

# *THE CAPITOL DOME*

*SPECIAL EDITION*

## **IN THIS ISSUE:**

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CORRIDORS  
HISTORY*

*LATROBE  
AND THE  
CAPITOL*

*BOOTLEGGERS  
IN THE  
CAPITOL*

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NEWS*



# UNITED STATES CAPITOL HISTORICAL SOCIETY 2016 EVENTS

For the most up-to-date information, visit [www.uschs.org](http://www.uschs.org) and explore the news releases and calendar of events.

## Member Appreciation Reception

*Tuesday, February 2*

For Society members who give at the \$250 level and up.

For this unique educational program, the Architect of the Capitol, the Secretary of the Senate, and our USCHS Capitol Fellow bring guests into the Brumidi Corridors to show and educate them on the restoration process.

## Volunteer Appreciation Reception

*Rescheduled: Tuesday, February 9*

Mitsitam Café at the National Museum of the American Indian

This evening of food, friendship, and fascinating facts celebrates our loyal and hardworking volunteers. To start volunteering with USCHS, contact [swolfe@uschs.org](mailto:swolfe@uschs.org).

## Annual Black History Month Lecture

*Wednesday, February 17, Noon-1 pm*

Room 385, Russell Senate Office Building

Free and open to the public.

Discussion about Reconstruction Era black congressmen, especially Sen. Blanche K. Bruce. Speakers include Matthew Wasniewski, Historian of the House of Representatives; Betty K. Koed, Senate Historian; and Melinda Smith, Senate Curator.

## House Lights Up Program with Woolly Mammoth

*Sunday, February 21, approximately 3:30*

(after 2 pm performance of *Guards at the Taj*)

Woolly Mammoth Theater Rehearsal Hall

Free and open to the public.

Special for USCHS members: use our code for \$25 tickets.

Contact [BBarnett@uschs.org](mailto:BBarnett@uschs.org) for more information about membership.

Join USCHS Chief Historian William C. diGiacomantonio and three panelists to explore stories of historical oddities, mysterious legends, and unsung heroes in the construction of the Capitol.

## Reception and Panel Discussion Honoring the 90th Anniversary of the Joint Committee on Taxation

*February 24-25, 2016*

For Constantino Brumidi Society members and above.

February 24: evening reception.

February 25, 9 am-noon: speakers and panelists reflect on the history and role of the JCT in the legislative process.

Participants will include George Yin, Joseph Thorndike, James Wetzler, Randall Weiss, Bernard Shapiro, John Samuels, and Mel Schwarz.

For more information, please contact [VictoriaWolfe@uschs.org](mailto:VictoriaWolfe@uschs.org).

## Exterior Walking Tours

*Mondays, March through November, 10 am-noon*

Union Station Metro, Massachusetts Ave. exit, top of the outside escalator

Small fee applies. Walk up or reserve a spot at [www.uschs.org](http://www.uschs.org).

Society staff and trained volunteers lead visitors around the outside of the Capitol and provide perspectives about Congress, the origin and construction of the building, and the meaning of democratic government.

## Book Talk

*Thursday, March 10, Noon-1 pm*

Ketchum Hall, VFW Building, 200 Maryland Ave. NE

Free and open to the public.

John Norris speaks with former Senate Historian Don Ritchie about his book on an important member of the twentieth-century Washington press corps, *Mary McGrory: The First Queen of Journalism*.

## Book Talk

*Wednesday, March 16, Noon-1 pm*

Ketchum Hall, VFW Building, 200 Maryland Ave. NE

Free and open to the public.

Cindy Gueli discusses her book, *Lipstick Brigade: The Untold True Story of Washington's World War II Government Girls*.

## Annual Trustee Breakfast

For Leadership Council members.

For more information, please contact [VictoriaWolfe@uschs.org](mailto:VictoriaWolfe@uschs.org).

## Book Talk

*Wednesday, April 13, Noon-1 pm*

Ketchum Hall, VFW Building, 200 Maryland Ave. NE

Free and open to the public.

Mau VanDuren discusses his book, *Many Heads and Many Hands: James Madison's Search for a More Perfect Union*.

## Annual History Symposium

*Thursday, May 5 (evening keynote lecture and reception)*

*Friday, May 6 (day-long symposium)*

Free and open to the public.

Scholars from across the country gather to discuss how Congress has handled immigration and related issues from the early republic to the 1980s.

## Freedom Award Presentation

*Wednesday, May 11*

National Statuary Hall, U.S. Capitol

For Cornerstone Level members and above. For more information about

Society membership, contact [BBarnett@uschs.org](mailto:BBarnett@uschs.org).

USCHS will present its annual Freedom Award to author and historian David McCullough. The program will include a reception and the award presentation.

## Chief of Staff Event

For Constitution Signers members and above.

For more information, please contact [VictoriaWolfe@uschs.org](mailto:VictoriaWolfe@uschs.org).

## Book Talk

*Wednesday, June 8, Noon-1 pm*

Ketchum Hall, VFW Building, 200 Maryland Ave. NE

Free and open to the public.

Fergus Bordewich returns to discuss his latest book, *The First Congress: How James Madison, George Washington, and a Group of Extraordinary Men Invented the Government*.

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**Cover:** A view of Great Experiment Hall, the second of three House corridors with murals designed by Allyn Cox. Cox and his assistant Cliff Young completed work on this corridor just before Cox’s death in 1982. For more on Cox and Jeffrey Greene, who oversaw the completion of the third corridor, see Debra Hanson’s article on page 2.

# MODERN MURALISTS of the CAPITOL: Allyn Cox and Jeffrey Greene

by Debra Hanson

As the bicentennial year of 1976 approached, many American individuals, organizations, and institutions sought ways to recognize and celebrate this major milestone in our nation's history. While some planned events such as festivals, parades, concerts, and firework displays, others focused on projects of a more enduring nature. Throughout the world and across the centuries, works of art and architecture have been one of the most visible ways of commemorating events, individuals, and peoples that have played a major role in the lives of communities and nations, and so figure prominently in their collective memory. Intended for a diverse public audience, these artifacts ideally merge aesthetic with social and political concerns in order to communicate and instill a sense of shared civic identity and historical memory. This principle can be observed throughout the U.S. Capitol, where its art and architecture—from the earliest to more recent additions, some commissioned and some donated by individual states and other entities—plays a central role in constructing “official” visual narratives of American history, culture, and politics as conceptualized at different moments in the nation's past. The objects and images housed here also serve a didactic function, for although there has never been a single, codified plan for the acquisition of art in the Capitol, the teaching potential of painting, sculpture, and architecture has long been associated with the building's exterior and interior spaces and its decorative program. Thomas Jefferson, for example, envisioned “the Congress Hall” as yet another of his “models of good taste,” while George Washington viewed it as part of the “general diffusion of knowledge”

required to educate citizens of the new democracy.<sup>1</sup>

Among the most visible and well-known examples of this mode of thinking about public art and its role in advancing the informed citizenship advocated by Washington, as well as the collective historical memory that supports it, are John Trumbull's four large-scale paintings of the American Revolution in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda (fig. 1). Commissioned in 1817 and installed in 1826 after the construction of the Rotunda was completed, these works comprised the first major Congressional commission awarded to an American artist, and so set a model for subsequent “national” works of art housed in the Capitol. In later decades and centuries, the didactic intent (if not always the clearly visualized message) of Trumbull's Revolutionary War images would be echoed in a variety of styles, mediums, and locations throughout the Capitol.<sup>2</sup> Later visual and architectural projects continually refer back to the older fabric of the Capitol as they expand upon it, and in this way express the concepts of continuity within change, and unity within multiplicity, that guide the evolution of the building, the nation it represents, and the Congress it houses.

With this and other artistic and historical precedents in mind—the large body of work completed in the nineteenth century by painter Constantino Brumidi, for example—it was particularly appropriate that the U.S. Capitol Historical Society, then under the leadership of Rep. Fred Schwengel (1906-1993), chose to mark the nation's bicentennial by undertaking an ambitious mural series spanning three first floor corridors in the House wing of the U.S. Capitol (fig. 2). The artist, Allyn Cox, began plan-





Fig. 1. John Trumbull, *Signing of the Declaration of Independence* (1818; installed 1826)

ning the first series of murals in 1969, although Congress did not authorize the project until 1971. Painting began in 1973; its conclusion twenty years later thus also honored the 1993 bicentennial that marked George Washington's laying of the Capitol cornerstone in 1793 (figs. 3a, 3b). Initiated by the Historical Society, the planning and execution of the murals was a collaborative effort that required the support and input of many additional individuals and organizations, including the Daughters of the American Revolution, who funded the second corridor, "The Great Experiment Hall;" George White, former architect of the Capitol; the Architect of the Capitol curators and other staff members; the Joint Committee on the Library responsible for overseeing works of art in the Capitol; House and Senate leadership; and many others. The painting of the murals would occupy artist Allyn Cox (1896-1982) from the early 1970s until his death in the fall of 1982, only a few days after the completion of "The Great Experiment Hall" and his attendance at a National Statuary Hall ceremony held in his honor by House and Senate leaders (fig. 2). Although Cox worked in other areas of the Capitol over a thirty-year span, it is his House murals, known collectively as the Cox Corridors, that are at the heart of his artistic legacy.

### ALLYN COX AT THE CAPITOL

Allyn Cox was, in fact, one of very few painters to undertake a major mural campaign at the U.S. Capitol. The first was

Constantino Brumidi (1805-1880), the Italian-born and classically-trained artist who devoted the majority of his career to the decoration of the Senate hallways now known as the "Brumidi Corridors," the monumental *Apotheosis of Washington* located in the eye of the inner dome in the Rotunda, the *Frieze of American History* below the dome (fig. 4), and many committee rooms and other spaces throughout the building.<sup>3</sup> At the time of Brumidi's death in 1880, the *Frieze of American History* was unfinished. His assistant, Filippo Costaggini, completed eight more scenes from Brumidi's sketches, but a large gap remained due to miscalculations regarding the height of the frieze. Allyn Cox finally completed this project in the early 1950s, and so began his long association with the Capitol, a building he described as "more friendly than awe-inspiring, more like a warm home than a monument."<sup>4</sup>

Like the rest of Brumidi's work at the Capitol, the *Frieze of American History* was painted in true, or *buon*, fresco, a technically demanding medium in which paint is applied directly to wet plaster and bonds chemically with the wall surface as it cures. By the 1950s, many traditional art forms and styles were displaced by abstraction and other twentieth-century modernisms, so there were fewer artists trained in either fresco or academic mural painting in general, making Cox an obvious choice to complete the frieze.<sup>5</sup> The son of American muralist Kenyon Cox, Allyn attended the National Academy of Design and Art Students League in New York and worked as an assistant to his father before being awarded a fellowship to study at the Ameri-





Fig. 2. Allyn Cox (right) and Fred Schwengel at the 1982 "Day of Recognition" ceremony held in Cox's honor in Statuary Hall

can Academy in Rome in 1916. While there, he studied Classical and Renaissance-era decorative painting, and under the guidance of what he described as "practitioners of the great school of fresco painting stemming from Raphael," mastered the use of traditional methods such as *grisaille*, a type of painting in monochrome, and *trompe l'oeil*, a technique that "fools the eye" by creating an illusion of three dimensions on a flat two-dimensional surface.<sup>6</sup> This training was instrumental to his future work at the Capitol, since the still-incomplete *Frieze of American History* had been painted in *grisaille* intended to resemble sculpture, the medium in which it was originally conceived by architect Thomas U. Walter. In completing a work begun by Brumidi, Cox needed to match his style as closely as possible (figs. 5a, 5b, 5c). Upon completing his academic training in Italy, he returned to America to carry out mural commissions in a variety of public and private buildings, and was soon recognized as "capable of painting on a large scale, and in a variety of subjects and treatments."<sup>7</sup>

Fig. 3b. Detail, "Capitol Cornerstone Ceremony"



ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL

Fig. 3a. Allyn Cox, Corridor I, The Hall of Capitols, overview

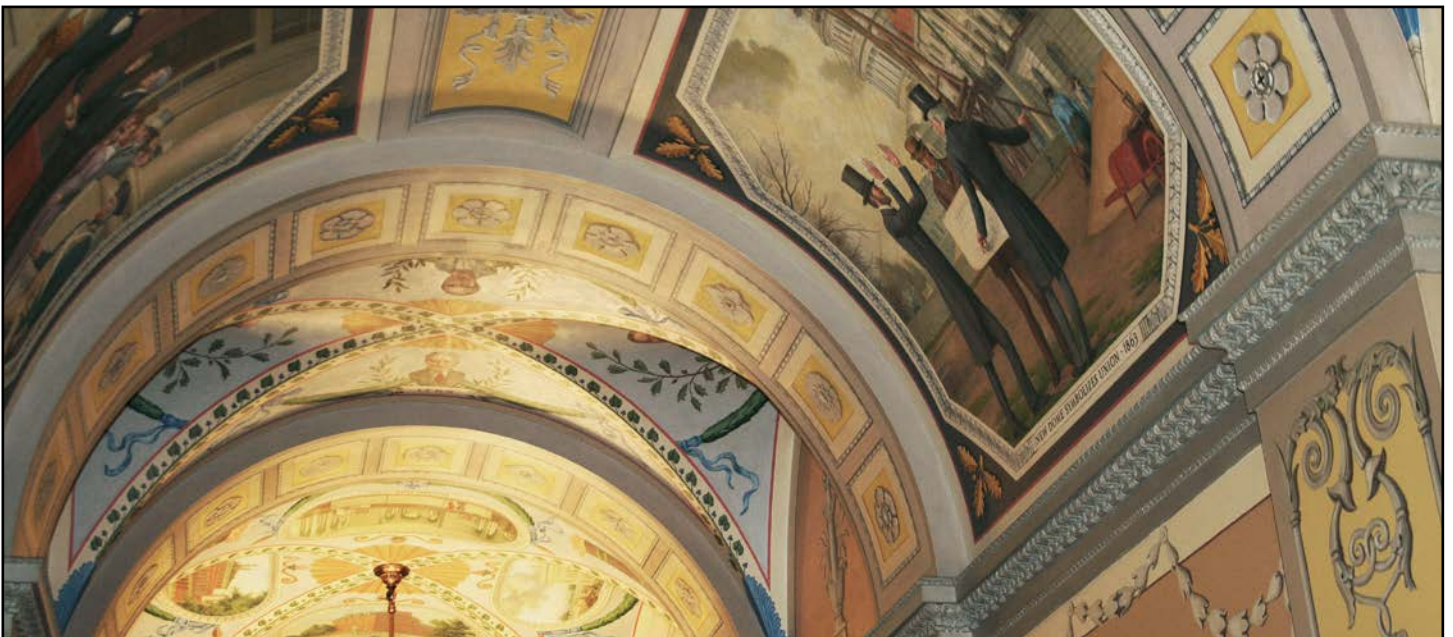






Fig 4. Brumidi, Costaggini, and Cox, Frieze of American History (fresco, begun 1877, completed 1953), Rotunda of the U.S. Capitol



Scenes from the frieze by each artist: Fig. 5a. Allyn Cox, Frieze of American History, detail: "Peace at the End of the Civil War" (c. 1953) (left) and Fig. 5b. Constantino Brumidi, Frieze of American History, detail: "Landing of Christopher Columbus" (c. 1878) (right)

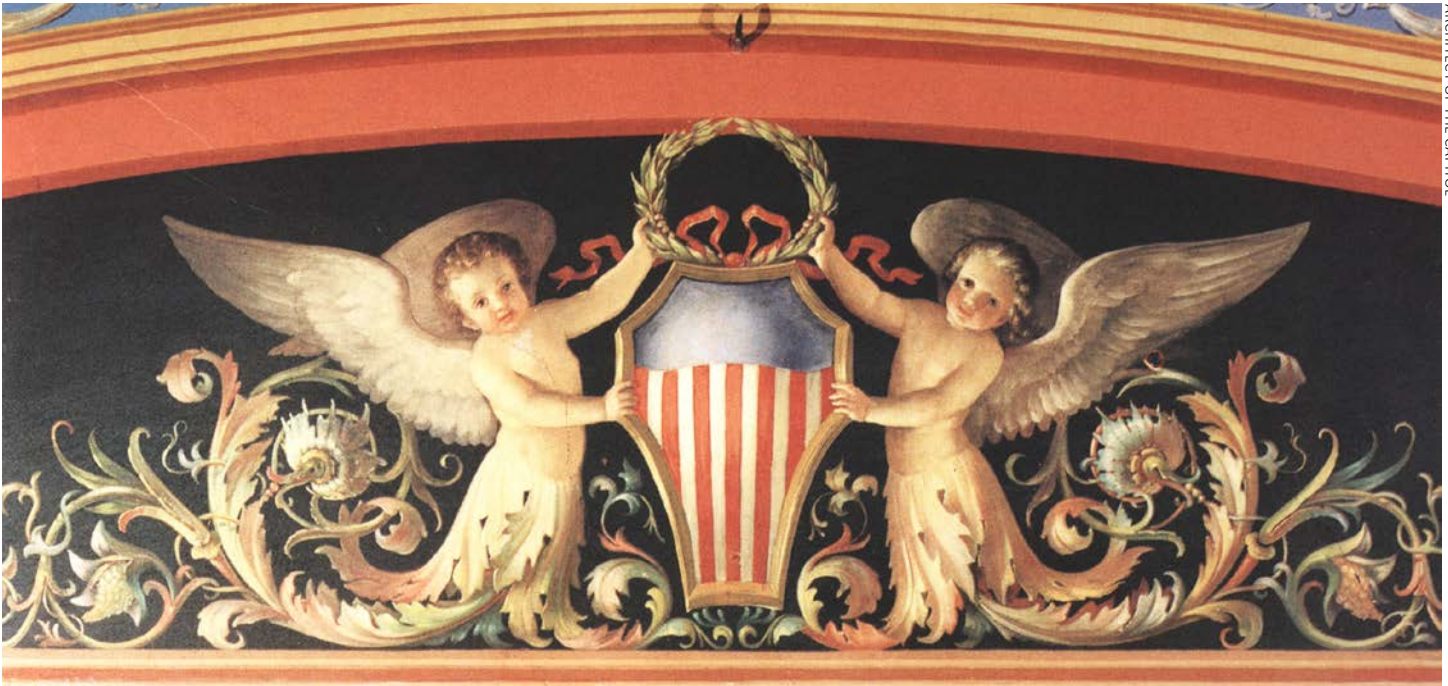


Fig. 5c. Allyn Cox at work on the frieze

Since both the subject matter and use of sepia-toned *grisaille* in the frieze were predetermined, Cox's primary challenge in completing it was to replicate the appearance of Brumidi's scenes while filling the thirty-foot gap with scenes of the Civil and Spanish-American Wars and the Wright Brothers' first flight. Having completed this commission, he went on to clean and undertake additional work on the original nineteenth-century sections of the frieze; five years later he returned to restore Brumidi's *Apotheosis of Washington*. He then produced his first original work in the Capitol, a portrait of Henry Clay for the Senate Reception Room, before proceeding with additional restoration work. By the time he began painting the House corridors in the early 1970s, Cox had amassed an impressive body of knowledge regarding the art and architecture of the Capitol and the legacy of past masters. In a 1973 interview, he explained how his murals were intended to reflect and harmonize with the Neoclassical style of the building:

I've tried to keep the decoration in the style of the building, in this case, the House wing designed by Thomas U.





