



Fig. 14A. An 1840 lithograph depicts the statue of George Washington by Antonio Canova in the North Carolina Statehouse that was destroyed by fire in 1831. Thomas Jefferson recommended the sculptor and suggested Washington be portrayed as a Roman soldier.



Fig. 14B. The original plaster model of Canova's Washington was discovered in Italy in 1908 and two years later the king of Italy presented it to North Carolina. In 1970, Italian artist Romano Vio used the model to sculpt this marble copy for the rotunda of the State Capitol.

"Doctor of the Church" and his scholarly role as writer and editor.³⁰

As Dora Thornton describes in *The Scholar in His Study* (1997), the images of learned saints appealed to Renaissance artists and scholars who built their own studies and grew their own libraries in order "to lay claim to the civility, polite manners, and educated tastes which came to define the ruling elite of the Italian Renaissance." At the same time, such aspirations often reflected larger social imperatives motivated by a desire to establish modern Italian culture as a worthy rival to that of ancient Greece and Rome.³¹ It is not surprising, then, that one of the primary sources for this Renaissance portrait type was the seated philosopher statue common to the ancient Greek Hellenistic period.

Typical examples include a statue at the Louvre of the third-century B.C. Stoic philosopher Chrysippos, whose portraits were popular throughout the ancient Roman period as representing the epitome of "a cultured man," and a statue of the Epicurean Hermarchos in the collection of the Museo Archeologico, Florence.³² These, and other seated philosopher statues, celebrated the intelligence of the subjects and the moral tranquility derived therefrom. Brumidi likely was aware of the relevance of this particular lineage to contemporary portraiture, especially in light of a work by Brumidi's own sculpture teacher in Italy, Antonio Canova (1757–1822). Canova produced the ill-fated *George Washington*, 1819–20, (figs. 14A and 14B) for the North Carolina Statehouse in Raleigh. Clearly, Canova's *Washington*, destroyed by fire in 1831 and the most famous statue in America during the 1820s, was based on the seated philosopher portrait type. Consistent with this portrait tradition, to which Brumidi's Fulton also ultimately belongs, Canova endowed Washington, who is shown composing his farewell address, with the moral authority, dignity and cultured learning embodied in the seated philosopher statue.

There is of course a seated statue of Fulton in the Capitol, but it portrays the inventor within a very different cultural tradition—the prevailing late-nineteenth-century ideology of success and the celebration of the common man. It is this ethos that animates the wonderful seated statue of Robert Fulton completed in 1883 by Philadelphia sculptor Howard Roberts (1843–1900). One of Pennsylvania's two historical portraits of native sons or daughters allotted spaces within the Capitol's National Statuary Hall Collection, Roberts's marble *Fulton* (fig. 15) rests comfortably against the west wall of National Statuary Hall, the former chamber of the House of Representatives.³³ Perhaps the most original sitting portrait statue in nineteenth-century American sculpture, its uniqueness derives largely



Fig. 15. Howard Roberts, Robert Fulton, 1883. Marble, National Statuary Hall, United States Capitol.

from the naturalness of the sitter's attitude and the unassuming, workmanlike characterization of the famous inventor.

After seeing the plaster model of Fulton in Roberts's Chestnut Street studio, a Philadelphia critic wrote the following description:

The sculptor abandoned heroics at the outset, and endeavored to imagine Fulton . . . in his habit as he lived. . . . He has accordingly represented Fulton as a stalwart man in the prime of life, who has thrown himself in an easy and unconstrained attitude in an elbow-chair, and is intently engaged in studying a small model of a steamboat which he holds with both hands on his knees. The inventor has his coat off and his ruffled shirt cuffs turned up at the wrist, and a small vise and other tools by his side, and a variety of books and

papers at his feet suggest the workshop. The figure sits crossways in the chair, the feet have the peculiar twist which a person is apt to unconsciously take when seated in deep study, the body is limp, the limbs relaxed, and the whole force of the man is concentrated in a powerfully modeled face that suggests the most intense and anxious thought.³⁴

But not everyone saw the statue in such a positive light. Some criticized the casual informality of Roberts's statue as a misrepresentation of Fulton's gentlemanly character. Reacting to Roberts's model in 1881, for example, a writer for the *American Architect and Building News* seriously doubted that "the bare arms, the ungraceful attitude, and the workman's tools" correctly expressed "the character of the delicate and courtly Fulton." "There is at least a question," the writer continued, "whether all beauty in a work of art should be sacrificed in order to reproduce as many as possible of the unattractive qualities of a subject."³⁵ In 1888, John H.B. Latrobe, a prominent Baltimore lawyer and the son of Benjamin Henry Latrobe, the architect of the Capitol from 1803–11 and 1815–17, wrote with regard to Roberts's statue of Fulton that "whatever may be its merit as a work of art, in one respect it does him an injustice. He was not a mechanic, working in shirt sleeves. He belonged in social life to the rank of what are called gentlemen."³⁶

For Latrobe and the *American Architect and Building News* critic, the menial nature of Roberts's characterization (what some observers at the time would have called "progressive" but what they called "unattractive" and "an injustice") was clearly demeaning to the subject and conflicted with their idealization of Fulton as a more refined manifestation of American genius. In contrast, Brumidi's Fulton inspired no such misgivings. Taking a more conservative approach by drawing upon a distinctive tradition of American portraiture dominant over a half-century earlier, Brumidi blended an aptitude for the mechanical arts and the practical application of knowledge into the cultivated, scholarly image of an enlightened man of science.



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1. Kirkpatrick Sale, *The Fire of His Genius: Robert Fulton and the American Dream* (New York, 2001), p. 2.

2. Ibid., pp. 2-3.

3. Joseph J. Ellis, *After the Revolution: Profiles of Early American Culture* (New York, 1979), pp. 25, 35.

4. Ibid., p. 30.

5. Ibid., pp. 37-38.

6. Barbara A. Wolanin, *Constantino Brumidi: Artist of the Capitol* (Washington, D.C., 1998), p. 138.

7. Michael Quick, *American Portraiture in the Grand Manner, 1720-1920* (Los Angeles, 1981), p. 170.

8. For a full identification of everyone depicted in the painting, see *ibid.*, p. 170.

9. Wolanin, *Brumidi*, pp. 73, 75, 80-81.

10. Ibid., pp. 80-81.

11. Thomas Hamilton Ormsbee, *Collecting Antiques in America*, 3d ed. (1940; New York, 1962), pp. 130-31.

12. See Janet R. Houghton to Barbara A. Wolanin, Sept. 3, 1998, and Object Worksheet, both in Records of the Architect of the Capitol, Washington, D.C.; Wolanin, *Brumidi*, p. 226; and Ormsbee, *Collecting Antiques in America*.

13. Helmut von Erffa and Allen Staley, *The Paintings of Benjamin West* (New Haven and London, 1986), cat. no. 532, p. 454; and Richard Murray to Barbara A. Wolanin, Dec. 10, 1998, Records of the Architect of the Capitol.

14. Constantino Brumidi Voucher submitted for fresco of Robert Fulton in the Patent Corridor [\$500.00], AOC Voucher Book, Works of Art, v. 11, AOC Archives.

15. On a more personal level, Brumidi also may have identified with the image of West as a fellow expatriate artist enjoying the final years of a long and illustrious career.

16. Wolanin, *Brumidi*, pp. 49-50.

17. Ibid., p. 82.

18. Ibid., pp. 100, 102.

19. Ibid., p. 102.

20. For more information on the pose of melancholy, see Erwin Panofsky et al., *Saturn and Melancholy: Studies in the History of Natural Philosophy, Religion, and Art* (New York, 1964); Brandon Brame Fortune, *Franklin and His Friends: Portraying the Man of Science in Eighteenth-Century America* (Washington, D. C., 1999), pp. 23, 163 n. 9; Ludmilla Jordanova, *Defining Features: Scientific and Medical Portraits, 1660-2000* (London, 2000), pp. 41-42; and Thomas P. Somma, "The Problem with Public Art: Henry Kirke Brown's *Thinking Negro* (1855) from His Pedimental Design for the United States Capitol," in *American Pantheon: Sculptural and Artistic Decoration of the United States Capitol*, ed. Donald R. Kennon and Thomas P. Somma (Athens, Oh., 2004), pp. 118-21.

21. "Report of the United States Art Commission," Feb. 22, 1860,

Ex. Doc. No. 43, House of Representatives, 35th Cong., 1st Sess., included in "Documentary History of Art Commissions 1858-1911," (Compiled for the Office of the Superintendent of the U.S. Capitol), pp. 747-49. See also, Wolanin, *Brumidi*, pp. 95, 96, 97 ns. 37-40 and 42; and Thomas P. Somma, *The Apotheosis of Democracy, 1908-1916: The Pediment for the House Wing of the United States Capitol* (Newark, Del., 1995), pp. 38-39, 126 ns. 105-11.

