



Fig. 11. Seth Eastman, *Fort Sumter, South Carolina, After the War, 1870–1875*.



Fig. 12. It appears that Eastman used this George N. Barnard photograph, *Fort Sumter in April, 1865*, as the source for his painting.

League in New York before they were purchased by Granville Valentine and taken to Richmond, Virginia. Chapman's Charleston paintings now reside in Richmond's American Civil War Museum.

Seth Eastman's painting of the interior of Fort Sumter during the war is very similar to Chapman's, sharing the same point of view and many of the same incidental details (figs. 9 and 10). It would nevertheless have been impossible for Eastman to have seen Chapman's painting. However, his view of the exterior of Fort Sumter after the war (fig. 11)

is identical to a photograph taken in 1866 (fig. 12), which includes several men and a rowboat in the foreground. From this we might assume that Eastman, and perhaps Chapman, may have consulted a wartime photograph. His antebellum Sumter is highly idealized, drawn perhaps from an as-yet unidentified print, or extrapolated from maps and plans of the fort—child's play for a master topographer like Eastman.

COASTAL DEFENSES

The forts painted by Eastman had once been the state of the art, before rifled artillery rendered masonry obsolete, as in the bombardment of Fort Sumter in 1861 and the capture of Fort Pulaski one year later. By 1867, when the construction of new Third System fortifications ceased, more than 40 citadels defended American coastal waters.¹² Most of Eastman's forts were constructed under the Third System, but few of them saw action during the Civil War. A number served as military prisons. As commandant of Fort Mifflin on the Delaware River from November 1864 to August 1865, Col. Eastman would have visited Fort Delaware on Pea Patch Island, located in the river channel between Wilmington and New Castle, Delaware. Channel-dredging had dumped tons of spoil at the northern end of the island, land upon which a miserable prison-pen housed enlisted Confederate prisoners of war. Their officers were quartered within the fort in relative comfort.

Construction of Fort Mifflin had begun in the colonial period, when it was simply identified as Mud Island Fort. Named for Pennsylvania governor Thomas Mifflin, the installation was defended in 1777 by a small American force. A vastly superior number of Crown forces, including famed military engineer



Fig. 13. Seth Eastman, Fort Mifflin, Pennsylvania, 1870–1875.

John Montresor, ultimately captured and dismantled it. Rebuilt as a First System fort after the conflict, Fort Mifflin was improved under the Second System prior to the War of 1812. It never saw action again. Like the much newer Fort Delaware, it was used as a mustering-point and military prison during the Civil War (figs. 13 and 14).

Eastman's paintings constantly remind us of his mastery of topographical drawing, which is altogether different from optical rendering. Many of his compositions manipulate space, moving the foreground closer

to the subject, compressing the space between viewer and subject. The structural character of Third System Forts Scammel and Gorges in the harbor of Portland, Maine is rendered with the precision of mechanical drawing, and yet many of Eastman's pictures rely on optics—that is, photographs. An important concept to bear in mind when reading Eastman's paintings is this duality of approach. Highly conceptualized elements, such as architecture and topography, are combined with optical effects to create a unified image.



Fig. 14. The author photographed this view of Fort Mifflin on the Delaware River, looking back toward Eastman's vantage-point from the northeast bastion, in July 2017.



Fig. 15. Seth Eastman, Fort Trumbull, Connecticut, 1870–1875.

In his painting of Fort Trumbull (fig. 15), Eastman compresses the space and privileges pictorial design over fidelity to data. Every artist knows never to let the facts stand in the way of a good composition. All of the elements in Eastman's painting appear in a photograph of the same time. Direct comparison allows us to decipher his thinking. The space between the viewer and the distance is compressed. Our point of view moves forward, just offshore from the point of land jutting into the Connecticut River. The curtain-walls and bastions are slightly enlarged. The hotel is enlarged in scale and cropped by the left edge of the canvas.

Fort Zachary Taylor in Key West is one of the few permanent fortifications in enemy territory that never fell to Confederate forces. Throughout the war it served as discouragement to blockade-runners. It is equally unlikely that Eastman ever visited the site or that he failed to use secondary sources for visual data (fig. 16). A carte-de-visite of the period shows Fort Taylor from a slightly different perspective (fig. 17). Nevertheless, it proves that photographs of the site did exist. Located 67 miles west of Fort Taylor, Fort Jefferson in the Dry Tortugas was used during the Civil War as a military prison.¹³ Convicted Lincoln assassination conspirators who escaped the noose were imprisoned here, including Dr. Samuel Mudd, who had been released in 1869, the year before Eastman embarked on his final project.

Eastman's view of Fort Knox (figs. 18 and 19), located across the Penobscot River from Bucksport, Maine, goes beyond the limits of optical verisimilitude—but only just. A photograph from 1866 shows the fort still under construction. Another photograph, now in the collection of the Maine Historical Society and most likely produced by or for the Corps of Engineers,



Fig. 16. Seth Eastman, Fort Taylor, Florida, 1870–1875.



Fig. 17. Anonymous, carte-de-visite showing Fort Taylor.



Fig. 18. Seth Eastman, Fort Knox, Maine, 1870–1875.

shows the fort in the final stages of construction. It is important to note that while Eastman relied on photographic sources, he did not reproduce them verbatim. He transformed them. In his painting, the grey crystalline planes of the fort seem uneasy within their surroundings. The land itself seems to have been manipulated, hewn, carved, and folded into unnatural forms. In works like this he exercised less artistic license than he did addressing subjects with which he had personal knowledge and experience.

FRONTIER OUTPOSTS

In 1848, Eastman had been ordered to Texas to lay out and improve a chain of forts to protect new settlements anticipated following American victory in the Mexican-American War. The nomadic Comanche empire was still very viable and active in its resistance to westward expansion. The Apache controlled



Fig. 19. The author photographed the casemates at Fort Knox in Prospect, Maine in October 2017.



Fig. 20. Seth Eastman, Fort Defiance, New Mexico (now Arizona), 1870–1875.

vast territories to the west and were likewise tenacious in their resistance. Western forts were not mighty citadels but often nothing more than a series of single-story buildings surrounding a rectangular parade-ground, perhaps enclosed by a palisade if timber was nearby. Warfare was personal, defined by speed and mobility in hit-and-run tactics. While I have found no evidence that Eastman visited Fort Rice (North Dakota) or Fort Defiance (Arizona), he would have been familiar with the character of these posts. His paintings combine a topographer's precision with a painter's eye. He would have had no ground for concern about some congressman calling him on the carpet because a house or tree was in the wrong place. The aerial perspective used in his depiction of Fort Defiance is reminiscent of popular townscapes published between the 1870s and 1890s for mass consumption. Eastman drew on at least one government report for one of his paintings: a lithograph of Fort Defiance (fig. 20) based on drawings produced by the Kern Brothers, artists accompanying the John M. Washington expedition from Santa Fe to Navajo Country in 1852.¹⁴ There can be no doubt that this image inspired Eastman's painting. His painting of Fort Rice reprises the familiar western trope of the trading post on a riverbank, an outpost of enterprise and progress, as represented in 1833 by Karl Bodmer's views of Forts Pierre and Union, on the upper Missouri River. Army posts on the northern plains followed a plan nearly identical to that of fur-trading establishments such as Fort Union (North Dakota), painted by George Catlin, or Fort Laramie (Wyoming), painted by Alfred Jacob Miller.

SOLDIER—ARTIST—EYEWITNESS

Fort Mackinac (see cover of this issue) was built by the British in 1781 on Mackinac Island and occupied



Fig. 21. Seth Eastman, Fort Snelling, Minnesota, 1870–1875.

by United States forces in 1796. It was captured by the British in 1812, one of the first American losses in the conflict. Eastman appears to have visited the site and the ruins of an earlier fort built by the French in 1715. His drawing of its ruins is reproduced as a plate in Schoolcraft's compendium (see fig. 7). Traveling by water between the eastern seaboard and northern Minnesota, the indefatigable draftsman would have passed the site and presumably landed there at least long enough to produce a sketch. In his drawing, we are looking north across the straits now spanned by the Mackinac Bridge. In the foreground scattered timbers mark the location of the French fort, which had been abandoned in 1763.

Eastman's Fort Tomkins, perched atop a bluff on the Staten Island side of the Verrazano Narrows, towers above Battery Weed, which is portrayed larger than life. This disparity in scale creates an illusion of depth, enhanced by the fictive proximity of the distant shoreline. For comparison, we might consult a more factual view of the Narrows, painted by Jasper Francis Cropsey in 1868 and now in the collection of the Amon Carter Museum in Fort Worth, Texas. The sweeping vista from La Tourette Hill looks across the Narrows to Fort Lafayette, standing slightly offshore from Fort Hamilton. On the near shore to the right stands Fort Tomkins. Compared with Cropsey's view, Eastman's is inventive, romantic, and elegiac.

Eastman exercises greater artistic license again in his painting of Fort Snelling (fig. 21)—a place he knew intimately. He had produced numerous drawings of the site, in which the terrain can almost be read like a map. He compresses the foreground to transform the fort into a soaring presence, reminiscent of Cole's view of Fort Putnam. Intimately acquainted with the New York Harbor Forts—Forts Mifflin, Snelling, and West Point—the confidence Eastman derived from that



Fig. 22. *Seth Eastman, West Point, New York, 1875.*

knowledge enhanced his ability to employ imagination, which he did to great effect in his view of Fort Michilimackinac. West Point and Fort Snelling without question are two places the adult Eastman knew best. One can imagine his emotional attachment to these places, where as a junior officer he met, married, and abandoned his first wife, only to return eight years later with a new bride, growing family, and command of the post. Eastman never denied his Indian daughter or her family. When Nancy Eastman died after giving birth to his grandson, her Santee Dakota husband adopted the Eastman surname and gave it to his children, whose descendants carry the name to this day.

Evening descended on the last day of August 1875. In one of the rooms of a modest row-house in Washington, D.C., a new painting rested on an easel. The scene was one the artist knew well (fig. 22). Nearing twilight, cadets practiced gunnery-drill at Knox's Battery. Others met their sweethearts at Land's End, as he and Mary once had done. Gazing across Constitution Island toward the Highlands' North Gate, Storm King

rises up to the left. Across the river, the haunted island stands offshore, just beyond Breakneck Mountain. Newburg Bay stretches northward, into the distance. Mount Taurus looms above Little Stony Point, beside the spires of Cold Spring, the foundry, and the marsh across the river from Crow's Nest. It had been as if the painting had made itself. He had but to hold the brush, as these landmarks brought Seth Eastman home to West Point, to Thayer, Gimbrede, and Weir, to the girl from Virginia, to the Long Gray Line, to the beloved stamping-grounds of his youth. Palette and brushes lay nearby. A ghostly vapor of turpentine, varnish, and linseed oil hung in the air, but the painter's chair was empty. Carefully having put the finishing touches on his last work, Eastman lay down to rest. Years of hard service had aged him well beyond his 67 years. Closing his eyes, he drifted away to report to his final post. His had been a remarkable life that today is worthy of further study.