Compare Brumidi's iconography with Cox's plans for Corridor I: Fig. 6a. Brumidi, detail of cherubs over doorway of S-127, now the Senate Appropriations Committee Hearing Room (above) and Fig. 6b. Cox, sketch for acanthus figures for Corridor I (below)

Walter in the 1850s....I've used Classical motifs throughout. In the ceiling I use cornucopias, lions, griffons, and fabulous figures that end in acanthus leaves. It is, I should say, a traditional scheme of Classical decoration to go with the architecture.<sup>8</sup>

Cox's scheme also drew extensively on the iconography developed by Brumidi, who integrated a visual vocabulary derived from Classical and Renaissance sources with uniquely American symbols and figures (figs. 6a, 6b). This in turn referred to precedents set by architect Benjamin Henry Latrobe, whose corn, tobacco, and magnolia leaf columns and other designs were among the first to combine Old and New World motifs in the service of an evolving national iconography (fig. 7). As the second Architect of the Capitol (succeeding William Thornton), Latrobe was responsible for most of the initial plans—some built and others unrealized—for the building's Neoclassical interiors, so it should be no surprise to see echoes of his work in that of later artists and designers. As stated earlier and confirmed by Cox's statement, the interweaving of past and present, continuity and change, and unity and multiplicity, is a constant within the Capitol; this confluence of past and present is felt throughout the building and provides an overarching concept and context for its decorative program.

## THE CORRIDORS' PROGRESS

A primary purpose of the murals known collectively as the Cox Corridors was to embellish the first floor hallways in the House wing, which had remained plainly painted since the completion of the Capitol extensions in the 1850s. They were also intended to balance the Senate corridors decorated by Brumidi in the nine-

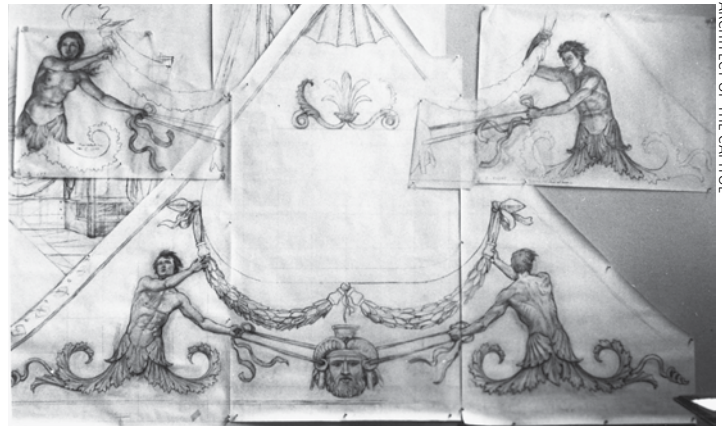


Fig. 7. Benjamin H. Latrobe, east vestibule of the U.S. Capitol, "corn columns" installed in 1809



teenth century, and in doing so bring a greater degree of visual symmetry and parity to the interior spaces of the Capitol. Although their location in the hallways of the House wing of the Capitol parallels that of the Brumidi Corridors in the Senate wing, the Cox Corridors—particularly “The Hall of Capitols” and “The Great Experiment Hall”—differ from the nineteenth-century murals stylistically and in their more overtly didactic representation of scenes and figures from American history.

Each of the three House Corridors is organized around a specific historical theme: Corridor I (the easternmost north-south hallway), “The Hall of Capitols,” focuses on the meeting places of Congress and its legislative predecessors, as well as important events that took place in and around the Capitol. Corridor II, “The Great Experiment Hall,” depicts events and institutions central to the success of the American experiment in democracy, while Corridor III, “The Westward Expansion Corridor” (the westernmost north-south hallway) pictures key people, places and events in the discovery, exploration, and settlement of the West (fig. 8).

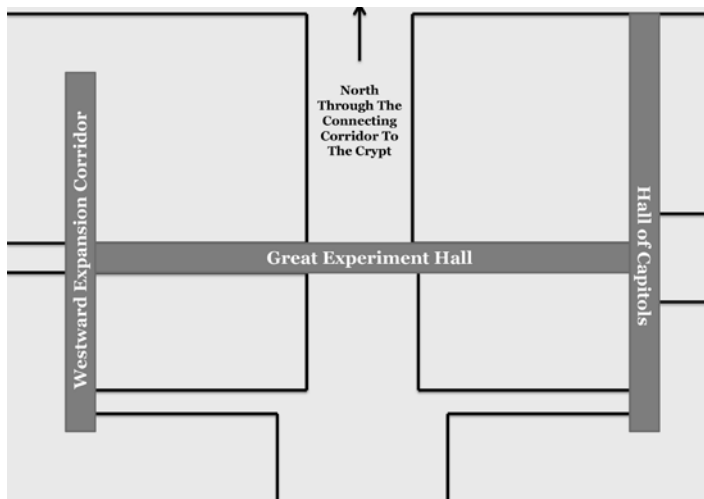


Fig. 8. Layout of the Cox Corridors, first floor, House wing of the U.S. Capitol

While each of these corridors comprises a complete visual unit, together they tell the ongoing story of America’s physical, social, political, and economic growth (figs. 9a, 9b). Their narrative continuity is reinforced by the repetition of selected design elements: all share a common color palette; incorporate similarly-lettered and formatted quotations; and employ painted garlands, moldings, and other framing devices, as well as additional *trompe l’oeil* elements, including allegorical and mythological figures painted in *grisaille* that often serve as background elements as well as relief portraits of individuals important to the history of the Capitol (fig. 10). Image placement is also consistent, with paintings concentrated on the curved vaults of the ceilings and the lower walls left free of decoration, an arrangement with both practical and aesthetic advantages (fig. 9a). Since the Corridors are high-traffic areas in a busy workplace, elevating the images aids in their maintenance and preservation, while in aesthetic terms, the plain lower walls provide a strong visual contrast with



Fig. 9a. Westward Expansion Corridor, Corridor III, overview



Fig. 9b. Detail, “From the Atlantic Ocean to the Mississippi River”





ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL (LEFT)

Fig. 10. Cox, cartoon for Allegorical Figure of History, Corridor II, The Great Experiment Hall

the ornamentation above. Methods and materials are also consistent throughout; rather than true buon fresco, the House murals are oil on canvas that has been adhered to the ceiling and walls prior to decoration.

Once the canvases are placed, the designs for each scene are transferred to the wall from a cartoon (a detailed drawing done to scale) by pouncing (applying powdered charcoal through perforations in the cartoon) (figs. 11a, 11b). The cartoons are then removed and the actual painting is done *in situ*: on site in the Capitol rather than in the artist's studio. Although the materials do not replicate those used for *buon fresco*, this method aligns with that of traditional wall painting in that it facilitates the integration of the painted image with its architectural environment. (Brumidi had transferred his cartoons in a similar manner.) In the House hallways, this integration is complicated by alternating barrel (round) and groin (segmented) vaults, which form bays and other spaces of uneven sizes (fig. 11a). Another advantage to painting the murals *in situ* is that adjustments in proportion, color, perspective, and other elements can be more easily made as the painting proceeds rather than after its completion.

The historical narratives painted in the Corridors highlight another of their functions: education. While the U.S. Capitol



Fig. 11a. Jeffrey Greene (left, painting) and Terry Brackenberry (right, pouncing outline of a cartoon on the wall) at work in the Westward Expansion Corridor



Fig. 11b. Original drawing for "Clearing Land" medallion to be painted in one of the groin-vaulted segments on the ceiling



Fig. 12. The EverGreene artists (left to right) Terry Brackenberry, Dean Kalamos, Jeff Greene, and Doug Shelton in the Westward Expansion Corridor (1993)



ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL

Fig. 13a. Greene, Corridor III, detail, "Timucuan Village"





Fig. 13b. Cox, Corridor II, detail

Historical Society supports a wide range of learning initiatives, the House murals exemplify yet another way in which it strives to “develop a wider and more avid interest in our Capitol” through the enhancement and preservation of its art and architecture.<sup>9</sup> As noted in the introduction to this essay, the didactic potential of the arts is intrinsic to the building’s multiple functions as “our national temple;” a “civic museum;” “the people’s house;” or in modern parlance, a popular tourist site; and “the Congress hall.” From its beginnings, the Capitol has been remarkably accessible to all visitors. Even with current security constraints it remains so today, and accessibility is also integral to the art housed there. In a posthumous Congressional tribute to Allyn Cox, Senator Howard Baker described his paintings as “instant history, with a legacy that is instantly secured.”<sup>10</sup> The phrase “instant history” suggests Baker’s perception of the public appeal of Cox’s murals, the legibility of the historical events and figures they portray, and the didactic intent of the “teachable moments” they convey.

At the time of Cox’s death, he left preliminary notes and had a watercolor sketch approved by the Joint Committee on the Library for a third House corridor on the theme of westward expansion. These included a basic design concept that featured maps picturing the physical growth of the United States in each of the Corridor’s bays (its barrel-vaulted compartments), with smaller, medallion-like images grouped in the groin vaults (smaller segmented areas in the ceiling) between them (figs. 9a, 9b). Following an open competition initiated by the Architect of the Capitol’s office, EverGreene Painting Studios of New York City (now EverGreene Architectural Arts), under the direction of artist Jeffrey Greene (b. 1953), was awarded the commission for the final House corridor in the summer of 1992. Work on the corridor began immediately—with exhaustive research and, in Greene’s words, “much brainstorming” among many collaborators. Pencil sketches, figure studies, color charts, three-dimensional maquettes (or models), and finally, full-scale cartoons, were produced in preparation for the actual painting. Once the final cartoons were approved, the EverGreene artists relocated

to Washington for the on-site painting of the corridor. “The Westward Expansion Corridor” was dedicated in September 1993, the Capitol’s bicentennial year. To maintain visual and narrative continuity and an overall unity in all three House hallways, the methods and materials used were the same as those employed in the first two series of corridors.

Painting proceeded quickly due in part to the fact that, for the most part, the EverGreene artists worked collaboratively (fig. 12), with each specializing in one component of the overall design, such as portraiture, landscape, *trompe l’oeil*, maps, or painted texts. (Allyn Cox had painted the earlier corridors with a single primary assistant, Cliff Young.) Just as Cox had worked in the style of Brumidi in order to maintain compositional unity in the *Frieze of American History* and had sought to situate the Cox Corridors within the Neoclassical fabric of the building established and maintained by earlier presidents and legislators, architects, artists, engineers, and other officials, so the EverGreene artists adhered to the visual model Cox had established in “The Hall of Capitols” and “The Great Experiment Hall” (figs. 13a, 13b, 13c).

In their totality, the three House corridors testify to the ongoing importance of public art that, within the precincts of the Capitol, continues to play a role in “the general diffusion of knowledge” advocated by George Washington and his contemporaries. At the same time, they also illustrate the principles of unity and multiplicity, of continuity and change, that characterize both the architectural structure and decorative program of the building as a whole. While adhering to the parameters of Cox’s stylistic model, the historical narrative of the “Westward Expansion Corridor” at the same time foregrounds the new, more inclusive views of American history evolving in the early 1990s when it was created. As modern muralists of the Capitol, Allyn Cox and Jeffrey Greene upheld an ongoing tradition to which many have contributed by visualizing the nation’s past as well as its significance in the present.

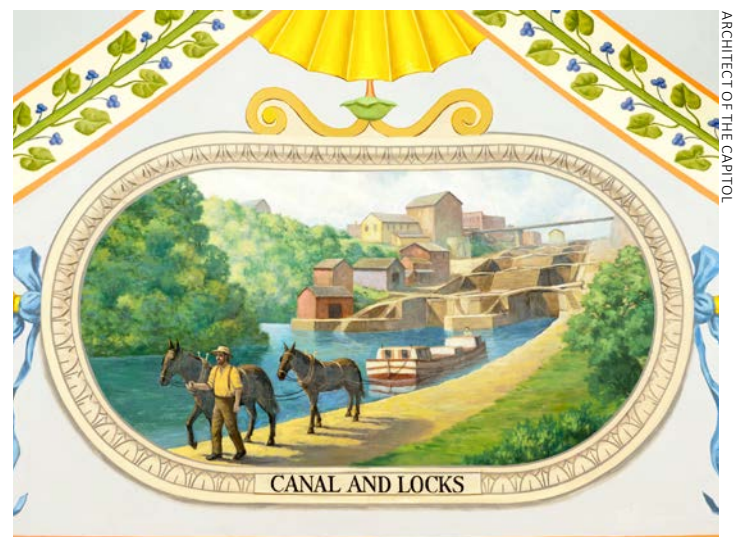


Fig. 13c. Greene, Corridor III, detail

**DEBRA HANSON** is an art historian and received her PhD in Art History from Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts in 2005; she is currently an assistant professor of art history at VCU's Middle Eastern campus in Doha, Qatar. She is also assistant director of the Honors Program at VCUQatar. Hanson has been awarded numerous fellowships from the U.S. Capitol Historical Society to conduct research at the Capitol and has written and presented extensively on the intersections of art, architectural space, politics, and historical memory within the Capitol.

Hanson has twice been the recipient of a Capitol Fellowship, through which USCHS provides financial support to scholars researching important topics in the art and architectural history of the United States Capitol Complex. In both 2008 and 2010, her work focused on westward expansion and way it has been portrayed in the Capitol, including the "Westward Expansion Corridor" that figures in this article. USCHS has published her research in several articles in *The Capitol Dome*, and Hanson has also presented several USCHS brown bag lectures.

## Notes

1. In choosing the Maison Carre, an ancient Roman temple, as the model for his design for the Virginia State Capitol in Richmond, Jefferson asked, "How is a taste in this beautiful art [architecture] to be formed in our countrymen, unless we avail ourselves of every occasion when public buildings are to be erected, of presenting them as models for study and imitation?" (Jefferson to James Madison, September, 1785 in Koch and Peden, ed., *The Life and Selected Writings of Thomas Jefferson* [New York, 1998], 354). Jefferson followed the same principle with regard to the planning and design of the U.S. Capitol, then as now one of the nation's primary public buildings. In the same letter, Jefferson wrote, "You see, I am an enthusiast on the subject of the arts, but it is an enthusiasm of which I am not ashamed, as its object is to improve the taste of my countrymen...." In his 1796 Farewell Address, George Washington advised his audience to "promote, then, as an object of primary importance, institutions for the general diffusion of knowledge as...it is essential that [in a democracy] public opinion should be enlightened" ([http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th\\_century/Washing.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/Washing.asp), accessed August 6, 2015).

2. While the historical and moral lessons conveyed by *The Signing of the Declaration of Independence* were praised by Trumbull's contemporaries—the October 20, 1818 edition of *The American Mercury*, for example, advised that "every American ought to view this painting...that they may become familiar with the faces of these, our glorious benefactor"—the stylistic qualities of *The Signing* have often been criticized. Virginia's Representative John Randolph of Roanoke famously decried the work as "a shin-piece, for surely there was never such a collection of legs submitted to the eyes of man," and later critics have bemoaned, variously, its static formality, stiffness, and inaccurate details. For a more recent assessment, see Irma Jaffe, "Virtue and Virtual Reality in John Trumbull's 'Pantheon,'" Kennon and Somma, ed., *American Pantheon: Sculptural and Artistic Decoration of the US Capitol* (Athens, OH, 2004), 72-89.

3. For in-depth assessment of Brumidi and his work at the Capitol see Barbara Wolanin, *Constantino Brumidi: Artist of the Capitol* (Washington, DC, 1998) and Amy Burton and the US Senate Commission on Art, *To Make Beautiful the Capitol: Rediscovering the Art of Constantino Brumidi* (Washington, DC, 2014).

4. "Cox Paints American History," *The Philadelphia Enquirer*, June 29, 1981, 11A.

5. The term "academic art" refers to styles of painting and sculpture derived from the European art academies that exerted institutional control over the training of artists and exhibition of their work from the sixteenth to the mid-nineteenth century. While varying from artist to artist, the "academic style"—generally thought of as highly finished, polished, and conservative, with subjects drawn from history and mythology rather than contemporary life—was, in the course of the nineteenth century, increasingly identified with conventional approaches to the making of art, and therefore in opposition to the progressive modernism of new avant-garde movements.

6. Allyn Cox to Senator Theodore F. Green, February 16, 1950, Architect of the Capitol Curatorial files.

7. Frank van der Linder, "The Allyn Cox Interviews," oral history recording, U.S. Capitol Historical Society.

8. Henry Hope Reed, "An Interview with Allyn Cox," *Classical America* 3(1976), 28.

9. As noted in the first section of this essay, the Cox Corridors function as a highly visible and permanent statement of the U.S. Capitol Historical Society's ongoing educational mission within the precincts of the Capitol. Other educational initiatives currently supported by the Society include fellowships and research internships; online tours and a "blog of history;" annual symposia and speakers' series; educational tours of the Capitol, its grounds, and Capitol Hill; a "Capitol Classroom" that provides lesson plans and other Capitol-related materials for K-12 teachers; and an annual Youth Leadership Forum.