22. Fortune, *Franklin and His Friends*, esp. pp. 4-9, 67, 160.

23. Ibid., pp. 27-28. See also, Brooke Hindle, *The Pursuit of Science in Revolutionary America, 1735-1789* (Chapel Hill, 1956), esp. pp. 248-79.

24. Erffa and Staley, *Paintings of Benjamin West*, p. 153 and cat. no. 620, p. 620.

25. Ibid., p. 507.

26. Fortune, *Franklin and His Friends*, p. 128.

27. Ibid., pp. 130, 133.

28. Ibid., p. 128. See also, Antonello Gerbi, *The Dispute of the New World: The History of a Polemic*, trans. Jeremy Moyle (1955; rev. ed., Pittsburgh, 1973).

29. Leroy was an obstetrician who "probably attended Madame David at the birth of her first child." David portrays the doctor "as an intelligent and refined man, dressed in fine clothes, writing at his desk leaning on a volume of Hippocrates's *Marbi mulierium* ('The Diseases of Woman'), lit by a quinquet lamp—a recent invention that gave illumination equal in strength to a dozen candles." Lavoisier was an "eminent experimental physicist and chemist," Marie-Anne his "indispensable assistant." Experimental equipment is given great prominence in the double portrait and includes a gasometer, a simple barometer, a pneumatic trough and a glass flask with a stopcock. See Simon Lee, *David* (London, 1999), pp. 78, 127-29.

30. Dora Thornton, *The Scholar in His Study* (New Haven and London, 1997), p. 40.

31. Ibid., pp. 1-2.

32. See Gisela M. Richter, *The Portraits of the Greeks* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1984), pp. 103, 105, 131.

33. The subject of the other portrait statue from Pennsylvania is John P. G. Muhlenberg, sculpted by Blanche Nevin. See *Compilation of Works of Art and Other Objects in the United States Capitol* (Washington, D.C., 1965), pp. 206, 223.

34. "The Fine Arts," *Daily Evening Telegraph* (Philadelphia), Mar. 25, 1880, p. 6.

35. "Pennsylvania's Contribution to the National Hall of Sculpture," *American Architect and Building News*, July 16, 1881, p. 25.

36. John H.B. Latrobe, May 14, 1888, reprinted in John Edward Semmes, *John H.B. Latrobe and His Times, 1803-1891* (Baltimore, 1917), p. 31.

‘From the Giddy Height Above’: Investigating Constantino Brumidi’s Final Days in the Capitol Rotunda

by Jane Armstrong Hudiburg

“Within the great dome, just below the spring of the arch, a panel encircles the wall, and here this old Italian artist Constantino Brumidi with brush and easel is bringing into life and beauty a series of historical pictures, that will live and last for centuries to be admired by other generations long, long into the future. The task is a great one, and we could wish that the vigor of immortal youth might be given this old painter, that this, his last best art conception, might be complete, ere the brush falls from the nerveless hand.”

—Reporter for the *Donaldsonville Chief* (LA), September 7, 1878.¹

“I have watched you, maestro, clinging to the ceiling like a fly, slapping around commissary paint, until I grew dizzy, and I have wondered when you would fall from the giddy height above upon the giddy throng below and break your Roman nose.”

—Reporter for the *Washington Post*, April 1, 1878.²

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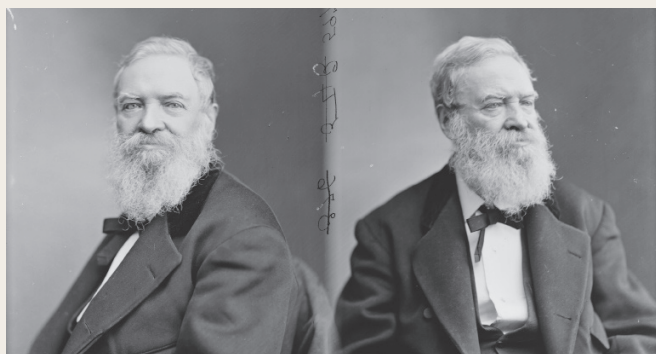


Fig. 1. These photographs of Constantino Brumidi late in life are part of the Brady-Handy Photograph Collection in the Library of Congress.

“There are many popular delusions concerning the Capitol,” lamented the building’s chief guide, H. J. Kennedy, to an *Evening Star* reporter in 1902. “Among the erroneous impressions that seem to be entertained by almost every visitor is one that relates to the frieze in the rotunda. Nine in every ten people who live in this city, and who bring their friends to see the building, believe that Brumidi fell from the scaffold while at work on the frieze and was killed.”³

Current guides with the Capitol Visitor Center Services, however, are well aware that Constantino Brumidi (fig. 1), the nineteenth-century Italian artist, survived that fall, or actually, that *near* fall, in 1879 from the scaffolding fifty-eight feet above the Rotunda floor. Indeed, it is one of the favorite stories relayed to the tourists and school groups visiting the Capitol each day. Guides point to each of the frieze’s scenes, which encircle the base of the Dome,

beginning with Columbus walking into the New World, and pause at the one depicting “William Penn and the Indians” (fig. 2).

“Do you see where the background behind Penn changes from a darker taupe to a lighter color?” a guide is likely to ask. Heads craned upwards nod. “That is where Brumidi fell. He managed to grab the scaffolding”—and here the guide may mimic swinging on monkey bars—“and held on for *several minutes* before being rescued. He didn’t get hurt, but he was shaken up, and he never finished the scene.” Seeking a strong reaction, the guide is never disappointed. While older visitors may gasp, middle school students, in particular, perk up, their faces brightening. Finally, an interesting story to catch their attention: an old man, in his seventies, dangling from a platform high above the Rotunda floor. Still, one is left to wonder, could a frail, elderly man really save himself in such a dramatic fashion? And, if so, how did the accident affect the outcome of the Frieze of American History, one of the most iconic artworks in the Capitol?

Brumidi, of course, is known for far more than the decorative frieze that he left unfinished. In addition to his famous fresco, *The Apotheosis of Washington* (1865), painted on the curved canopy under the Dome, the artist left his mark throughout the Capitol, including the frescoes and murals in the Brumidi Corridors of the Senate wing, the Senate Reception Room, the President’s Room, and numerous committee rooms. In fact, by the time Brumidi finished the frieze’s first scene in April 1878, no one could “remember when Brumidi was not painting the Capitol.”⁴

Fig. 2. The central figure of William Penn in the “William Penn and the Indians” section was the last part of the Rotunda frieze on which Brumidi worked. The difference between Brumidi’s style and that of his successor, Filippo Costaggini, is readily apparent.



Brumidi’s history as an artist began in Rome, where, at the age of thirteen, he entered the renowned art school, Accademia di San Luca or Academy of St. Luke, to study painting, sculpture, and the art of frescoing (painting on wet plaster so that the colors become a permanent part of the wall or ceiling). His demonstrated skills led to work restoring sixteenth-century frescoes in the Vatican. For this effort, he and his partner had the opportunity to create their own Vatican design, a wall painted to resemble a three-dimensional curtain. Brumidi then found work as an artist throughout the city, including commissions to create large-scale murals in the Palazzo Torlonia and the theater in the Villa Torlonia and frescoes on the dome and ceiling in the Church of the Madonna dell’ Archetto.⁵

Fleeing Rome in 1852 after being imprisoned for his part in the Republican Revolution, Brumidi landed in New York City. There, and throughout the region, he painted portraits and decorated private homes. Later he would paint altarpieces and church frescoes, including multiple murals in St. Stephen’s Church (New York) and Taylor’s Chapel in Baltimore. In 1854, he went to Mexico City, where he painted a Holy Trinity for the cathedral. En route back to New York, he stopped in Washington, D.C. and visited the Capitol.⁶

There, Brumidi secured a meeting with Captain Montgomery C. Meigs, the superintendent of Capitol construction, who granted him a test assignment, a lunette in a room intended for the House Committee on Agriculture.⁷ The sample fresco painting led to a long and fruitful relationship between the artist and the Army engineer, who became quartermaster general of the Union Army during the Civil War. Indeed, Meigs later claimed that “the best pictures and decorations of the building are his design. . . . I have as yet seen no [one] who could compare with him as a director of the decorations of the interior of the Capitol.”⁸ Or as one reporter opined in 1876,