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Endowment for the Arts. His *Hudson Highlands* is a suite of archival prints inspired by expeditionary artists such as John-James Audubon, William Guy Wall, George Catlin, and Seth Eastman.

NOTES

1. Edward Townsend (1818–93; West Point, Class of 1837) was adjutant general of the United States (1869–80). In West Point slang, “Yearling” (Yuck) denotes second-year cadets, and “Cow” denotes third-year cadets.

Unless otherwise noted, all biographical material used in this article was drawn from the following published sources: Sarah Boehme, Christin F. Freest, and Patricia Condon Johnston, *Seth Eastman: A Portfolio of North American Indians* (Afton, MN, 1996); Lois Burkhalter, ed., *A Seth Eastman Sketchbook, 1848–1849* (Austin, TX, 1961); Brian W. Dippie, *Catlin and His Contemporaries: The Politics of Patronage* (Lincoln, NE, 1980); John M. Elkins, *Life on the Texas Frontier* (privately published, 1908); Michael Horigan, *Elmira: Death Camp of the North* (Mechanicsburg, PA, 2005); Marybeth Lorbiecki, *Painting the Dakota: Seth Eastman at Fort Snelling* (Afton, MN, 2000); John Francis McDermott, *Seth Eastman: Pictorial Historian of the Indian* (Norman, OK, 1961) and *Seth Eastman’s Mississippi: A Lost Portfolio Recovered* (Urbana, IL, 1973); Charles M. Robinson, *Frontier Forts of Texas* (Houston, TX, 1986).

The principal source for information about the individual forts, apart from personal site-visits, was Robert B. Roberts, *Encyclopedia of Historic Forts: The Military, Pioneer, and Trading Posts of the United States* (New York, 1988).

2. Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, *Historical and Statistical Information respecting the History, Condition, and Prospects of the Indian Tribes of the United States . . . Illustrated by S. Eastman* (6 vols., Philadelphia, 1851–57).

3. On the title page of his *American Drawing-Book* (1st ed., New York, 1847), John Gadsby Chapman wrote, “Anyone that can learn to write can learn to draw.”

4. Seth Eastman, *Treatise on Topographical Drawing* (New York, 1837).

5. See Arthur D. Efland, *A History of Art Education* (New York, 1990), Chap. 4.

6. Rembrandt Peale, *Graphics: A Manual of Drawing and Writing, for the Use of Schools and Families* (New York, 1835), pp. 5, 6.

7. Seth Eastman’s sketchbooks of his 1848 journey from Saint Louis to San Antonio now reside in the collection of the McNay Museum in San Antonio, Texas. A sketchbook covering his travels from Fort Snelling to Saint Louis the same year is in the Minneapolis Public Library.

8. Sébastien le Prestre de Vauban (1633–1707) was a French nobleman, marshal of France, and a pioneer in the art of military engineering. Vauban designed a new system of circumvallation designed to withstand sieges supported by modern artillery. His innovations gave birth to modern city-planning and concepts applied to both Major Peter L’Enfant’s layout of Washington, D.C. and Georges-Eugène (Baron) Haussmann’s Paris.

9. Joshua Rowley Watson (1771–1818) was a British naval officer and artist who, in 1816–17, traveled extensively in the Hudson Valley, Lake George, western New England, Chesapeake Bay, the Delaware and Hudson valleys, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., and the Potomac River. Two sketchbooks of his American travels are known: one resides at the New York Historical Society Museum & Library, the other at the Barra Foundation in Wayne, Pennsylvania. An excellent book on the subject is Kathleen A. Foster and Kenneth Finkel, *Captain Watson’s Travels in America: The Sketchbooks of Captain Joshua Rowley Watson, 1771–1818* (Philadelphia, 1997).

10. Dino Buzzatti (1906–1972), *Il Deserto dei Tartari* (Milan, 1940; multiple English editions, translated in 1952 by Stuart Clink Hood as *The Tartar Steppe*).

11. John Brinckerhoff Jackson (1909–96), *The Necessity for Ruins and Other Topics* (Amherst, MA, 1980).

12. The First System of coastal defenses, begun in 1794, was replaced by the Second System in 1807. The Third System was the final phase of construction of seacoast fortifications in the United States, which began in 1816 and continued to 1867. Subsequent systems were named after Secretaries of War, such as William C. Endicott and William H. Taft. After 1918, increased use of airpower and mobile heavy artillery made fortifications obsolete. During the Cold War, coastal defenses were replaced by missile defense and other forms of airpower.

13. The Dry Tortugas are a group of islands visited by Ponce de Leon in 1513 and named for the sea turtles the explorer found there. Located 67 miles from Key West in the Gulf of Mexico, Fort Jefferson was built on Garden Key starting in 1846 but was not garrisoned until 1861. Evacuated in 1874, it saw brief service in the Spanish-American War (1898) before falling into disrepair. In 1935 it was declared a national monument. In 1992 the islands and the fort were designated a national park.

14. Richard Hovenden Kern (1821–53) and his younger brother Edward (1823–1863) were Philadelphia-born artists who documented military exploration of the American West by John C. Fremont, John M. Washington, and John Pope. Edward Kern was an official artist aboard the USS *Vincennes* on a voyage to the Pacific and East Asia in 1851–53, and to China and Japan aboard the USS *Fenimore Cooper* in 1859–60. While surveying a railroad route through Utah, Richard Kern, Captain John W. Gunnison, and six others were killed by Pahvant Indians in 1853. Edward Kern died of natural causes in Philadelphia ten years later.

15. Charles Eastman, aka Hakadah, aka Ohiye S'a (1858–1939), was a popular author and proponent of Indian rights. He was the fifth child of Winona (Nancy Mary) Eastman, aka Wakantakawin (1831–1858). His father, a Santee Dakota named Wak-anhdi Ota, aka Many Lightnings, had become a Christian and favored assimilation into Euro-American society. Ohiye S'a attended mission school, Beloit College, Knox College, and Dartmouth College before completing medical school at Boston University. He is also known to readers as the physician who in 1890 treated the survivors of the Wounded Knee Massacre. He was influential to such organizations as the Boy Scouts of America, the Campfire Girls, and the YMCA. Later in life he promoted Indian self-determination and freedom over assimilation.

IMAGE CREDITS:

Fig. 1. Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, [LC-DIG-cwpb-06905]

Fig. 2. James Lancel McElhinney, West Point from *Garrison's Landing*, journal painting (3.5 x 10," aqueous media in watercolor sketchbook) from *Hudson Highlands: North River Suite Volume One* (New York, 2017).

Fig. 3. West Point Museum

Fig. 4. Philadelphia Museum of Art, 125th Anniversary Acquisition, promised gift of Charlene Sussel

Fig. 5. Seth Eastman, bookplate engraving from *Treatise on Topographical Drawing* (New York, 1837).

Fig. 6. Watercolor on paper, collection of the McNay Art Museum, gift of Robert L. B. Tobin in memory of Madeline and John W. Todd

Fig. 7. Seth Eastman, "Ruins of Old Fort Mackinac, 1763", in Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, *Historical and Statistical Information Respecting the History, Condition and Prospects of the Indian Tribes of the United States* (Philadelphia, 1851–1857).

Fig. 8. Bookplate from the collection of the author

Fig. 9. Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives

Fig. 10. American Civil War Museum

Fig. 11. Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives

Fig. 12. Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, [LC-DIG-ppmsca-35218]

Fig. 13. Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives

Fig. 14. Author

Fig. 15. U.S. Senate Collection

Fig. 16. U.S. Senate Collection

Fig. 17. Private collection, Morristown, New Jersey

Fig. 18. U.S. Senate Collection

Fig. 19. Author

Fig. 20. U.S. Senate Collection

Fig. 21. Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives

Fig. 22. U.S. Senate Collection

PAINTING HISTORY IN THE UNITED STATES CAPITOL ROTUNDA

by Anna O. Marley, Ph.D.

On 9 May 1852, the Officers of the Art Union of Philadelphia drafted a petition to the U.S. Senate's Committee on the Library to ask that one of their own receive the honor of a commission for a history painting to be installed in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda (fig. 1a).

The Art Union of Philadelphia, dedicated to the advance of the Arts of Design in the United States, and duly incorporated by the Legislature of Pennsylvania, begs leave respectfully to represent, that as a proposition has been entertained by your Honorable bodies, to employ the services of eminent American Artists to paint national pictures to fill the vacant panels of the Rotunda of the Capitol at Washington, it would be extremely gratifying to the friends of Art in this state if the services of Mr. P.F. Rothermel should be engaged for one of the series. His eminent talent as an historical painter; the renown which he has acquired by many of his productions, . . . lead us to the confident hope that should he be selected for this honorable duty, he would achieve a work creditable to himself and the Arts in our country, and prove a proud memorial of one of the most talented Artists of his native state.¹

A few days before, on 28 April, the Artists of the City of Philadelphia wrote a similar petition (fig. 1b):

The undersigned, . . . having learned that your honorable bodies are now (by your committees) considering the expediency of purchasing, or giving commissions for pictures to adorn the public buildings under your control at Washington, do therefore respectfully present this memorial asking attention to the merits of our fellow townsman Peter F. Rothermel, as an artist really deserving of the high rank he holds as a historical painter, and believing that any