10. Quoted in *The Capitol Dome*, vol. 17, number 4 (November 1982), 4.



# BOOTLEGGERS “INFEST” THE CAPITOL:

*When Dry Spies and Whiskey Peddlers  
Roamed the Corridors of Congress*

BY JANE ARMSTRONG HUDIBURG

*“Many people would think that the dome of the Capitol would have a sobering influence on any one, no matter what his personal habits and beliefs might be. From my experience, however, the reverse was true.” Capitol bootlegger, George L. Cassiday, a.k.a. “The Man in the Green Hat,” 1930.<sup>1</sup>*

Compared to the rest of the country, Washington, DC, seemed particularly “dry.” In fact, some would even say, *bone* dry. Not in climate, but in temperance. The capital city’s Prohibition Era began in 1917, three years *before* the 18th Amendment banned alcohol sales nationwide, and ended in February 1934, three months *after* the amendment’s repeal lifted the restriction in other jurisdictions. “Bone dry” members of Congress cheered when the District’s saloons closed, while the “wets” rejoiced when they re-opened. During the intervening years, however, Washingtonians could frequent one of the estimated 2,000 speakeasies operating in the city, or buy bottles of whiskey or rum from the thriving black market. In the Capitol, bootleggers happily obliged the anti-Prohibition senators and representatives, as well as the nominal teetotalers who voted “dry,” but drank “wet.”<sup>2</sup>

According to many sources, dozens, if not hundreds of bootleggers worked the corridors of Congress, including the first House and Senate Office Buildings, now known as the Cannon and Russell Buildings.<sup>3</sup> The most famous Capitol bootlegger, George L. Cassiday, commenced his career in the House Office Building (HOB), then moved his operation to the Senate side of

the Hill. The so-called “Man in the Green Hat” claimed to serve “more dries than wets” at a time when pro-temperance members held a large majority in both houses of Congress.<sup>4</sup>

In the course of conducting the door-to-door business, Cassiday and his rival salesmen had to dodge Prohibition Bureau agents, as well as the *genuinely* dry representatives and senators, who railed against congressional drinking. The often unseen struggle between bootleggers, “dry spies,” and pro-temperance officials came to a head in 1930 when the *Washington Post* published a series of articles written by “The Man in the Green Hat” and Roger Butts, a young undercover agent placed in the Senate Office Building (SOB). Full of intrigue and drama, these first-person accounts highlighted the difficulties involved in Prohibition enforcement, while exposing the illicit alcohol trade occurring “right under the shadow of the Capitol dome.”<sup>5</sup>

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A year after Prohibition took effect nationwide, the *Baltimore Sun* declared, “There are more distilled spirits in the Congressional office buildings than ever before.” One needed only to make “his wants known to certain employes [*sic*],” the reporter noted,



Bootlegger George L. Cassidy, a.k.a. "The Man in the Green Hat," in October 1930

and a bottle would appear. Key staffers either supplied the alcohol themselves or had a direct connection to an outside bootlegger. The number of bootleggers serving the Capitol is difficult to determine precisely because so many staff joined in on a part-time basis, supplementing their "meagre salaries . . . by doing a little bootlegging on the side." This sideline business had been especially active during the 1922 Christmas season, when the "demand for a holiday supply was so large that the quality, never represented as really fit to drink, fell at such a rate as to cause serious, although unofficial, complaint." House and Senate clerks and secretaries received "quotations on 'wet goods' daily," leading to a "brisk or dull" market, depending on the price. When liquor running became more common and less risky, good quality Southern-made corn whiskey dropped to \$7 a quart.<sup>7</sup>

In response to such reports, in May 1921, city commissioners and a contingent of dry members of Congress announced a new partnership expected to reduce the flow of alcohol pouring into town. The Metropolitan Police would increase its presence at the District's borders and more Capitol Police officers would guard the entrances to the HOB and SOB. Bootleggers wasted no time

reacting to the crackdown; overnight, the price of corn and rye whiskey jumped by two dollars.<sup>8</sup>

While stronger enforcement measures may have curtailed open alcohol sales, they had little effect on liquor consumption within the Capitol complex. Late in 1922, several incidents sparked the ire of the "dry" Senator Charles Curtis (Kansas), then the current chair of the Committee on Rules and the future Senate majority leader. During the Christmas "drinking" season, a waiter dropped a pint of holiday "hooch" on the floor of the Senate restaurant. (The *Sun* reported that "There was a scurrying of attendants and no one could ascertain who dropped the bottle, nor for whom it was intended.") On another occasion, an inebriated secretary staggered through the HOB, fell, and broke a bottle near the office of Representative William D. Upshaw (Georgia), one of the most prominent "dry" Democrats in Congress. And Upshaw himself gave a stirring speech calling for members to "practice what they preach" and refrain from imbibing bootlegged alcohol.<sup>9</sup>

On Christmas Eve, Curtis issued an order to the Capitol Police: all known bootleggers would be denied access to the Senate side of the Capitol complex. The officers were to "report





*Vice President Charles Curtis in July 1929*

and arrest any suspicious character” coming about. According to the *New York Times*, response to the ultimatum was “more or less merriment,” and no bootleggers planned to put the SOB on their “blacklist.”<sup>10</sup> The day after Christmas, though, Curtis showed how serious he was concerning liquor in the Capitol. He had the bottle-dropping waiter fired.<sup>11</sup>

Despite the Curtis mandate, the *Times* considered Washington’s reaction to Prohibition to be a “farce,” noting, in January, 1923, that two bootleggers had recently “come to blows” over a territory dispute in the HOB.<sup>12</sup> Two months later, another incident created a “sensation” among the Washington elite. In March, prohibition agents confiscated a bootlegger’s extensive customer list, including high-level military officers, as well as the “social register of official life in the National Capital.”<sup>13</sup> The revelation that elected and appointed officials solicited black-market alcohol surprised few “wet” leaders in the House and Senate, who often accused “dry” members of drinking “as they pleased.” Just a few weeks prior to the bootlegger raid, Representative James Gallivan, a “wet” Democrat from Massachusetts, posed a question on the House floor, asking “every dry Congressman who voted

dry and who takes a drink and likes a drink to raise his hand.” The request resulted in laughter, but no raised hands.<sup>14</sup>

When speaking to the public, several members scoffed at the notion that their own colleagues would purchase illicit alcohol. Addressing the House in 1924, Texas Representative Thomas Blanton, a “dry” Democrat, asserted, “I do not believe there is a Member in this House, whether there are any who are addicted to drink or not, who would buy liquor from a bootlegger: I do not believe it.”<sup>15</sup> Such skeptics, though, did concede that bootleggers reaped “a harvest” in the Capitol, even if they claimed that the customers were ordinary staff members.<sup>16</sup> The *Sun* referred to the “open secret”: “the Capitol Building, where the dry laws for the nation were made, has been a distributing point for wet goods for many months.”<sup>17</sup>

Several factors contributed to the Capitol’s thriving whiskey market. Under Prohibition’s enforcement legislation, the Volstead Act, there was no explicit ban on buying alcohol, just selling it. In addition, members of Congress felt particularly immune from prosecution, due to the Article 1, Section 6 clause in the Constitution that states senators and representatives



A group of “bone-dry” congressmen hold bones outside the Capitol. Rep. William D. Upshaw, a leading “dry” congressman, is on the right holding a crutch.

“shall in all cases, except treason, felony and breach of the peace, be privileged from arrest during their attendance at the session of their respective Houses, and in going to and returning from the same.” In fact, that clause encouraged members to drink in the Capitol, rather than in a speakeasy, where, presumably, no legislative business would be conducted. Also, unlike the Metropolitan Police, Capitol Police officers at that time owed their positions to a patronage system that lasted into the 1970s. Any officer sponsored by an urban, northern Democrat was unlikely to spend much effort enforcing Prohibition within the House and Senate Office Buildings.<sup>18</sup>

Although most bootleggers worked alone, and fought to retain their corner of the market, at least one bootlegging “ring” operated in the Capitol. In 1925, three women and two men were arrested following a tip from Representative John Cooper. According to the charges, based on evidence amassed by a “dry spy,” the women and one of the men, a dentist, served as distributors; the second man, Eli Wright, solicited the orders. Wright was a well-known figure on the House side of the Capitol complex, not just as a bootlegger, but as a doorkeeper. The irony that a man, monitoring the gates to Congress, would actually increase the flow of liquor, infuriated Cooper. The Ohio Republican demanded a congressional inquiry, stating, “It is a shame and a disgrace that bootleggers should be working right under the dome of the Capitol . . . It is about time that Congress take drastic action to see that all men of such character are driven out.”<sup>19</sup>

Cooper’s declaration did, eventually, result in action; the fol-

lowing year, the *New York Times* reported that a police officer chased down a prominent bootlegger in the House Office Building, leading to the arrest and arraignment of one George L. Cassidy. The alleged bootlegger pleaded not guilty to possession of six quarts of “poor quality” whiskey and was released on \$2000 bond.<sup>20</sup> There was no mention of a green hat, but Cassidy himself revealed the origin of his nickname, and the circumstances of his arrest, in the series of articles he wrote for the *Washington Post*.

In the mid-twenties, “dry” representatives, including Blanton, Cooper, Upshaw, and Louis Cramton, a Michigan Republican, formed a so-called vice committee, focused on ridding the Capitol of both its bootleggers and bookmakers.<sup>21</sup> At the time, Cassidy had worked in the HOB “for five years without being molested” by police officers who had little interest in enforcing Prohibition. After the House committee became more prominent, though, an officer, who had previously allowed Cassidy access to the building, stopped him in the hall (*not* chased him down, according to Cassidy) and confiscated a briefcase containing alcohol. When a reporter asked the Sergeant at Arms, Joseph Rodgers, who had carried the whiskey, he replied, “a man in a green hat.” And thus, Cassidy became “The Man in the Green Hat” and served a 90-day stint in the District Jail, which proved to be a temporary hiatus in his ten-year career.<sup>22</sup>

Now in 1930, writing for the *Post*, the bootlegger explained how an out-of-work ex-serviceman became the most notorious non-politician on Capitol Hill. Born in West Virginia, Cassidy





LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, PRINTS & PHOTOGRAPHS DIVISION

*A Prohibition leader, Rep. Willaim D. Upshaw of Georgia, stands on a railing with an umbrella, keeping the Capitol dry.*

held a variety of jobs, including brakeman and flagman for the Pennsylvania Railroad, before going to war. Upon returning, he couldn't pass the railroad physical and had no other prospects in sight. An old friend told him to consider bootlegging at the Capitol, where the "liquor brought the highest prices." Cassiday met his first two customers, southern "dry" congressmen, at the "old Hotel Varum," and his career took off from there.<sup>23</sup>

Cassiday relied on personal recommendations, as well as his customers' natural sociability, to expand his business. Seasoned House members were especially "eager" to help. They vouched for his services and, following an election, introduced new members to him as part of an unofficial House orientation program. The bootlegger's base soon spread geographically from the south to the north. One state's entire delegation would sign onto his service, then the neighboring state's would join as well.<sup>24</sup>

Cassiday picked up corn moonshine from suppliers in Maryland and Virginia, and rye, Scotch, Bourbon, and imported liquors from New York and other northern cities.<sup>25</sup> Although he had "watchers" to assist him as he smuggled alcohol to Washington, he had little help with the distribution process, which became logistically more challenging as his customer list grew. He simply did not have the physical capacity to carry that much alcohol into the Capitol complex on a daily basis. Frustrated by delays in service, Cassiday's clients began offering solutions, including one unidentified Midwestern congressman, who suggested setting up "a base of operations from the inside."<sup>26</sup>

When another member offered him a key to an HOB room, Cassiday seized the opportunity. Now he "could stow a good quantity away out of sight and draw on it" as needed. The room opened to a courtyard, had blinds, a big work table, and a bathroom with running water, which proved important for "cutting" the alcohol when supplies were limited. Over the months, Cassiday fine-tuned his process: "Using one gallon of pure rye whisky as a base, adding one gallon of pure grain alcohol and one gallon of hot water from the spigot and then adding a little bouquet coloring, [he] found it was possible to turn out 12 quarts of about 90 to 96 proof that was entirely satisfactory."<sup>27</sup>

The bootlegger room served another function: social club. Cassiday's "Bar Flies Association" consisted of his preferred customers, who used a special knock to get through the door. They would drink a "few rounds" and sing a "few songs" before heading out for dinner and a show. Or the group would migrate to the basement, where a poker room was "tucked away well out of sight." "There was a mahogany table with a green felt top and plenty of upholstered swivel chairs. Sometimes half a dozen congressmen would sit in for a game when there wasn't much doing in the floor of the House." Not surprisingly, Cassiday considered these years, from 1920 to 1925, to be the "good old days" when the HOB felt like "home."<sup>28</sup>

After Cassiday pleaded guilty in the "Green Hat" case, though, he had to leave behind the House and its "general spirit of good fellowship and conviviality." Moving to the Senate, he noticed a stark difference between his old and new customers. In the House, members congregated in groups; often, Cassiday lingered into the evening, waiting for a caucus meeting to break. On the north side of the Hill, however, "you had to deal with a senator as an individual." Or more likely, work with the "go-between," a secretary who purchased alcohol on behalf of the senator.<sup>29</sup>

In both the HOB and the SOB, members developed elaborate systems to receive and pay for liquor. Several used the "locked desk drawer" method. Cassiday would periodically stop by the member's desk, use his own key to open the drawer, and leave behind a fresh supply of alcohol. One senator had Cassiday store bottles behind his personal copies of the *Congressional Record*. On occasion, he would say, "I could use some 'new reading material,'" signaling Cassiday to re-stock the liquor and re-shelve the volumes. The senator called him "the librarian."<sup>30</sup>

During his years on Capitol Hill, Cassiday became interested in the legitimate business of Congress: the passage of national policy. He spent many hours perched in the House and Senate galleries, listening to his customers debate the merits of Prohibition. Other issues concerned him as well, especially veterans' legislation. According to the *Post* account, he helped one congressman write letters promoting a soldiers' bonus bill and, during a congressional recess, traveled to the Midwest to work on a senator's re-election campaign. Cassiday sought for his friends to stay in office, whether they were customers or not, and it "cut [him] up considerably" when a favored member was defeated.<sup>31</sup> One can imagine the feeling was mutual when Cassiday's own job was in jeopardy.



Assistant Attorney General Mabel W. Willebrandt, who declared that "Bootleggers infest the halls and corridors of Congress," in her 1929 New York Times article, "THE INSIDE OF PROHIBITION: CHAPTER 11--ARE CONGRESSMEN ABOVE THE LAW?"

Not everybody loved the loyal bootlegger, though, and Charles Curtis, above all, pursued an end to the Green Hat era. Now, as Herbert Hoover's vice president, the former leader of the Senate remained attentive to the institution and used his increased power to work hand-in-hand with the Treasury Department's Bureau of Prohibition. In 1929, shortly after Assistant U.S. Attorney General Mabel Walker Willebrandt publicly declared, "Bootleggers infest the halls and corridors of Congress," Curtis, Secretary of the Senate Edwin P. Thayer, and the Treasury Department's Prohibition Commissioner James M. Doran signed off on a plan placing a young "dry spy" in Cassiday's prime territory: the Senate Stationery Room.<sup>32</sup>

The Prohibition agent in question, Roger Butts, presented his side of the story in his own *Washington Post* series, published in November, 1930. The previous year, as a twenty-year old, Butts left a clerical position to join the Prohibition Bureau, earning \$180 a month to work undercover. Briefed on his assignment, the "dry spy" got "quite a thrill" to hear that he would be working for the vice president of the United States.<sup>33</sup>

In December, 1929, Butts met with the Secretary of the Senate and John C. Crockett, the chief clerk of the Senate, who escorted him to the Stationery Room and introduced him as a temporary

worker, hired to assist with the Christmas rush.<sup>34</sup> For the first two weeks, Butts worked a regular schedule, waiting on senators and their secretaries as he filled orders for stationery, pencils, pens, paper, and other supplies. He also kept an eye on the windows. Situated at the northeast corner of the SOB, the room had a view of First Street, where Cassiday parked his car on a daily basis.<sup>35</sup>

Once the "boys in the stationery room" warmed up to him, Butts felt comfortable broaching the subject of the Man in the Green Hat, but was unable to secure a liquor delivery. He believed that Cassiday was "shunning" him due to his youth and because the bootlegger had "no confidence" that Butts wanted the alcohol for his own consumption. The dry spy hatched a plan: he bought two pints from a rival salesman, drank enough to get the liquor on his breath, and arrived to work late, "not staggering, but just a little unsteady." In Butts' words, "I sat at my desk and started singing and making all kinds of noises to give the impression that I was feeling good." Word of the incident got back to Cassiday, but he was too "shrewd" to add Butts to his customer list.<sup>36</sup>

Finally, in February, 1930, the dry spy had another Senate employee, who was aware of Butts's true assignment, arrange a liquor drop-off outside of the SOB. This unnamed individual called Cassiday from the Stationery Room and ordered six fifths





*Following a Capitol Police chase, bootleggers crash their car near the Capitol.*

of gin. At the appointed time, Cassiday appeared, and Prohibition agents closed in for the arrest. While the bootlegger carried no alcohol (the liquor was stored in another man's car), he did hold a "little black book" containing the names of "senators, congressmen and their secretaries"—all customers of the Man in the Green Hat.<sup>37</sup>

Two hours after Cassiday's arrest, agents surrounded another Senate bootlegger, William David Goldberg, as he stepped from his car. Startled, the man dropped a package, breaking six bottles of gin. The police held both bootleggers for transporting illegal liquor, while Cassiday protested that he was "framed."<sup>38</sup>

Later that day, Senator Burton Wheeler, a "wet" Democrat from Montana, used the bootleggers' arrests to publicize a resolution he had recently sponsored, authorizing the Senate Judiciary Committee to "investigate the activities of the Bureau of Prohibition in the Department of the Treasury and all matters in any wise pertaining to the enforcement of the prohibition laws of the United States." Wheeler argued that, after ten years of Prohibition, there had been "a complete breaking down of law enforcement in this country."<sup>39</sup>

Other members maintained the opposite: the two sting operations demonstrated that Prohibition *was* being enforced. Pro-temperance senators and representatives reveled in Cassiday's

conviction in April 1931, resulting in an eighteen-month jail sentence, which, they believed, would finally end his bootlegging career. They were disappointed, though, that the Prohibition Bureau never released Cassiday's customer list, which Commissioner Doran himself acknowledged included "an extensive" compilation of members of Congress." According to Butts, the original black book was returned to the Man in the Green Hat and later the book and any copies made were destroyed. Cassiday himself soon faded from history. According to his son Fred, the elder Cassiday never spent a night in jail, but would check out each evening and return home. After serving his last jail sentence, he worked at a shoe factory and in Washington hotels before his death in 1967 at the age of 74.<sup>40</sup>

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Although the Judiciary Committee never acted on Wheeler's resolution, the senator and his "wet" colleagues considered Cassiday's Capitol exploits proof positive that Prohibition simply could not be enforced; it was a "farce." That sentiment may have influenced the pro-repeal movement that accelerated following the Democrats' congressional victories in 1930 and Franklin Roosevelt's presidential inauguration in 1933. Enforcement measures were inadequate and expensive, while legalized drinking promised much-needed additional tax revenue during



*This photograph of the congressional “wet block” was taken after a meeting to discuss “wet legislation.” It includes Rep. John Phillip Hill, chairman of the wet block (front row, fourth from left in dark coat), and some of the 61 wet members.*

the Great Depression.

