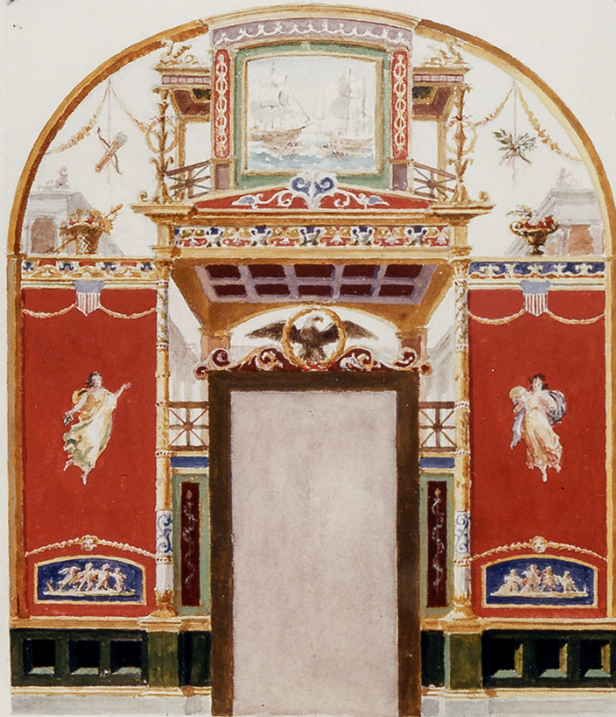


THE CAPITOL DOME



Brumidi and Pompeian Inspirations
Alan Cranston and *Mein Kampf*
John Quincy and Louisa Catherine Johnson Adams



From the Editor's Desk

In March 2018, a USCHS lunchtime lecture audience was held in thrall by Dr. **Elise Friedman's** presentation, "Pompeii on the Potomac." The title is a riff on other tongue-in-cheek tributes to Washington as "Paris on the Potomac," "Hollywood on the Potomac," and even "Babylon on the Potomac." But Pompeii? The Roman city destroyed by fire and ash in 79 C.E. gave its name almost 1800 years later to the style that ornaments the Senate Appropriations Room (S-127). Dr. Friedman's research opened a window onto Constantino Brumidi's uniquely compelling decorative program for one of the most important but least accessible working spaces in the Brumidi Corridors. Unlike most of our lunchtime lectures, C-SPAN was not able to record her presentation, so we are especially pleased to make her findings available to a larger audience through these pages. We hope readers will enjoy walking hand-in-hand with a trained archeologist as she unearths the buried sources for Brumidi's masterpiece.

The remaining two articles in this issue illustrate episodes that dramatically affected the trajectory of a member of Congress's life of public service, or that cast a new perspective on a member's more conventional biographical treatment.

First, **Lorraine Tong** describes a biographical sidelight easily overshadowed in the longer life narrative of Sen. Alan Cranston. Many years before representing California in the U.S. Senate (1969–93), Cranston was a budding young journalist who filed eye-witness reports from his foreign desk assignments in Europe from 1936 to 1938. Upon his return, Cranston deployed his formidable powers of analysis and German-language skills to provide the first American edition (abridged) of Adolph Hitler's *Mein Kampf*—one that would not leave out or whitewash the impending horrors of the Nazi state machinery and its genocidal ideology.

Cranston's edition of *Mein Kampf* was quashed

by a court injunction and ultimately (1941) impounded for copyright infringement. But by then, two years into WWII, the world had other proof of Hitler's plans for world domination. Another 60 years later, at Cranston's memorial service in San Francisco, then-Sen. Joe Biden spoke for many of his colleagues when he said that "Most of us would consider it a successful career if we did nothing other than be sued by Adolph Hitler."

Ryan Conner accesses rarely tapped primary sources to provide pendant perspectives by one of American history's legendary political couples on three distinct episodes in congressional history. As a U.S. senator, secretary of state, and finally as a single-district representative from Massachusetts, John Quincy Adams kept minute and candid records of his break with the Federalists in 1808, on the Missouri Compromise in 1820, and on his antislavery petition campaign of the 1830s. His wife, Louisa Catherine Johnson Adams, recorded her own observations on the same topics, during the same periods. But the difference between their writings' viewpoints, tones, and intended audiences are stark and revealing. Nothing better highlights those differences than the title of Louisa's autobiography, "Adventures of a Nobody": it is both playfully ironic and heart-renderingly confessional at the same time. Nobody who knows anything about John Quincy would suspect his robust self-esteem capable of subscribing his name to such a memoir.

Like the other articles in this issue, Conner's piece challenges readers to appreciate different styles—of art, political activism, and introspective writing—in new and complex ways.