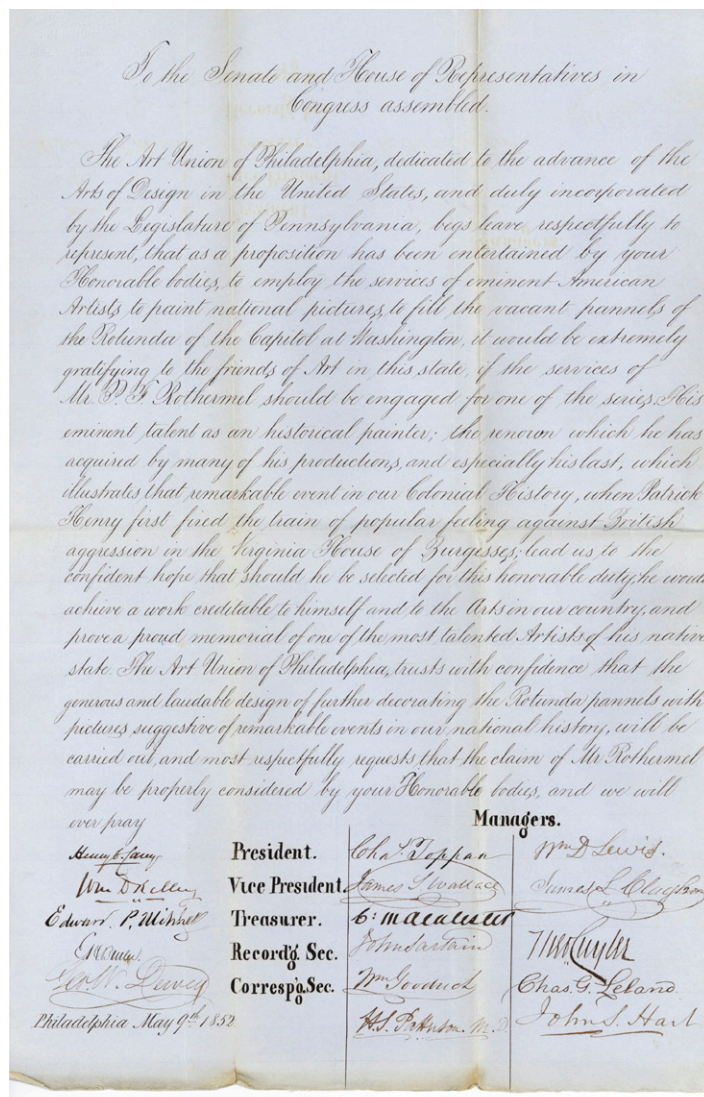
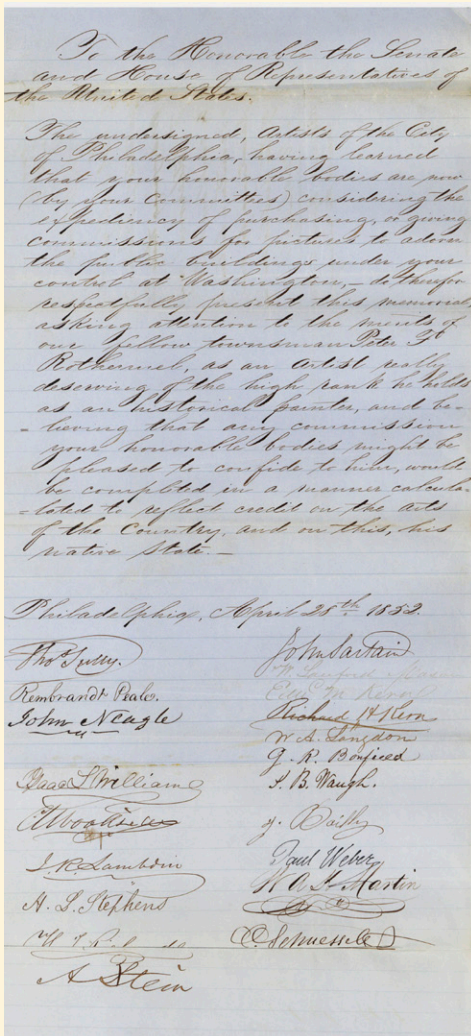


Fig. 1a. The petitions from Philadelphia are part of the Senate records from the 32nd Congress (see also fig. 1b).

commission your honorable bodies might be pleased to confide to him, would be completed in a manner calculated to reflect credit on the arts of the country, and on this, his native state.²



The signatories of these two documents represented the artistic elite of Philadelphia, including Henry Carey, president of the Art Union and noted art collector and publisher; John Sartain, manager of the Art Union and the city's leading printmaker; and the painters and Pennsylvania Academicians Thomas Sully, Rembrandt Peale, John Neagle, J.R. Lambdin, William Trost Richards, J.B. Waugh, and Paul Weber. In short, Philadelphia employed all its artistic firepower in this attempt to install a painting in the Rotunda. From the perspective of the city's artists and art supporters, this valiant attempt was met by disappointment and derision. However, this failed attempt at a commission reveals much about the national artistic and legislative processes from the 1830s to the 1850s, and the way these two seemingly disparate realms were intimately intertwined.

Many people today do not tend to think of artists actively shaping our nation's history, but that is exactly what Peter F. Rothermel (1812–1895) and his contemporaries—including Emanuel Leutze (1816–1868), John Gadsby Chapman (1808–1889), William Henry Powell (1823–1879), Robert Walter Weir (1803–1889), and John Vanderlyn (1775–1852)—were attempting to do in securing and executing paintings for the Rotunda from the 1830s to the 1850s (fig. 2). As American painter Emanuel Leutze wrote from Dusseldorf, Germany in 1854 to Montgomery C. Meigs (1816–1892), army engineer and supervisor of the construction of the new Capitol Dome and wings from 1853 to 1859:

...who can teach like the artists? Give the boy a book of the deeds of his fathers and as he turns slowly leaf by leaf, will not the first impressions be lost before he received the third and

Fig. 1b. A second petition from Philadelphia artists (see also fig. 1a)



Fig. 2. Visitors encounter eight history paintings in the Rotunda of the U.S. Capitol, including (from left) *Discovery of the Mississippi by De Soto* by William Powell, *Landing of Columbus* by John Vanderlyn, and *Embarkation of the Pilgrims* by Robert Weir.

fourth. But let us paint history. Behold! Open to your eyes, unrolled to your perception the pictures will steal upon your mind imperceptibly without an effort without fatigue.³

Just as Leutze argued, those artists that did succeed in achieving a commission for the four vacant Rotunda panels have had an outsized influence on how citizens of the United States understand and imagine their history, as the paintings were not only displayed in the Rotunda, but were mass reproduced throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in objects as diverse as fine art prints, history text books, sheet music, postage stamps, world's fair guides, and currency. Indeed, as early as 1855 in an article in *The Crayon*, the nation's leading art periodical, one author opined of the Capitol paintings, "To describe and criticize these pictures with minuteness is not my intention, and would be a waste of time; for by the art of the engraver, they have been made as familiar to the American people as a thrice-told tale."⁴ In our twenty-first-century moment, when much of the country is examining its troubling and contentious shared artistic past, these pivotal yet understudied decades of antebellum American art history decidedly merit sustained examination and analysis.

A current (2018) and ongoing exhibition project at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (PAFA), entitled *Creando Historia/Making History in the Americas*, examines history painting at the three oldest art academies in the Americas—founded in Mexico City (1781), Philadelphia (1805), and Rio de Janeiro (1816)—as expressions of comparative hemispheric nationalist ideologies during the long nineteenth century. By focusing in particular on the academic history paintings that were produced by artists working at these schools, the exhibition project asks: what roles did these institutions play in defining national histories and identities? How did art academies in Mexico, the United States, and Brazil shape education programs aimed at producing modern citizens? To what extent did national politics determine the functions of art academies? What types of visual idioms were deployed by art academies to shape national consciousness? How were the international conventions of academic history paintings used in these three countries to explicate their complex and individual projects of nation building and expansion within the transnational discourse of modern painting? In part, the exhibition project argues that history paintings from the nineteenth century form the visual backdrop of conceptions of citizenship and history across all of the Americas.

In a time when scholars are increasingly examining the ideals and legends of America's "founding," these paintings illustrate a period in this hemisphere's history when Americans—North and South—were struggling to define the political, social, and geographic borders of their nationhood.⁵ Visual artists were often at the vanguard of this definition, and the grand canvasses they left their countrymen represent the most iconic and lasting examples of this phenomenon. Now is the time to demand that art historians investigate these narratives in the context of the diverse realities of the artists and audiences involved in their conceptions. While the larger, ongoing exhibition focuses on history painting in the Americas' first three art academies, this article will focus on how U.S. artists including Rothermel and his contemporaries, national patrons of the arts, architects, and Members of Congress battled to decorate the Rotunda, the new nation's most prominent "art gallery," with their own competing visions of what American history was the most suitable to be enshrined in the



Fig. 3. This star, inset in the floor of the Crypt one floor below the Rotunda, marks the center of the original District of Columbia.



Fig. 4. Penn's Treaty with the Indians by Benjamin West (1783–1820)

navel—or compass stone (fig. 3)—of the American republic.

History painting as practiced in the antebellum United States was indebted to eighteenth-century British practices, and was modernized by Benjamin West, a native of Swarthmore, Pennsylvania, who was PAFA's first honorary academician and the successor of Joshua Reynolds at the Royal Academy in London.⁶ When he painted his iconic American painting *Penn's Treaty with the Indians* (1771–72) (fig. 4), he was in fact living in London, the metropolis of the British Empire. West updated history painting to include the recent history of the "New World." Despite being pioneered by a young man from Pennsylvania, modern history painting got off to somewhat of a rough start in the United States after its brilliant debut in London. West's American students strove valiantly to bring history painting to the attention and admiration of the American people. The first generation of national rather than colonial artists, including Rembrandt Peale, Samuel F.B. Morse, Washington Allston, and John Trumbull, working in the 1810s and 1820s, all tried to bring history paint-

ing to the American people—with mixed success.

While much has been written on the four paintings Trumbull completed for the Capitol Rotunda in the early Republic, the four additional paintings installed throughout the 1840s and 1850s have not received sustained recent scholarship.⁷ As early as 4 January 1828, in an Annual Report of the commissioner of public buildings, Charles Bulfinch, then Architect of the Capitol, wrote: "In closing this report, I ask leave to add, that the Rotundo cannot be considered complete, while the four large panels are suffered to remain vacant; and to suggest a hope, that the measures may be taken to supply them with paintings, comfortable to the others, on great national subjects."⁸ Following this report was a two-day debate on the matter. But owing to partisan politics, the panels were still bare in 1834 when the Twenty-third Congress considered a joint resolution to employ "four native artists" for the job. In the House debate, Rep. John Quincy Adams (MA) doubted whether four native artists could be found to complete the panels. This was mightily objected to, with Aaron Ward (NY) citing a large number of artists

he thought could do it. Henry A. Wise (VA) proposed that the subject be pre-1783 so that it would not curry favor to either current political party. In the end, Congress voted to let American artists pick the subjects as long as the narrative dated before 1781. But the panels remained bare. In 1836 another resolution was passed to restrict them to “subjects serving to illustrate the discovery of America; the settlement of the U.S.; the history of the Revolution; or the adoption of the Constitution.”⁹

The four subjects eventually chosen for the panels were hemispheric in their scope—encompassing the southern United States, with Chapman’s *The Baptism of Pocahontas at Jamestown, Virginia, 1613*, installed on 30 November 1840; New England, with Weir’s *Embarkation of the Pilgrims*, installed 21 December 1843; the Caribbean, with Vanderlyn’s *The Landing of Columbus*, installed 15 January 1847; and finally the American West, with Powell’s *Discovery of the Mississippi by De Soto, A.D. 1541*, installed 16 February 1855.

Originally, the so-called “Western” panel was to be painted by the artist Henry Inman (1801–1846), president of the National Academy of Design in New York City, with the subject, as of 1836, the “Emigration of Daniel Boone to Kentucky.” Upon the death of the artist in 1846, the vacancy set up a flurry of proposals from artists and art connoisseurs around the country to follow in Inman’s footsteps. In 1847 the citizens of St. Louis sent a petition to the Senate for the artist Charles Deas (1818–1867) to do a painting, “General Clarke breaking up the council with the Shawaneca.” Eventually, Inman’s student William Henry Powell (1823–1879), who had studied in Cincinnati and so was nominally considered to be “western,” received the commission in 1848. A joint committee of Congress selected De Soto raising a cross on the Mississippi as the subject matter, taken from two recently published and widely popular U.S. history books: Theodore Irving’s *The Conquest of Florida under Hernando de Soto* (1835); and George Bancroft’s *History of the United States* (1834).¹⁰ In 1852 Powell was still working on the painting in Paris. It was probably this delay that caused Philadelphia’s artistic community to see an opportunity for one of their own, Peter F. Rothermel, to take over the commission, and provide his own, and his powerful patrons’, view of the American West.

