was inside the Senate with the armor of a warrior when I heard that you dear girls had come here to see me. I put on the cloak of the poet and immediately came out to see what you want. What is it that we can do for you?” And there was absolute silence, and, finally, one little voice from the back piped up and said, “Nothing, Senator, we just came to hear you talk.” I hope that’s helpful. Just make sure you attribute it to George Tames; otherwise, I’m in a bunch of trouble and can’t run for office.

unusual one because it’s a film that’s based on a man attempting to commit suicide and finding out what his life would be like without him in the course of that evening. It’s Dickensian that way like “A Christmas Carol,” but it’s more than that; it’s utterly American.

And it occurs to me as we struggle today over the meaning of America, as we look at the fact that so many of us think that we can become independent free spirits—I harken back to that moment when I realized I wanted to be a filmmaker, when I realized the power of this medium to not only explicate and to explain, but also to communicate powerful, higher emotions our Founding Fathers would have called them. These are not sentimentality or nostalgia—those are the enemies of good anything. But it isn’t a retreat purely to reason where everything always adds up and one and one always equals two. That’s the safety of an empirical (continued next page)

and French New Wave films and it was the first time I ever saw my father cry. He had not cried at my mother’s funeral and my brother and I had noted that, but when he cried at a movie, I understood exactly not only how and why he was crying, but I forgave him for the lack of emotion in other places because I understood the . . . medium had that power to release certain emotions into the air. The film we watched is a film probably everyone in this room has seen, and that’s *It’s a Wonderful Life* by Frank Capra, starring Jimmy Stewart. It’s Jimmy Stewart’s favorite film; it was supposedly Frank Capra’s favorite film...and it’s a very



From left, Ken Burns; **Patrick Butler**, President and CEO, Association of Public Television Stations; Sen. **Tom Harkin** (IA); and **Bill Shuler**



world. What we seek in our faith, what we seek in our art, what we seek in our relationships, what we seek in the communication and the compromise with each other is that strange calculus when one and one equals three. I've been interested in that all along. I've been interested in a whole that was greater than the sum of the parts and tried to ask the question how the impossible of one plus one could equal three.

And I think that somehow going back, as I was thinking about this evening, to that moment when I knew I wanted to be a filmmaker with my father who was trying to mask the tears that were streaming down his cheeks at *It's a Wonderful Life* and all of its poignancy about life and failure and success and what we leave and who we are. But I realize that we always have a choice in this country. We can choose



Sen. **Richard Durbin** (IL) greets Burns after the program.

to live in Bedford Falls, the community in which Jimmy Stewart was an active participant, where he understood in the very worst of times we were bound to each other inextricably. Or we could live in Pottersville, the imaginary nightmare of the world in which a George

that begin the creation of our country, "We, the People," and understand that we are talking about forming a more perfect union. And it's in the spirit of that that I accept this award and thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Bailey-less [Bailey was the character played by Jimmy Stewart] Bedford Falls had metastasized into a place of independent free agents where everybody did whatever they wanted, that we serve no masters but our own self-interest. And I think we go back to the extraordinary words

## CHAIRMAN'S "FRED SCHWENGEL AWARD"

One of the enduring legacies of the Society's anniversary year will be the Chairman's "Fred Schwengel Award." The inaugural award was presented to Robert L. Breeden, Publications Consultant, 1962-present; Vice President, USCHS, 1991-93, and Chairman of the Board, USCHS, 1993-2000. Breeden was the force behind the Society's *We, the People* guidebook to the Capitol, first unveiled in 1963 and now in its 16th edition. The award was accepted on his behalf by Cynthia Breeden Scudder.



USCHS board chairman, Hon. E. Thomas Coleman; Cynthia Breeden Scudder; Ken Burns; USCHS president, Hon. Ron Sarasin



# ANNUAL COMMITTEE DINNER

## *Focuses on Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*



*Ranking member and 36-year Senate veteran Richard Lugar greets the crowd.*

**O**n July 10, 2012, the U.S. Capitol Historical Society honored the history and accomplishments of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations (SCFR) with a reception and dinner. The SCFR is among the oldest committees in the Senate: it was one

of 11 standing committees created in 1816. Senators serving on the Committee have guided the United States through almost two centuries of global interaction, as both a fledgling nation and a world-wide super power, and have overseen the Oval Office's

decisions through countless international crises.