“Raphael in the Vatican was a fool to Brumidi in the Washington Capitol. High up in the lofty dome, or down in the darkest corridors, where no foot but that of the watchman treads, Brumidi paints away, covering the walls with men and women, and gods and goddesses, and birds and beasts, and flowers. By the yard or by the mile, by the week or by the year, he paints on, paints ever.”⁹

If Brumidi was a fixture in the Capitol, so was the scaffolding that accompanied his works-in-progress (fig. 3). Many of the work platforms elevated the artist a mere yard or two; the wooden scaffolding required for the “Apotheosis of Washington” raised Brumidi one hundred and eighty feet. His knowledge of three-dimensional forms in space ensured that the figures, some of which are fifteen feet tall, appear to have normal human proportions despite being painted on a curved surface seventeen stories above the Rotunda’s floor.¹⁰

While lower to the floor, the frieze’s scaffolding proved to be a more flimsy apparatus than the one that served the “Apotheosis of Washington.” Attached to the Rotunda’s curved walls, it moved as work progressed. One newspaper reporter, writing in 1878, provided a vivid description of the platform: “Brumidi’s scaffold is supported on three diagonal props of wood, each forty feet long, resting upon the cornice of the old dome, and extending outward, and half way up their length making a shelf upon the broad architrave of the new or superincumbent dome of iron. Ropes from the gallery above the new cornice hold these long stanchions.” To reach the scaffolding, “The old man has to climb up the inner gallery—which is built in the dome’s shell—by a ladder, step on the balustrade, and go down a second ladder nearly one hundred feet from the floor below. Then he stops on a little railed scaffold, turning himself half way round and goes down the third long ladder. *If he should fall, he would mash down yonder like a basket of eggs* [emphasis added].”¹¹

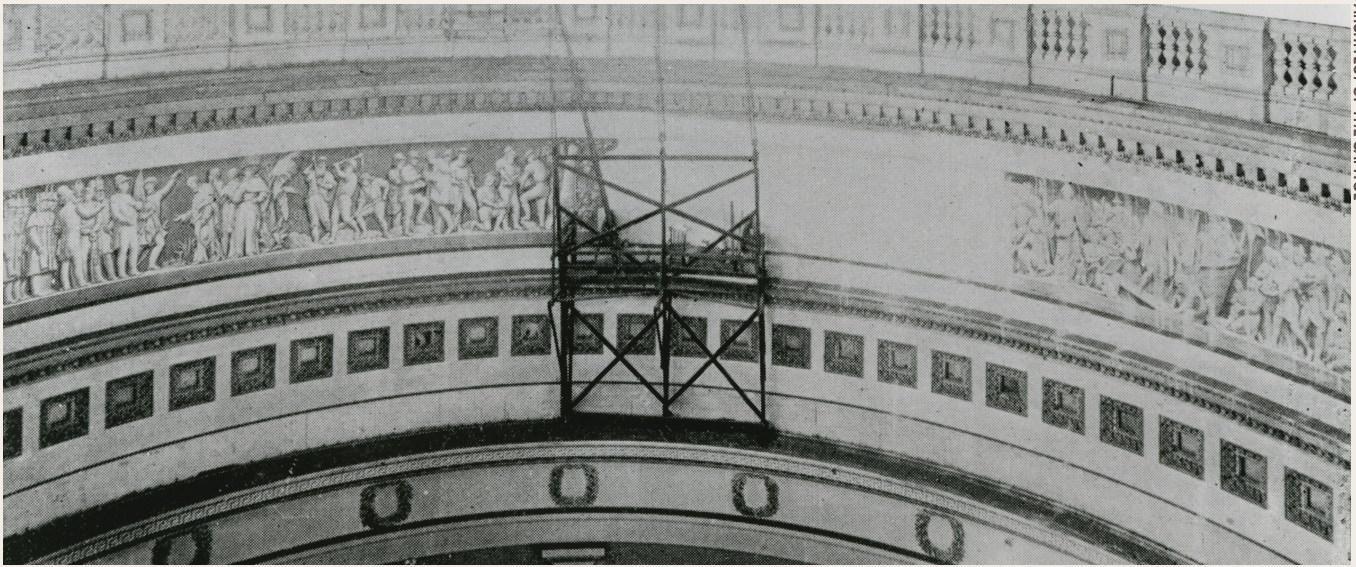


Fig. 3. The scaffold used to paint the frieze remained in the Rotunda for many years. This photograph was published in George Hazelton, *The National Capitol*, 1897.

Captivated by the element of danger, visitors entering the Rotunda scanned the scaffolding for a glimpse of the famous painter. They were often disappointed. Weeks would pass when Brumidi was unable to work from the platform. Sickened by asthma or thwarted by the chill of winter, he retreated to his nearby home studio on G Street, N.W., described as “a pleasant room given up to casts, pictures and music, where all the preliminary work is done.”¹²

Brumidi spent his time in the studio preparing the full-size drawings, or “cartoons,” which would be applied to the freshly plastered surface. When he was able to work in the Capitol, Brumidi transferred the images using a traditional transfer technique. One observer outlined the process: the drawings “are taken to the rotunda and placed over the space designed to be next attacked, and perforated with lines of dots along which charcoal is rubbed so as to leave impressions on the plaster beneath. The drawing is then removed, and the artist, having suitably prepared the mortar, proceeds to copy the design, section by section, till the whole is transferred to the wall.”¹³

Brumidi first prepared a small sketch of scenes for the frieze in 1859. However, delays in congressional authorization pushed the project back until 1877. Brumidi was then seventy-three years old, although some reporters described him as a man in his eighties. The artist’s advanced age, the height of the scaffolding, and the frieze itself, which mimicked a three-dimensional bas relief,¹⁴ fascinated dozens of writers, who traveled to the Capitol to personally witness Brumidi and his working conditions: “He has nothing upon his scaffold but a wooden chair and a box for table, and two tall trestles to reach his design. His cups of colors are arranged outside the railings of his scaffold, along the sill of the architrave . . . The old man, the age of eighty

[sic] is thrice lonely there—by age, by desertion and by the solitude of avocation.”¹⁵

Far from being a solitary figure, though, Brumidi enjoyed the company of several friends in the Capitol, including senators and representatives, Montgomery Meigs, and the guards stationed in the Dome’s gallery or the floor below. Often, he was accompanied by the mason who applied fresh plaster to the wall each day. And he spoke with those inquiring reporters, who generally treated him with deference. One particular *Washington Post* writer, however, adopted a rather jocular tone when he cornered Brumidi in April 1878:

‘I have watched you, *maestro*, clinging to the ceiling like a fly, slapping around commissary paint, until I grew dizzy, and I have wondered when you would fall from the giddy height above upon the giddy throng below and break your Roman nose. Is it not dangerous, *caro mio*?’

‘Yes, and I am old,’ the artist replied. ‘I want a better platform, but what can I do? I can’t get it.’¹⁶

Brumidi, obviously, was well aware of the dangers involved in working “from the giddy height above.” While he continued to use the same two-stage platform, however, he soon grew too “feeble” to make the arduous journey up to the gallery and then down a ladder to the frieze. Instead, according to another writer, “A derrick has been rigged, by which he is carried, every day that he is able to work, up to a stationary swinging scaffold. Large crowds witness his ascension, and hundreds are at all times, during the sessions of Congress, engaged in viewing it.”¹⁷

As winter approached, there were fewer days that

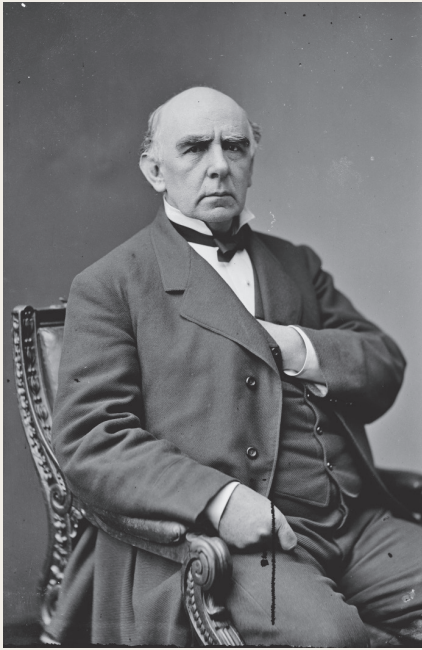


Fig. 4.
Architect of the
Capitol Edward
Clark oversaw
Brumidi's work in
the Capitol. Clark
served in office
from 1865 until his
death in 1902.