The campaign of Rothermel and his supporters to achieve a U.S. Capitol commission in 1852 was the culmination of a decade of history paintings by Rothermel focused on the Spanish conquest of the Americas. Rothermel was director of PAFA from 1847 to 1855 and was one of its most influential instructors at a time when PAFA was one of the most prestigious art schools

in the Americas, having been founded in 1805, a few short years after the founding of the nation. As a leader of PAFA in the 1840s and 1850s, and as Philadelphia’s most important history painter, Rothermel played a part in broader international trends in history painting in the mid-nineteenth century. Looking to his career expands our understanding of how artists at the United States’s most venerable art school negotiated and visualized national identity during the period of territorial conflict between the United States and Mexico known as the Mexican-American War (1846–48) or the *primera intervención estadounidense en México*. In this period, PAFA was the focal point of Philadelphia’s cultural life and a major force on the American art scene. As scholars have recently shown, in the 1840s and 1850s a similar cultural renaissance in Mexico emerged around the Academy San Carlos in Mexico City.¹¹

Rothermel began his series of large-scale history paintings related to the Spanish conquest with *Columbus before the Queen* (1842) (fig. 5). This painting was influenced by a combination of popular literary influences including the Romantic historian William H. Prescott’s first book on the history of Spain, *History of the Reign of Ferdinand and Isabella* (1837), and his contemporary Washington Irving’s *History of the Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus* (1828). Each of these histories portrays Isabella as a Christian missionary and Columbus as her able knight. This was a popular subject for both American and Mexican academic painters at the time; contemporaneous paintings include Emanuel Leutze’s *Columbus before the Queen* (1843) (fig. 6), exhibited at PAFA in 1848, Powell’s *Columbus Before the Council of Salamanca* (1847) (fig. 7), which hung in the library of the U.S. Capitol in 1847 and helped Powell secure his Capitol commission, and Juan Cordero’s *Columbus before the Catholic Sovereigns*, painted in Rome in 1850 before it traveled to its permanent home in Mexico City (fig. 8).¹²

Rothermel’s series of scenes of the Spanish conquest was begun after a prominent art connoisseur saw his *Columbus before the Queen* in an exhibition organized by Rothermel at PAFA and subsequently commissioned a painting of similar size and subject matter. *Sartain’s Union Magazine* wrote of the commission in 1852, not coincidentally the same year Philadelphia was lobbying for Rothermel to receive a Capitol commission:

Professor [James] Mapes, who has done so much to encourage art and artists in the country, saw, while on a visit to Philadelphia, the picture of “Columbus before the Queen;” and, being struck with some of its points, left with a friend an order for Rothermel to paint one



Fig. 5. Columbus before the Queen by Peter F. Rothermel



Fig. 6. Columbus before the Queen by Emanuel Leutze (American, born Germany)



Fig. 7. Columbus Before the Council of Salamanca by William Henry Powell

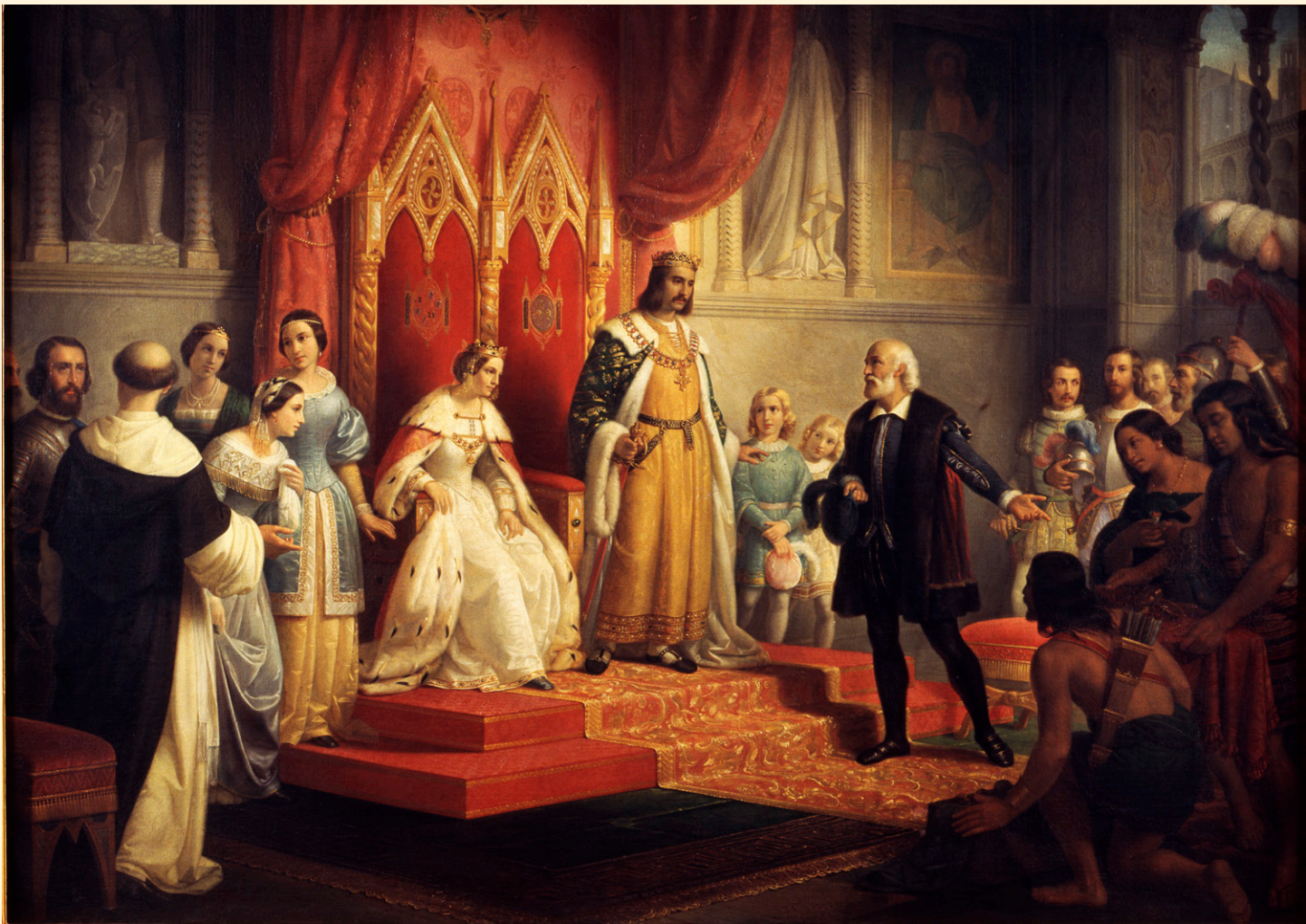


Fig. 8. Columbus before the Catholic Sovereigns by Juan Cordero

of the same size, suffering the artist to choose the subject; and adding, that if, when finished, any one fancied it, the artist should sell the picture, and paint another instead. At that time Prescott's work on "The Conquest of Mexico" was making a great noise, and furnished a number of good subjects. Rothermel selected "Cortez haranguing his Troops, within sight of the Valley of Mexico," and painted, as he says, "a very fair picture."...It attracted the attention of a liberal patron of the arts, Warrington Gillette, of New York, but at that time a resident of Baltimore, who gave Rothermel without hesitation the price he demanded, and thus made an invaluable addition to his own collection. Professor Mapes, who saw the picture, liked it so much, that he ordered its substitute to be founded on a similar subject,—“The Surrender of Guatemozon.”...These paintings attracted such admiration, that several more, on similar themes, were ordered. One of these—“Noche Triste; or, The Morning of the Retreat on the Causeway,”—was for Mr. [Amos] Binney, of Boston; another,—“Cortez Burning his Fleet,”—for James Robb, of New Orleans; a third,—“Launch of the Brigantines,”—for J.B.H. Latrobe, of Baltimore, son of the architect of the Capitol; and a fourth,—the subject unknown to me,—which is now in the possession of the artist's cousin, Samuel H. Rothermel, of Philadelphia.¹³

In 1844, a reviewer noted that Rothermel's paintings of the conquest “have a penchant for the heroic age of our western world—for we have had our age of chivalry as well as Europe. Columbus and Cortés and Soto, Rothermel's favorites, were all belted knights in their time—and knights errant too, for they wandered further in quest of adventures than even the Crusaders.”¹⁴ The paintings are decidedly romantic, in keeping with Prescott's approach to history, which Prescott acknowledged as romantic and widely accessible.¹⁵ Rothermel was an admirer of the great French Romantic painter Eugene Delacroix (1798–1863), as well as Baroque painter Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640), and one can see the influences of both masters in his romantic and high toned color approach to landscape and in the figures in his history paintings.

Rothermel's paintings were not made exclusively for a private domestic market—though private individuals residing in Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, and Boston often commissioned them. Rather, they were

primarily intended for display in the public art exhibitions of Philadelphia and New York City. In order to understand Rothermel's paintings one must also understand their intended audiences. Rothermel was not only a leading academician at PAFA, but also his patrons included leading Whig elites in Philadelphia and up and down the eastern seaboard. For example, of the patrons mentioned in the above quote, two of them, James Robb of New Orleans and J.B.H. Latrobe of Baltimore, were intimately involved in the expansion of railroad networks across the continent, while another two, Amos Binney of Boston and James Mapes of Newark, N.J., were nationally-known scientific leaders.¹⁶ By 1862, at the height of the Civil War, the artist and his patrons were among the founding members of the Republican Union League Club of Philadelphia. The Union League was created following a time of great turmoil in Philadelphia, when Rothermel's paintings of the Spanish conquest were at their height of popularity.

Tension over religion and immigration boiled over in Philadelphia and its suburbs in the major anti-Catholic riots of 1844, the same year Rothermel painted *Cortés's First View of the City of Mexico*. These nativist riots, which took place 6–8 May and again 6–7 July 1844, were a result of rising anti-Catholic sentiment aimed at the growing population of Irish Catholic immigrants. These social conflicts did not go unnoticed in the art world. An 1845 review of Rothermel's showing of *The Surrender of Guatemozin* at the National Academy of Design in New York City referred to the painting as being painted “by one of the most promising artists of the mob city.”¹⁷ Prescott's narrative, while romanticizing the conquest, was also decidedly anti-Catholic, and so as much a part of the spirit of the times as the nativist riots. At the same time as these local tensions were taking over Philadelphia, the United States was becoming embroiled in conflict with neighboring Mexico, leading to the Mexican-American War of 1846–48. In these years Rothermel painted *Cortés's Invasion of Mexico (Cortés before Tenochtitlan)*, *Cortés Burning His Fleet*, *Cortés's Launch of the Brigantines*, and “*Noche Triste*.”