The event was held in the historic Kennedy Caucus Room in the Russell Senate Office Building. The Honorable **Ron Sarasin**, Society

*Chairman John Kerry recounts his time serving on the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations.*

president, welcomed Committee Chairman **John Kerry** (MA), Ranking Member **Richard Lugar** (IN), committee members, ambassadors, Society members, and distinguished guests. The Honorable Tom Coleman, chairman of the Society's board of directors, introduced the keynote speaker, former Sen. **Chuck Hagel**.

Chairman Kerry, Ranking Member Lugar, and the Honorable Chuck Hagel have all served many years on the committee and value it among their highest accomplishments in the Senate. Each recounted work on the committee that allowed them to reach across party lines and effect palpable change in the world. Kerry recounted a trip he took early in his senatorial career with then-Chairman Lugar to the Philippines—a trip where the U.S. delegation uncovered election fraud. “Dick (Sen. Lugar) seized the reins, and





*The U.S. Capitol Police Honor Guard departs after leading attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance.*



as chairman of this oversight group...said 'we got to call this the way we see it.' We rushed back, met with President Reagan, and Dick Lugar and others changed history with that event. It was remarkable." Kerry learned early on, from his Republican colleague, that working together would ensure lasting change on a global scale.

Lugar was similarly influenced by a senator from across the aisle. "I did not have the pleasure of serving



*The Honorable Chuck Hagel recounts his many years of public service.*

Fulbright offering advice and guidance to the student. Upon election to the Senate, both men sought seats on the committee, and both would eventually ascend to the chairmanship. Both would have some of the most influential, prolific careers ever seen on the committee.

The U.S. Capitol Historical Society was honored to recognize this time-tested, wide-reaching committee and some of the exceptional senators



*Sen. Jim Risch (ID)*

with Senator (J. William) Fulbright in the Senate. He left office two years before I was elected to represent Indiana. But his influence on my career was profound and permanent." Lugar earned a Rhodes scholarship and followed in Sen. Fulbright's footsteps all the way to Pembroke College at Oxford. They both focused on government and economics under the same tutor—R. B. McCallum. The two exchanged many letters during Lugar's first year at Oxford, with Sen.



*Sen. Jeanne Shaheen (NH) listens to stories from the speakers.*



who have served on it. We were supported by our Capitol Committee members, and especially by generous contributions from Walmart; Caterpillar, Inc.; Express Scripts; ExxonMobil Corporation, and Invesco.



*H.E. **Claudio Bisogniero**, ambassador of Italy to the United States, and Sen. **Benjamin Cardin** (MD)*



*Chairman John Kerry chats with H.E. **Anibal de Castro**, ambassador of the Dominican Republic to the United States.*

## FALL MEMBERSHIP TOURS INCLUDE CONGRESSIONAL CEMETERY

This fall, USCHS members were invited to tour Congressional Cemetery, the historic burial ground for federal city notables such as William Thornton, first architect of the Capitol, and Elbridge Gerry, signer of the Declaration of Independence and inspiration for the term “gerrymandering.” The cenotaphs or “empty tombs” (shown at right) were designed by Benjamin Latrobe, second architect of the Capitol, to commemorate the service of Members of Congress who died in office and were buried elsewhere. The fall tour schedule also included “Spies of Capitol Hill” and “Nature, Celebrations and Inaugurations.” These and similar tours are a benefit of membership; tours are offered both spring and fall.





# Capitol Committee Update

The U.S. Capitol Historical Society's Capitol Committee is proud to introduce our newest level of membership: the \$15,000 Constitution Signers level. Members at this level of giving will receive all the membership benefits of the Brumidi Society, as well as two invitations to each biannual breakfast or lunch bringing together Society members and various congressional staff members, such as chiefs of staff and legislative directors.

*Current Constitution Signers are:*

**American Beverage Association**

**BP**

**The Brown Rudnick Charitable Foundation**

**Chevron**

**ExxonMobil Corporation**

**sanofi-aventis**

## SPRING PREVIEW

The U.S. Capitol Historical Society has events brewing for 2013! Check in on our redesigned (and easier to navigate) website for the latest updates on our annual African American History Month Lecture in February, upcoming brown bags, USCHS 50th Anniversary exhibit updates, and more. On May 3, our annual symposium rolls around again, with the latest installment in the series *The National Capital in a Nation Divided: Congress and the District of Columbia Confront Sectionalism and Slavery*; the day-long conference will focus on non-war-related Congressional legislation during the Civil War.