Brumidi was able to fresco the frieze, derrick or not. In December, Brumidi notified Architect of the Capitol Edward Clark (fig. 4) that, while he would continue to work in his studio, "In this very cold weather I am compelled to suspend the work in the Rotunda where the heating is not enough to prevent frost at the surface of the mortar [sic], that not remain soft long enough upon the wall for absorbing the colors . . . causing injury to the work."¹⁸ Meanwhile, a writer for *American Architect and Building News* worried that Brumidi, "now almost about to leave the world," would be unable to complete the frieze, as it would be nearly impossible to secure an artist who could finish it for him.¹⁹ Another reporter testified to Brumidi's unparalleled skill: "There is scarcely room for difference in regard of the excellence of these frescoes in black and white. The designs are noble and graceful, and the execution is wonderful. The frescoes are perfect to the degree of optical illusion. It is difficult to persuade a stranger that the work is not in relief."²⁰

In the spring, Brumidi was back on the scaffolding, much to the relief of many in the Capitol. The subject of another *Washington Post* interview in April 1879, Brumidi escorted the reporter to his studio to view the remaining frieze cartoons. He explained that the last scene, "The Discovery of Gold in California," would lie adjacent to the small allegorical panel preceding the first American history scene. ("So the gold-digger . . . will steal up behind Columbus and tell him there is gold in the New World," the reporter mused.) Painting half a figure a day, Brumidi estimated that he would complete the project within five years. "Do you not find the work beyond your strength?" asked the reporter. "Oh, no, I am not so strong as once. I cannot walk well, or stand, but my arm

has lost nothing; my hand and my eye are as good as ever. It is my life-long work."²¹

In June, Mary Clemmer Ames, the noted Washington correspondent, listed the Capitol's early-summer charms, including viewing the "venerable" Brumidi without the "hurrying crowds."²² Those artist sightings were short-lived, however, as respiratory illness drove him from the city. Brumidi explained his absence in a letter to the architect of the Capitol. "A short time before I was attacked by the Asthma and finding no relief [sic], was advised to leave the City by Dr. Thompson, and decided to come here [to Orkney Springs, VA]. I only suffered only during the night which was very fortunate as it permitted me to work in the day. I have completed three Cartoons representing the treaty of William Penn, Settlement of New England which comprises two cartoons. I have brought one with me on which I work every day; I find the air a great benefit to me the water also and, expect to be able to continue the Fresco very soon. . . . Very respectfully, C. Brumidi."²³

Less than a week later, Brumidi returned to Washington, writing, "[I am] ready to procede [sic] the work in fresco (with your permission) three Cartoons are near completed. I am improved in the general health, that was the object of my trip and not the pleasure."²⁴ Another letter to Clark on September 29th, though, revealed that Brumidi, who was paid ten dollars for each day he worked, worried about money in addition to his health. "Dear Sir, I recived [sic] the visit of Dr. Taylor and I hope to obtain much benefit from his prescription; but my sickness proced [sic] more by the mental than fisical weaknes [sic], because my mind is much worried by the terrible future prospect of starvation as soon as my bad health prevent me to do the daily work, having Safe [sic] nothing in the past, when the fortune provided me with very profitable works Now sickley [sic] and old, with 26 years service as an Artist in the Capitol, I ask the confort [sic] of to be replaced in the Roll, as a reward for my work, and gain again the tranquility of the mind."²⁵

Two days after requesting job security, Brumidi tumbled from his narrow platform. According to a *Washington Post* reporter, who interviewed Brumidi at his home later that night, "He was seated in his well-known chair, perched upon the second stage of his platform, and leaning over to give a finishing touch to a figure which was almost out of his reach, his chair slipped off and turned over. The artist, who has been almost helplessly feeble for a long time, managed to grasp a rung of the ladder" between the platform's two stages. "He was fortunately seen by Officer [Humphrey] Lamon, of the Capitol Police, in the dome above, who promptly came to his rescue, arriving just in time to save Mr. Brumidi, whose strength was exhausted."²⁶

Apparently, George McCauley, a Capitol guide, also raced to the scene. As one onlooker noted, “This gentleman went from the floor of the rotunda, risked his own life in passing around three of the pillars on their narrow ledges in time to assist Mr. Lamon, who was nearly exhausted at the moment, in his efforts to save the painter.”²⁷

The *Baltimore Sun* provided a similar account, “The chair that he sits on, which is on his suspended scaffold, fell over, throwing him forward. He managed to hang on to the side of the scaffold until assistance reached him, when he was pulled up On account of his advanced age the shock was so great that there is no telling how much it will affect him.”²⁸

Brumidi himself described the “miraculous escape” in yet another petition for admittance on the regular payroll. Referring to himself in the third person, he stated: “Upon the 1st day of October he was engaged at work upon the Historic Painting in fresco, in the Frieze of the Rotunda of the Capitol, and while sitting upon a temporary scaffold, and near its edge the chair turned from under him and threw him over; he caught the round of a ladder and, *remained suspended by the strength of his arms for the space of fifteen minutes* [emphasis added], till officer Lammon descended from the top of the Dome to the scaffold and called two men from the floor of the Rotunda to assist in the rescue of your petitioner.”²⁹

Writing in 1902, the author of *The National Capitol*, George C. Hazelton, gave this portrayal: “The watchman just below the canopy, who was accustomed to follow with his eyes the progress of the artist, saw him fall, and running down the long flights of steps, succeeded in rescuing the old gentleman as he clung nearly exhausted to the ladder, or he would have fallen and been dashed to pieces on the



ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL

Fig. 6. Filippo Costaggini was chosen to continue the frieze following Brumidi's death. Brumidi recommended him because of his similar Italian training.

floor beneath. The chair upon which he sat in order to paint had been pushed backward on the small platform, and as his assistant was absent, there was no one on the scaffolding to rescue him.”³⁰ In the same year, H.J. Kennedy, the Capitol's chief guide, provided a more muted version of the incident, leading one to suspect the truth lies somewhere between Brumidi's description and the later account: “He was hauled up to the frieze and had a habit of placing his chair on a box. One of the legs of the chair slipped from the box and Brumidi was thrown backward, his body striking a support used in the scaffolding. He did not fall, however, but was shaken up, and as he was an old man it was rather severe on him. Men went to his assistance at once and he was brought down, but in a day or two he resumed his work as usual.”³¹

Kennedy was correct that Brumidi returned to the fresco the next day, but it was only for one day. According to the *Sun*, the artist painted for a time from the platform, then “became nervous and was forced to suspend. He has doubts that he will be able to finish the work on which he is engaged, though he thinks he can complete the cartoons on papers, so that others can transfer them to the walls.”³²

Brumidi, in fact, did continue in the studio, even as his health deteriorated. Later in November, he reported to



PHOTOGRAPH BY RON WILLIAMS

Fig. 5. Brumidi was buried at Glenwood Cemetery in an unmarked grave in the Germon family plot of his American wife, Lola Germon. This marker was placed in 1952 through the efforts of Myrtle Cheney Murdock, author of a pioneering book about Brumidi's artwork.