The “wets” finally got their wish on December 5, 1933, when the states ratified the Twenty-first Amendment, repealing the national prohibition on liquor sales. Individual jurisdictions, though, were able to extend the ban, and Washington, DC, with its complicated role as the capital city, delayed legalization. And once authorized liquor was available, it generally cost more than the bootlegged variety.<sup>41</sup>

A full year after repeal, a liquor lobbyist pleaded his case before Congress. Ammon McClellan, executive director of the League of Distilled Spirits Rectifiers, argued that high taxes and a “scrambled” legal system kept the bootleggers in business. In fact, he had information that the Man in the Green Hat *still* operated on Capitol Hill. And not just Cassiday, but “gray hats and green hats and brown hats and even derbies are hangers-on at the Capitol.”<sup>42</sup>

McClellan blamed the ease of tax evasion, as well as “people who would ‘stoop’ to buy from a bootlegger.” He certainly had a point. In the post-repeal environment, bootleggers offered a tax-

free product. But they also provided something a little less tangible: a “general spirit of good fellowship and conviviality.” After all, no *legitimate* whiskey peddler could ever replace the Man in the Green Hat, a man who went door-to-door, led sing-alongs and poker games, and made a Washington office building feel like home, not just for himself, but for all of his customer friends.



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Rep. John Philip Hill (left), the outgoing congressional “wet” leader, congratulates Rep. John C. Linthicum, who was elected to succeed him as “wet” leader (c. 1927). Both representatives were from Maryland, a state that resisted Prohibition more strongly than many others.

# Notes

1. George Cassiday, “Capitol Tipplers had Weakness For Rye, Bourbon, Says Cassiday,” *The Washington Post*, October 28, 1930.

2. While the 18th Amendment, and its companion enforcement legislation, the National Prohibition Act (Volstead Act), took effect nationwide on January 17, 1920, alcohol bans were already in place in certain jurisdictions. Texas Senator Morris Sheppard sponsored the Sheppard Act, which closed D.C. saloons in 1917; Linda Wheeler, “The Day it Poured: Just 60

Short Years Ago, The Ban on Booze in D.C. was About to be Lifted,” *The Washington Post*, February 27, 1994; Garrett Peck, *Prohibition in Washington, D.C.: How Dry We Weren’t* (Charleston, S.C.: The History Press, 2011), pp. 33-34.

3. “WASHINGTON’S PROHIBITION FARCE,” *The New York Times*, January 14, 1923.

4. Cassiday, “20 to 25 Orders Daily Called Fair Capitol Trade by Cassiday,” *The Washington Post*, October 26, 1930.

5. Cassiday, “‘The MAN in the GREEN HAT’: Cassiday Reveals Rum Dealings in U.S. Senate Office Building,” *The Washington Post*, October 27, 1930.

6. “BOOZE SHY AND HIGH WITH CAPITOL: Bootleggers Raise Price After Sleuths are Set to Watch Avenues to Senate and House,” *The Baltimore Sun*, May 19, 1921.

7. Newspaper articles during this time period used the spellings “employe” and “whisky”; in this article, the spellings, “employee” and “whiskey” are used outside quotations. In 1921, \$7 was worth the equivalent \$93 in 2015. “BOOTLEGGERS ACTIVE IN CAPITOL ANNEXES: Whisky Said To Be Peddled,” *The Baltimore Sun*, May 18, 1921.

8. “BOOZE SHY AND HIGH WITH CAPITOL: Bootleggers Raise Price After Sleuths are Set to Watch Avenues to Senate and House,” *The Baltimore Sun*, May 19, 1921.

9. “CAPITOL IS BARRED TO BOOTLEG GENTRY: Senate Rules Committee Chairman Issues Drastic Order to Police Force,” *The Baltimore Sun*, December 24, 1922.

10. Ibid.

11. “CAPITOL BOOTLEGGERS GONE: Senator Curtis Has Negro Waiter Who Dropped Flask Dismissed,” *The New York Times*, December 27, 1922.

12. “WASHINGTON’S PROHIBITION FARCE,” *The New York Times*, January 14, 1923.

13. “WASHINGTON AGAPE AT LIQUOR PATRONS: Bootlegger’s List Has Men and Women High in Official and Military Life,” *The Baltimore Sun*, March 13, 1923.

14. *The Congressional Record*, 67th Cong., 4th sess., Feb. 24, 1923, p. 4517.

15. *The Congressional Record*, 68th Cong., 1st sess., March 7, 1924, p. 3772.

16. In 1926, Senator Coleman Blease, a Democrat from South Carolina, declared “Bootleggers reap a harvest selling liquor at the Capitol.” While some “dry” members denied senators and representatives would buy alcohol, Blease reported that “The trouble with Congress is that they vote dry and drink wet.” “BLEASE CALLS CAPITOL RICH BOOTLEG MARKET: Tells Police Liquor Venders Make Rounds of Office Buildings Daily,” *The Washington Post*, March 12, 1926.

17. “WASHINGTON AGAPE AT LIQUOR PATRONS: Bootlegger’s List Has Men and Women High in Official and Military Life,” *The Baltimore Sun*, March 13, 1923.

18. Ibid.

# (Notes, con'd.)

19. In different news articles, the bootlegger was referred to as Eli George Wright, Eli Wright, and George E. Wright. The other bootleggers were identified as Dr. Edward Marks, Miss Rose Trachenberg, and Mrs. Mabel Hawkins. Daniel Ford, a college student and "dry spy," worked undercover, amassing the evidence needed to expose the bootlegging ring. "DRY AGENT, IN GUISE OF CAPITOL WORKER, CAUSES 4 ARRESTS," *The Washington Post*, Feb. 22, 1925.

20. Cassidy recalled in the *Washington Post* series that his arrest occurred in 1925; however, the *New York Times* reported that the arrest was in 1926. "Dry' Agents Search for Congress Liquor As Alleged Capitol Bootlegger Is Arraigned," *New York Times*, March 26, 1926.

21. "Bookies As Well As Bootleggers Will Be Driven From Capitol," *The Baltimore Sun*, Feb. 25, 1925; Cassidy, "20 to 25 Orders Daily Called Fair Capitol Trade by Cassidy," *The Washington Post*, Oct. 26, 1930.

22. The police officer, in this case, was on the patronage of an unnamed Massachusetts representative, who was most likely opposed to Prohibition. Cassidy, "20 to 25 Orders Daily Called Fair Capitol Trade by Cassidy," *The Washington Post*, Oct. 26, 1930.

23. Cassidy, "Cassiday, Capitol Bootlegger, Got First Rum Order From Dry," *The Washington Post*, Oct. 24, 1930. The Hotel Varnum was located on the northwest corner of New Jersey and C streets, SE, on the present-day site of the Longworth House Office Building. The establishment dated back to at least 1893, when Rand McNally's *Handy Guide to Washington* (2nd ed., New York, 1897, p. 11) described it as "a small, comfortable house" offering rooms for \$2 per night.

24. Cassidy, "Cassiday, Capitol Bootlegger, Got First Rum Order From Dry," *The Washington Post*, Oct. 24, 1930.

25. Ibid.

26. Cassidy, "'The MAN in the GREEN HAT': Part of Cassidy's Rum Supply Stored in House Office Building," *The Washington Post*, Oct. 25, 1930.

27. Ibid.

28. Ibid.

29. Cassidy, "'The MAN in the GREEN HAT': Cassidy Reveals Rum Dealings In U.S. Senate Office Building," *The Washington Post*, Oct. 27, 1930.

30. Ibid.

31. Ibid.

32. Willebrandt, as Assistant U.S. Attorney General in charge of Prohibition cases, was, at that time, the highest-ranking woman in the federal government. She wrote a series of *New York Times* articles, entitled "The Inside of Prohibition," concerning lapses in Prohibition enforcement. "THE INSIDE OF PROHIBITION: CHAPTER 11--ARE CONGRESSMEN ABOVE THE LAW?," *New York Times*, Aug. 15, 1929; "CURTIS, DORAN PUT DRY SPY IN SENATE OFFICE: Vice President Says He Aided in the Effort to Curb Cassidy," *The Washington Post*, Nov. 1, 1930; Roger Butts, "Authorities, He Avers, Were Ready to Go Limit in Case," *The Washington Post*, Nov. 11, 1930.

33. Butts, "Authorities, He Avers, Were Ready to Go Limit in Case," *The Washington Post*, Nov. 11, 1930.

34. Butts, "Prohibition in the Senate: Butts Tells How Cassidy Sold Him 'Fifth of Gin' at Capitol," *The Washington Post*, Nov. 12, 1930.

35. Ibid.

36. Butts, "Prohibition in the Senate: Cassidy's Arrest and Seizure Of Black Book Bared by Butts," *The Washington Post*, Nov. 14, 1930.

37. Ibid.

38. "Agents Arrest Another Alleged Bootlegger Just Outside the Senate Office Building," *New York Times*, Feb. 20, 1930.

39. *The Congressional Record*, 71st Cong., 2nd sess., Feb. 10, 1930, p.p. 3356-3357.

40. "'Man in the Green Hat' Must Go To Jail as Capitol Bootlegger," *The New York Times*, Apr. 7, 1931; "PUBLISH 40. 'GREEN HAT' LIST, CARAWAY ASKS: Senator Urges Disclosures, Assails Placing of Agent in Office Building," *Washington Post*, Nov. 4, 1930; Butts, "Prohibition in the Senate: Cassidy's Arrest and Seizure Of Black Book," *Washington Post*, Nov. 14, 1930; "CURTIS, DORAN PUT DRY SPY IN SENATE OFFICE: Vice President Says He Aided in the Effort to Curb Cassidy," *The Washington Post*, Nov. 1, 1930; Peck, *Prohibition in Washington, D.C.*, p. 133.

41. "SAYS BOOTLEGGER SUPPLIES CAPITOL: Rectifier Code Head States 'Man in Green Hat' is Still About Congress," *The New York Times*, Dec. 16, 1934.

42. Ibid.



# From Roman Republicanism to Greek Democracy:

## Benjamin Henry Latrobe's Capitol

by Pamela Scott

The burning of the Capitol on August 24, 1814 was more a reprieve than a disaster for Benjamin Henry Latrobe. He now had the unexpected opportunity to repair some of his Capitol's interiors and rebuild others into exemplars of Greek Revival architecture. During his first tenure as the Capitol's architect (1803-1812) (fig. 1) Latrobe was constrained by William Thornton's 1792 winning design for the exterior shell and Stephen Hallet's for the interiors. Hallet partially built the two-story Senate in wood; after January 1795 a succession of short-term architects finished much of the north wing for the Senate. The Capitol Latrobe inherited was that enclosed wing and the "oven," the brick walls and temporary roof of the hall for the House of Representatives built in 1801. These designs were a fusion of eighteenth-century Neoclassicism derived from the Roman and Renaissance architecture interpreted by Italian, French, and English sources as well as ancient ones. Latrobe soon found himself both supported and bedeviled in his collaboration with President Thomas Jefferson who had been involved with designs for the Capitol since 1791.<sup>1</sup>

In May 1807, while in battle with Jefferson over the vaulting of the House chamber, Latrobe wrote the president: "My *principles* of good taste are rigid. In Grecian architecture, I am a bigoted Greek, to the condemnation of the roman architecture of Balba, Palmyra, Spalatro, all of the buildings erected subsequent to Hadrian's reign." He admired the "*bold plans and arrangements*" of early Roman architecture "but think their decorations and details absurd beyond tolerance." He expressed his fundamental architectural credo at this critical juncture of the Capitol's design when he was rebuilding the North Wing and caught in the dilemma of how to erect a dome over the hippodrome-shaped House chamber designed by Hallet and sanctioned by George Washington.<sup>2</sup>

Wherever therefore the Grecian style can be copied without impropriety I love to be a *mere*, I would say a *slavish* copyist, but the *forms*, and the *distribution* of the Roman and Greek buildings which remain, are in general inapplicable to the objects and uses of our public buildings. [O]ur government, our legislative assemblies, and our courts of Justice buildings [are based on] entirely different principles from their basilica's; and our amusements could not possibly be performed in their Theatres or amphitheatres.

Yet despite his caveats, Latrobe went on to infuse the Capitol's rebuilt interiors and his new ones with direct references to Greek architectural forms, architectural orders, and sculptural decorations. He adapted them, however, to his own purposes as he integrated them with other historical traditions. He had pioneered the revival of Greek architecture in America in 1798 with his design for the Bank of Pennsylvania and educated two important American architects (Robert Mills and William Strickland) in that style during the next decade. He even took it upon himself to educate congressmen about correct taste in architecture in order to convince them to approve and fund what was an increasingly expensive enterprise.<sup>3</sup>

In November 1816, when he was well into his second tenure (1815-1817) as the Capitol's architect (fig. 2), Latrobe penned a diatribe against those American architects who, in claiming they were building in the "*Grecian taste*, the idea suggested is, that it unites the most elegant proportions with the most severe simplicity." He condemned them for instead being

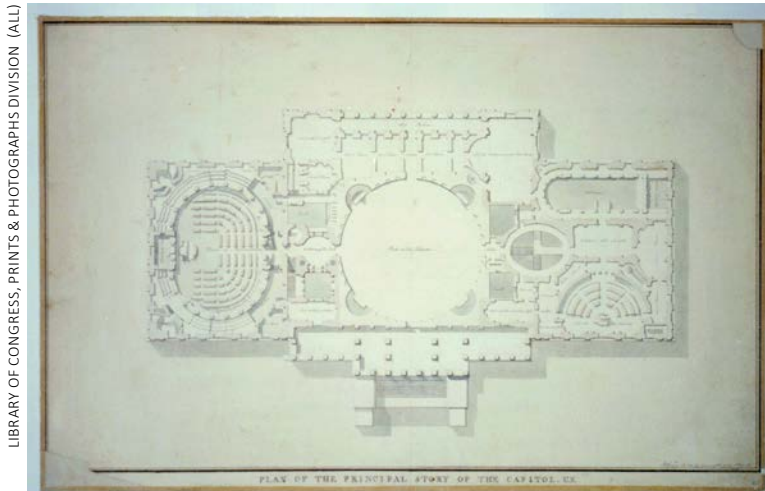


Fig. 1. In 1806 Latrobe recorded the shapes of the rooms on the Capitol's main floor, notably the hippodrome-shaped House of Representatives and the Rotunda.

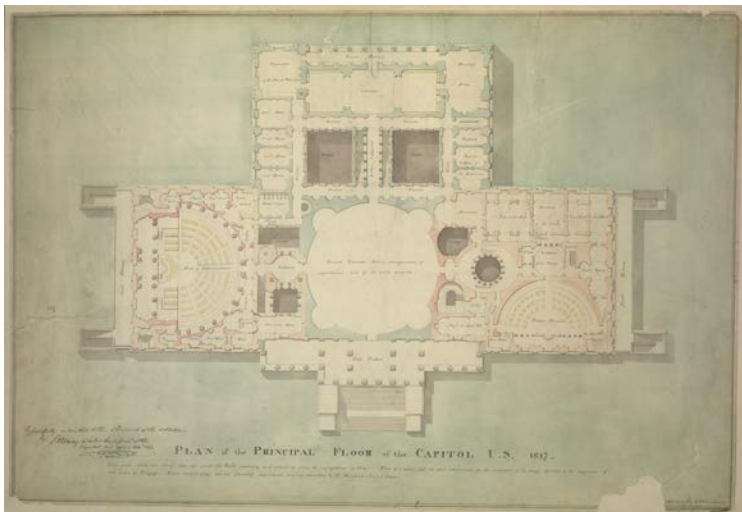


Fig. 2. By 1817 Latrobe had designed a new west wing for the Library of Congress and committee rooms and the new hemispherical House chamber.