Rothermel's view of Cortés appears to have shifted between 1844 and 1846 (figs. 9 and 10). What seems to be romantic and celebratory in 1844 is brooding and destructive by 1846. In particular, smoke and lurid flames progressively dominate the canvases. Rothermel also seems to be moving farther away from an exclusive focus on figures to the inclusion of landscape as an expressive element of the composition. From looking at these paintings it is difficult to know how Rothermel felt about American imperialism and territorial expansionism.



Fig. 9. Cortez's First View the City of Mexico by Peter F. Rothermel, 1844



Fig. 10. Cortez' Invasion of Mexico (Cortes before Tenochtitlan) by Peter F. Rothermel, 1846



Fig. 11. The Storming of the Teocalli by Cortez and His Troops by Emanuel Gottlieb Leutze (Germany, active in America)

Is Cortés the gallant leader haranguing his troops or the melancholic leader looking out over a sunset the color of blood and the city of Tenochtitlan? How was Rothermel affected by the anti-Catholic riots and fires in his own city, as well as by newspaper reports of major conflicts along the Mexican-American border? These paintings are certainly more nuanced and confusing than contemporaneous popular topographic military depictions of the contested landscape of Mexico made during the Mexican-American War. For example, a print of the 1846 battle of Buena Vista takes a military topographic

approach to the landscape, which is seen from a bird's eye view.¹⁸ The Mexican landscape forms a backdrop to the impressive military prowess of the United States in the foreground; all is controlled and mapped. In his contemporaneous canvases it is hard to know whether Rothermel expects the viewer to identify with Cortés, or to see him as a decadent Catholic conquistador. His paintings are also nuanced enough to suggest that, by 1846, Rothermel may have been, like many Americans, dismayed by the bloodshed of the Mexican-American War.



Fig. 12. De Soto Raising the Cross on the Mississippi by Peter F. Rothermel

In contrast to Rothermel, his competitor and contemporary Emanuel Leutze had a somewhat less nuanced view of the conquest. Leutze's *The Storming of the Teocalli by Cortez and His Troops* (1848) (fig. 11) was commissioned in 1846 for Boston scientist Amos Binney, a friend of William H. Prescott; both men were members of the Boston Athenæum, one of the United States's oldest membership libraries, founded in 1807.¹⁹ As mentioned above, Binney had commissioned one of Rothermel's Cortés paintings, namely *Noche Triste*; or, *The Morning of the Retreat on the Causeway* (1848,

location unknown). Based on this ownership I surmise that Binney meant the Leutze and Rothermel paintings to hang together. It is productive to discuss whether Rothermel or Leutze best embodied Prescott's view of the conquest. Leutze's painting depicts the first, failed battle the Spaniards waged against the Aztecs. Prescott, who described Cortés and his men as "gallant cavaliers," attributed the strength of brute force to the Aztecs, and the skill of "superior science" to the Spaniards. But no one really comes off well in Leutze's painting: both the Spanish and Aztecs seem bloodthirsty and



Fig. 13. Discovery of the Mississippi by De Soto, A.D. 1541 by William Henry Powell, 1848–55

cruel. Was this really aligned with Prescott's view of things? As William Truettner argues, "Prescott's volumes had presented the founding of the Americas as a first step toward New World civilization."²⁰ It seems that Rothermel's less violent depictions of events in *The Conquest of Mexico* were perhaps more in line with Prescott's original intent, as well as aligned with the views of the artist's elite East Coast patrons. Leutze, on the other hand, seems to have more in common with mestizo images from the sixteenth-century Florentine Codex than with romantic visions of the progress of civilization.

Jochen Wierich argues that the Leutze painting "revealed the problems that romantic history painters faced in giving manifest destiny a concrete pictorial form, and in convincing their audience that the history of the United States was guided by divine provi-

dence."²¹ The problem of embodying a positive image for Western manifest destiny in the figure of Cortés may be why Rothermel eventually returned to De Soto as his Spanish colonial hero. Indeed, Cortés was most often left out of official U.S. history paintings, most probably because he could too easily be associated with the protestant Black Legend of Spanish cruelty. Also, in the aftermath of the Mexican-American War, perhaps the Mississippi subject matter was more in keeping with popular taste than the bloody conquest of Mexico City.

Rothermel's *De Soto Raising the Cross* (1851) (fig. 12) depicts what was believed at the time to be the first Christian religious service in America. When Rothermel painted his second and more successful version of the subject, De Soto was a popular figure in Philadelphia. In 1852 the play *The Tragedy of de Soto* was presented at Philadelphia's Chestnut Street Theatre with scenery

paintings by Rothermel's fellow PAFA exhibitor Russell Smith. Also in 1852, when Rothermel's painting *Patrick Henry in the House of Burgesses* was exhibited in the Rotunda of the U.S. Capitol, "twenty Philadelphia artists, including Thomas Sully, Rembrandt Peale, John Neagle, J.R. Lambdin, John Sartain, William Trost Richards, Samuel Waugh and Christian Schuensele, petitioned Congress to commission Rothermel to produce a national work."²² The Cortés series, and then the return to the subject of De Soto, appears to have been an attempt on the part of Rothermel, his patrons, and the Philadelphia art community in general, to have one of Rothermel's paintings selected for the U.S. Capitol project. William Henry Powell was painting his *Discovery of the Mississippi by De Soto, A.D. 1541*, from 1848–55 (fig. 13). In all likelihood, Rothermel, who knew that Congress was at the time looking for a Western subject, painted his composition in competition.

Landscape has more of a role in this painting than in any of Rothermel's other images of Spanish conquest and discovery. The entire foreground is given over to the pliable clay of the Mississippi river banks. Both the cross and the kneeling natives in the right foreground seem to be emerging out of the earth. The cross gives the appearance of having been hewn from a tree, unlike the cross in Powell's version which includes what appears to be an applied ivory crucified Christ. The cross is being planted in the ground, becoming as much a part of the American soil as the native figures. Visually, this is undoubtedly the most accomplished painting of Rothermel's conquest series. In focusing on the American landscape, rather than architecture or figures, to convey the dramatic emotional narrative of conquest, Rothermel has created his masterpiece. At a time when "Manifest Destiny" was being bandied about as the term *du jour* in United States politics, what better image than the planting of a Christian cross in the soil of a great western river to suggest the divine destiny of America to push westward? According to Prescott, in this vision of the conquest the goal is the spread of Christianity across the wilderness of America, rather than the goal of Cortés, the gold-loving Spaniard. Rothermel's cross also has other strong visual resonances in 1852 and resembles nothing so much as a telegraph pole and wires that had recently been patented and were making their way across the eastern seaboard, in anticipation of linking the whole continent (fig. 14).

Philadelphians continued to push for Rothermel to receive a Capitol commission. The Philadelphia architect Thomas U. Walter, at the time also the Architect of the Capitol, wrote to Col. C.G. Childs in December of

1852, "the only chance that I can see for Mr. Rothermel is to get a commission direct from congress. Leutze has painted one stairway, leaving [?] yet to paint. . . . The committee on the Library has charge of all works of art."²³

It wasn't only Philadelphians who were advocating for Rothermel. In early February 1853 Gouverneur Kemble (1786–1875), a New York Democrat, patron of the arts, co-founder of the Century Club, and Honorary Academician at the National Academy of Design, wrote to Meigs that he felt the work of Rothermel, "for truth and expression, and good color, is equal to anything that the other [Leutze] has done, and the drawing is better than in most of Leutze's pictures." Meigs responded that "that unless Weir be excepted, we have as yet no artist fully qualified to undertake the decoration of our staircases... Rothermel's Patrick Henry seemed to me a sketch, as though he had not the industry or skill to paint a finished picture." Kemble did not give up, however, stating "I think that at a first attempt, instead of too sincerely criticizing the pictures in the rotunda, it would be better to look upon them as the first efforts of untried artists, which if you do, you would find, that Weir's picture would take a high stand, and that there are touches of genius and talent in that of Chapman of the highest promise."²⁴

Even after Rothermel's failure to achieve a commission, not all were happy with Powell's executed DeSoto painting.

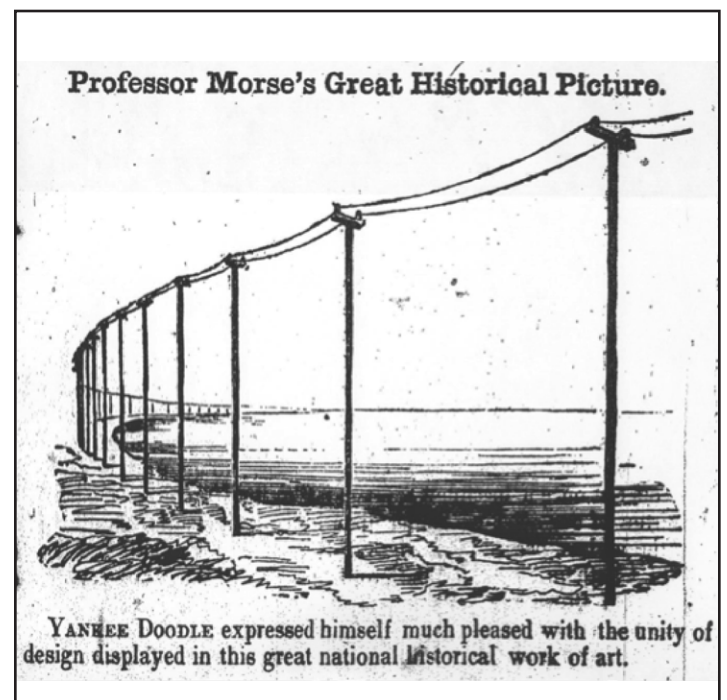


Fig. 14. "Professor Morse's Great Historical Picture"



Fig. 15. The Landing of the Pilgrims at Plymouth Rock by Peter F. Rothermel

Mr. Powell is not quite correct in all his facts; the commission to paint the picture was not given to him with quite such unanimity as he states... Judge Campbell of this city, and Mr. Ingersoll of Philadelphia, proposed an open competition that should give all the artists in the country an opportunity to compete for the work, by sending in cartoons of designs, from which a committee should choose the one that was best adapted to the purpose.²⁵

While Philadelphians wanted Rothermel to execute the painting, New Yorkers had their own suggestions, and Asher B. Durand and others wanted Samuel F.B. Morse to be awarded the commission after Inman's death.