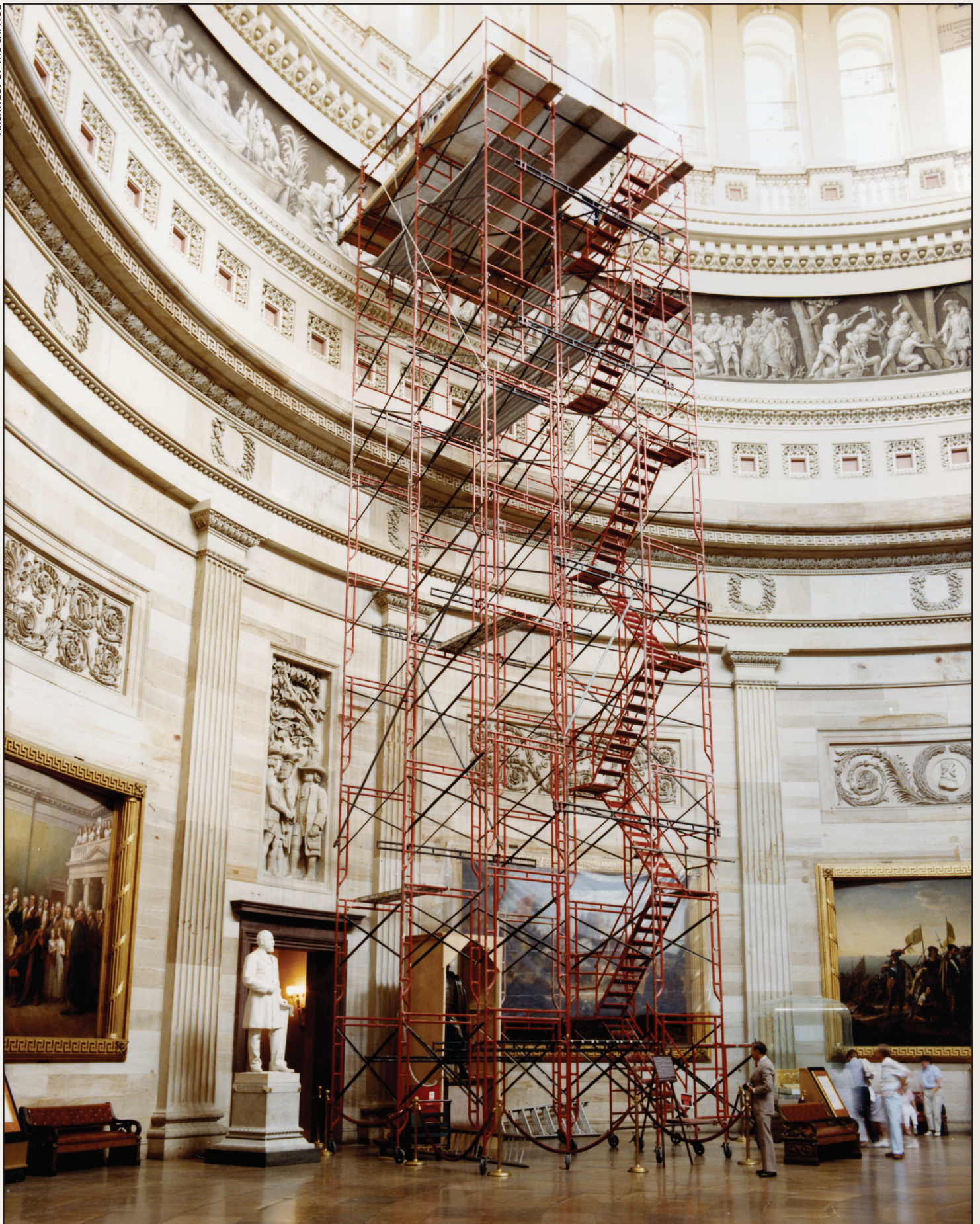


Fig. 7. This sturdier and safer scaffold was used in the 1980s when the frieze was conserved.

Clark, “[I] have employed all the working days in drawing the cartoons for the frieze now in progress in the Rotunda of the Capitol, and having completed the subject of Oglethorpe, and the Muscogee Chief, with a portion of the insurrection of Lexington. I work sometime with difficulty when I am troubled by the asthma, but after some rest, I proceed with my work.” By January, though, the general consensus held that Brumidi would never finish the frieze, which was “not more than one-third done.” According to a Sacramento reporter, “He regards this last labor as the best of his life, and is exceedingly anxious to live long enough to see it finished, but he has given up all hope of doing it himself. In a recent conversation he said that he thought he would be able to finish the cartoons with crayons on paper, and that he thought an artist could be secured in Italy who could transfer the designs to the walls of the Rotunda.”³³

Brumidi toiled on into February, working on the scene, “The Battle of Lexington,” then lost consciousness the day before his death in his home on February 19th.³⁴ While some obituaries cited the lingering effects of the October accident, or his chronic asthma, others concluded that, “disorders with the natural infirmities of age were the immediate cause of his death.”³⁵ Surrounded by “many friends,” Brumidi was buried in the Glenwood Cemetery (fig. 5) with Architect of the Capitol Clark serving as a pallbearer.³⁶

Accolades followed Brumidi’s death: “He was the genius of the Capitol.”³⁷ Others called Brumidi the second Michelangelo. Senator Daniel Voorhees (D-IN) eulogized him from the Senate floor: “During more than a quarter of a century he hovered along these walls from the basement to the dome, leaving creations of imperishable beauty wherever his touch has been. Wherever he paused by a panel, or was seen suspending to a ceiling, there soon appeared the brilliant conceptions of his fertile and cultivated mind.”³⁸ Senator Justin Morrill (R-VT), a personal friend to the artist, agreed. “The evidences of his rare genius . . . are too conspicuous to be denied.” “Even after that accident by which his life hung many minutes fearfully imperiled under the dome of the Capitol, his latest work there, unfinished though it be, shows that his hand had not lost its cunning, and his acquaintance with American history and skill in its portrayal has, perhaps, never been more happily displayed.”³⁹

However appreciated the unfinished frieze was, it still needed to be completed. Recommended by Brumidi, the painter chosen to assume the task, Filippo Costaggini (fig. 6), seemed ideal: Italian, a fellow graduate of the Accademia di San Luca, and willing and able to follow Brumidi’s drawings (although his painting style was more

detailed and thus less resembling a bas relief). When Costaggini finished the “Discovery of Gold” scene in 1889, thirty-one feet of blank wall separated the last scene from the first. The problem came from an early miscalculation. While Brumidi had planned for scenes with a height of nine feet, the band’s usable vertical space was actually seven feet, nine inches, forcing the scenes to be smaller in scale. Costaggini offered to finish the frieze with his own designs, but arguments over subject matter blocked their implementation. His death in 1904, and further difficulties with congressional authorization, delayed the band’s completion until 1953, when the American artist Allyn Cox finally closed the circle with three scenes of his own design depicting the Civil War, the Spanish-American War, and “The Birth of Aviation” (fig. 7).⁴⁰ So while Brumidi had envisioned a gold-digger whispering to Columbus, the frieze concludes with an airplane, symbolizing a new era of exploration.

The question remains, had Brumidi’s chair not slipped on the scaffolding in 1879, could he have finished the frieze, his “life’s work”? The evidence provides a stark answer: no. Brumidi, with his chronic illness and dwindling strength, had no chance to complete the project, let alone enlarge the additional scenes needed. The lengthy delay in commencing the frieze, not the “fright and shock” caused by the incident on the scaffolding, led to the unfortunate situation. Brumidi simply ran out of time. Still, the story is fascinating, and also a bit sad: the painter of cathedrals, religious and secular, fearing for his life, high above the Rotunda floor. An old man, “thrice lonely there—by age, by desertion and by the solitude of avocation.”⁴¹



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Notes

1. "Our Washington Letter," *The Donaldson Chief* (LA), Sept. 7, 1878, p. 1.
2. "The Capitol's Ghost: Sixty Years of Devotion to High Art on a Scaffold," *The Washington Post*, Apr. 1, 1878, p. 1.
3. *The Evening Star* (Washington), Jan. 4, 1902, p. 18.
4. "A Profitable Job," *Andrew County Republican* (MO), Mar. 31, 1876, p. 7, citing an article in the *Philadelphia Times*.
5. Brumidi also painted Pope Pius IX's portrait; the assignment may have saved his life. A leader in the Italian revolution, Brumidi was arrested in 1851 for ordering the occupation of convents and monasteries by pro-republic troops. In his defense, he asserted that he did so under an official order to protect precious artwork from French soldiers. Despite abundant evidence supporting this claim, Brumidi was sentenced to eighteen years in prison for, among other things, seeking the "destruction of the Catholic Church." Pope Pius IX, however, granted Brumidi a full pardon, allowing him to leave the country. Barbara Wolanin, *Constantino Brumidi: Artist of the Capitol* (Washington, D.C., Government Printing Office, 1998), pp. 15-23.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 52-54.
7. The first room Brumidi painted is H-144, now the House Appropriations Committee Room. *Ibid.*, p. 54.
8. Montgomery Meigs, Letter to Secretary of the Interior, June 5, 1862. Architect of the Capitol (AOC) Archives. Note: all quotations include original spellings and grammatical constructions.
9. "A Profitable Job." The article erroneously concluded that Brumidi had grown rich painting at the Capitol.
10. Wolanin, *Constantino Brumidi*, p. 131.
11. "Painting Under the Dome of the Capitol," *Elk County Advocate* (PA), Feb. 28, 1878, p. 4.
12. "Brumidi's Life Work: How He is Decorating the Capitol Rotunda," *The Washington Post*, Apr. 11, 1879, p. 1. Brumidi's studio was in his home located at 911 G Street, N.W., the current site of the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library.
13. *Milan Exchange* (TN), Jan. 16, 1879, p. 3.
14. The frieze was done in grisaille, a technique using a monochrome of whites and browns to resemble the coloring of sculpture. Brumidi's shading added to the three-dimensional effect. AOC website, <http://www.aoc.gov/capitol-hill/murals/frieze-american-history>, accessed Jan. 15, 2014.
15. "Painting Under the Dome of the Capitol."
16. "The Capitol's Ghost."
17. "Notes and Clippings," *The American Architect and Building News*, vol. 5, Jan. 11, 1879, p. 16.
18. Constantino Brumidi, Letter to Edward Clark, Dec. 27, 1878. AOC Archives.
19. *The American Architect and Building News*.
20. *Milan Exchange*.
21. "Brumidi's Life Work."
22. Mary Clemmer Ames, "A Woman's Letter," *New York Independent*, reprinted in *Clearfield Republican* (PA), July 16, 1879, p. 1.
23. Brumidi, Letter to Architect Edward Clark, Aug. 11, 1879, AOC Archives.
24. Brumidi, Letter to Architect Edward Clark, Aug. 18, 1879, AOC Archives.
25. Brumidi appears to have been placed and removed from the Architect's regular payroll more than one time during his years of service in the Capitol. Brumidi, Letter to Architect Clark, Sept. 29, 1879, AOC Archives.
26. Officer Humphrey Lemon was also referred to as Lamon or Lammon. "Brumidi's Narrow Escape, His Chair Upon the Scaffolding in the Capitol Dome Turns Over—End of His Work," *The Washington Post*, Oct. 2, 1879, p. 1.
27. "A Praiseworthy Act," *The Washington Post*, Oct. 6, 1879, p. 2.
28. *The Baltimore Sun*, Oct. 2, 1879, p. 1.
29. Brumidi, Petition to the Senate and the House of Representatives, Nov. 17, 1879, AOC Archives.
30. George C. Hazelton, Jr., *The National Capitol: Its Architecture, Art and History* (New York: J.F. Taylor & Company, 1902), pp. 98-99.
31. *The Evening Star*, Jan. 4, 1902.
32. "Letter from Washington," *The Baltimore Sun*, October 8, 1879, p. 4.
33. "The Best Work of His Life," *Daily Record-Union* (Sacramento, CA), Jan. 2, 1880, p. 2.
34. At the time of Brumidi's death, he lived at 921 G Street, N.W. Wolanin, *Constantino Brumidi*, p. 243.
35. "Death of a Great Artist," *The Washington Post*, Feb. 20, 1880, p. 1. The official death certificate listed "chronic Bright's Disease and uremia," or kidney failure. Wolanin, *Constantino Brumidi*, p. 171.
36. *The National Republican* (Washington, D.C.), Feb. 23, 1880, p. 4.
37. *The Washington Post*, Feb. 20, 1880.
38. *The Congressional Record*, 46th Cong., 2d sess., Feb. 24, 1880, p. 1075.
39. *Ibid.*
40. Wolanin, *Constantino Brumidi*, pp. 173-76.
41. In his petition to be placed on the regular payroll, Brumidi claimed that the "fright and shock" of the fall exacerbated his asthma, causing injury during the performance of his duty. Brumidi, Petition to the Senate and the House of Representatives, Nov. 17, 1879, AOC Archives.