William diGiacomantonio

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UNITED STATES CAPITOL
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Cover: Constantino Brumidi's 1856 watercolor sketch—now housed in the archives of the Architect of the Capitol—proposed a Pompeian style and narrative scheme to decorate room S-127 in the Capitol. Montgomery Meigs chose Brumidi's proposal over that of James Leslie. For much more about Brumidi's work in S-127, see Elise Friedland's article on page 2 of this issue. (*Image courtesy Architect of the Capitol*)

POMPEII ON THE POTOMAC: Constantino Brumidi's Nineteenth-Century, Roman-Style Murals for the Naval Affairs Committee Room in the United States Capitol

BY ELISE A. FRIEDLAND



Fig. 1. View of S-127, looking northeast, U.S. Capitol

INTRODUCTION

Constantino Brumidi, the Italian-born painter turned U.S. citizen, is perhaps best known for his *Apotheosis of George Washington* in the Rotunda of the United States Capitol. This famous fresco, however, was one of the artist's later works. Brumidi's artistic impact on the interior décor of the Capitol appears earlier in the Senate extension wing, where "The Artist of the Capitol" designed and painted his second full-scale mural cycle for the walls and ceiling of the original Naval Affairs Committee Room (now the Senate Appropriations Committee Room, S-127; fig. 1). Executed between the fall of 1856 and the spring of 1858, the murals of S-127 are quite different from those of any other room decorated by Brumidi in terms of both their coherent classical style and narrative. Stylistically, the images echo first-century Roman wall painting, and it is well-known that one of Brumidi's nine maidens, the figure holding a flag on the wall panel just inside the entrance from the adjacent room (S-128), was modeled directly on a floating Maenad from the House of the Ship (Casa del Naviglio) at Pompeii (figs. 2 and 3).¹ However, because no thorough iconographic study of the room has been undertaken until now, the extent of Brumidi's direct borrowing from Pompeian and other Roman wall painting has been unknown. It was not certain whether he adopted and adapted multiple, specific ancient models throughout the room or merely created subjects "in the Pompeian style." How

would Brumidi, then living in America, have had access to the subjects and motifs of particular Pompeian paintings to be able to transform and transfer them onto the Capitol's walls? What messages did Brumidi and his patron, Montgomery Meigs, the supervising engineer of the Capitol, convey with the Pompeian style and Graeco-Roman figures of this mural cycle?

A recent and ongoing study of the mural cycle in S-127 has provided many insights regarding Brumidi's inspiration, design, and subjects. Though the complex iconographic program and historical context of its model continue to be studied, we can now understand far more about this early decorative undertaking of the patron-artist team, Meigs and Brumidi. First, it is now clear that Brumidi borrowed extensively from Pompeian wall paintings that were (in many cases) discovered at the site in the early nineteenth century or were on display in the Real Museo Borbonico in Naples (today the Naples Archaeological Museum). In addition, we now have identified the source that provided models not only for the figures themselves, but also for the overall design of the walls. Brumidi consulted an enormous "elephant folio," owned by the Library of Congress and originally printed in Berlin between 1828 and 1829. This volume, by the German decorative painter Wilhelm Zahn, reproduced drawings of Roman wall paintings, recorded as they were discovered at Pompeii and other sites around the Bay of Naples. Finally, notes from Meigs's journal about his goals for commissioning murals for the interior of the Capitol in general but also about the completed paintings in S-127 in particular show that, in addition to their aesthetic goals "to make beautiful the Capitol,"² Meigs and Brumidi were striving to position the nation's new hall of government, the Capitol, among its European architectural peers. With this echo of Roman wall painting and mythology decorating the walls of the epicenter of American legislature, Meigs and Brumidi continued the Founding Fathers' links between America and Rome and their reliance on public art as a tool for writing the history of the still-new nation.

BRUMIDI'S MURALS FOR THE NAVAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE MEETING ROOM

Constantino Brumidi began work at the Capitol with his first murals in early 1855 and was soon put on the payroll. On 20 August 1856, a watercolor design he had submitted for the murals in the Naval Affairs Committee room (S-127) was approved by Montgomery Meigs, and Brumidi began to coordinate a team of artists and decorative painters who worked alongside him to execute the decora-



Fig. 2. Constantino Brumidi, *floating maiden with flag*, c. 1857, S-127, U.S. Capitol