Fig. 3. About 1810 Latrobe planned to redesign the dome to have a hexagonal drum and a west propylaea entrance in emulation of the propylaea of the Athenian Parthenon.

the copyists of the “absurdities of the Roman luxury of the age when taste and morals were in the decline.” In veiled references to Thornton’s Capitol exterior and James Hoban’s for the President’s House, he noted “that even in our national buildings ... [they] remind us of the palaces of European kings, by the taste of their external decorations, rather than of Athenian freedom, by their beautiful, magnificent, and permanent simplicity,” a not too veiled reference to the superiority of his own work at the Capitol. Latrobe concluded his essay by defining architecture as combining “the most exalted science, with the most perfect art” to achieve “the most perfect record of the public spirit, the wealth, the civilization, and taste of nations;” the Capitol, his hoped-for future legacy.<sup>4</sup>

In 1810-1811 Latrobe redesigned the Capitol’s exteriors to be more in accord with his evolving interior spaces. He planned a new west entrance (fig. 3) in the form of a Greek portico based on the Propylaea, the entrance to the Athenian Acropolis, but altered its intercolumniation and added features from other Athenian buildings. The main purpose of the Capitol’s propylaea was to provide houses for the doorkeepers of the Senate and House while freeing up spaces for committee rooms, but also to improve the pedestrian approach to the Capitol. The massiveness of his propylaea’s six Greek Doric columns—they were to be 32 feet high—had “aspiration[s] to the sublime” as they vied with the slightly taller Roman Corinthian columns (dictated by Thornton’s original choice) in the loggia above and behind them. The Acquia sandstone walls of the Capitol’s wings were already whitewashed and soon to be painted, but Latrobe’s watercolor depicted his propylaea in the stone’s natural light brown color. He may have intended it to remain unpainted in order to visually separate the Capitol’s two distinctly different historical sources, Roman and Greek.<sup>5</sup>

Instead of the open balustrades atop the extant House and Senate wings, Latrobe planned solid ones for his center building. He designed a monumental statue of Athena as American Liberty (fig. 4) for its central stepped podium, a reference to the cult statue of Athena in the Parthenon. The Greek Athena wore a helmet, her left hand resting on her shield and her right one raised and holding the Palladium, the small statuette that represented civic power. Whoever possessed the Palladium in the Greek world held power. Latrobe’s Athena-Liberty wore a liberty cap, and her awkward stance in his wash image suggests he painted her in reverse, intending to have the image either lithographed or engraved. When reversed, American Liberty’s left hand rested on a stone tablet signifying laws—the Constitution—her raised right arm with palm open as if to express the openness of America’s government; Congress and the Supreme Court and who and what they represented was the American Palladium. In his farewell address written on 19 September 1796, Washington referred to the union of the states, “the unity of Government... [as] the Palladium of your political safety and prosperity.” At least as important for Latrobe, Jefferson wrote



in 1809 (just after his second presidential term had expired) that “our national constitution, [is] the ark of our safety, & grand Palladium of our peace & happiness.”<sup>6</sup> The word Palladium and its concept were well understood at the time. The editors of the *Times and Patowmack Packet*, Washington’s first newspaper, printed their motto in the first issue: “Let it be impressed upon your minds, let it be instilled into your children, that the Liberty of the Press is the Palladium of all the civil, political, and religious rights of Freemen.”<sup>7</sup>

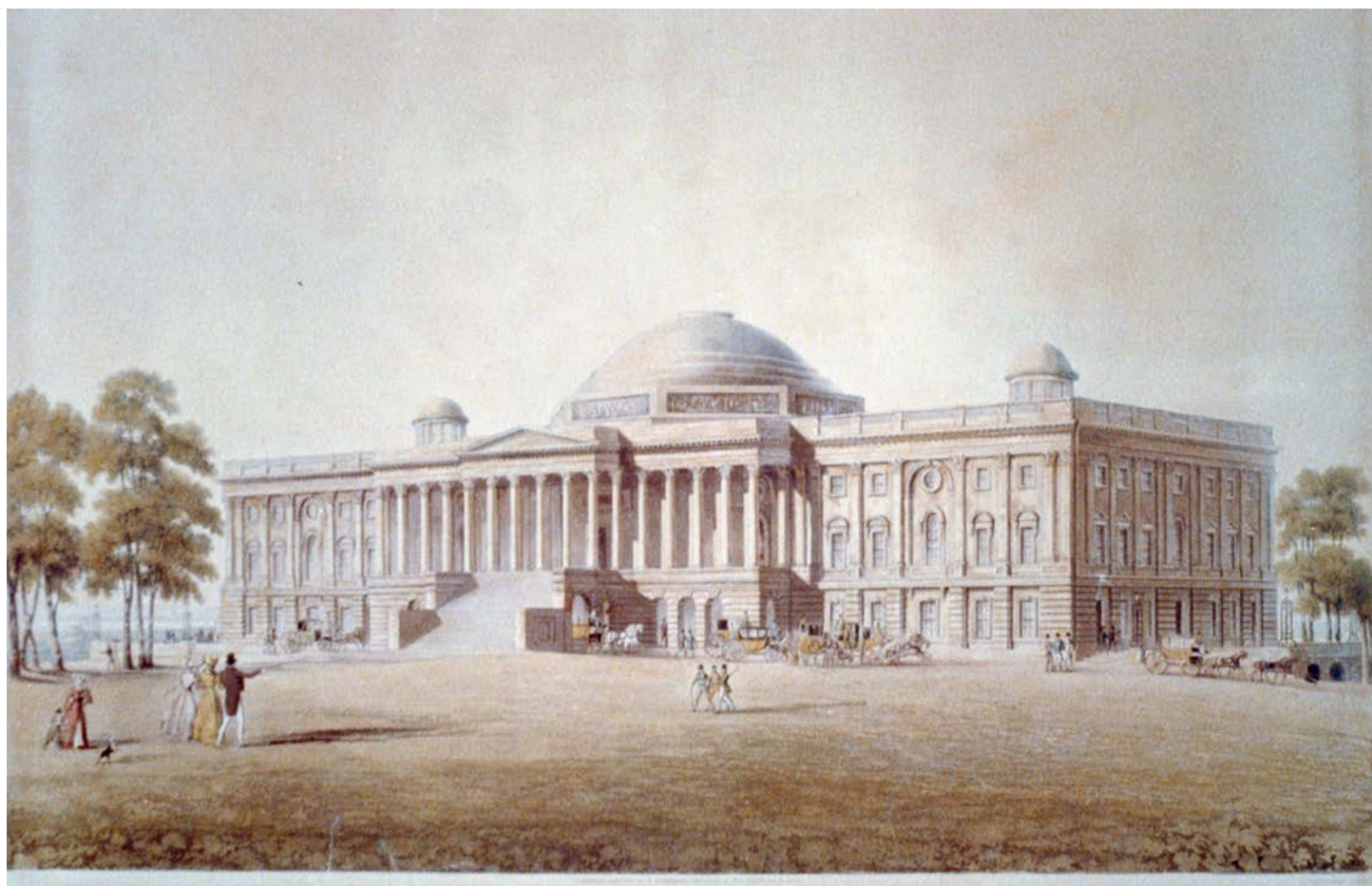
The images of the warrior goddess who founded Athens underwent a sea change in America during the Revolutionary Era. Pierre du Simitiere’s ca. 1776 design for the Great Seal of the United States included a figure of American Liberty as Athena holding a constitution. Congress chose the eagle for the Great Seal; the bird associated with the power of kingship thus came to represent Congress as the center of the nation’s political power. For his Athena-Liberty Latrobe chose to represent the power of Congress via the most potent Greek god, to create a new but meaningful figure for the Capitol whose meaning had already been broadly illustrated and accepted by most Americans.<sup>8</sup>

Latrobe’s 1810-1811 alterations making Thornton’s Roman Pantheon-inspired dome more “Greek” exemplified one way he achieved acceptable architectural fusions of Greek and Roman architectural elements. He designed for the rotunda’s covering a hexagonal drum and a series of stepped rings from which the low Roman dome emerged. His 1810 perspective from the northeast (fig. 5) shows a distinctly Greek frieze of figures decorating the drum in the tradition of the Parthenon frieze. The timing of this series of drawings suggests Latrobe celebrated Jefferson’s retirement in 1809 as president. It freed him to express his own beliefs and tastes for the simplicity of Greek architecture on the exterior of



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*Fig. 4. Latrobe planned a monumental statue of Athena as American Liberty to stand atop the Capitol’s western portico, here painted in reverse in readiness for engraving.*



*Fig. 5. Thomas Sunderland’s 1825 print, made from a Latrobe watercolor, shows the octagonal drum’s frieze with a series of figures similar to those on the Athenian Parthenon.*

the Capitol to be in accord with his interiors. These designs were not just wishful thinking because Latrobe included these fundamental additions in his estimates until 1816 when he replaced the propylaea with the west wing built to accommodate the Library of Congress and provide for congressional committee rooms.

Six weeks after the Capitol was burned, Latrobe wrote a Capitol Hill resident that he didn't believe the Capitol could be "repaired." He was most concerned about rebuilding the House of Representatives; he had been informed that the "Columns are gradually falling down."<sup>9</sup>

I know exactly what it would be best to do, but I cannot intrude my advice & Mr. Madison will never employ me again, I am told. All I can do is lie by and wait. If called upon I will give all my talents & industry to restore or to build something new & better & cheaper & more beautiful in the place of the former room. Perhaps Congress may call upon me.<sup>10</sup>

On 17 April 1815, when Latrobe visited the Capitol to view the "melancholy spectacle" of the ruins from the British visit the summer before, he was encouraged by what remained intact.

[M]any important parts are wholly uninjured, and what particularly is gratifying to me, the picturesque entrance of the House of Representatives with its handsome columns, the Corn Capitals of the Senate Vestibule, the Great staircase, and all the vaults of the Senate chamber, are entirely free from any injury which cannot be easily repaired.... In fact the mischief is much more easily repaired than would appear at first sight, and I was less chagrined than I had prepared myself to be.<sup>11</sup>

Latrobe was mistakenly optimistic; as the difficulties of rebuilding became apparent, he wrote Jefferson that he wished the British had burnt the Capitol to the ground so he could have started anew. His thinking about how to express the Capitol's multiple meanings was evolving. Latrobe's over-arching theme in designing the Capitol's interiors during both of his building campaigns was seamlessly to combine historical styles of the great eras of architecture in the Western tradition—Egyptian, Greek, Roman, and Medieval—in such ways as to invent new and meaningful symbolic emblems and architectonic spaces. Latrobe's synthesis of these traditions might have been meant to reflect either or both of two broad themes in American history. America was a nation of immigrants, its colonists largely drawn from several European countries, some of whom imported slaves from Africa. In addition, the Founding Fathers examined and debated western systems of government—ancient through modern—as they framed the Constitution. As a Neoclassical architect Latrobe believed abstract representations of ideals rooted in classicism were eternal and appropriate for a new nation composed of immigrants.<sup>12</sup>

The ancients used the Classical orders of architecture as allegories of peoples and status of building types. Latrobe attached meanings to the orders to represent the structure of the new form

of government. All three of Latrobe's designs for the Supreme Court chamber were similar in shape and construction: the central space a room within a room, a semicircular arcade defining this space. A screen of columns faced east, those in the second and third iterations separated the main space from the justices' retiring room. Classical architectural rules dictated that, as a ground floor room, the Supreme Court's columns ought to be Doric. Latrobe chose the earliest known Greek Doric from Paestum (fig. 6) for his second and third chambers. Paestum's Doric temples were built near the dawn of Greek columnar architecture, identified by the exaggerated echinus (bowl-shaped molding) of their capitals. Latrobe chose Paestum capitals to reflect allegorically the Court's purpose, the chamber where Justices protected the Constitution, the beginning of the United States that protected American liberties.

Sculptural decorations for the first courtroom are unknown, but for the second, Latrobe initially designed two reliefs to decorate the impost blocks atop the columns, a mask of Justice alternating with her scales. He finally settled on heads of Minerva (Wisdom) and Blind Justice. When Latrobe rebuilt the courtroom in 1815-1817 he reengineered the vaults, increased the number of Paestum columns to six, and relegated all the symbolic sculpture to the wall that faced the justices. In May 1817 Carlo Franzoni modelled, then cast in plaster, the three-part relief of seated Justice as the central figure (fig. 7). She holds scales in her left hand and rests her right hand on the sword of justice. Latrobe's former student Robert Mills later wrote that the sword points down rather than being raised because "American justice is not punitive." Although Franzoni's alternate sketches for Justice show her blindfolded, his finished Justice was clear-sighted. On Justice's left an eagle protects law books and on her right a young winged figure holding the Constitution is seated in front of a radiant sun. Latrobe added the eagle and the sun, and positioned the sword as specifically American symbols. He represented the Constitution as a book rather than a charter because the Court's rulings interpreting the Constitution continued to be written, ensuring the rights of Americans. Integrating American symbols with ancient personifications was a hallmark of Latrobe's second tenure as the Capitol's architect, a change that seems to have been stimulated by the responses of senators and Members of Congress.<sup>13</sup>

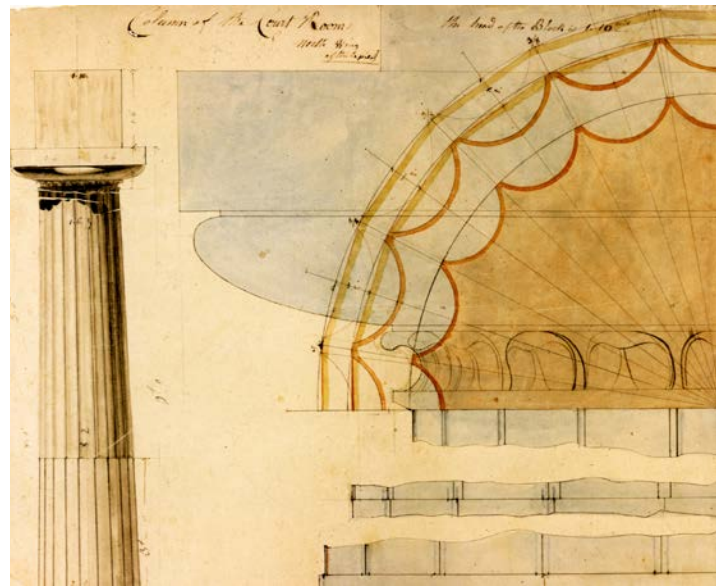
Latrobe's ground-story corn capital vestibule, finished in 1810, immediately south of the Supreme Court, also led to the Senate chamber above it. It survived the fire and contains the first of Latrobe's three famed American orders (fig. 8). They continued a European tradition of newly invented national orders for great public buildings. Latrobe may have seen or was told about America's first national order invented by Peter Charles L'Enfant for the Senate chamber in Federal Hall in New York, the old City Hall repurposed to house the First Federal Congress. L'Enfant's American order included stars, rays of the sun, and the cipher U.S. amidst leaves referring to emblems on the Great Seal. Latrobe approached his American orders in an entirely different way, by using the imagery of native American plants to represent the occupations of the nation's population. The six corn



stalk shafts topped by capitals of corn cobs framed by unfurled corn leaves represented American agriculture; Jefferson called them the “Cerealian” capitals (after Ceres, Roman goddess of agriculture). Moreover, by layering the vestibule’s vertical parts—stone pilasters attached to walls behind free-standing stone columns—and varying the shapes of vaults above, Latrobe created an apparently spatially expansive introduction to the relatively modest Capitol, a theme he repeated frequently to aggrandize it.<sup>14</sup>

Latrobe’s first Senate chamber (1806-1808) directly above the courtroom was entered in the center of its semicircle through four of the most elaborate of the Greek Ionic columns, those originating on a porch of the Erechtheum on the Athenian Acropolis. According to the Greek historian Pausanias the Erechtheum housed several ancient cults. Senators, elected by state legislatures, represented America’s widely divergent regional histories, cultures, and populations. Hallet’s 1793 drawing for the first Senate included paintings of stars and state seals in its vaulted ceiling to express its function as representing the states.

In February 1816 Latrobe wrote about the six human figures that had supported the east gallery of his first Senate chamber. “You will observe that the Caryatides or figures formerly supporting the Gallery next to the Wall, are brought forward and support the front of the Gallery.” Generally caryatids referred to figures of Greek women acting as columns used on the Erechtheum’s second porch located on the Athenian Acropolis. In March 1817, how-



ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL

Fig. 6. The Greek Doric columns that Latrobe designed for the Supreme Court were modelled on the most ancient ones known, to serve as allegories for the court’s role.

ever, a newspaper account of the House debate on the proposed rebuilding quoted one member’s ridicule of Latrobe’s allegorical sculpture:<sup>15</sup>

Mr. Speaker [Henry Clay, a former member of the



Fig. 7. Carlo Franzoni’s 3-part sculpture in 1817 for the Supreme Court combined new American and traditional European emblems related to justice.





Fig. 8. The corn capital vestibule contained Latrobe's first use of an American order of architecture based on native vegetation; corn probably represented American farmers. See also p. 6, fig. 7.

Senate], you must recollect the stone gallery in the senate chamber; there were several male figures beneath, with their hands raised to support it. The figures were not colossal, nor Herculean, but even if they had no weight to bear up, the very attitude, with hands stretched out and permanently elevated as high as their head, was enough to give pain to the beholder. [The speaker then "exhibited the attitude of the arms, which was the most incapacitating possible for sustaining a weight—It was something like that of pulpit orators in the act of praying.]"<sup>16</sup>

Latrobe may have called such figures caryatids, which were better known than the more properly identified male atlantes and performed the same architectural function. What is certain is that Latrobe intended them to represent groups of Americans—personifications identified by traditional emblems to which specific American meanings were attached. The best evidence of their character is the estimate of their costs by Franzoni, who carved them while Congress was in recess during the summer of 1812. They represented art (\$400), commerce (\$150), agriculture (\$150), science (\$175), Bellona or military force (\$125), and Minerva or civil government (\$200), the range of occupations in which Americans excelled as an independent nation. Neither images nor descriptions of them survive, so how these caryatids conveyed their peculiarly American characteristics is unknown. Latrobe described the room and figures as "a Theatre for the Senate and a Gallery, or galleries supported by caryatides, for the people. [And] a work of art in which that character and Taste of Grecian Architecture is preserved ... and a work of *rational* decoration in which that which is reasonable is made to supply the decoration."<sup>17</sup>

For his second Senate chamber (1816-1817), Latrobe's atlantes were to stand atop the public gallery that overlooked the seated senators. One is shown in profile on Latrobe's 1817 section drawing of the north wing (fig. 9). Librarian of Congress George Watterston later recalled plaster "emblematic figures of the old thirteen States, decorated with their peculiar insignia." Latrobe's son remembered seeing some of the caryatids. Carlo Franzoni modelled "figures of North and South Carolina, represented as sisters, the arm of one around the neck of the other; also, Massachusetts and Maine—a mother leading her child—for Maine was as yet a district only. These were figures of the heroic size, a part of a series intended by Mr. Latrobe to have places in the building." Latrobe maintained continuity in expressing the Senate's function, but expressed it more meaningfully by adapting famous architectural sculptures for his emblematic figures representing the states.<sup>18</sup>

Even highly educated Euro-Americans decried Latrobe's attaching idiosyncratic emblems associated with America to Greek architectural figures to personify the states. The prominent financier and Capitol Hill resident, Thomas Law (who had divorced Martha Custis's granddaughter six years earlier), reported a speech by Massachusetts Congressman Timothy Pickering delivered on March 1, 1817, during one of his last days as a member

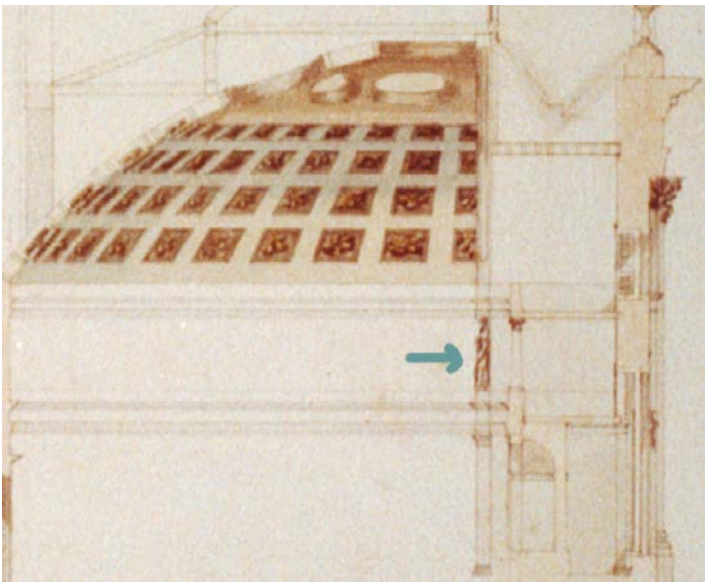


Fig. 9. The only known visual evidence of Latrobe's caryatids to represent the states in the Senate Chamber appears on this 1817 section drawing of the north wing.

of the House of Representatives. Pickering was an ardent Federalist who, in the words of his modern-day editors, was “devoted almost exclusively to the bitterest kind of opposition to Thomas Jefferson and all of his works”—be they Jefferson’s hand-selected architects, sculptors, or Virginian Republican successors to the presidency. According to Law, Pickering’s opinion was “a most admirable piece of sound, judicious criticism on some of the works of our chief architect, and his subordinate artists”—complete with “plain good sense and natural taste” combined with “much poignant satire and humour.”<sup>19</sup>

Mr. Pickering rose and afforded the house considerable instruction and amusement by a piece of shrewd, judicious, natural criticism upon certain models he had examined of sculptural ornaments intended for the capitol. He wished to enquire . . . whether the figures intended by the architect (Mr. Latrobe) to represent the several states, were to be comprehended in the proviso [appropriation for rebuilding]; or whether those *fantastic* images were to be laid aside. They are (said Mr. P.) female figures. The one designed to Represent New Hampshire has a fish in her hands. Now, of all the fish caught in the sea by the people of New England, forty nine in fifty, perhaps ninety nine in a hundred are taken by the inhabitants of Massachusetts. The female representative of Massachusetts has a boy by her side to represent the district of Maine. The lady of Vermont has a raw calf skin thrown over her shoulders; the pate falls on the left shoulder, and two of the legs hang dangling from her bosom. Mr. P. did not know with what emblem the lady of Virginia would be exhibited; perhaps with a BUCK SKIN over her shoulders; whether with the horns on her head, or, like the calf’s pate of Vermont, resting on the left shoulder, he could not tell; but doubtless a pair of the legs would be suspended from her breast.