Rothermel employs a similar format to his De Soto painting with his *Landing of the Pilgrims* (1854) (fig. 15); here, American religion and American landscape are paired to create a successful history painting.²⁶

The landscape dominates the foreground of snow and storm-tossed waves. *Landing of the Pilgrims* is not part of the Spanish conquest series, but is related, especially when one realizes that the painting was commissioned in 1852, the same year of Rothermel's unsuccessful campaign to complete a panel in the U.S. Capitol. For example, a comparison between Rothermel's *Landing of the Pilgrims* and Robert Walter Weir's *Embarkation of the Pilgrims* (painted from 1837–43) (fig. 16) reveals that though Weir chose to focus on figures, Rothermel continued his use of landscape to capture the emotional impact of the historic moment.²⁷

In progressing from Cortés to De Soto to the Pilgrims, Rothermel moved further and further away from the themes of the Spanish Conquest. It makes sense that this is so, given the conditions in contemporary Philadelphia, which by the 1850s was feeling the impending pangs of sectionalism which were to erupt in the U.S. Civil War. In transitioning from Mexico to



Fig. 16. Embarkation of the Pilgrims by Robert W. Weir

the Mississippi to New England, Rothermel's paintings offer us a map of American geopolitics in the 1840s and 1850s, from excitement about territorial conquest to the south, to anxieties about the spread of slavery to the new lands annexed from Mexico, to a retreat and idealization of the founders of Protestant New England. In all these themes, Rothermel was aligned with Whig/Republican concerns in Philadelphia. Rothermel's views of the Spanish conquest say more about Philadelphia and Washington, D.C. in the 1840s and 1850s than they do about the sixteenth-century con-

quest. But that is always the case with history painting. In capturing a moment in history, the artist almost always tells us more about his own time than the one he aims to portray. Thus, from Rothermel's paintings of Cortés and De Soto, we may be able to learn more about the territorial conquest of the Mexican-American War and anxieties over immigration and slavery than we can about the conquest of Mexico by Spain.



ANNA O. MARLEY, PH.D. is curator of historical American art at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in Philadelphia. Her ongoing exhibition project will be a sustained comparative study of Brazilian and Mexican paintings of the same period revealing the entangled artistic and political ideologies of the aca-

demic hemisphere. This research was made possible by USCHS's Capitol Fellowship. The author particularly wishes to thank Michele Cohen, curator, Architect of the Capitol, and William C. di Giacomantonio, chief historian at the U.S. Capitol Historical Society, for their unflagging support of this project.

NOTES

1. "Petition of the Officers of the Art Union of Philadelphia to employ Rothermel to paint a picture for one of the panels of the Rotundo, May 9th, 1852," Senate records from the 32nd Congress, 'Petitions and Memorials' referred to the Committee on the Library, Sen32A-H10, 9 Dec. 1851 to 22 Feb. 1853, Center for Legislative Archives, National Archives and Records Administration.
2. "Petition of Thos. Sully and other artists of Philadelphia praying that Peter F. Rothermel may be employed to execute a historical painting for one of the public buildings in Washington," *ibid.*
3. Emanuel Leutze to Montgomery C. Meigs, 14 Feb. 1854. Painter, Emanuel Leutze File, Office of the Curator of the Architect of the Capitol.
4. Charles Lanman, *The Crayon*, 28 Feb. 1855, pp. 126–137.
5. See an earlier article in this journal for an excellent example of this struggle, especially as it relates to the Mexican-American War: Matthew Restall, "Montezuma Surrenders in the Capitol," *The Capitol Dome*, 53, no. 2 (Fall 2016): 2–10.
6. Joshua Reynolds, head of the British Royal Academy, defined British historical painting in his "Discourse IV," read to the Academy in 1771, as "some eminent instance of heroick action or heroick suffering. There must be something either in the action, or in the object, in which men are universally concerned, and which powerfully strikes upon the publick sympathy." In terms of subject matter, he advised that subjects be drawn from ancient (Greek or Roman) or biblical history, as he believed these subjects would be "popularly known." Joshua Reynolds, *Seven Discourses Delivered in the Royal Academy by the President* (London, 1778), p. 103–104.
7. For two excellent publications on history painting in the United States, including the Capitol paintings, see William H. Gerdts and Mark Thistlethwaite, *Grand Illusions: History Painting in America* (Fort Worth, TX, 1988); and Ann Uhry Abrams "National Paintings and American Character: Historical Murals in the Capitol's Rotunda," in William S. Ayers, ed., *Picturing History: American Painting, 1770–1930* (New York, 1993), pp. 65–79. For a study of

- Trumbull's paintings in particular see Tanya Pohrt, "Reception and Meaning in John Trumbull's 'Declaration of Independence,'" *Yale University Art Gallery Bulletin: Teaching with Art* (2013): 116–119.
8. From the Rotunda, General file, Office of the Curator of the Architect of the Capitol.
 9. 11 Cong. Deb. 791–95 (1834); *Statutes at Large*, 24th Cong., sess. 1, Res. 8 (23 June 1836), p. 133.
 10. "Editorial Notes," *Fine Arts, Putnam's Magazine*, 3 (Jan.–Jun. 1854): 117–19.
 11. Ray Hernández-Durán, "Modern Museum Practice in Nineteenth-Century Mexico: The Academy of San Carlos and la antigua escuela Mexicana", 9, Issue 1 (Spring 2010). www.19thc-artworldwide.org.
 12. PAFA annual exhibition records indicate Rothermel and Leutze's paintings showing regularly together in the 1840s and 1850s. Mark Thistlethwaite notes that Rothermel and Leutze were both studying in Philadelphia at the same time and may have been in John Rubens Smith's drawing class together. Mark Thistlethwaite, *Painting in the Grand Manner: The Art of Peter Frederick Rothermel (1812–1895)* (Chadds Ford, PA, 1995), p. 13.
 13. Thomas Dunn English, "Peter F. Rothermel," *Sartain's Union Magazine of Literature and Art*, 10 (January 1852): 15.
 14. An Amateur, "Visits to the Painters," *Godey's Lady's Book*, 29 (Dec. 1844): 277.
 15. Richard Kagan, "Prescott's Paradigm: A New Look at a Bostonian's Image of Sixteenth-Century Spain" in Jonathan Brown, ed., *The Word Made Image: Religion, Art, and Architecture in Spain and Spanish America, 1500–1600* (Boston, 1998), p. 16.
 16. *Biographical and Genealogical History of the City of Newark and Essex County, New Jersey* (New York and Chicago, 1898), pp. 149–51; The Frick Collection, "Archives related to Robb, James, 1814–1881," last modified 12 Nov. 2014, <http://research.frick.org/directoryweb/browserecord2.php?action=browse&-recid=7150>; Tulane University, Howard Tilton Memorial Library, Special Collections, "Latrobe, John H.B. (John Hazelhurst Boneval), 1803–1891," <http://specialcollections.tulane.edu/>



archon/?p=creators/eator & id=171.

17. “The National Academy,” *Broadway Journal*, 17 May 1845, p. 307.

18. For more on this topographic view and others see “Historic Reportage and Artistic License: Prints and Paintings of the Mexican War” in Ayers, *Picturing History*, pp. 101–115.

19. William H. Truettner, “Storming the Teocalli—Again: Or, Further Thoughts on Reading History Paintings,” *American Art* 9, no. 3 (Autumn 1995): 59.

20. *Ibid.*, pp. 67, 68, 70.

21. Jochen Wierichm, *Grand Themes: Emanuel Leutze, Washington Crossing the Delaware, and American History Painting* (University Park, PA, 2012), p. 51.

22. Thistlethwaite, *Painting in the Grand Manner*, pp. 16, 51.

23. T.U. Walter Papers, Archives of American Art, Reel 4141, 419–421, 17 Dec. 1852 to Col. C.G. Childs.

24. G. Kemble to Meigs, 3 Feb. 1853; Meigs to Kemble, 8 Feb. 1854; Kemble to Meigs, 16 Feb. 1854. Rothermel, P.F. File, Office of the Curator of the Architect of the Capitol.

25. “Editorial Notes,” *Fine Arts, Putnam’s Magazine*, 3 (Jan.–Jun. 1854): 120.

26. For an excellent study of this painting see Mark Thistlethwaite, “A Band of Exiles on the Wild New England Shore: The Place of Peter F. Rothermel’s ‘Landing of the Pilgrims’ in America’s National Memory,” in the exhibition catalog of the same name, for the exhibition in the William Center Gallery, Lafayette College (Easton, PA, 2014), pp. 3–43.

27. In an 1835 review of this painting, the Puritan emigrants were set up in direct contrast to the “tumult of the Irish mob, sweeping through the streets” of Boston, which reminds one of the anti-Catholic sentiments in Philadelphia in the 1840s; see Jacob Abbott, *New England and Her Institutions by One of Her Sons* (Boston, 1835), pp. 245–46.

CREDITS:

Figs. 1a and 1b. “Petitions and Memorials” referred to the Committee on the Library, Center for Legislative Archives, National Archives and Records Administration

Fig. 2. U.S. Capitol Historical Society

Fig. 3. U.S. Capitol Historical Society

Fig. 4. Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, gift of Mrs. Sarah Harrison (The Joseph Harrison, Jr. Collection)

Fig. 5. Smithsonian American Art Museum, museum purchase

Fig. 6. Oil on canvas, 38 9/16 x 50 15/16 in. Brooklyn Museum, Dick S. Ramsay Fund and Healy Purchase Fund B, 77.220

Fig. 7. Oil on canvas, collection of Phoenix Art Museum, museum purchase

Fig. 8. © D.R. Museo Nacional de Arte/ Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes y Literatura, 2017

Fig. 9. Oil on canvas, collection of the New York Historical Society, gift of Mrs. Louis A. Gillet, 1945.454

Fig. 10. Oil on canvas, collection of the Lowe Art Museum, University of Miami, museum purchase through 1987 acquisition funds, Bridgeman Images

Fig. 11. Oil on canvas, 84 3/4 x 98 3/4 in. (215.3 x 250.9 cm), Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, CT, The Ella Gallup Sumner and Mary Catlin Sumner Collection Fund, 1985.7

Fig. 12. Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, fund provided by the Henry C. Gibson Fund and Mrs. Elliott R. Detchon

Fig. 13. Architect of the Capitol

Fig. 14. *Yankee Doodle* 1 (October 10, 1846): p. 5.

Fig. 15. Oil on canvas, 41 1/8 x 54 7/8, (Kirby Collection of Historical Paintings), Lafayette College, Easton, Pa.

Fig. 16. Architect of the Capitol

SOCIETY NEWS

AN EVENING HONORING THE ENERGY AND COMMERCE COMMITTEE

KATIE GARLOCK/PORTRAITONS



Former Chairman John Dingell delivers one of the keynote addresses.



KATIE GARLOCK/PORTRAITONS

Energy and Commerce Committee Members with Dingell (seated) and USCHS Board Chairman Don Carlson (right).

On May 23, 2018 the United States Capitol Historical Society hosted an evening reception to honor and celebrate the accomplishments of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce—the oldest committee in Congress. Current and former members and staff of the committee, along with members of the Society, enjoyed the evening’s program in magnificent National Statuary Hall. Before the reception, event donors from the Society joined Chairman **Greg Walden**, Ranking Member **Frank Pallone Jr.**, former Chairmen **Fred Upton** and **John Dingell**, and Rep. **Debbie Dingell** for a meet-and-greet in the Rayburn Room.