Fig. 3. *Floating Maenad*, 1st c. A.D., House of the Ship, Pompeii

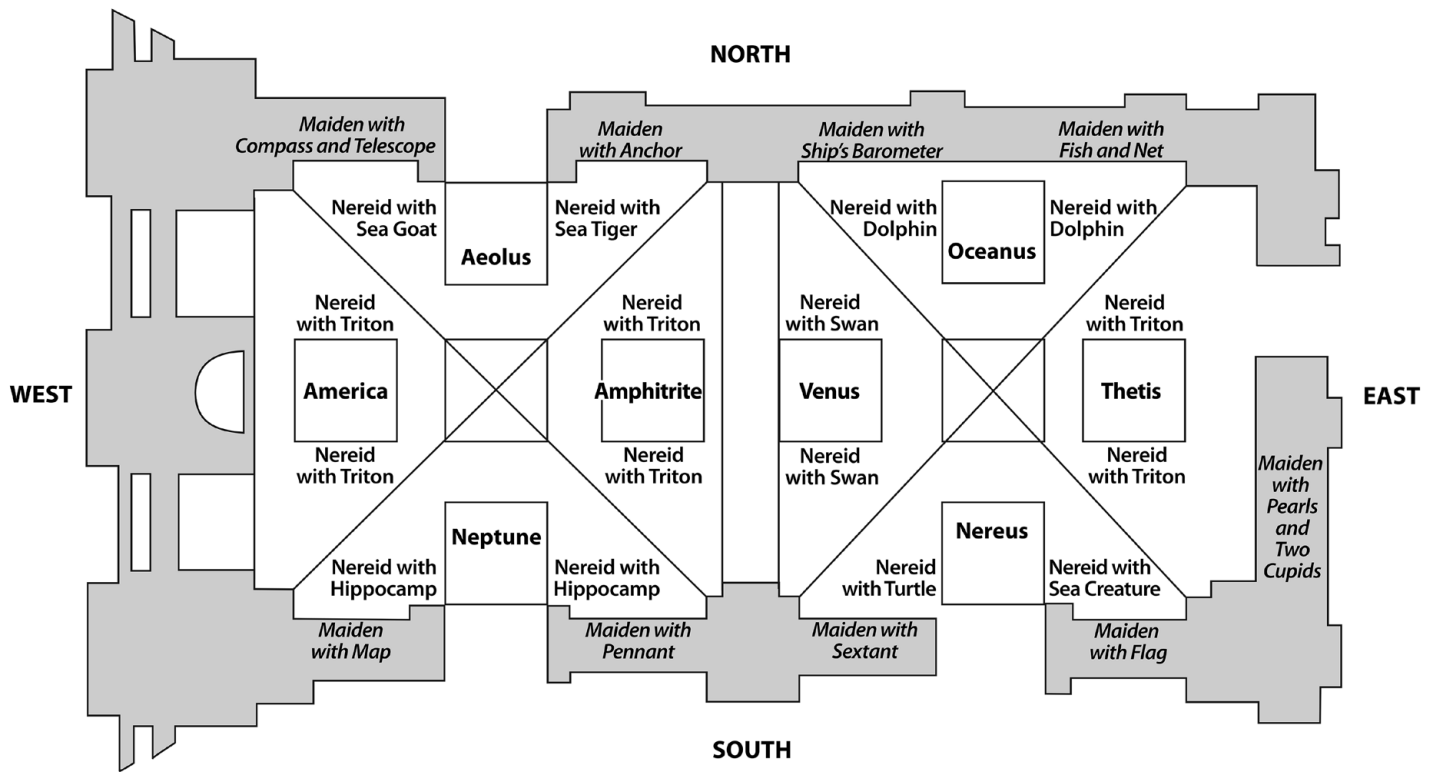


Fig. 4. Diagram of S-127 with narrative scheme of ceiling and walls

tive scheme of the room. The rectangular room planned to house the Naval Affairs Committee is located in the northwest area of the Senate wing; it was accessible both from the wide North Corridor and from the West Corridor. Brumidi's painting scheme responded to the layout of the room with its four doorways: two in the south wall from the adjoining room S-128; one on its north wall off the North Corridor; and one on its east wall from the West Corridor (now a window). The ceiling of the rectangular room was partitioned into two square bays, each subdivided with groin vaults. These groin vaults create four curved, triangular segments whose points join at the center of the bay above each half of the room (figs. 4, 5, and 6). This architectural layout left Brumidi ample wall-and ceiling-space in which to create a mural cycle whose narrative program related to the maritime focus of the room's occupant, the Naval Affairs Committee.³