Pickering went on to ridicule Latrobe’s corn and tobacco orders and his atlantes in the Senate, and although the blocks of marble for them had already been ordered from Italy, Pickering concluded “by declaring that he could not vote for the proposed appropriation unless the preposterous state emblems he had described, were swept away.”<sup>20</sup>

Latrobe blamed Law for the “public and eloquent condemnation” of the caryatids and challenged Law’s self-defense that “*Every body* to whom [I] have spoken condemns [them] equally.” In a lengthy essay, Latrobe reminded Law that sentiments and abstract ideas are expressed on human faces, heard as human languages, written as records, and depicted in paintings and sculpture as “*signs*, an internal operation or movement of the mind neither audible, visible, nor tangible.”<sup>21</sup>

If then it is the intention of architectural writing to record events, or to perpetuate sentiments, national customs, or private matters, and it is admitted, that such records are worthy of the expense they may occasion,

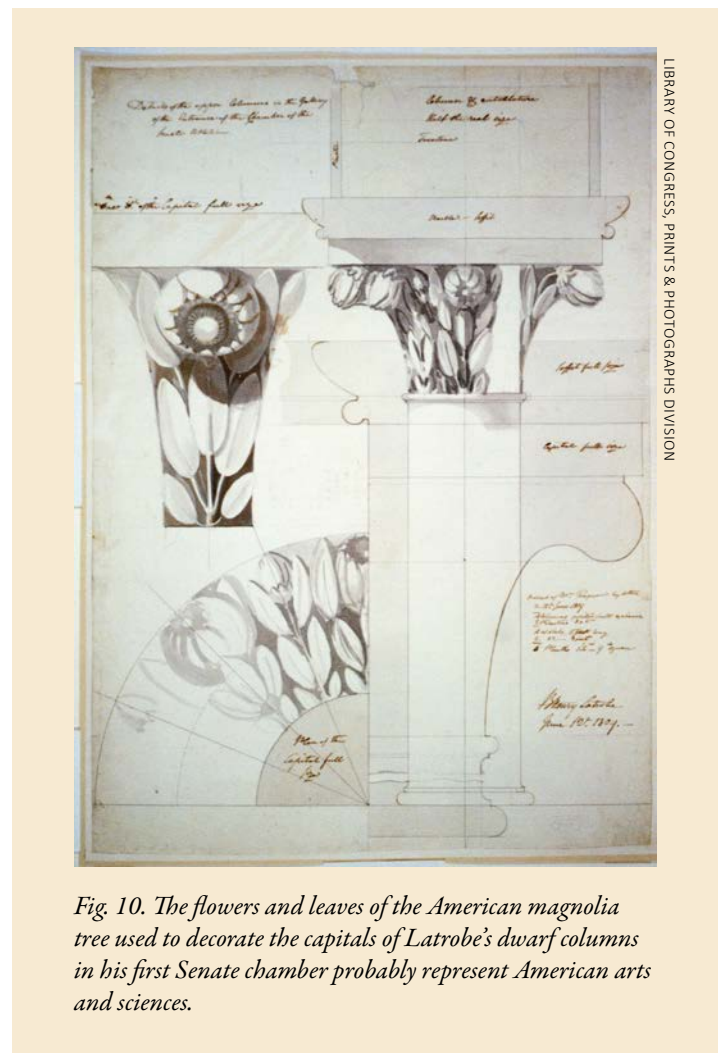


Fig. 10. The flowers and leaves of the American magnolia tree used to decorate the capitals of Latrobe’s dwarf columns in his first Senate chamber probably represent American arts and sciences.

the consideration of the Character, in which the record shall be written and of the style is the only one before us. It may indeed be said that as good Laws may be made in a Wigwam, as in the Capitol, and that all decoration is useless, and all history mere idle amusement. You however who admit Corinthian columns without Censure will not, I presume make that assertion. . . .

The Senate by the Constitution of our country, represents not the majority of the people, like the house of Representatives, but the individual States, as corporate bodies. . . . If their Chamber is to be decorated at all, the decoration should have the character consistent with the character of the body for which it was built. Their character of an *assembly of the States* is that which is most prominent. The practice of representing communities . . . by female figures, has existed since the dawn of history.... An unknown statue without attributes, is everywhere received as the portrait of an individual. But the moment any attribute is discovered there remains no doubt that the statue is a personification.

This then remains the only question. It is a question respecting the talents of the Architect and of his Sculptors: are the attributes intelligible? . . . [The] Chronological state





Fig. 11. Latrobe's use of tobacco leaves and flowers to decorate the columns of the rotunda outside the Senate chamber probably represented American merchants.

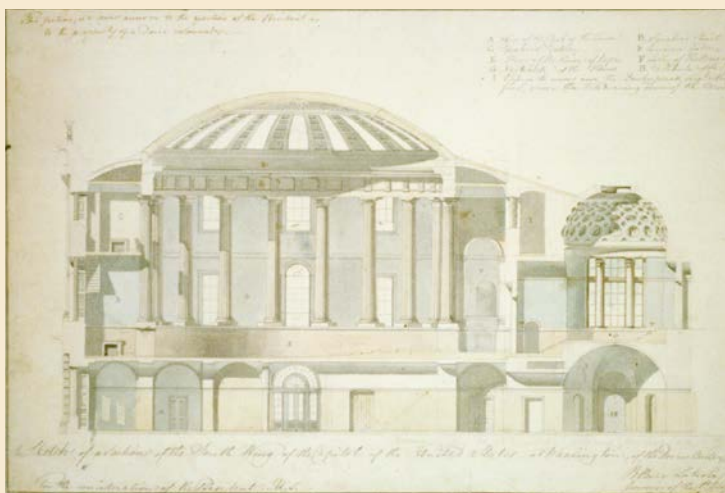


Fig. 12. Jefferson wanted the dome atop the hippodrome-shaped first House chamber to be lit by long skylights to distinguish it as the "handsomest room in the world."

of the agriculture and improvement of the states at the time of building the Chamber, all there furnish an exuberant choice, strongly marking and distinguishing the States from one another.<sup>22</sup>

Congress did not fund carving the caryatids as a result of Pickering's criticisms and Law's reporting. Little visual evidence survives of these major contributions to Latrobe's iconographical program for the Capitol.

Two of Latrobe's three American orders are associated with the Senate chamber. He designed the second to be floriated, a dwarf order for the visitors' gallery above the entrance of his first Senate chamber (fig. 10). It was based on magnolia flowers and may have represented American arts and sciences, because the *Magnolia Grandiflora* was the first native American tree considered to be beautiful enough to be planted at Kew Gardens. The third order, the tobacco leaf rotunda (1816), was not in the Senate's vestibule but located adjacent to it in a domed two-story space devised to light the central corridors of the north wing's two floors (fig. 11). Tobacco was America's second largest export product, and Latrobe probably intended its delicate tobacco flowers and broad leaves to represent American commerce in place of the traditional classical figure of Mercury that Hallet had proposed in 1792.

Both of Latrobe's House chambers commanded his best architectural efforts. He designed and built his first House of Representatives (1805-1807) in close collaboration with President Jefferson. It was intended to be a unique room where the directly elected representatives of the modern world's first system of government by and for the people assembled. Hallet selected the ancient hippodrome shape for the House of Representatives because of its associations with the seating organization at the Menu Plaisirs at Versailles. The French National Assembly met there in August 1789 to hammer out a peaceful transition from an absolute to a constitutional monarchy for America's principal Revolutionary War ally. The central podium surrounded by tiered or stadium seats proved to be good acoustically and visually for a large assembly being addressed by individual orators. Contrary to his own preference for a semi-circular Neoclassical auditorium room, at Jefferson's behest Latrobe designed a "Grecian" version of the hippodrome based on semicircles rather than the half ellipses of Hallet's plan, because that general form had been sanctioned by George Washington in 1792.<sup>23</sup> (See figs. 1 & 2.)

Although it existed for fully seven years before it was burned by the British, and given the room's uniqueness, it is strange that it did not elicit more private commentary. Apart from Latrobe's own renderings and descriptions, no known contemporary images and only two unofficial contemporary descriptions are known to exist. One appeared in a prominent Philadelphia magazine that drew upon Latrobe's reports, complained about the poor acoustics, and described the room's remarkably three-dimensional character. Congressional officers and visitors were cleverly accommodated within the monumental room dominated by the raised enclosure for the representatives. Aside from its serious acoustical faults, the author admitted the chamber's "magnificence and

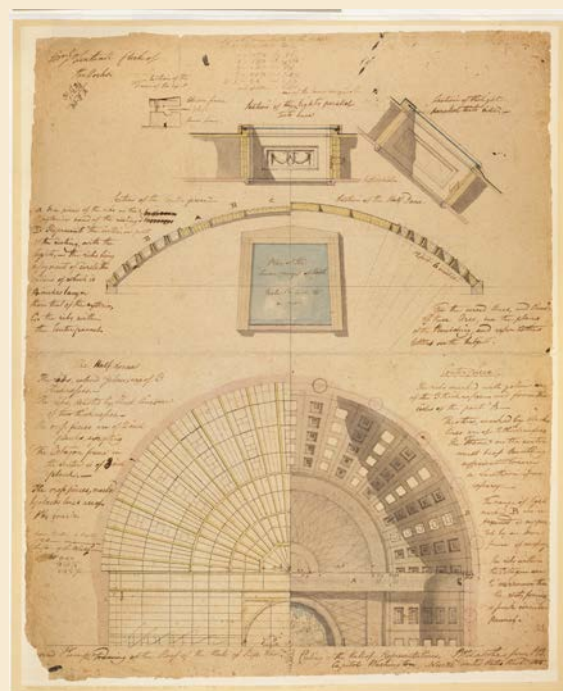
splendor [was] probably not equaled in America, and for any other purpose besides that of debate, it would be an excellent room.” The other account, penned by Hannah Gallatin’s nineteen-year-old niece Frances Few on 29 November 1808, is notable for describing the room’s color scheme, which had never been known to modern scholars. Although Miss Few expressed herself “very much pleased with the room,” she did not seem to comprehend how it was lit.<sup>24</sup>

[I]t is of an oval form the roof is supported by twenty four white stone pillars of the Corinthian order which are very beautiful, the ceiling is painted but in my opinion is rather dashing and the speakers chair is very tawdry decorated with crimson and green velvet trimmed with yellow fringe and the wood painted lilach and yellow.

Jefferson wanted Latrobe to build skylights over this unusual House chamber based on those lighting the Halle aux blés (1784) in Paris (fig. 12). After Latrobe argued against the inherent problems of skylights—leaks and too much heat and light—the president opined that the House’s skylights would make it the “handsomest room in the world, without a single exception.” Latrobe’s modification was to light the chamber via one hundred skylights set in rows alternating with rows of coffers. Upper and lower panels of glass were enclosed in boxes of graduated sizes sunken the thickness of the double roof and solved all the problems of skylights (fig. 13). When arguing against skylights for the House chamber, Latrobe feared even his solution of panel lights would “destroy the solemnity that is appropriate to the object of the edifice.” When Latrobe redesigned the House chamber as a semi-circular auditorium in 1815, the large vertical windows of the cupola set on its half-dome flooded the chamber with the kind of light Latrobe preferred, a “Large Mass of Central light.”<sup>25</sup>

Jefferson and Latrobe were also at odds about the choice of the ancient architectural order for the House chamber. Members of the House were elected directly by the people, and thus in Jefferson’s view their meeting room was the Capitol’s most important chamber, deserving of the stateliest of the classical orders. He preferred the Corinthian of the Temple of Pollux and Castor; three of its elaborate columns were still standing in the Roman Forum. Perhaps his choice was not just their beauty but the fact that the brothers Pollux and Castor were the Dioscuri, the sons of Zeus, Helen of Troy their sister. Because the Dioscuri were part of Rome’s foundation myths the president may well have considered their temple’s order an appropriate link to America’s founding era, its success expressed most potently by the House of Representatives, government by and for the people.

In 1804 Latrobe preferred that Roman Doric columns be used for the House chamber but his next choice was the order of the Tower of the Winds, the Attic order, located in the Roman Agora near the Athenian Acropolis. By October 1804 he abandoned the tower’s order in favor of a more elaborate Greek one. By November 7 when Latrobe wrote Jefferson, the president had accepted his architect’s suggestion of the Corinthian order used on the Choragic Monument of Lysicrates in Athens, the most



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Fig. 13. Latrobe’s response to Jefferson was 100 skylights set with the double roof, a spectacular architectural effect for which no known description survives.



Fig. 14. The columns of the Athenian Tower of Winds—that represented the entire world—were Latrobe’s choice for the columns in the vestibule between the House and Rotunda.



AUTHOR

Fig. 15. Brilliant light once poured from its cupola into the two-story House vestibule, with its four upper walls decorated with Tower of the Winds columns.





Fig. 16. Latrobe favored a “unity of light” to flood his second House chamber, his allegory linking the Enlightenment’s new civic religion—liberty—to the House of Representatives.

ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL

elaborate one known in Greek architecture. Latrobe offered to marry it together with the cornice of the Roman Temple of Castor and Pollux but Jefferson preferred the Roman modillion cornice so commonly used in American Georgian architecture of the eighteenth century. Latrobe justified this kind of synthesis because he believed the Greeks did not have the same rigid rules of the orders that Renaissance writers of treatises on architecture imposed on antiquity. “The Greeks knew of no such rules, but having established *general* proportions and laws of form and arrangement, all matters of detail were left to the talent and taste of individual architects.”<sup>26</sup>

Both the circumference and diameter of Latrobe’s second House chamber were defined by the monumental columns, their Lysicrates capitals carved of Carrera marble on site in Italy by Giovanni Andrei, a sculptor who arrived in Washington in 1806 but was sent back to Italy in 1815. The choice of this order might have been because of the close association of all the choragic monuments—dedicated to individual singers—with the nature of Greek theater which was sung rather than recited. The House chamber’s auditorium form was descended from ancient theaters and as a unique person Lysicrates was an appropriate choice to be remembered in this chamber whose occupants were directly elected by individual Americans. Latrobe decided to use the richness of a colored proto-marble, Potomac breccia, for the column shafts, a spectacular feature that mitigated the aesthetic loss of the one hundred skylights of his first House chamber.

Once Corinthian was selected for the House chamber, Latrobe used the Tower of Winds order for the columns of both of the House’s vestibules (fig. 14). British eighteenth-century scholars of Greek architecture considered the tower’s order as intermediate between the Ionic and the Corinthian—the Attic order—and thus appropriate for these vestibules in close proximity to the Corinthian House. The vestibule that connected the chamber to the rotunda is a circular tempietto. On the east side of the Tower of Winds vestibule there were two sets of columns. One set faced the vestibule while the second stands about three feet away on a window ledge set high on the wall that overlooked the adjacent dome lighting the ground floor vestibule. (See both the 1806 and 1817 plans, figs. 1 & 2.)

The ground floor entrance vestibule to the south wing was more extensive and architecturally complex than the north wing’s vestibule. Both legislators and visitors alike entered a rectangle the same size and shape as the corn vestibule but were led forward by light to cross the first vestibule and enter a two-story upended double cube inner vestibule. All of the inner vestibule’s upper walls were decorated with two free-standing Tower of the Winds columns. Those on three sides stood in front of walls except those facing the window looking into the Tower of Winds tempietto outside the House chamber (fig. 15). The cupola of the inner vestibule’s dome admitted abundant and concentrated light into this vertical space, the “Unity of Light” Latrobe favored.<sup>27</sup>

No immediately apparent staircase led upward from the south





Fig. 17. Latrobe also used light as a physical and metaphorical force at St. John's Church, as it enters through 13 sides: the cupola and windows on its 12 sides.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

wing vestibules; rather it was enclosed in its south wall, an ill-lit flight of stairs that ended at the entrance to the House chamber. Those who climbed the staircase emerged from dimness into brilliant light emanating from two directions, the House chamber and its vestibule. The conceit seems to have been the passage from the darkness of monarchy into the brilliant light of democracy. Latrobe was employing his version of "*architecture parlante*," or "architecture that speaks," the late eighteenth-century French architectural theory that eschewed decoration to convey meaning in favor of relying on the functions associated with architectural forms themselves to express their purposes. For Latrobe it was light "speaking," that constantly changing evanescent force that made distinguishing architectural forms possible. This magnificent architectural entrance sequence survived the fire to serve Latrobe's second House chamber but was ruined when congressmen demanded that an open staircase be installed in the inner vestibule in the early 1820s.