## Development Committee Spotlight



**Mary Moore Hamrick**, a member of the Development Committee, leads Grant Thornton's public policy and government affairs efforts and serves as the firm's primary liaison with Members of Congress. Her public policy and capital markets expertise, and her unique understanding of public company auditing, position her as a knowledgeable and respected policy advocate for credible, timely, and relevant financial information that is fundamental to promoting investor confidence in the global capital markets. She is a member of Grant Thornton's US National Leadership Team and Chairman of the firm's Political Action Committee.

Hamrick has a strong business and legal background, with 20 years' experience working for and then with the U.S. Congress. She most recently served as the Senior Director of External Relations and Strategic Planning for the Center for Audit Quality, where she managed its strategic priorities, stakeholder outreach, and communications plans to advance the auditing profession's core values of integrity, objectivity, honesty, and trust. Hamrick's prior experience includes employment as Director of the Office of External Relations for the Public Company Accounting Oversight Board, where she established its government relations office and directed its public affairs functions. She also headed the New York Life Insurance Company's Washington, D.C. governmental affairs office, served as counsel to the U.S. House Committee on Energy and Commerce, and was a registered investments representative for Morgan Stanley.

Hamrick received her bachelor's degree *cum laude* from Duke University and her JD and MBA degrees from the University of North Carolina. When she is not working, Hamrick likes to play golf and walk in the woods with her Welsh springer spaniel. To this day, she still gets excited when she walks past the Capitol at night and sees the light on in the dome.



# Breakfast Features Rep. Hal Rogers



*Chairman Hal Rogers (second from left), has coffee with **Bob Bergman** (UPS), **Tanner Daniel** (Nestle USA), **Randy Dove** (Hewlett-Packard), and **Josh Holly** (Nestle USA).*

On the morning of November 15, 2012, Rep. **Hal Rogers** (KY), Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, joined members of the U.S. Capitol Historical Society's Brumidi Society, Constitution Signers, and Leadership Council membership levels and Society staff for the annual Congressional Leadership Breakfast. Rogers expounded on his time in Congress, sharing memories of the bipartisanship shown on the House floor while Speaker Tip O'Neill was at the helm. He discussed how much congressional culture has changed since the increase in jet air travel, explaining how spending weekends in their home districts has prevented Members from forming the close, personal bonds they used to. The Chairman did, however, express hope for a future where the divisions along the aisles are less harsh, and where lasting friendships can be made between Members serving in the House and the Senate and between those on Capitol Hill and those in the White House.

The Society would like to thank the

American Council of Life Insurers for the generous use of their offices, at 101 Constitution Avenue, NW, with impressive views overlooking the Capitol grounds and dome. We would also like to show our appreciation to Express Scripts and the American Society of Civil Engineers for their support of the Breakfast.



***Dontai Smalls** and **Bob Bergman** of UPS greet **Casey Dinges** of the American Society of Civil Engineers and **Christine Burgeson** of Airlines for America.*



*Chairman Hal Rogers addresses the group on the importance of bipartisanship and friendship in Congress and in Washington at large.*



*The view of the Capitol on a chilly fall morning*



## THE CAPITOL DOME BOOKSHELF

### New & Noteworthy Books on Congressional and Capitol History

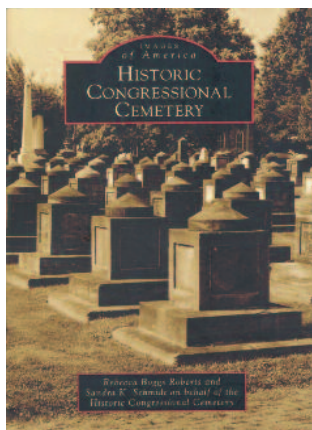
We continue our series presenting newly published books on congressional or Capitol history that are worthy of the attention of our readers. If you have a recommendation for a book to add to the Capitol Dome bookshelf, please contact us at [uschs@uschs.org](mailto:uschs@uschs.org). Books should be nonfiction, pertain to the history of the Capitol or Congress, and have been published within the last two years.