On the walls, Brumidi surrounded members of the Naval Affairs Committee with nine blue panels, at the center of which appeared floating maidens, holding contemporary attributes related to the sea and seafaring. Beginning in the southeast corner and proceeding clockwise around the room, these figures hold a flag (see fig. 2), sextant, pennant, map, compass and telescope, anchor, ship's barometer, fishing line, fish, and net, and, on the eastern wall, pearls (see fig. 1). At least two of these maid-

ens hold items that specifically reference their American context: both the flag and the pennant are red, white, and blue. Brumidi arranged the figures to highlight the doorways leading into the room. On the long south and north walls, these maidens serve as pendants, who face one another and flank the doorways (though the entry on the eastern end of the north wall is a false door). The short west wall contains windows, so there was no wall space for painted panels; however, the opposite east wall had one off-center entrance, and Brumidi took advantage of this larger wall space to depict the only group, the floating maiden holding pearls flanked by two flying putti, all facing the doorway. Though the references to the marine realm were relegated to the objects held by the various floating figures, the flat, expansive blue backgrounds of the walls added an appropriate aquatic feel. While it is tempting to interpret this color also as "American blue" added by Brumidi, it is important to note that blue backgrounds, though less common than red, black, and yellow, did occur in Pompeian wall painting already uncovered at the time.⁴

Above each pair of flanking panels and their doorways on the north and south walls as well as at the tops of the east and west walls were lunettes (fig. 1). For these, Brumidi designed architectural frames that surrounded rectangular panels, meant to be



Fig. 5. Constantino Brumidi, view of eastern groin vault: (clockwise from upper left) Oceanus, Thetis, Nereus, and Venus, c. 1857, S-127, U.S. Capitol

filled with paintings of episodes from U.S. naval history, including the War of 1812. We know from Meigs's journals that the painter George R. West, who had been commissioned to paint these, felt unappreciated and was dissatisfied with his pay, so he quit, and his scenes were later removed. Though one was filled in with architecture and bronze trophies by Camillo Bisco, the majority of these panels remain blank to this day, so that the room's mural decoration was never fully completed.⁵

The mural cycle culminates on the ceiling, where seven Graeco-Roman aquatic deities and a female personification of America oversee the maidens floating on the blue wall panels below. Here, Brumidi makes his main statement about America and the committee room's connection to naval affairs. Each deity or personification inhabits a painted, labeled niche, centered in one of the quadrants of the two groin vaults of the ceiling, and each is flanked by two attendants (see figs. 4–7). Gods are accompanied by various sea animals like dolphins, sea tigers, and sea horses, all with Nereids (sea nymphs) atop their backs. Goddesses are attended by Tritons (mermen), also ridden by Nereids, except for Venus, who is surrounded by swans. Brumidi positioned male deities around the sides of the room and created a line of powerful goddesses down the center that culminate in the personification of

America (see fig. 4). The eastern vault is flanked on the north by Oceanus, primordial Titan god of water, and on the south by Nereus, the old man of the sea (see figs. 4 and 5). Between Oceanus and Nereus on the far eastern end of the room is Thetis, Nereus's daughter, goddess of the sea and leader of his 50 daughters, the Nereids. Opposite Thetis and at the center of the room but still between Oceanus and Nereus, Venus, born from the ocean, stands in her shell. In the other half of the room in the western vault, Aeolus, god of the winds, is in the north (see figs. 4 and 6) with Neptune, Olympian god of the sea, in the south (see fig. 6). At the center of the room, just to the west of Venus, Amphitrite sits atop two dolphins, facing her husband Neptune to her south and with her mantle whipped up into an arc around her by the nearby wind god Aeolus to her north. The central axis of aquatic goddesses (Thetis, Venus, and Amphitrite) is completed on the western end of the room with a female personification of America, who is seated on a rock, wearing Native American dress, leaning on a bow with her left hand, clutching arrows in her right, and accompanied by a single dolphin. Here, Brumidi suggests that the maritime power of his new home country, in keeping with the Naval Affairs theme of the room, derives from a line of powerful Graeco-Roman goddesses of the sea, supported by related male marine deities.

Fig. 6. Constantino Brumidi, view of western groin vault: (counterclockwise from lower left) Aeolus, Amphitrite, Neptune, and America, c. 1857, S-127, U.S. Capitol





Fig. 7. Constantino Brumidi, *Aeolus*, c. 1857, S-127, U.S. Capitol

DESIGNING S-127: BRUMIDI'S MODELS AND WILHELM ZAHN'S 1828/9 PUBLICATION OF POMPEIAN PAINTING

Scholars have long wondered what models Brumidi used to design this extensive mural cycle, and whether he adopted and adapted specific ancient motifs or the design was only more generally “classicizing.” Brumidi clearly adapted the maidens on the walls in general from the floating figures that populated the frescoed walls in Roman homes in Pompeii and other sites around the Bay of Naples. In these elite homes and villas, single figures such as maenads (followers of the Graeco-Roman god Bacchus), victories (personifications of military successes) and other women (and sometimes men) would float at the center of otherwise plain, single-color wall surfaces (often black, red, or yellow). Reproductions of individual examples of these floating figures—removed from their broader Pompeian contexts—were extremely popular in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century decorative arts, appearing not just on walls, but on porcelain, pottery, fabrics, and even wallpaper, so the floating maidens in S-127 are part of a well-documented decorative trend.⁶