The Capitol Police Ceremonial Unit presented the colors for the Pledge of Allegiance to begin the evening, followed by a toast to the committee given by Chairman of the USCHS Board of Trustees Don Carlson. Walden delivered warm remarks, noting his great appreciation for the staff and their contributions to the incredible work of the Energy and Commerce Committee. With great humor, Pallone told the story of how he finally convinced then-Chairman Dingell to let him onto the committee in 1992.

The first of two keynote speakers, former Chairman Dingell—who holds the record for longest congressional service at 59 years, 21 days—was welcomed back with a loud and extended round of applause from the audience. With a large poster of planet Earth to his right, Dingell reminded the room that the commit-

tee’s jurisdiction is far reaching and that its decisions “have an impact on all of us.” The second keynote speaker, former Chairman Upton, shared anecdotes of his friendship with Dingell, including his pride for the many Dingell-Upton and Upton-Dingell bills that passed through the committee and were signed into law as well as their shared hospitality when visiting each other’s districts on opposite sides of Michigan.

Several posters containing photos of the Energy and Commerce Committee over the years were displayed around the room for the guests to enjoy and reminisce. Current and former staffers were thrilled to spend time and reconnect with colleagues.

The event was made possible through the generous support of these donors:

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For more information about the many benefits available to Capitol Committee Members, please contact Director, Corporate Giving Marilyn Green at (202) 543-8919 x21 or mgreen@uschs.org, or Manager of Development and Outreach Jennifer Romberg at (202) 543-8919 x23 or jromberg@uschs.org.

From the Chairman of the Board...

On behalf the entire board of the U.S. Capitol Historical Society, I am announcing the retirement of our longtime leader and president/CEO, the Hon. Ron Sarasin. After 17 years at the helm of our organization, Ron informed me of his intent to retire and formally did so at the end of March. Ron's service to the Society was monumental and we are most grateful for the opportunity to have worked with him. He successfully led us through many challenges and placed us on a path to fulfill our mission for the future.

Ron's unique career in the Congress and in the Washington business community gave him the skills we needed during these years of both change and growth. The Board wishes him a wonderful retirement and many, many years of good health to enjoy with his family.

The Society is now in the process of conducting a professional search for his successor; I look forward to sharing information on a new leader in the near future.

With all best regards and wishes,
Don Carlson

USCHS LAUNCHES *CREATING CAPITOL HILL*

KATIE GARLOCK/PORTRAITIONS



Sen. **Chris Van Hollen** (MD, standing, right) with *Creating Capitol Hill* authors **Don Alexander Hawkins** (standing, left), **William C. diGiacomantonio** (center), **Pamela Scott**, and **Charles Carroll Carter**

On Monday, 18 June, the United States Capitol Historical Society hosted an event to launch its latest book, *Creating Capitol Hill: Place, Proprietors, and People*. Written by **Charles Carroll Carter**, **William C. diGiacomantonio**, and **Pamela Scott**, and with maps by **Don Alexander Hawkins**, the book tells the story of how the Founding Fathers reached a compromise to situate the permanent seat of government along the Potomac River, how Pres. George Washington and Peter L'Enfant chose the site for the city, how Washington negotiated an agreement with the proprietors who owned the land on which the city was to sit, and how a neighborhood and capital city arose from these tenuous arrangements.

Donald G. Carlson, chair of the USCHS board of trustees, opened the event with remarks praising the dedication of the authors and editor **Donald Kennon** in seeing this book through to completion. Carlson also introduced a special guest who spoke to the gathered audience: “George Washington” as portrayed by **Dean**

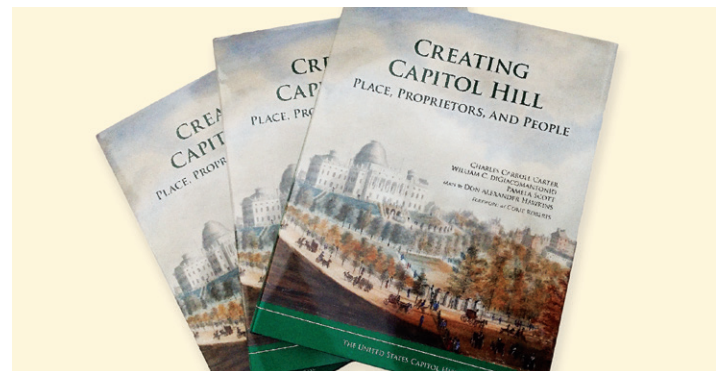
Malissa, the official interpreter for George Washington’s Mount Vernon. “Washington” spoke to the great uncertainty and challenges that beset the new republic at its founding—and subsequently—as the capital city was established, but emphasized that hope prevailed so long as people came together in a spirit of amity and mutual concession.

Kennon, also chief historian emeritus of USCHS, moderated a panel featuring all four contributors to the book. Carter detailed his lifelong fascination with the history of his family, as well as a few myths he has long wanted to debunk (such as “Jenkins’ Hill”). DiGiacomantonio shared how his background in political history enabled him to better explore the circumstances which yielded the Residency Act—which created a permanent seat of federal government along the Potomac River—as well as the agreement of the proprietors to yield half of their land to the new government in the expectation of a tremendous increase in value for the remainder. Hawkins explained how he got interested in

KATIE GARLOCK/PORTRAITIONS



“George Washington” as portrayed by **Dean Malissa**



Hardcover copies of *Creating Capitol Hill*

USCHS

maps of Washington, D.C. and the important role they play in understanding the history told by the other authors. Finally, Scott elaborated on how Carroll and Thomas Law were able to create a fledgling community to serve Congress at its earliest occupancy in Washington.

USCHS tour guides then took interested guests on the inaugural Creating Capitol Hill walking tour to explore the neighborhood and sites featured in the book. Ranging from the USCHS headquarters at Sec-

ond Street and Maryland Avenue NE as far as the Longworth House Office Building at New Jersey and Independence Avenues SE, the tour highlights themes from the book, such as land deals between the proprietors and the fledgling government, construction of homes and boarding houses, and early developments in commercial and social life on Capitol Hill.

C-SPAN recorded the evening's proceedings for their Book TV Series; watch the video by visiting c-span.org and searching for "Creating Capitol Hill."

CREATING CAPITOL HILL ON THE HILL



From left: Rep. Cole, volunteer Chuck Beck, Rep. Foxx, and Chairman Carlson

On Thursday, 12 July, the United States Capitol Historical Society formally presented *Creating Capitol Hill: Place, Proprietors, and People* to Reps. **Tom Cole** of Oklahoma and **Virginia Foxx** of North Carolina at a ceremony held in the Rayburn House Office Building. Donald G. Carlson, chair of the USCHS board of trustees, opened the event with remarks thanking Cole and Foxx for their service to both the country as Members of Congress and to the Society as members of the board of trustees.

BOOK TALK AT MOUNT VERNON



Dr. **Kevin Butterfield**, executive director of the Fred W. Smith Library for the Study of George Washington, moderated the question-and-answer session with authors Carter, Hawkins, and Scott, and editor Kennon.

Cole shared the following thoughts on the book: "As a historian, I am proud to serve on the board of trustees for the U.S. Capitol Historical Society. It was an honor to support the release of the society's newest publication, *Creating Capitol Hill*. The book beautifully illustrates the storied past and evolution of Capitol Hill. I look forward to sharing it with my friends, family, and constituents."

Foxx expressed the following sentiments on her involvement with the society: "It was a pleasure to join the U.S. Capitol Historical Society today for the launch of its new book, *Creating Capitol Hill*. The Society does excellent work in promoting knowledge of the Capitol's history and appreciation for its important role, and in helping preserve it. I'm glad to have been a benefactor of its mission today, and look forward to reading my copy of the book."

Following the presentation, USCHS Development & Tours Consultant **Samuel Holliday** led a team of volunteers and interns as they hand-delivered a hardcover copy of *Creating Capitol Hill* to each of the 541 congressional offices. Without the help of volunteers **Charles Beck**, **Ethan Fine**, and **Yvette Seltz**, and interns **Sophie Cos**, **Alison Gray**, **Madison Immel**, and **Clare Smith**, this distribution would not have been possible.

On Thursday, 13 September, the authors of *Creating Capitol Hill: Place, Proprietors, and People* participated in a Ford Evening Book Talk at George Washington's Mount Vernon. Offered by the Fred W. Smith Library for the Study of George Washington, these free monthly discussions highlight books focused on Washington and our nation's founding era. About 300 people turned out to the Robert H. and Clarice Smith Theater to hear remarks from editor Donald Kennon and authors Don Alexander Hawkins, Charles Carroll Carter (via his daughter **Anna St. John**), and Pamela Scott. After a question-and-answer session, the speakers signed copies of the book for interested guests.

NEW WALKING TOURS (cont. from back cover)



Steve Livengood guiding the “Temple of Democracy” Tour

“Temple of Democracy: History Made Here”

Join U.S. Capitol Historical Society staff and trained volunteers for a walking tour of the Capitol Grounds, filled with anecdotes about and perspectives of the Congress, the origin and construction of the building itself, and discussions of the broader concepts of democratic government. Learn why it took nearly 40 years to build the original Capitol as well as why and how it has been expanded and changed since then. Hear about famous—and infamous—incidents that have taken place inside, crucial turning points in the history of the republic, and how the daily activities in the complex today still shape the way our government and nation work. This tour is a different, more historically-inclined experience than those offered by congressional offices and the Capitol Visitor Center. Named “Best Specialty Tour” by *Washingtonian Magazine*, this is one experience you won’t want to miss!

“Olmsted’s Stunning Capitol Landscape”

Join U.S. Capitol Historical Society staff and trained volunteers for a special walking tour of the Capitol Grounds focusing on the work of Frederick Law Olmsted. Learn why the Architect of the Capitol brought in the Father of Landscape Architecture to improve the design of the grounds and how the monumental undertaking took place. Discover firsthand the beauty and intricacies of his careful design, all the while hearing about the incredible life he led, from merchant seaman to gentleman farmer to journalist to landscape architect. A local favorite, this is a tour every history and park-lover should take!



Samuel Holliday guiding the “Olmsted’s Stunning Capitol Landscape” Tour

“Creating Capitol Hill Book Tour”

Join U.S. Capitol Historical Society staff and trained volunteers to see the neighborhood and historic sites detailed in the Society’s latest publication, *Creating Capitol Hill: Place, Proprietors, and People*. Explore the streets around the Capitol as you learn about the circumstances and compromises that were necessary to create a permanent seat for the federal government. From structures long-since destroyed to those standing to this day, discover how hundreds of acres of wooded farmland became one of the most important communities of our country. Whether you’re a native Washingtonian or just curious about the capital city, this new tour is for you!