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Ms F. Marian Chambers

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SOCIETY NEWS

20th Annual Freedom Award

Last November, the U.S. Capitol Historical Society presented the 20th Annual Freedom Award to the Honorable **William S. Cohen** and the Honorable **Norman Y. Mineta** in recognition of their distinguished service in the United States Congress and their “across the aisle” leadership in the executive branch. Both men served in the cabinet of a president of the opposite party and in doing so inspired greater public understanding and involvement in our nation’s enduring representative democracy. The Freedom Award is presented annually to individuals and organizations that have promoted freedom, democracy, and representative government.

Full coverage of the event is in the Fall 2013 edition of this newsletter, which is available on our website, www.uschs.org, in the News and Events section. Here, we present excerpts from some of the evening’s speeches.

PORTRAITS



(from left) Freedom Award recipient Hon. Norm Mineta, Rep. Mike Honda, Freedom Award recipient Hon. William Cohen, and Sen. Susan Collins all spoke at the event.

In accepting the Freedom Award, Sec. **William Cohen** remarked on the compromises that must be reached in order to cross the aisle to work for a president of the opposite party, saying that “[President Clinton] and I did not know each other before I agreed to serve and he offered me the position as Secretary of Defense. I said, ‘On one condition.’ We both had one condition. I said, ‘You should understand if I agree to serve on your team, if you offer me this position, you will never have to second-guess me as to whether my loyalty lies to you or not. You will not have to worry that I’ll go in the back room and call up my former colleague and say, “Guess what these guys are doing?” And by the same token, you have that pledge from me, but I need a pledge from you, and that is that you never ask me to engage in a political discussion as long as I am trying to run the Department,’ and he said, ‘You absolutely have it.’ And he was true to his word, and I must tell you, out of the 31 years of public service, the 4 years serving with Bill Clinton were the finest of my life.”

Cohen also reflected on the current status of partisan

gridlock in our government and what is needed to break through it, sharing a quote from *The Recovery of Confidence*. Cohen noted, “One of the first books I read in 1970 was by John Gardner, and it was called *The Recovery of Confidence*, that the first order of business is for us to recover the confidence that we have, the capacity to engage in self-governance. We have that obligation, and he said something that’s always stayed with me. It’s purely poetic, in a way. He said, ‘Our institutions have become caught in a savage crossfire between unloving critics and uncritical lovers.’ It’s a wonderful expression, because he said at one end of the extreme, you have unloving critics, people who are so willing to engage in tearing down our institutions and our organizations, with nothing positive to recommend in their place. At the other end of the spectrum, you have the so-called ‘uncritical lovers,’ people who were so enamored with the status quo that they refuse to embrace change, no matter how positive. And so he said basically, if you have a criticism without love, you will have destruction. If you have love without criticism, you will have stagnation. And so what we have to have are loving critics. We need to be loving critics, loving this institution, loving the freedom that is ours to promote and not only in this country, but throughout the world....

“And so becoming loving critics and getting back to that position where you can have people—and Speaker Pelosi, I know that you are dedicated to this as well and to all who are here today—...think about the Tom Foleys and the Mike Mansfields and the Bob Michels and Bob Doles, [the] George Mitchells and so many others who were willing to stand for very strong principles, but ultimately to work across party lines in order to make ends meet. That is really what we have to do. We cannot have a sign hanging from the Statue of Freedom that says ‘Closed for Business. No Longer Open.’ That is impermissible. That is unacceptable. That is an embarrassment for our country when that happens.”

Rep. Mike Honda introduced Secretary Mineta and reflected on Mineta's early political career and the inspiration that he was to others. Recalling Mineta's decision to run for Congress, Honda said "In '74, he decided to run for Congress. I was glad, because I got to be involved in the first congressional race with an Asian American running for office, and I was proud."

Honda also spoke of Mineta's experience as a Japanese American who was placed in an internment camp during WW II and his work to right that injustice, saying "He took that responsibility seriously, because in 1988, President Reagan signed H.R. 442. It was the apology of the U.S. Congress for something they did in 1942. It took a few years, but determination, education, and a sense of doing the right thing urged him on."

Honda concluded that Mineta continues to inspire others, even though his career in public service has ended. "Norm has been first in many things being a Japanese American, but his character says to him, 'I shall not be the last.' So he always makes sure other people can go on, keeping that door open behind him, so other people can pass through and take advantage of many opportunities in this country, including in the halls of Congress."

Secretary Norman Mineta spoke about his experience as a Japanese American during WW II and how it shaped his understanding of freedom and citizenship. He explained, "By February of 1942, President Roosevelt had signed Executive Order 9066 to [delegate] to the Commanding General of the Western Civil Defense Command [the] ability to evacuate and intern persons. It didn't say Japanese or Italian. It just said 'persons.' And he used that to then evacuate from...the states of Washington, Oregon, and California those of Japanese ancestry, and commandeered fair grounds and racetracks...—namely horse fields—and started putting up these forts around where people of Japanese ancestry were living... These big placards...said 'Attention: All Those of Japanese ancestry, alien and non-alien.' Well, as a 10-year-old kid, I read that, and I was wondering, 'What's a non-alien? I know what an alien is. That's my dad, but what's a non-alien?' So they weren't even treating us as citizens, and yet when was the last time that any of you stood up, beat your chest and said, 'I'm a proud non-alien of the United States of America?' I don't think you have, and that's why to this day, I cherish the word 'citizen,' because my own government wasn't looking to call me a 'citizen.'"

Sen. Susan Collins began her political career as a staff assistant to then-Sen. Cohen and was elected to succeed him in 1997. Collins noted that Secretary Cohen's distinguished service made him a worthy recipient of the Freedom Award, remarking that "during his many years of public service, as Secretary of Defense, as a United States Senator, as a Member of the House of Representatives, Bill Cohen has strengthened our nation's core values through his intelligence, integrity, and imagination."

Collins also shared several stories that illustrated how much Cohen inspired her in the beginning of her career.

"As a young woman who had just finished my first year in college, I remember being so inspired when I heard Bill Cohen speak that I volunteered for his first campaign. The incredible effort, as he put it, to find out what was on people's minds by walking through the communities of the entire Second District was the very essence of democracy...."