But did Brumidi base these floating women and the other motifs from S-127 on specific Roman wall paintings? Tracing the early publication of the one, already-iden-

tified Pompeian model used by Brumidi revealed the ancient origins of the design scheme for much of the room. As noted above, it was known that Brumidi based his floating maiden with a flag on a floating maenad from the House of the Ship (Casa del Naviglio) at Pompeii (see figs. 2 and 3). The quotation in S-127 is nearly exact: Brumidi echoed the ancient figure’s posture, gesture, and costume (similar wreath, bare shoulder, whirl of drapery); to Americanize it, Brumidi merely swapped the thyrsus (staff of a maenad, entwined with ivy and topped with a pine cone) for an American flag, left out the maenad’s tambourine, and changed the black background to blue. The ancient floating maenad was originally part of the larger decorative scheme of the south wall of a *triclinium* or dining room in the House of the Ship (Casa del Naviglio) at Pompeii and was discovered on 13 November 1826.⁷ While multiple nineteenth-century publications reproduce this floating maenad individually, only one book records her within the context of the entire painted wall in which she was found: Wilhelm Zahn’s “elephant” folio (named for its pages’ large height), *Die schönsten Ornamente und merkwürdigsten Gemälde aus Pompeji, Herculenum und Stabiae*, Volume 1, published between 1828 and 1829 in Berlin (fig. 8).⁸

Wilhelm Zahn, a German decorative painter, lived at Pompeii from 1825–29 and 1830–40, and drew Pom-



Pompeii 1826.

Fig. 8. Wilhelm Zahn, *Die schönsten Ornamente und merkwürdigsten Gemälde aus Pompeji, Herkulanum und Stabiae: nebst einigen Grundrissen und Ansichten nach den an Ort und Stelle gemachten Originalzeichnungen*, Vol. 1 (Berlin, 1829), pl. 13, south wall of the triclinium in the House of the Ship, Pompeii



Fig. 9. Constantino Brumidi, *eastern half of south wall*, c. 1857, S-127, U.S. Capitol

peian paintings as they were being discovered. At the site, he placed transparent paper directly on the painted walls, traced the architectural and figurative outlines, and made notes about their colors. Back in Berlin in 1828–9, Zahn, encouraged by his friend, the famous literary figure and statesman Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (who himself had visited Pompeii in 1787), published many of his drawings via color lithography in a folio of 100 plates. Lithography offered a more direct process than *intaglio* printing, since designs were traced in reverse directly onto the stones from which they were printed, rather than being etched or engraved into copper plates. Moreover, Zahn's use of color lithographs avoided previous laborious processes of hand-coloring woodblock prints or etchings, which often limited the circulation of color versions; instead, color lithography enabled the relatively efficient production of large numbers of color prints. Zahn's work for this volume and two subsequent volumes, also on Roman wall painting from Pompeii and other sites in the Bay of Naples, are central to the development of the printing technique of color lithography. *Die schönsten Ornamente* was also important in the dissemination of archaeological discoveries, and Zahn's volumes differ markedly from other contemporary publications of

Pompeii. They are distinguished by their focus on reproductions of paintings, mosaics, specific motifs from these two-dimensional media, and most importantly *color*. In contrast to other nineteenth-century publications, which regularly included extensive narrative regarding the sites and material culture discovered, Zahn's only text was a brief, one-to-two-page, bilingual (German and French) listing of the works in each folio that provided titles or identifications of subjects, listed known findspots and discovery dates, and—tellingly—described the coloration of specific parts of each subject.⁹

Close comparison of the walls of S-127 with Zahn's drawing of the south wall of the dining room from the House of the Ship (Casa del Naviglio) at Pompeii in which the floating maenad appears shows that Brumidi adopted the decorative scheme for the walls of the Naval Affairs Committee Room directly from Zahn's drawing—and from the layout of the south wall of the triclinium in the House of the Ship (figs. 8 and 9). Like the wall at Pompeii as shown in Zahn's plate 13, Brumidi's design includes flanking floating maidens and flanking columns; for his purposes, Brumidi positions the doorways in the place of the Pompeian wall's central mythological panel representing the wedding of Zephyr and Chloris. In terms