Samuel Holliday speaking during the inaugural “Creating Capitol Hill Book Tour”

BRUCE GUTHRIE

LUNCHTIME LECTURES

The U.S. Capitol Historical Society kicked off 2018 with a big helping of lunchtime lectures. Despite inclement weather and other scheduling obstacles, we welcomed speakers and audiences who discussed an exciting range of topics. Several of the lectures are now available online through C-SPAN.

In January, **James Lancel McElhinney*** previewed his article on page 16 of this issue with a discussion of his research on Gen. Seth Eastman. February brought another *Capitol Dome*/lunchtime lecture connection when **Matthew Costello**, senior historian at the White House Historical Association, elaborated on his 2017 article on the debates surrounding the idea of a Capitol tomb for George Washington.

USCHS commemorated Black History Month with **A J Aiséirithe's** lecture on Frederick Douglass. Her talk included explorations of Douglass' evolving views after the Civil War as well as some of the positions he held or work he did while living in Washington, D.C. We also commemorated Women's History Month in March, with **Jane Hudiburg*** discussing the congressional and activist career of Jeannette Rankin, the first woman elected to Congress. She is famously the only Member of Congress to vote against U.S. participation in both world wars.

Two additional lectures took place in March. **Marcie Sims** covered the history of congressional Pages; many former Pages attended her book talk, co-presented with the U.S. Capitol Page Alumni Association, and shared stories from their time serving in the Capitol. One of our Capitol Committee members, Express Scripts, graciously hosted the lecture in their meeting room. **Elise Friedland**, a former Capitol Fellow, shared an early look at her research on Constantino Brumidi's work in the Capitol's S-127 committee room. Her work centers on finding the sources, especially Pompeiian, of Brumidi's designs for this space.

New lunchtime lectures are being planned for 2019! Check in at uschs.org for updates as they become available. If you are unable to attend a lecture, follow along on Twitter (@USCapHis and #historytalk) for live tweets.

*Speakers marked with an asterisk were recorded by C-SPAN; their talks are available on c-span.org. Search for "Capitol Historical Society" and the speaker's last name to find the recording.



Some of the Page alumni who attended Marcie Sims's (center, in blue) talk on March 7. Jerry Papazian, left, introduced Sims at the event on behalf of the U.S. Capitol Page Alumni Association.



Elise Friedland's enthusiasm for her topic spilled into the audience, members of which continued to examine some of Friedland's images after the talk.



Jane Hudiburg

Annual Symposium Focused on Reconstruction and the Fourteenth Amendment

Each spring, the U.S. Capitol Historical Society presents a scholarly symposium focused on an aspect or period of congressional history. The 2018 iteration, on May 4, continued our exploration of the Reconstruction period, with speakers detailing the issues surrounding the Fourteenth Amendment, citizenship, and the impeachment of Andrew Johnson.

Reconstructing the Constitution, Remaking Citizenship, and Reconsidering a Presidential Succession opened with a morning session centered on the Fourteenth Amendment. **Vernon Burton** (Clemson University and the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign) began the session by exploring some of the reasons for and effects of the passage of the Fourteenth Amendment. Then a panel of three speakers took on more specific questions about the amendment and citizenship. **Paul Finkelman** (Gratz College) discussed the way the amendment resolved some questions about who was considered a citizen and effectively reversed the Dred Scott decision. **Jack Chin** (UC Davis School of Law) analyzed certain ways that the amendment did not apply to all—it was long interpreted as offering citizenship only to black Americans and not, for instance, to Chinese immigrants and their children. **Alysa Landry** (journalist and doctoral student at Gratz College) discussed the ways this issue of who can be a citizen has played out for Native Americans around and since the time of the Fourteenth Amendment's passage.

Brandi Brimmer (Morgan State University) opened the afternoon session and continued the conversation about citizenship as she examined the lives of black Union widows who applied for pensions after the Civil War. Their survivor's benefits depended on an agreement that they and their Union soldier husbands were citizens; their benefits and status as citizens also turned on questions about their marital status and sexuality in a way that men's pensions did not. Next, **Rebecca Zietlow** (University of Toledo College of Law) discussed Rep. James Mitchell Ashley, an anti-slavery politician who also supported increased rights for "free" (white) labor and a more egalitarian version of liberty that addressed both racial and economic discrimination. **Mark Summers** (University of Kentucky) gave the final presentation, a lively history of the Andrew Johnson impeachment in which he argued that while Johnson remained in office, the impeachment effort was enough to effectively neutralize him.

The day concluded with all the speakers taking questions from the audience. Occasionally, other audi-

ence members answered questions too! It was, as is usual at a USCHS symposium, a lively and thoughtful exchange among the speakers and between them and audience members.

Most of the sessions are now available on c-span.org. Search for "Capitol Historical Society symposium" to watch them online.



Symposium co-director Paul Finkelman moderated the final Q&A session with all the speakers. Seated, from left: Mark Summers, Jack Chin, Vernon Burton, Rebecca Zietlow, Brandi Brimmer, and Alysa Landry.



Audience members line up to ask questions after one of the speakers concluded a presentation.



C-SPAN camera crews were present to record most of the talks.

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
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For more information please contact Laura McCulty Stepp, VP, Membership and Development at 202-543-8919 x22.

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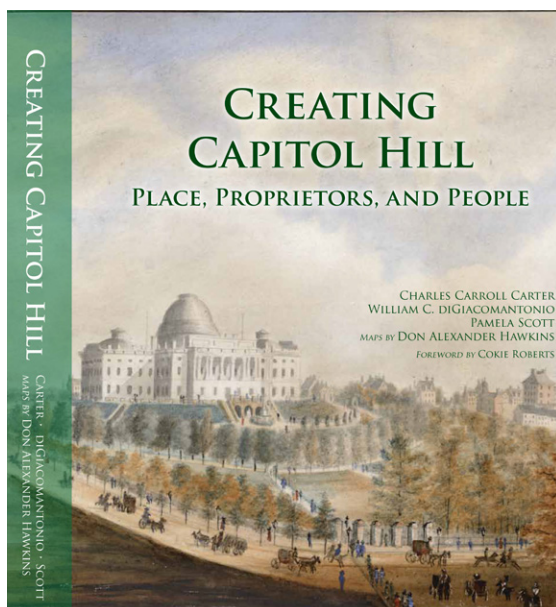
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MARKETPLACE



CREATING CAPITOL HILL: PLACE, PROPRIETORS, AND PEOPLE

This book recounts Capitol Hill's convoluted and fascinating history. In four essays the story is revealed, recounted, and unraveled. The three essayists, Charles Carroll Carter, William C. diGiacomantonio, and Pam Scott, have succeeded in bringing a fresh perspective to the distinct, yet strongly linked, building blocks of this historic narrative. Included are many never before seen maps, paintings, and photographs that shed abundant light on the pre-Civil War history of Capitol Hill. Softcover, 2018, 304 pp.

#003030 \$29.95 Members \$26.95

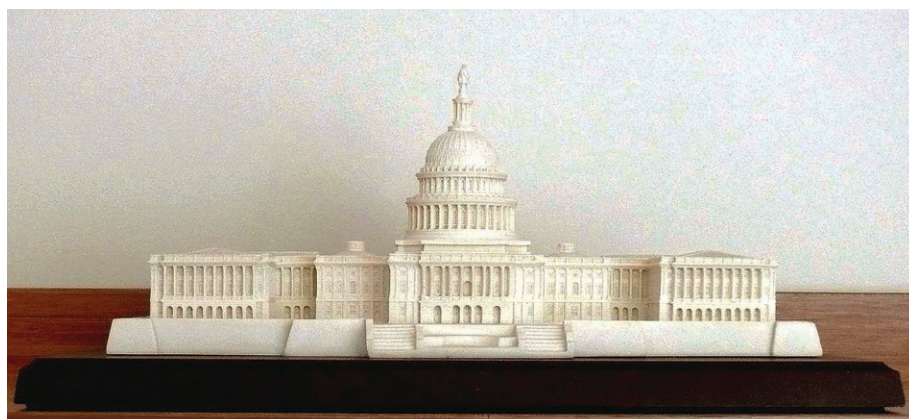
ALSO AVAILABLE IN HARDOVER!

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TO MAKE BEAUTIFUL THE CAPITOL

Detailed history of renowned Italian-born artist Constantino Brumidi's masterful work "making beautiful" the walls and ceilings of the United States Capitol over a span of 25 years starting in 1854. Paperback, 2014, 137 pp.

#002757 \$30.00 Members \$27.00

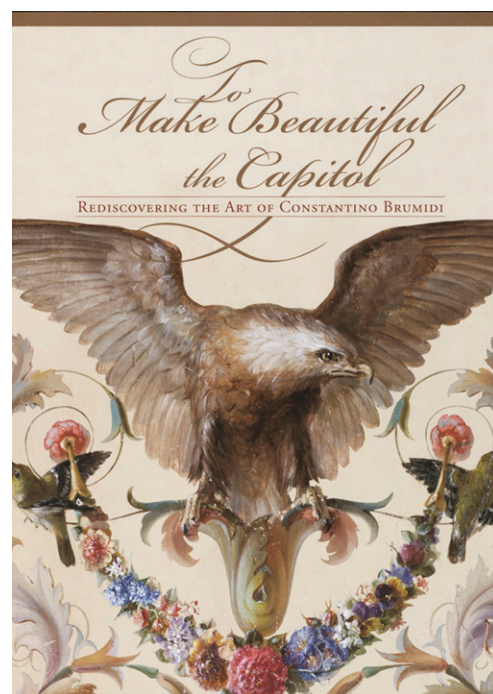


MARBLE CAPITOL REPLICA

Beautifully detailed replica of the Capitol is crafted from marble of the east front steps removed during renovations and ground to a fine powder. The mixture is then added to resin for exquisite detail.

(9 1/4" x 5 2/3" x 3 3/4")

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MARKETPLACE

2018 MARBLE SNOWFLAKE ORNAMENT

This beautifully crafted 24 kt. gold finished ornament features the marble removed from the east front steps in the 1995-96 renovations, ground into a fine powder and combined with fine resin to form a cameo of the United States Capitol dome surrounded by an octagonal marble frame.

(3" x 3") Made in America!

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Two-dimensional holiday enamelled 24 kt. ornament features the Bulfinch Dome and the Capitol Dome designed by Thomas U. Walter as it appears today in the foreground. (3" x 3")

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2019 "WE, THE PEOPLE" CALENDAR

Our award-winning "We the People" calendar showcases the talents of local professional photographers. The calendar presents 12 color photographs featuring interior and exterior images of the Capitol and Washington, DC monuments. It has become a treasured collectible to many because of the annual themes commemorating historic events in American history. The 2019 edition commemorative theme is "Steaming into History" and contains historic daily factoid notations from 200 years ago.

(Available with lip for custom programs. Contact Vincent Scott @ 202-543-8919, ext. 33).

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