## REBECCA BOGGS ROBERTS AND SANDRA K. SCHMIDT ON BEHALF OF THE HISTORIC CONGRESSIONAL CEMETERY

### *Images of America: Historic Congressional Cemetery*

(Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2012), 128 pp., softcover, \$21.99.



For those of you in the DC-metro area who have not had occasion to visit the Historic Congressional Cemetery or for those who live out of the area, this small and charming book, *Images of America: Historic Congressional Cemetery*, offers a unique glimpse into the history of the site and all the many things that make it a “must see” for any history

buff. The cemetery has been in existence for over 200 years, housing the remains of famous and even infamous Washingtonians and many others. This short guide tells tales of those who are buried there, chronicles the cenotaphs used to memorialize Members of Congress (and a few notable others who had contributed to the Capitol in some way), and looks at some of the statues and iconography that one will see upon a visit to Congressional Cemetery.

While there are many noteworthy and interesting people buried at the cemetery, here are some of the people and stories that are of particular interest:

#### **Mathew Brady – Photojournalist**

Brady is best known for his images of the Civil War and for his portrait of

Abraham Lincoln, which is the source of the image on the \$5 bill. Brady passed away in 1896, nearly bankrupt and poor, as well as blind from continued exposure to dark room chemicals. Although he had wanted to



Brady



sell his photo collection to the federal government to serve as a photographic record of the Civil War, they were not interested at the time. Finally, in 1954, the Library of Congress purchased the collection from Brady's grandniece.

**David Herold – Lincoln Assassination Plot Conspirator**

Herold, who met John Wilkes Booth through his friend John Surratt, joined the plot to assassinate President Lincoln. His job was to help the murderers escape, and once the Union soldiers caught up to them after 12 days of being on the run, Herold gave himself up while Booth was shot. Herold was hanged with the other surviving conspirators—George Atzerodt, Lewis Powell, and Mary Surratt—and buried near the execution site. Through an Episcopal pastor, his mother petitioned President Johnson in 1869, and Herold's body was moved to his family's plot at the cemetery; no headstone exists for him as he was interred with his sister, Elizabeth.



Herold

ALL LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

**Adelaide Johnson – Artist and Suffragist**

Johnson is still best known for her statue of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Lucretia Mott—called Portrait Monument—that resides in the Capitol rotunda. She also happened to be quite eccentric, as many artists can be, with one story in particular highlighting her eccentricity. In 1896, Johnson got married, and her bridesmaids were the busts of Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton that she had sculpted for the monument. Certainly not your typical picks for bridesmaids to be sure.



Johnson

~Reviewed by Joanna Hallac

Editor's note: Another new book on Congressional Cemetery was released too late for review here. *In the Shadow of the United States Capitol: Congressional Cemetery and the Memory of the Nation* by Abby A. Johnson and Ronald M. Johnson will be reviewed in an upcoming issue of *The Capitol Dome*.

# Calendar of Events

## January

**Booksigning: Mark Ozer**

*Washington, D.C.: Streets and Statues, Walking in the Steps of History*

Wednesday, January 9 at noon

Ketchum Hall, 200 Maryland Ave. NE

Free and open to the public.

Questions or to RSVP: (202) 543-8919 x38

or [uschs@uschs.org](mailto:uschs@uschs.org)

**Booksigning: Ronald M. Johnson and Abby Arthur Johnson**

*In the Shadow of the United States Capitol: Congressional Cemetery and the Memory of the Nation*

Wednesday, January 16 at noon

Ketchum Hall, 200 Maryland Ave. NE

Free and open to the public.

Questions or to RSVP: (202) 543-8919 x38

or [uschs@uschs.org](mailto:uschs@uschs.org)

## February

**African American History Month Lecture**

Wednesday, February 13, 2013 at noon

Speaker: Matthew Wasniewski,

Historian, U.S. House of Representatives

Topic: Oscar De Priest, Representative from Illinois (1929-1935)

Co-sponsored with the Illinois State Society of Washington, D.C.