"In the summer of 1974, before my senior year in college, I had the opportunity to serve in Bill's Washington office. I had a front-row seat into history as then-Congressman Bill Cohen served on the House Judiciary Committee during those historic impeachment hearings against President Nixon. His thoughtful, deliberative, and fair approach in evaluating the evidence won him respect nationwide. His vote as the freshman Republican to impeach a president of his own party was an act of great political courage."

USCHS Honors Senate Finance Committee

Members of the Society's Leadership Council, Constitution Signers, Brumidi Society, and their guests joined Senators and congressional staff in a standing-room-only tribute to the history of the Senate Finance Committee. The dinner, held in July 2013 in the Dirksen Senate Office Building, continued the Society tradition of honoring a different congressional committee each year. Finance Committee leaders Sen. **Max Baucus** and Sen. **Orrin Hatch** shared their experiences in working across the aisle on tax reform and other challenging issues. Former senators **John Breaux** and **Trent Lott**, now professional colleagues and personal friends, were the keynote speakers. The program was supported by generous donations from Bank of America, Express Scripts, Grant Thornton LLP, UPS, Citigroup, Davis & Harman LLP, and ExxonMobil. Additional coverage can be found in the Fall 2013 edition of *The Capitol Dome*, which is available in the News and Events tab on our website, www.uschs.org.

ALL-PORTRAITONS



Sen. John Breaux, Sen. Orrin Hatch, Sen. Trent Lott, and Sen. Max Baucus were the featured speakers.



Mark Boudreaux, ExxonMobil, Sen. John Thune, and Dontai Smalls, UPS



Lawrence O'Donnell, host of MSNBC's "The Last Word" and a former Senate Finance Committee staff director, attended the dinner.



*Committee Chairman Max Baucus and his wife, **Melodee Hanes***



***Russ Sullivan**, former Committee staff director, with current staff members*



***Rob Lively** and **Mary Rosado**, both with Express Scripts, and **Henry Menn**, Brown Rudnick LLP*



*Former Sen. Lott offers advice to Sen. **Ron Wyden** (left) and Sen. **Johnny Isakson** (center).*



***Dave AuClair**, **Mary Moore Hamrick**, **Justin Stamper**, and **Kristen Malinconico**, all from Grant Thornton LLP, join **Jim Carlisle** (center), Bank of America, during the pre-dinner reception.*

REP. XAVIER BECERRA

KEYNOTES BREAKFAST

Rep. Xavier Becerra (CA), chairman of the House Democratic Caucus, was the featured speaker at the annual Congressional Leadership Breakfast on December 13, 2013. Becerra spoke to members of the Society's Leadership Council, Constitution Signers, and Brumidi Society and shared his personal thoughts about the difficulty of balancing family life and professional responsibilities. Noting the trade-offs required to be an effective Member of Congress, Becerra said he constantly considers why he came to Washington and what he wants to accomplish for his constituents and the country. When entertaining thoughts of opting for a less frenetic lifestyle, he always concludes he can be of greater service as a Member of Congress than in any other endeavor.

As a member of the House leadership, Becerra was asked questions about pending legislation, the potential for bipartisan cooperation, and the possibility of a government shutdown in early 2014. He was also on hand for the California Quiz, testing the audience's knowledge of his home state.

The Society thanks the Boston Scientific Corporation and American Society of Civil Engineers for their generous support of the breakfast and Express Scripts for the use of their offices to host the event.



USCHS President Ron Sarasin welcomes Rep. Becerra.



Rep. Becerra talks about serving in Congress.



Brian Pallasch of the American Society of Civil Engineers and Steve LaPierre of Boston Scientific Corp. with Rep. Becerra

Capitol Committee Update

USCHS welcomes new Capitol Committee members and thanks those who have upgraded their memberships.
(November 2013-January 2014)

Constantino Brumidi Society (\$10,000-\$14,999)

American Council of Life Insurers (new)
Equipment Leasing and Finance
Association (upgrade)
Grocery Manufacturers Association (new)
Investment Company Institute (new)
Microsoft (new)

Founder Members (\$5,000-\$9,999)

Biotechnology Industry
Organization (new)
Boston Scientific (new)
Motorola Solutions (new)

The Society deeply appreciates all the Capitol Committee members for their continued involvement and support of its educational mission.

WALKING TOURS OF THE CAPITOL EXTERIOR

*Mondays, 10 am-Noon
March-November*

Meet at Union Station Metro, Massachusetts Avenue exit, top of outside escalator.
There is a cost for this tour; USCHS members receive one complimentary tour.

For more information, visit www.uschs.org and click on the calendar of events, or call (202) 543-8919.

USCHS CALENDAR

APRIL

1812 Lecture Series: Stephen Hansen

Wednesday, April 23

Noon–1 pm

200 Maryland Ave. NE

For more information or to pre-register, visit www.uschs.org or call (202) 543-8919 x38 and leave a message.

Annual Trustee Breakfast

Tuesday, April 29

Speaker: Rep. Pat Tiberi

For Leadership Council Members

For more information, contact
victoriawolfe@uschs.org.

MAY

USCHS Annual Symposium

Friday, May 2

9:00 am–4:45 pm

Dirksen Senate Office Building, Room G50

See back cover or www.uschs.org for more information.

Spring Member Tour: Capitol Grounds Tour

Wednesday, May 7

with Ted Bechtol, Superintendent of the Capitol Grounds

USCHS members only.

For more information, call (202) 543-8919 x20.

Spring Member Tour: Spies of Capitol Hill

Tuesday, May 13

with Carol Bessette

USCHS members only.

For more information, call (202) 543-8919 x20.

National Heritage Lecture

Thursday, May 22

Supreme Court Building, 6 pm

Speaker: James Swanson, author

Topic: 50th Anniversary of the Warren Commission

Ticketed; by mailed invitation.

For information, call (202) 543-8919 x20.

JULY

Dinner honoring the House Committee on Armed Services

Wednesday, July 23

For Constantino Brumidi members and above.

For more information, contact
victoriawolfe@uschs.org.

In Memoriam

The U.S. Capitol Historical Society has been saddened by the recent loss of two friends.

Joseph N. Grano, 1945-2013

Preservation activist and longtime member of the U.S. Capitol Historical Society Joe Grano passed away on November 24, 2013 at George Washington Memorial Hospital of complications from a stroke. A native of the Bronx, he was known for his passionate commitment to historic preservation, his Italian-American heritage, and Constantino Brumidi, the Italian American artist of the Capitol.

Grano moved to Washington, D.C. in 1977 after obtaining a law degree from St. John's University. He worked as a government lawyer until the plans to demolish historic Rhodes Tavern ignited his passion for historic preservation. Quitting his job in 1979, he energetically rallied the opposition and even won passage of a pro-preservation ballot initiative by a wide margin. The tavern, however, was razed in 1984 to make way for the Metropolitan Square project. As Joe remarked watching the "dismemberment" of the building, "Sometimes the good guys don't win."

His efforts to commemorate the life and work of Brumidi proved more successful. As chairman of the Constantino Brumidi Society, he developed a coalition of Italian American organizations and members of Congress to commemorate the bicentennial of the artist's birth in 2005. Three years later his efforts spurred Congress to vote to posthumously award a Congressional Gold Medal to Brumidi. The medal was presented in a ceremony in the Rayburn Room of the Capitol in July 2012. Characteristically, Joe Grano boycotted the ceremony because it was not held in the Rotunda, the site of Brumidi's most important work.

Joe Grano was enthusiastic and unapologetic in his advocacy. As Jason Dick wrote in his *Roll Call* blog, "There's a Latin term for folks like Joe Grano, which he would hopefully appreciate. *Sui generis*."



Joe Grano would gather fellow art lovers, preservationists, and Italophiles at Brumidi's gravesite in Glenwood Cemetery in northeast Washington, D.C. to observe the artist's birthday in July and Italian Heritage Month in October.

Randall B. Groves, 1964-2014



Randy Groves (far right) stands next to Society President Ron Sarasin and Don Kennon on the occasion of a visit to the office by Washington Nationals mascot Screech (the baby version, ca. 2006).

Randy Groves, operations manager for the United States Capitol Historical Society, died on February 7, 2014 after a short illness. Randy grew up in Oklahoma and California, graduated from high school in Seminole, Oklahoma, and joined ROTC in college. He then served in the U.S. Army as a second lieutenant. He worked as a sports and news reporter and photographer for newspapers in Seminole and Muskogee, Oklahoma and Merced, California, as well as working for the Gannett News Service. His experience in journalism led him to a position as press aide for Rep. Gary Condit (1993-2002), following which he became a professional tour guide in Washington, D.C. Randy joined the staff of the historical society in 2004 as operations manager, in which capacity he oversaw the production, printing, and marketing of the Society's annual *We the People Calendar* to congressional offices. His meticulous attention to detail and his contacts and knowledge of Capitol Hill proved invaluable to all aspects of the organization's programs and will be sorely missed.