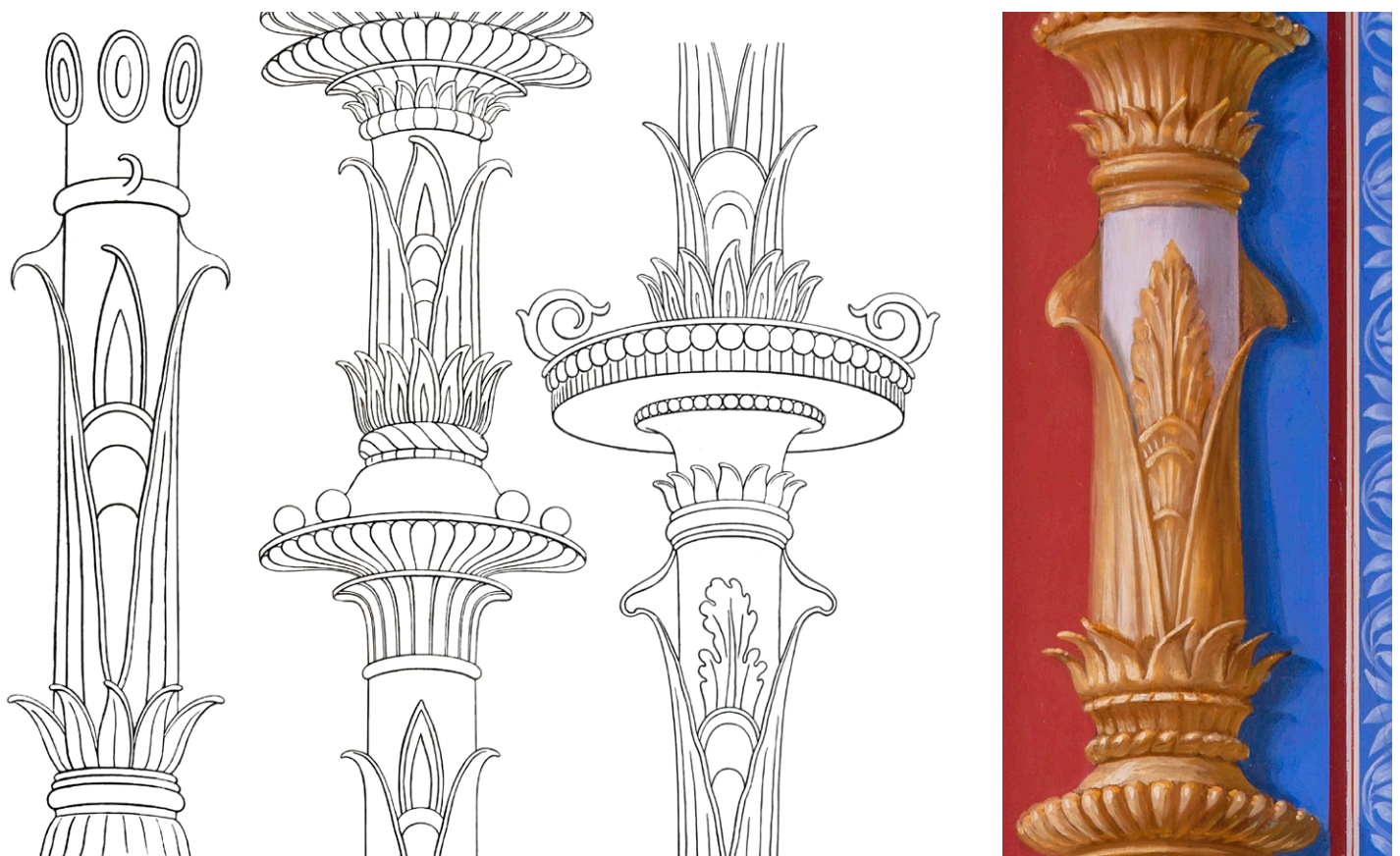


Fig. 10. Comparison of details of (right) candelabra from S-127, U.S. Capitol, with Zahn, *Die schönsten Ornamente*, Vol. 1, pl. 16, study of a candelabrum from the south wall of the triclinium in the House of the Ship, Pompeii



Fig. 11. Comparison of (above) Zahn, *Die schönsten Ornamente*, Vol. 1, pl. 88, Victory seen by Zahn in the Real Museo Borbonico in Naples, and (below) Constantino Brumidi, floating maiden holding pennant, c. 1857, S-127, U.S. Capitol



of decorative motifs, as on the Pompeian wall, Brumidi also surrounds his panels of floating figures with vegetal borders, topping them at their outer corners with animals (though Brumidi replaces the fantastical beasts visible in Zahn's plate with swans). Finally, Brumidi similarly punctuates these panels at the bottom outer corners with floral motifs (though Brumidi uses cornucopia filled with flowers).