Questions or to RSVP: (202) 543-8919 x38

or [uschs@uschs.org](mailto:uschs@uschs.org)

## March

**Booksigning: Maurine H. Beasley**

*Women of the Washington Press: Politics, Prejudice, and Persistence*

Details TBA

**New Members Reception**

Reception to welcome Members of the 113th Congress

Details TBD

**Walking Tours of the Capitol Exterior Resume**

(March through October) Approximately two hours

Starting at Union Station Metro exit

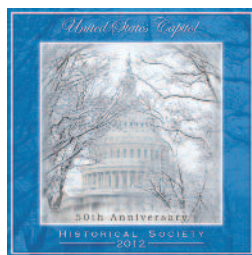
\$10.00 per person

Visit [www.uschs.org](http://www.uschs.org) for more information.





# WINTER MARKETPLACE



## 2012 HOLIDAY ORNAMENT

Gold-plated and formed into the shape of a snowflake featuring a snowy Capitol scene framed by an intricately raised enamelled design, this beautiful collectible is handcrafted in America! In the center is the dome of the Capitol framed by wintry tree branches and snow. This year's ornament commemorates the United States Capitol Historical Society's 50th year of "Inspiring Informed Citizenship."

**#002565** **\$24.00**  
**Members** **\$21.60**

## 50TH ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATIVE BOX

Architectural and patriotic relief designs adorn this beautiful ivory resin box that can be used for a multitude of purposes. (3 1/2" x 3 1/2" x 2" square)

**#002655** **\$36.00**  
**Members** **\$32.40**



## 2012 MARBLE CARRIAGE

Using marble taken from a wing of the east front of the Capitol, originally installed between 1863 and 1865, this classic design may be one of the most beautiful ornaments fashioned out of the historic marble steps. The marble is ground to a fine powder and mixed with resin to mold the frame which holds a classic turn-of-the-century Capitol carriage image. The piece is then surrounded by a 24 kt gold finish. Gift boxed.

**#002650** **\$26.00**  
**Members** **\$23.40**

## "WE, THE PEOPLE" BOOKENDS

This collectible set of bookends is a welcome addition to any library setting. Beautifully crafted with a scroll-like front that incorporates the preamble in this classic design. Gift boxed with provenance for easy gift giving. (7 1/2" x 9 1/2" x 4")

**#002638** **\$152.00**  
**Members** **\$136.80**



TO ORDER ONLINE: [www.uschscatalog.org](http://www.uschscatalog.org)





# WINTER MARKETPLACE



## EAST FRONT DESSERT PLATE

7 1/2" porcelain plate features a deep burgundy band trimmed with a outer gold band of stars reminiscent of the decorative elements in the Capitol. The center art is an image of the renovated east front of the Capitol. Each plate comes individually boxed in a presidential blue box.

#002694      \$42.00      Members      \$37.80

## EAST FRONT GALLERY TRAY

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For fine dining or any special gift occasion, this Charles Arey 10 oz. crystal goblet is carefully etched with the Great Seal of the United States and decorated with beautifully patterned traditional lines.

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Complete the appropriate sections of this page to enroll as a Society member, renew your membership, give a gift membership, or order items from *The Dome Market Place*.

If you are giving a gift membership, please provide the person's name and address below.

### GIFT MEMBERSHIP:

### \*CAPITOL ALUMNI MEMBERSHIP:

The Society recognizes the service of individuals, family members and descendants of those who have served in the U. S. Congress. Our Capitol Alumni members represent the living history that USCHS is charged to preserve.

*To become a Capitol Alumni Member, please tell us your connection with the Capitol.*

### EVENT REGISTRATION:

List the events that you wish to attend. Include your name(s) and a phone number at which we may contact you.

### YES, I/WE WILL ATTEND:

You may fax this form to (202) 544-8244 or mail it to: USCHS, 200 Maryland Ave., NE Washington, DC 20002-5796

### Questions?

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# Roll Call

The Newspaper of Capitol Hill

Vol. 8, No. 5

Washington, D. C.

10 Cents

July 18, 1962

## U. S. Capitol Historical Unit Formed

Founders of the U. S. Capitol Historical Society gathered in the Senate Restaurant at 8 a. m. yesterday to discuss organization plans and read a letter of congratulation and encouragement from President Kennedy.