Working at the Society, Randy became very interested in the life and work of Constantino Brumidi and in the last several years made annual spring pilgrimages to Rome and Assisi. While in Rome he made a point of seeking out Brumidi's work and getting permission to photograph in the Church of the Madonna dell'Archetto and in the theater of the Villa Torlonia. Some of his photographs are displayed on the Society's website at <http://www.uschs.org/villa-torlonia-images-march-2013>.

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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.

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

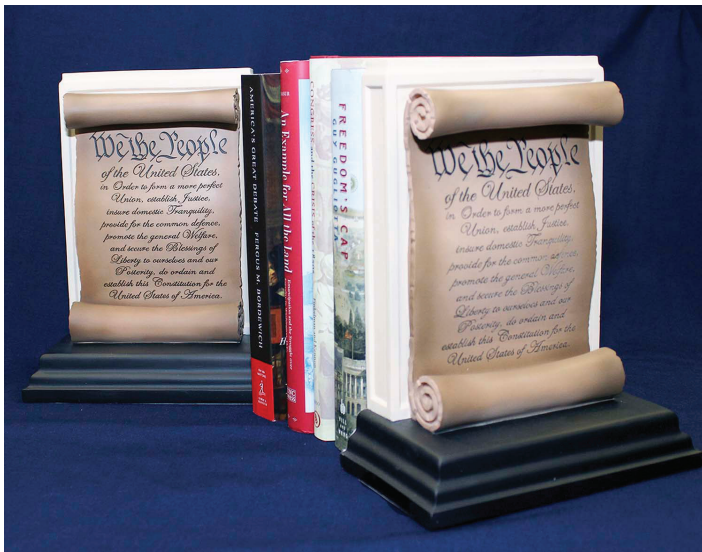
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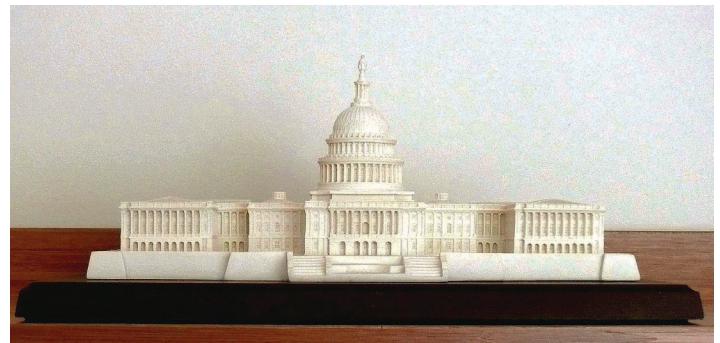
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This collectible set of bookends is a welcome addition to any library setting. Beautifully crafted with a scroll-like front that incorporates the preamble in this classic design. Gift boxed with provenance card for easy gift giving. (7 1/2" x 9 1/2"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



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Beautifully detailed replica of the Capitol is crafted from marble of the east front steps removed during renovations and ground to a fine powder. The mixture is then added to resin for exquisite detail. (9 1/4" x 5 2/3" x 3 3/4")

#002089 \$75.00 Members \$67.50

THE AMERICAN SENATE: AN INSIDER'S HISTORY

This ground breaking, comprehensive history of the United States Senate is the result of twenty years of research by two authorities on Senate history, Neil MacNeil and Richard A. Baker. Hardcover, 16 B&W halftones, 472 pp., 2013.

#002755 \$29.95 Members \$26.95

THE HOUSE: A HISTORY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

The United States House of Representatives is thought by many to be the premiere deliberative legislative body in existence. The founders of our country designed the House to reflect the will of the people. Noted historian Robert V. Remini, a past winner of the Freedom Award, chronicles two centuries of the House from inaugurating a new government until current times. This single-volume history is a must have. Hardbound, 614 pp., 2006.

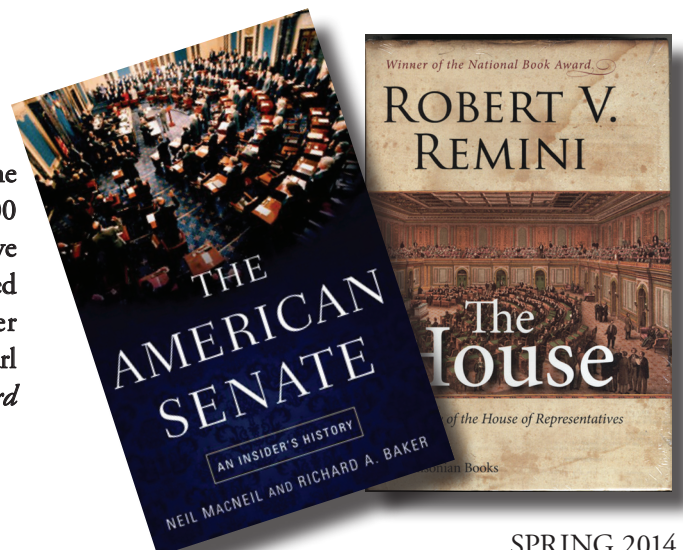
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COLUMBUS DOOR BOOKENDS

Crafted from the marble taken from the east front steps during the 1995 renovations, these bookends are based on the 17-foot tall, 20,000 pound bronze doors in the east front of the Capitol. The doors have a curved semicircular tympanum above two valves that are divided into four panels, each of which depicts the life of Christopher Columbus. Engraved in the base of the bookends is the quote by Carl Sandburg: "Whenever a People or an Institution Forgets its Hard Beginnings it is Beginning to Decay." (9 1/2" x 5" x 3")

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SPRING MARKETPLACE



GREAT SEAL CRYSTAL CLOCK

A quartz movement timepiece rests in a fine crystal tower. Engraved in the crystal is the Great Seal of the United States. Gift Boxed. (9" x 3 1/4" x 1 1/2")

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FOUR-STAGE PORCELAIN BOWL

Designed especially for the U.S. Capitol Historical Society, this heavyweight porcelain bowl is the perfect presentation piece or gift item. Four images of the Capitol framed in wreaths of green and highlighted with 22kt trim give this bowl a very distinctive look. Inside in 22kt gold is an eagle clutching a banner proclaiming E Pluribus Unum - Out of Many, One. The bowl is 8 1/2-inches diameter by 4 inches tall. Elegantly gift boxed.

IMAGES:

A-C (additional sides)
D (inside center of bowl)

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Four stone coasters featuring the four stages of the Capitol rest in a pine wood base. Excellent for entertaining or gift giving. Gift boxed.

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2014 Annual Symposium Announced

The eleventh annual symposium, “*A Just and Lasting Peace*”: *Ending the Civil War*, in the United States Capitol

Historical Society’s series, “The National Capital in a Nation Divided: Congress and the District of Columbia Confront Sectionalism and Slavery,” will be held on Friday, May 2, 2014. 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. **Paul Finkelman**, the President William McKinley Distinguished Professor of Law and Public Policy at Albany Law School, directs the series in consultation with the Society’s Vice President for Scholarship and Education, **Donald Kennon**. The annual symposia are held at locations on Capitol Hill and bring together the best and brightest new scholarship.

The 2014 symposium will be held in the Dirksen Senate Office Building, Room G50, and will focus attention on Congress and the issues surrounding bringing the Civil War to a close. In addition to moderator Finkelman, other speakers include **Gregory Downs**, City College and Graduate Center, CUNY;

Carole Emberton, Associate Professor of History, University of Buffalo; **Matthew Pinsker**, Associate Professor of History and Pohanka Chair in American Civil War History at Dickinson College; **Anne Sarah Rubin**, Associate Professor of History, University of Maryland, Baltimore County; **Michael Vorenberg**, Associate Professor of History, Brown University; and **Peter Wallenstein**, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

Visit our website, www.uschs.org, to pre-register or to get the latest information on the speakers’ topics and program order. You may also pre-register by emailing uschs@uschs.org or by calling (202) 543-8919, ext. 38 and leaving a message.

Papers presented at the Society’s symposia are published in collected editions by Ohio University Press. Three volumes in this series are currently available and may be purchased at the Society’s web site store: *Congress and the Emergence of Sectionalism*; *In the Shadow of Freedom: The Politics of Slavery in the National Capital*; and *Congress and the Crisis of the 1850s*. All are edited by Paul Finkelman and Donald R. Kennon.