Further study of Zahn's Volume 1 shows that, in addition to adopting his decorative scheme for the walls of S-127 from Zahn's plate 13, Brumidi adopted and adapted numerous motifs from this famous publication. For example, Brumidi's columns in S-127 are adaptations of the columns depicted in plate 13 and drawn in further detail by Zahn in plate 16 (fig. 10): the segment drawn by Zahn on the left become the bottom portion of Brumidi's columns, while the portion drawn by Zahn on the right is used by Brumidi as the segment second-from-the-top. Brumidi also modeled other floating figures on drawings by Zahn. For instance, Brumidi's floating maiden holding a pennant is adapted from Zahn's plate 88, which depicts a victory holding a trophy that Zahn saw in the Real Museo Borbonico (though he did not record her findspot; fig. 11). Though Brumidi removed the figure's wings, clothed her, replaced the trophy with a pennant, and altered the tilt of her head and position of her hands slightly, overall he maintains the Roman Victory's posture and gesture. Brumidi is also faithful to Zahn's description of her color by clothing the American floating maiden in green drapery and applying the red of the trophy described by Zahn to the mantle that floats around her. Brumidi's borrowings extend beyond the floating figures on the walls: he even modeled some of his figures on the ceiling after drawings by Zahn. One example is the Nereid riding a sea panther at Aeolus' left side (visible at the right in fig. 7), which is based directly on Zahn's plate 64, depicting a painting that Zahn saw in the Real Museo Borbonico, which we know today is from the Villa Arianna at Stabiae (fig. 12).

While this art historical connection between Brumidi and Zahn's first volume of *Die schönsten Ornamente* is convincing, further support comes from an important archival source. Montgomery Meigs, in his journal entry of 22 June 1858, notes his admiration of Brumidi's completed murals in S-127, and he even compares Brumidi's paintings to those of a specific book on Pompeian wall painting, citing the artist/author's last name: "The Pompeian rooms are better than the examples from Pompeii in the book of _____." Until recently, however, this last name was unknown, because Meigs kept his journals in Pitman shorthand, which was a new invention at the time. Though portions of Meigs's journals related to



Fig. 12. Comparison of (left) *Nereid Riding Sea Panther*, 1st c A.D. Villa Arianna, Stabiae and (right) Zahn, *Die schönsten Ornamente*, Vol. 1, pl. 64, *Nereid riding a sea panther seen by Zahn in the Real Museo Borbonico in Naples*

his work on the Capitol have been transcribed, until this recent study of S-127 the last name of that artist/author remained undeciphered, because the transcriber was not familiar with the various nineteenth-century artists/authors who had published volumes on Pompeii, and so the shorthand made no sense to him. A recent re-evaluation of Meigs's entry from that day reveals that the artist/author's last name was indeed "Zan" (Pitman's is phonetic, so Meigs's characters only spell out the sound of our German artist's last name). Thus, we now know that Meigs was comparing Brumidi's completed S-127 to Zahn's volume: "The Pompeian rooms are better than the examples from Pompeii in the book of Zahn." Thus, based on iconographic evidence for the artist and archival documentation for the patron, it seems that both artist and patron knew and consulted this famous, colorful, contemporary publication of Pompeian decorative painting.

BRUMIDI AND THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS COPY OF ZAHN'S PUBLICATION

But how did Brumidi (and Meigs) have access to Zahn's lavish (and no doubt expensive) publication? It is most likely that this artist and patron team were consulting the copy owned by the Library of Congress and still in the collections to this day (fig. 13). Though we no longer have acquisition records for the Library from the first half of the nineteenth century, new research on the history of the Library of Congress' copy of Zahn's Volume 1 shows that the Library owned the volume by 1856, when Brumidi must have submitted his proposal for the room (approved by Meigs on 20 August 1856).¹⁰ Careful examination of the folio itself along with some archival research helps to reconstruct the history of the Library's copy of Zahn's

Volume 1 from publication until the time of Brumidi. From its frontispiece, we know that the copy was published in Berlin in 1829. But when did the volume make its way from Berlin to Washington?