More significantly, Jefferson and Latrobe meant the physical light flooding the House chamber to represent the Enlightenment ideal of Liberty as the new civic religion (fig. 16). The connection of light to liberty was common in the colonies where Enlightenment ideals of liberty, democracy, republicanism, and religious tolerance were linked. On 1 June 1795, Jefferson wrote: "This ball of liberty, I believe most piously, is now so well in motion that it will roll around the globe. At least the enlightened part of it, for light and liberty go together." Near the end of his

life, in a letter to John Adams, Jefferson reiterated the phrase: "I shall not die without a hope that light and liberty are on steady advance." Jefferson's 1812 comment to Latrobe that the Capitol was the "first temple to be dedicated to the sovereignty of the people" and his frequent reference to America as the "empire of liberty" attest to his allegorical ways of expressing the revolutionary change in how humans were governed. In addition to Jefferson's written words we must add his intention to light the House chamber as a kind of lighthouse, a beacon pinpointing the location of America's representative form of government. Latrobe shared Jefferson's political and intellectual points of view but neither left a paper trail outlining their covert meanings for the House chamber. The truth is in their work.<sup>28</sup>

Latrobe, like many great architects before him, recognized the power of natural light to reveal the beauty of architectural forms but also to realize intangible meanings. In two of his commissions contemporary with his designs to complete the Capitol, Latrobe also utilized the power of light to convey abstract meanings. Latrobe returned to Washington in early July 1815 and by the end of the month the building committee to erect St. John's Episcopal Church invited mechanics to view Latrobe's drawings in the architect's office at the Capitol. By erecting a more monumental church than originally intended, St. John's vestry sent its message to Congress—then debating moving elsewhere—that the national capital should remain in Washington. One factor in Latrobe's selection of a Greek cross shaped plan for St. John's



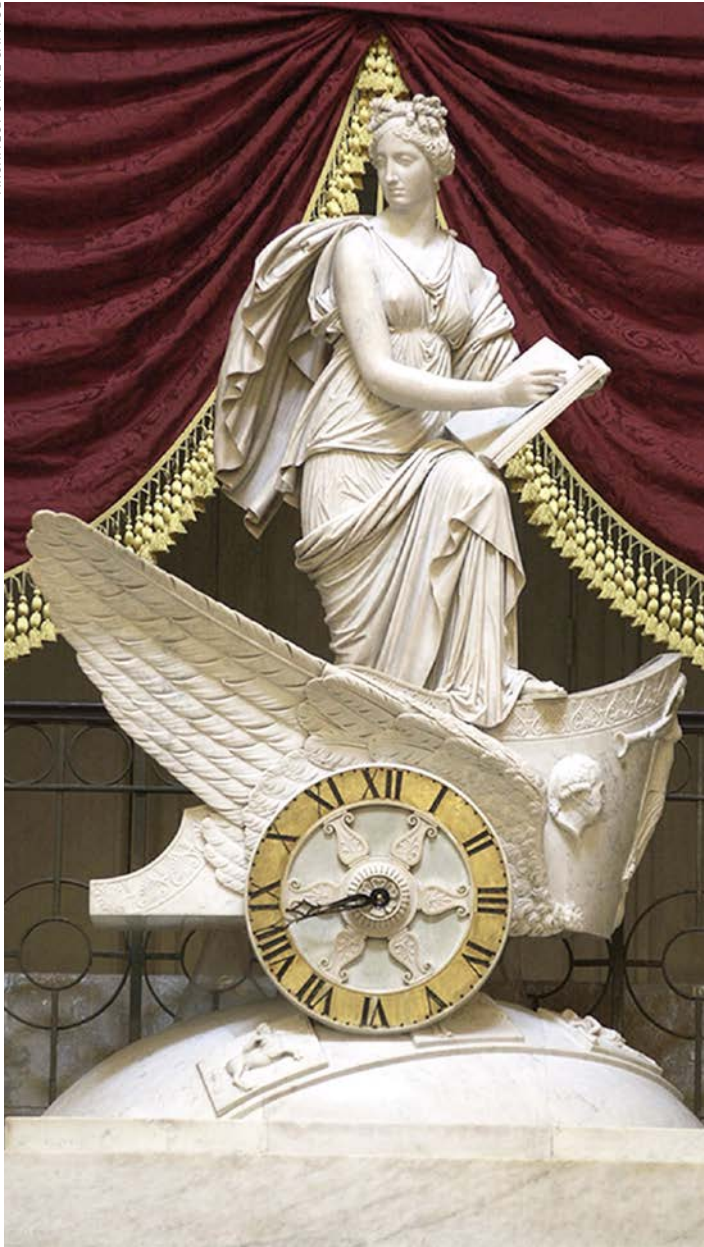


Fig. 18. National political union, the “new constellation” represented by the American flag’s 13 stars, supported the Muse of History’s chariot as she recorded the new world’s history.

related to its location facing the President’s House; its architecture was to be a symbol of national union. An octagonal cupola above the central space provided the sanctuary with abundant light, but additional light flowed in from high windows on the twelve sides of its four arms (fig. 17). Given the intense contemporary interest in infusing important “national” buildings with symbolism reflective of the nation’s founding, Latrobe may have intended the thirteen directions from which light entered St. John’s to represent the original states, a potent statement wherever the church was located but multiplied many times by its proximity to the center of the government’s executive powers.<sup>29</sup>

Like the Capitol, Latrobe’s involvement in the design and construction of the Baltimore Cathedral had two building campaigns, each covering about the same period of time for both buildings. Around August 1817 Latrobe had an epiphany about

completing the construction of the cathedral with a double dome, the outer wood “dome to be 10 feet distant from the solid brick and stone dome within.”

Through this exterior dome light is thrown into the interior of the church through 24 windows, each is about 10 feet high and 2 feet 6 inches wide. . . . [T]he windows being upon the sides, are not seen from within, but cast a strong reflected light through the opening, from a high decorated ceiling which terminates the view.<sup>30</sup>

These hidden sources of light created what French architects called “*lumière mystérieuse*,” the ethereal light of Christian faith that seemed to emanate from Heaven.

Latrobe expressed the first House chamber’s overt meaning via its sculpture. The tradition of a figure of American Liberty behind the Speaker’s chair dates from Federal Hall and Congress Hall in Philadelphia. Giuseppe Ceracchi’s 1792 terra cotta *Minerva as the Patroness of American Liberty*, wearing a helmet and breastplate decorated with a liberty pike and cap, might have been the one L’Enfant planned for New York. Carlo Franzoni’s plaster model of Liberty was a colossal seated figure above the Speaker’s chair in the Capitol’s second House chamber. “By her side stands the American eagle, supporting her left hand, in which is the cap of liberty, her right presents a scroll, the constitution of the United States. Her foot treads upon a reversed crown as a footstool and upon other emblems of monarchy and bondage.” Franzoni also carved an immense spread-winged eagle in the frieze opposite the entrance, its wing spread twelve feet, six inches in breadth. Four relief panels opposite the eagle were personifications representing Agriculture, Art, Science, and Commerce. All were ruined in the fire but some vague outlines of horizontally oriented figures are discernable on Latrobe’s 1815 sketch of the colonnade suggesting he had designed the emblematic figures based on the relief sculptures representing the directions of the winds on the Tower of Winds. What attributes identified Franzoni’s reliefs as representing America are unknown.<sup>31</sup>

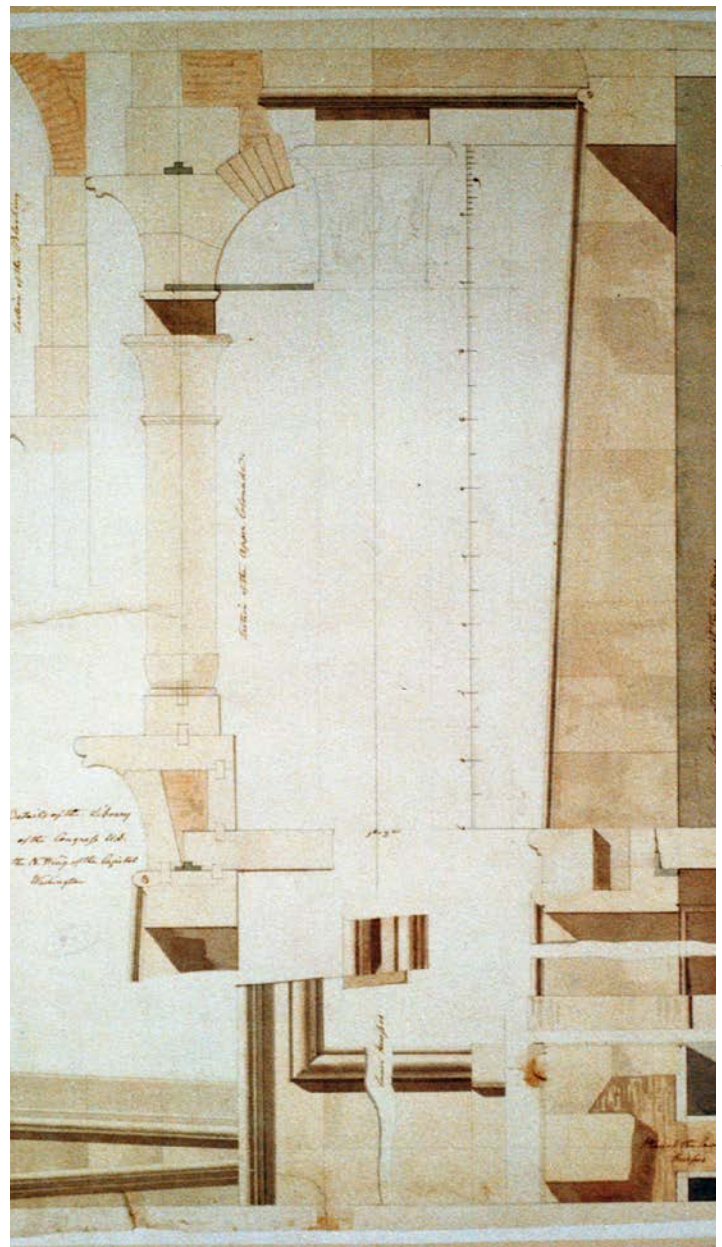
When Latrobe planned the sculpture for the second House chamber he resurrected his 1810 Athena-Liberty. In 1818-1819 George Weis made a “mould of the figure of Liberty” that was placed above the Speaker’s chair, apparently following Franzoni’s maquette. This Liberty held the furled Constitution in her right hand above an American eagle symbolizing her protection of America. On her left a rattlesnake—an American emblem since 1754—held together the fasces, the ancient Roman insignia of senators adopted as an emblem of national union in America. This group looks across the House chamber towards the Car of History Clock (fig. 18). The muse of History, who rides in a car propelled by eagle’s wings and is decorated with a portrait of Washington, records American historical events as they occurred. The chariot sits astride a globe encircled by a band with signs of the zodiac, the twelve constellations composed of different arrangements of stars that signified the universe. The Continental Congress resolution of June 14, 1777, that selected the flag of the United States, stipulated “that the union be thirteen



stars, white in a blue field, representing a new constellation.” Latrobe’s inclusion of the reference in a new context to the flag, one of America’s earliest and most revered symbols, indicates how carefully he thought through the rebuilt Capitol’s entire iconographic program by fusing traditional European and new American emblems.<sup>32</sup>

Latrobe’s Egyptian Revival Library of Congress was under construction when work on the Capitol was suspended in 1812 (fig. 19). It was a U-shaped room across the hall from the Senate chamber but sunken five feet to accommodate one full and two half stories, its central reading room overlooked by galleries of book stacks. Eight elaborately carved Egyptian column shafts and capitals carried the section of the lower gallery around the room’s semi-circular end. Plainer, dwarf Egyptian columns overlooked the reading room from the upper gallery. It is uncertain if any of these Egyptian-inspired columns were carved. During the second building campaign, Latrobe relocated the library to the front of the Capitol’s new west wing overlooking the Mall. He changed the basic form of his second Library of Congress, but retained its Egyptian decoration. The ancient library in Alexandria, Egypt, doubtless inspired Latrobe’s choice of the historical style of architecture for the Library of Congress; it is unknown if he also meant the room to represent America’s African population. From his first tenure as the Capitol’s architect, Latrobe had access to two books by Dominique Vivant Denon illustrating Egyptian architectural details, and he used details from each. During his second building campaign newly hired sculptors working with Latrobe carved Egyptian columns and capitals for his second Library of Congress, which he was unable to build. The profiles of their bases were Egyptian-inspired, and some of their capitals combined Egyptian lotus flowers, Greek anthemions, and American tobacco flowers. Fragments were recycled by Latrobe’s successor Charles Bulfinch as fireplace mantles now located in west wing rooms (figs. 20 & 21).<sup>33</sup>

Much of Latrobe’s rebuilt and new work done during his second campaign at the Capitol was done under President James Monroe, who did not hold his architect’s abilities in the same esteem as Jefferson and James Madison had. In May 1816 Samuel Lane, a War of 1812 disabled veteran, was appointed commissioner of public buildings with authority over Latrobe. From the outset Lane was antithetical to the architect and his designs, the warfare between the two men becoming so hateful that Latrobe resigned in November 1817. A newspaper opinion piece, signed “A,” decried Latrobe’s leaving, questioning why he “abandon[ed] in their unfinished state the great monuments of his country’s splendor, and of his own genius.” He suggested the influence of submerged forces. “The loss is irreparable, and we have a right to know whether any dissensions, which may have arisen between him and other public officers, proceeded from his misconduct or from the tyranny of petulant ignorance in others.” After Lane died unexpectedly in April 1822, a review of his accounts revealed he had embezzled about \$25,000 from the Capitol’s accounts. Seemingly Lane’s demeaning treatment of Latrobe was intended to force him to quit in order to prevent the architect from discovering the defalcations.<sup>34</sup>



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Fig. 19. Latrobe designed the Library of Congress as an Egyptian Revival room in emulation of the great library of Alexandria, Egypt, one of the wonders of the ancient world.

The evolution of Latrobe’s architectural and emblematic work during his two tenures at the Capitol was increasingly to record America’s founding history within the context of European traditions common to most Americans. Yet the evidence of the opinions of staunch Federalists like Thomas Law and Timothy Pickering reveals that both educated Euro-Americans and native-born Americans found the architect’s fusion of these traditions ridiculous. The urge to forge a separate American identity via the art decorating the nation’s public buildings was not confined to the uneducated classes as is often supposed. Latrobe—a liberal thinker like Jefferson—wanted to place American history and achievements within the context of western traditions and make them more intellectually accessible to the majority of citizens. John Trumbull’s important cycle of paintings of the Revolution’s greatest military and civic events,





Fig. 20. Latrobe's surviving Egyptian Revival columns combined American tobacco leaves, the anthemion of Greece, and the lotus flower of Egypt.



Fig. 21. Latrobe designed the shafts and bases of his columns in his Library of Congress in the Egyptian manner, now recycled as fireplace mantels.

first planned with Latrobe in the 1810s to decorate the walls of the “grand Vestibule,” as Latrobe called the rotunda, seemed to bridge the gap by depicting real American events with actual people. Had Latrobe stayed to complete the Capitol it would have been a very different work of architecture than the one completed by Charles Bulfinch in the mid-1820s. The direction of its character as the repository of American history might have been expressed more allegorically as a continuation of Western European traditions rather than via its evolving colonial identity under Bulfinch.



## Notes

1. Pamela Scott, “Stephen Hallet’s Designs for the United States Capitol,” *Winterthur Portfolio* 27 (1992): 157. Latrobe retained Hallet’s Capitol drawings among his own papers; in 1872 his son sent them to Architect of the Capitol Edward Clark (Office of the Architect of the Capitol, Letter Book 5, Letters Sent, 30 Dec. 1869 to 18 Oct. 1872).
2. Benjamin Henry Latrobe to Thomas Jefferson, 21 May 1807, in John C. Van Horne and Lee W. Formwalt, eds., *The*

*Correspondence and Miscellaneous Papers of Benjamin Henry Latrobe* (3 vols., New Haven, CT, 1984-88) 2:428.

3. The fundamental history of Latrobe at the Capitol is Jeffrey A. Cohen and Charles E. Brownell, *The Architectural Drawings of Benjamin Henry Latrobe* (2 vols., New Haven, CT, 1994) 2:344-424 (first building campaign) and 2:577-637 (second building campaign). For a succinct overview of how the politics of the day affected Latrobe at the Capitol,

see William C. Allen, *History of the United States Capitol* (Washington, DC, 2001), pp. 49-123.

4. Philotechnis, “Architectural,” [Washington, DC] *Daily National Intelligencer*, 20 Nov. 1816.

5. Cohen and Brownell, *Latrobe Drawings* 2:418.

6. George Washington, “Farewell Address to the People of the United States,” 19 Sept. 1796 and Jefferson to the Republicans of Essex County, Massachusetts,

28 March 1809, both online at *founders.archives.gov*.

7. Fred A. Emery, "Washington Newspapers," *Records of the Columbia Historical Society* 37-38(1937):43.

8. Pamela Scott, "Power, Civic Virtue, Wisdom, Liberty, and the Constitution," in Donald R. Kennon, ed., *A Republic for the Ages: The United States Capitol and the Political Culture of the Early Republic* (Charlottesville, VA, 1999), pp. 402-47.

9. Latrobe to Frederick May, 24 Sept. 1814, in Edward C. Carter II and Thomas E. Jeffrey, eds., *Microfilm Edition of the Papers of Henry Latrobe* (Clifton, NJ, 1976) 119/G2.

10. Ibid.

11. Latrobe to Mary Elizabeth Latrobe, 17 April 1815, in Van Horne and Formwalt, *Latrobe Correspondence* 3:644.

12. For Latrobe's freedom in the use of the orders, see Charles E. Brownell, "Thomas Jefferson's Architectural Models and the United States Capitol," in Kennon, *Republic for the Ages*, pp. 349-381.

13. Cohen and Brownell, *Latrobe Drawings* 2:402; Pamela Scott, *Temple of Liberty: Building the Capitol for a New Nation* (New York, 1995), pp. 77-78 (Franzoni's sketches are illustrated on p. 126); Robert Mills, *Guide to the Capitol and National Executive Offices of the United States* (Washington, DC, 1847-48), p. 10.

14. "Description of the Federal Edifice at New York," [Boston] *Massachusetts Magazine* (June 1789):332; Scott, *Temple of Liberty*, pp. 76-7; Jefferson to Latrobe, 10 Oct. 1809, Van Horne and Formwalt, *Latrobe Correspondence* 2:777.

15. Van Horne and Formwalt, *Latrobe Correspondence* 3:733.

16. [Thomas Law], "Our Correspondent at Washington," [VA] *Alexandria Gazette*, 4 March 1817. The additional description of Rep. Timothy Pickering's mimicking hand gestures is taken from a reprinting of the original report by [Philadelphia] *Poulson's American Daily Advertiser*, 11 March 1817.

17. Carlo Franzoni, Proposal, 21 July 1812, RG 42: Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital, Entry 17, Con-

tracts and Estimates, Volume 1, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC; Latrobe to Thomas Law, 10 Nov. 1816, Van Horne and Formwalt, *Latrobe Correspondence* 3:826.