The temporary chairman, Rep. Fred Schwengel (R-Iowa), said he has received more than 250 messages from individuals and groups expressing interest; that a third of the membership of Congress had indicated interest or approval.

The society decided it would be self-supporting and would not ask Congress or Federal agencies for funds, but would accept assignments or contracts from Government agencies for research.

The group set its next meeting for 8 a. m., Aug. 28, in the Old Supreme Court Chamber in the Capitol.

## Capitol Historical Society Organized

Capitol history buffs Tuesday met in their favorite building and formed a "U.S. Capitol Historical Society" to publicize the great national landmark.

They named Sen. Carl Hayden (D-Ariz) as honorary chairman and laid plans to obtain a charter by act of Congress or establish as a non-profit educational group under District of Columbia law.

Rep. Fred Schwengel (R-Iowa), the Capitol's leading historian, was named to head a steering group to propose a constitution and bylaws to be adopted at a second meeting July 31 in the Capitol.

They will work closely with a Capitol Committee and art curator to be named under legislation which cleared the Senate Rules Committee last week. Art treasures and historic works will be restored to good order in the Capitol in the manner Mrs. Jacqueline Kennedy is restoring the White House.

Committee members said the Capitol has been "curiously neglected" for 162 years. Interested persons around the country will be invited to join the group, and dues collected to make a movie about the Capitol and otherwise promote the structure.

Those attending were: Sen. Hayden; Rep. Schwengel; Rep. Marguerite Stitt Church (R-Ill); Arthur B. Hanson, general counsel, American Newspaper Publishers Assn.; Dr. Richard H. Howland, curator civil history dept., Smithsonian Institute; Dr. David Means, chief of manuscripts div., Library of Congress; Mrs. Lillian



REP. SCHWENGEL

Kessel, Capitol Architect historian; Dr. John Crane, historian; Stephen V. Feeley, author "The Story of the Capitol" and clerk of House Public Works Public Buildings and Grounds subcommittee; Melvin M. Payne, executive vice-president, National Geographic Society; Vic Birely, vice-chairman, Lincoln Sesquicentennial Committee; John Holton, aide to Speaker John McCormack; Charles Baird, aide to House Minority Leader Charles Halleck; John A. Jackson, executive secretary to Sen. Leavitt Saltonstall (R-Mass).

## Capitol's History, Art to Be Subject For Guide Book

By Elsie Carper  
Staff Reporter

A guide book similar to the "best seller" produced for the White House Historical Association is planned to publicize the U. S. Capitol, its history, architecture and works of art. As a first step in the production of a guide book, the Capitol Historical Society

each year but there is no guide book available for them to take home and read at leisure, he said. Payne is a vice president of the Capitol Historical Society which was formed last summer under the leadership of Rep. Fred Schwengel (R-Iowa). Schwengel now is president of the society. One of the first de-





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## THE **50TH** ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNITED STATES CAPITOL HISTORICAL SOCIETY

### ***YOUR CAPITOL, OUR MISSION: 50 YEARS INSPIRING INFORMED CITIZENSHIP***

The United States Capitol Historical Society is observing its fiftieth anniversary in 2012 and 2013. Founded in the summer of 1962, the organization took as its mission “to foster and increase an informed patriotism” through the study of the history of the Capitol, the Congress, and the principles of American representative government.

This issue of *The Capitol Dome* is one of several 50th anniversary projects and events. Check the Society’s web site ([www.uschs.org](http://www.uschs.org)) or sign up for our email updates to keep informed as new projects and events are announced.

## USCHS HISTORY ONLINE

Did you know that USCHS is online nearly every day with historical tidbits and articles?

**Keep it short and sweet with an historical fact a day:**

Follow us on Twitter *@CapitolHistory* or like us on Facebook at *Today in Capitol History*. (You can also like the Society’s main Facebook page at *U.S. Capitol Historical Society*.)

**Check out the newest addition to our online**

**publications—our blog:** A variety of USCHS staffers and guests contribute posts on topics ranging from art in the Capitol and historical images to legislative anniversaries and annual commemorations. We’re open to suggestions too; comment at [uschs.wordpress.com](http://uschs.wordpress.com) and let us know what you’d like to see covered.

Check out *The Capitol Dome* online! Find our online edition at [www.uschs.org](http://www.uschs.org).