18. George Watterston, *A New Guide to Washington* (Washington, DC, 1842), pp. 27-28. J.H.B. Latrobe, "The Capitol and Washington at the Beginning of the Present Century: An Address before the American Institute of Architects in Washington, November 16, 1881" (pamphlet, Washington, D.C., 1881), p. 21.

19. Frederick S. Allis, Jr. and Roy Bartolomei, eds., *Guide to the Microfilm Edition of the Timothy Pickering Papers* (Boston, 1966), p. 13; [Law], [VA] *Alexandria Gazette*, 4 March 1817.

20. [Law], [VA] *Alexandria Gazette*, 4 March 1817. Pickering would have known that the Virginia militia who marched to Boston in 1775 at George Washington's request wore buckskins as its uniform.

21. Latrobe to Law, 10 Nov. 1816, Van Horne and Formwalt, *Latrobe Correspondence* 3:824.

22. Ibid. 3:828-9.

23. Charles E. Brownell, "Latrobe, His Craftsmen, and the Corinthian Order of the Hall of Representatives," in Ian M.G. Quimby, *The Craftsman in America* (New York, 1984), pp. 247-272.

24. Jefferson to Latrobe, 8 Sept. 1805, Van Horne and Formwalt, *Latrobe Correspondence* 2:140; [Philadelphia] *The American Register; or, General Repository of History, Politics and Science*, 1 Jan. 1809; Noble E. Cunningham, Jr., ed., "The Diary of Frances Few, 1808-1809," *The Journal of Southern History* 29(Aug. 1963):352. Images of Latrobe's first House chamber were digitally generated by the architectural historian Richard Chenoweth for his article "The Most Beautiful Room in the World? Latrobe, Jefferson, and the First Capitol," *The Capitol Dome*, v. 51, 3(Fall 2014):24-39.

25. Cohen and Brownell, *Latrobe Drawings* 2:352-4; Latrobe to Jefferson, 29 Oct. 1806, Van Horne and Formwalt, *Latrobe Correspondence* 2:280.

26. Latrobe to John Lenthall (Clerk of the Works), 5 Aug. 1804, Van Horne and

Formwalt, *Latrobe Correspondence* 1:528.

27. Latrobe to Jefferson, 29 Oct. 1806.

28. Cohen and Brownell, *Latrobe Drawings* 2:350-1; Brian Stelle, "'The Yeomanry of the United States Are Not the Canaille of Paris': Thomas Jefferson, American Exceptionalism, and the 'Spirit of Democracy,'" in Robert M.S. McDonald, ed., *Light and Liberty: Thomas Jefferson and the Power of Knowledge* (Charlottesville, VA, 2012), p. 21; Jefferson to Latrobe, 12 July 1812; Jefferson to Tench Coxe, 1 June 1795; and Jefferson to John Adams, 12 Sept. 1821, all online at *founders.archives.gov*.

29. T.H. Gilliss, "To Mechanics," [Washington, DC] *Daily National Intelligencer*, 25 July 1815.

30. Cohen and Brownell, *Latrobe Drawings* 2:445-6.

31. Latrobe, "Report on the Hall of Representatives," Van Horne and Formwalt, *Latrobe Correspondence* 2:503-4.

32. Resolution of 14 June 1777, in Worthington Ford et al., eds., *Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789* (34 vols., Washington, D.C., 1904-37) 8:464. George Weis was paid \$468 on 31 March 1818, for 117 days' work on the plaster model of Liberty (RG 42: Records of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks of the National Capital, Entry 72, Abstracts of Expenditures, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC). The traditional attribution of Carlo Franzoni as the sculptor of the Car of History may be incorrect because several sculptors, including Italians, worked for Latrobe in 1816-1817.

33. Cohen and Brownell, *Latrobe Drawings* 2:357, 362-5.

34. "For the National Messenger," [Georgetown, DC] *National Messenger*, 28 Nov. 1817. Secretary of State John Quincy Adams mentions Lane's embezzlement in connection with a Senate proposal that the commissioner's office be abolished and its duties transferred to the architect (Bulfinch); entry of 13 April 1822, *Diary* 32:262, Adams Family Manuscript Trust, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston.

# Society News

## Dinner Honors History of House Ways & Means Committee



*Current and former chairmen and ranking members of the Committee (from left): Reps. Sander Levin, Bill Archer, Bill Thomas, Paul Ryan, Charlie Rangel, Dave Camp, and Jim McCrery*



*Rep. Bill Pascrell (D-NJ) with Connie Tipton (International Dairy Foods Association and USCHS Board) and Clay Hough (International Dairy Foods Association)*



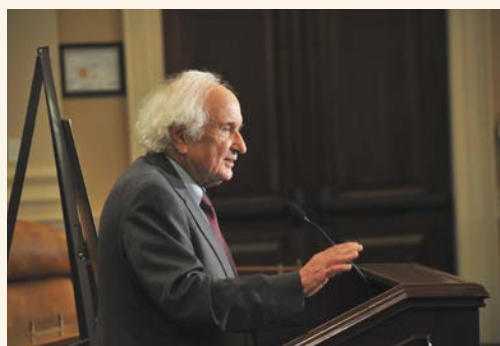
*The Honorable Bill Archer, Marilyn Green (USCHS), Mary Moore Hamrick (Grant Thornton), and Rep. Kenny Marchant (R-TX)*



The beautifully restored Ways and Means Committee room resonated with laughter and applause as Cokie Roberts gave her keynote address at the U.S. Capitol Historical Society's July 15 dinner honoring the history of the House Ways and Means Committee. The evening had begun with a reception, during which members of the USCHS Capitol Committee joined current and former Members of Congress and staff of the committee for passed hors d'oeuvres and drinks. The call to dinner was followed by the Presentation of the Colors by the U.S. Capitol Police Ceremonial Unit. Among the crowd were four former chairmen of the committee: **Bill Archer**, **Bill Thomas**, **Charlie Rangel**, and **Dave Camp**. In addition, former Ranking Member **Jim McCrery** attended, as did two former committee members, **Barbara Kennelly** and **Nancy Johnson**, who were among the first women to serve on the committee.

The Honorable **Ron Sarasin**, president of USCHS, greeted the nearly 170 guests and read a letter of best wishes from President George H.W. Bush, a distinguished former committee member. The Honorable **Tom Coleman**, chairman of the USCHS board, led the guests in a toast to the committee. Current committee Chairman **Paul Ryan** (R-WI) looked thoughtfully at the portraits on the walls of past chairmen and thanked the former chairmen in attendance for all he had learned from them. Ranking Member **Sander Levin** (D-MI) drew the audience back in time as he shared stories about his esteemed colleagues and the former chairmen of the committee. Both emphasized the unique importance of the issues facing the committee. Cokie Roberts, journalist, author, and member of the USCHS board, gave a candid, insightful, and humorous keynote address as she told stories about growing up in the Capitol and in the Ways and Means room in particular.

The event was generously supported by Bank of America, Grant Thornton LLP, Northwestern Mutual, Baker, Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell & Berkowitz P.C., ExxonMobil Corporation, and the Securities Industry and Financial Markets Association.



*Ranking Member Sander Levin shares memories and stories. (left)*

*Cokie Roberts gives a sincere and introspective keynote speech. (below)*



*The Honorable Ron Sarasin (USCHS President and CEO) greets and speaks with Chairman Paul Ryan. (left)*



# Capitol Committee Updates

USCHS thanks those who renewed, upgraded, or joined the Capitol Committee (June 2015 – September 2015).



*Mary Mann and Karen Aguilar (both with International Paper) with Scott McCandless (PricewaterhouseCoopers)*



*The Honorable Bill Archer, Rep. Sam Johnson (R-TX), and Rep. Charlie Rangel (D-NY) share a laugh.*



*Chairman Paul Ryan speaks about his relationships with the former chairmen.*



*The Honorable Ron Sarasin welcomes the guests.*

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A special thanks to the Capitol Committee members who made an additional contribution at the end of our fiscal year, June 30, 2015.

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

For more information about the many terrific benefits available to you as a Capitol Committee member, please contact:

Marilyn Green, Director,  
Corporate Giving at  
(202) 543-8919 x21 or  
mgreen@uschs.org, or  
Victoria Wolfe, Manager,  
Development & Outreach,  
at (202) 543-8919 x23 or  
VictoriaWolfe@uschs.org.

## LEAVING A LEGACY

*By including USCHS in your bequests, you can instill and foster informed citizenship for generations to come. If you are considering a bequest to USCHS, here is some suggested wording for your attorney:*

After fulfilling all other specific provisions, I give, devise, bequeath \_\_\_\_\_% of the remainder [or \$ \_\_\_\_\_] to the United States Capitol Historical Society, a District of Columbia charitable corporation [Tax ID #52-0796820] currently having offices at 200 Maryland Ave., NE, Washington, DC 20002.

*For more information please contact Laura McCulty Stepp, VP,  
Membership and Development at 202-643-8919 x22.*

## Third Chief of Staff Event Features Rick Murphy, Chief of Staff to Senator Kelly Ayotte

Senator Kelly Ayotte's (R-NH) chief of staff, **Rick Murphy**, was the U.S. Capitol Historical Society's honored guest at the annual Congressional Staff event on September 16. Murphy joined members of the USCHS Constitution Signers and Leadership Council for lunch in Express Scripts's lovely space overlooking the Capitol. Murphy provided sincere and thoughtful remarks on his commitment to public service, including to Senator Ayotte's constituents and to the senator herself.

Murphy's comments emphasized his commitment to public service after spending 15 years in the private sector and made Society staff recall the Honorable Lee Hamilton's keynote address at our 2003 dinner honoring the staff directors of the committees of the U.S. House of Representatives. Hamilton said, "Your public service gives you a stimulating, proud and lively career....I hope you feel that by working in the Congress you are given the unique opportunity to make a difference in the lives of people and the great affairs of this nation."

USCHS wishes to thank Express Scripts for generously hosting and exclusively supporting this event.



*Phil Park (Altria), Rick Murphy (Office of Senator Kelly Ayotte), and Megan Hauck (Nathanson+Hauck)*



*Jonah Houts (Express Scripts) and Rick Murphy share a laugh.*



*Ann Taylor (Sanofi) listens thoughtfully as Angela Song (Express Scripts) looks on.*

## Summer Lectures

The U.S. Capitol Historical Society augmented its annual August series of brown bag lectures with additional events in June and July. **David S.** (retired from Colorado State University) and **Jeanne T. Heidler** (senior civilian faculty member of U.S. Air Force Academy's history department) began the summer with a June 2 discussion and book signing of their recent work, *Washington's Circle: The Creation of the President*. Their presentation focused on George Washington's standardization of social gatherings during his presidency, one of the elements involved in the practical creation of the presidency.

**Debra Hanson** (VCUQatar) gave the Capitol-focused August series an early start with a July 29 lecture in the Russell Senate Caucus Room about the various portrayals of George Washington in artwork in the Capitol's Rotunda, including

Constantino Brumidi's *The Apotheosis of Washington*. **Amy Burton** and **Christiana Cunningham-Adams** presented a two-week mini-series on the landscape medallions in the Brumidi Corridors. On August 5, Burton, from the Office of the Senate Curator, discussed her discovery of the source material for the medallions: reports on possible transcontinental railroad routes produced for Congress in the mid-nineteenth century. The following week, Cunningham-Adams, from the Office of the Architect of the Capitol, discussed painting conservation generally and the landscape medallions specifically, including before and after pictures of one medallion that had been overpainted with an entirely different scene. In the final talk of the summer on August 26, Curator for the Architect of the Capitol **Barbara Wolanin** discussed her recent research

on the friendship between Constantino Brumidi and Justin Morrill, a representative and senator from Vermont, which highlights the paintings Brumidi did for Morrill's homes and suggests that Morrill's ideas influenced Brumidi's work.

On August 19, **Ron Duquette**, an historical interpreter, presented information on the War of 1812, the Treaty of Ghent, and the early Treasury Department in the person of Albert Gallatin. Gallatin was one of the negotiators of the Treaty of Ghent after serving in the House and as secretary of the Treasury.

Most of the lectures aired on C-SPAN in the fall of 2015. Go to [www.c-span.org](http://www.c-span.org) and search for "U.S. Capitol Historical Society" to find these and other USCHS events. Stayed tuned to the calendar and announcements at [www.uschs.org](http://www.uschs.org) for the latest news on 2016 events.



*Amy Burton*



*Jeanne and David Heidler*



*Ron Duquette as Albert Gallatin*



# Winners of Making Democracy Work Essay Contest

The U.S. Capitol Historical Society is pleased to announce the winners of the 2014-15 Making Democracy Work Essay Contest. We had more than twice as many entries as during the previous contest, coming from 24 states and Washington, DC. The caliber of the entries was generally higher than in previous contests; it is encouraging to see so many students engaging with difficult topics related to citizenship, voting, discrimination, and government.

## The 2014-15 contest winners:

### Senior Division

First place: Sophia Chen (La Crescenta, CA)  
Second place: Dmitri Garlic (Weslaco, TX)  
Third place: Xinlan Emily Hu (Louisville, KY)

### Junior Division

First place: Fafa Abena Nutor (Worthington, OH)  
Second place: Jimin Kim (Irvine, CA)  
Third place: Isabella Trasolini (Newbern, TN)

Congratulations to the winners, and thanks to all those who submitted entries!

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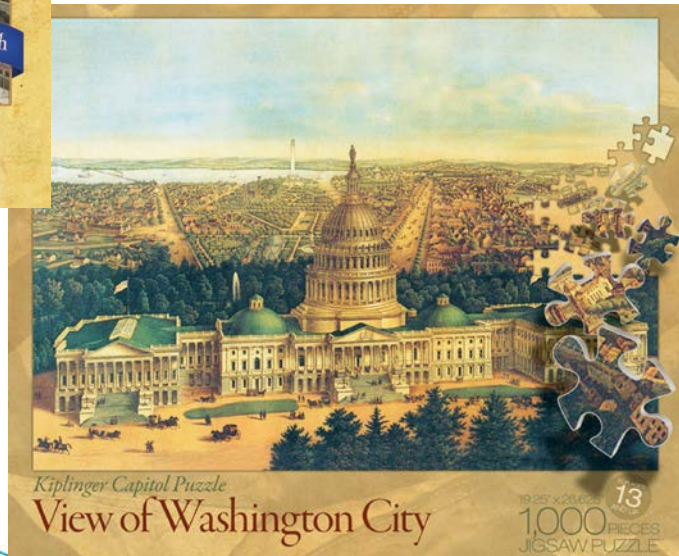
# MARKET PLACE

*Enjoy winter gaming and reading!*

## CAPITOL PUZZLES

Choose from a contemporary view of the United States Capitol with the beautiful east front plaza or a turn-of-the-century view from the Washington Kiplinger collection.

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## AMERICAOPOLY

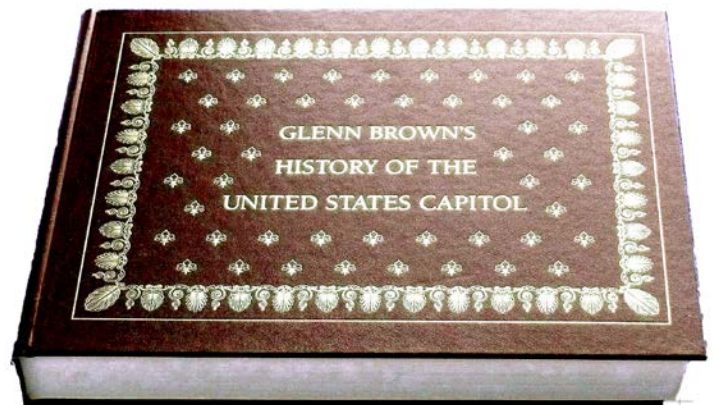
This American-themed property board game—based on one of the most popular board games of all time—includes such unique Americana game pieces such as a baseball cap, hot dog, Liberty Bell, Statue of Liberty, and many others. For two to six players, ages 8+.

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## HISTORY OF THE CAPITOL

This is one of the most important publications about the United States Capitol, originally published in two volumes by the U.S. Government in 1900 and 1903. In this one-volume edition, William Bushong sets the original publication in context with an introductory essay on Glenn Brown and his place in the story of the Capitol and the city of Washington. 2007. 644 pp., hardcover, annotated edition.

- |         |         |                 |
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| #002211 | \$69.95 | Members \$62.95 |
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# MARKET PLACE

*Enjoy winter entertaining!*



A.



B.



C.



D.

A. Senate Wing, 1800 (side)  
C. Bulfinch Dome, 1825-1856 (side)

B. Senate & House, 1814 (side)  
D. Federal Eagle (interior)



## MINTON GLASS TRAY

First installed in 1896, the richly patterned and colored Minton tile floors are one of the most striking features of the extensions of the United States Capitol. This fine glass tray is a tribute to that rich architectural element. (6" x 10")

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## FOUR STAGE CAPITOL COASTERS

Four stone coasters featuring the four stages of the Capitol rest in a pine wood base. Excellent for entertaining or gift giving. Gift boxed. Coasters are 4" x 4", Tray 4" x 4 1/2" x 1 1/2".

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Designed especially for the U.S. Capitol Historical Society by Pickard, this heavyweight porcelain bowl is the perfect presentation piece or gift item. Four images of the Capitol building during its construction history are framed and highlighted with 22 kt trim to give this bowl a very distinctive look. The bowl is 10" diameter by 4" tall.

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Admired throughout the millennia, the beauty of glass is perhaps unmatched by any other material. It creates prisms of light that cast their own shadows and rainbows of color. A deep engraved detail of the Capitol, done by hand, adorns this footed masterpiece. Gift boxed. (5.75" high x 7" diameter)

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## FOUNDATION AND USCHS GIVE SPECIAL AWARD TO LOCAL TEACHERS



*January Morrison (center) with her students, and Laura McCulty Stepp (left) of the U.S. Capitol Historical Society and Diana Nelson of Brown Rudnick, LLP (right)*

Congratulations to the 2015 winners of the We the People Constitution Challenge sponsored by The Brown Rudnick Charitable Foundation. More than 30 schools participated in the We the People Constitution Tour during the 2014-2015 school year, and four winning teachers received awards and shared the prize money:

**LaTonya Davis (Paul PCS, Middle School)**  
**Sean McGrath (Stuart-Hobson Middle School)**  
**January Morrison (Cesar Chavez PCS - Chavez Prep)**  
**Monica Shah (Brightwood Education Campus)**

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