Important information about the history of this copy of the volume comes from a blind stamp embossed on the frontispiece. This stamp reads in German, "VERTRAG VOM 13. MAI 1846" or "Contract of 13 May 1846" (referring to a convention signed on that date) and relates to what has been called "the first international copyright law." This law was established between the kingdom of Prussia and the United Kingdom and "extended British copyright privileges to imported Prussian works, at the same time reducing import duty on them."¹¹ Other members of the Prussian Customs Union soon followed suit, and we have evidence that Saxony and Brunswick participated in the convention as well. One article of the convention requires that a stamp containing the text above and a symbol established by responsible authorities be put in all books exported to the United Kingdom. The stamp in the Library of Congress copy of Zahn features the symbol of Saxony (which is not surprising, because the city of Leipzig was a major center of the German book trade in this period). Therefore, the presence of this stamp in the Library of Congress copy of Zahn's Volume 1 tells us that though it was printed in Berlin in 1829, this particular copy was exported from Saxony to the United Kingdom after 1 September 1846 (when the convention went into effect).

Two further pieces of evidence provide information about the Library of Congress' acquisition date. First, a purple stamp also on the frontispiece of the volume reads "Library of Congress / City of Washington." Not only are there plenty of parallels for this stamp being used

in books acquired by the library in the mid-nineteenth century, the name “City of Washington” is known to have been used during this antebellum period, whereas after the Civil War and especially from 1871 on the city was more commonly referred to as “Washington, D.C.” Second, and most convincingly, Zahn’s Volume 1 (and 2) do not appear in any of the published catalogs or supplements for the Library of Congress until 1849, when both volumes are recorded for the first time under the category of “Gardening, Painting, Etc.”¹² Therefore, between 1 September 1846 and 30 June 1849, the Library of Congress copies of Zahn’s Volumes 1 and 2 made their way first from Leipzig to the United Kingdom and then to America, such that they were available for Brumidi and Meigs to consult in 1856.¹³ In fact, in 1856 the Library of Congress was housed in the Capitol, making access to Zahn’s volumes even more straightforward. Though Brumidi would not have had borrowing privileges, he could have consulted the volume in the reading room, and we also know that occasionally senators requested books on his behalf.¹⁴

POMPEII ON THE POTOMAC: “A PALACE FOR THE PEOPLE”

Why would Brumidi and Meigs (who approved the artist’s design) have chosen to decorate this first highly decorated room in the Senate wing in such a coherent Pompeian style, delivered directly from the early nineteenth-century excavations on the Bay of Naples to the walls of the Capitol via a prominent German book renowned for being the first color publication of the wall paintings at Pompeii and other nearby sites? For Brumidi, this style and its motifs were most familiar both from his training at the Accademia di San Luca in Rome but also especially from his subsequent work in and around Rome. Brumidi had acquired plenty of experience implementing such Pompeian style programs during his work for the Torlonia family, decorating both their palace in Rome and the theater in their extra-urban villa.¹⁵ Thus, the Pompeian style would have been a natural decorative mode to deploy in this early, full-scale commission in the Senate wing.

For Meigs, the Pompeian style and subject matter fit perfectly with what he saw as his role as a patron of art, especially in the Capitol. First, in the tradition of Thomas Jefferson, Meigs seems to have felt a responsibility to his young country to utilize public art to cultivate American taste, American artistic technique and skill, and the cultural (and thereby political) stature of the United States. Meigs writes constantly in his journals and letters about his efforts on behalf of American art and artists, at one



Fig. 13. *Author with the Library of Congress copy of Wilhelm Zahn, Die schönsten Ornamente und merkwürdigsten Gemälde aus Pompeji, Herkulanum und Stabiae: nebst einigen Grundrissen und Ansichten nach den an Ort und Stelle gemachten Originalzeichnungen, Vol. 1 (Berlin, 1829)*

point announcing that “American art...has no sincerer friend than myself.”¹⁶ Second, Meigs was dedicated not only to advancing the art of the young United States through architecture rooted in the classical tradition (adapted to American needs and locale), but also via interior décor—and specifically decorative painting derived from ancient Rome and the resulting tradition of Italian fresco, since he had been planning to decorate the interior of the Capitol with classically-inspired murals even before he met Brumidi.¹⁷ In fact, this Pompeian style was in vogue throughout Europe during the later eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth centuries, when royalty and elite were decorating rooms of their palaces and estates with fresco cycles done in the Pompeian style.¹⁸ Brumidi’s patron, Meigs, clearly knew about this trend. Though he had not yet travelled overseas as of 1854, Meigs records in his journal that he aimed to create in the Capitol a “people’s palace”—that is, a building for the American people decorated in the style of the famous



Fig. 14. James Leslie, *proposal for S-127, 1856?*, watercolor

European palaces from Madrid to Oslo.¹⁹

We also know from Meigs's journal that he had considered not only Brumidi's proposal for the decoration of S-127 (see front cover), but another proposal from artist James Leslie (fig. 14).²⁰ A comparison of both proposals, which are fortunately still extant as watercolors, may demonstrate Meigs's discerning eye and dedication to a true Pompeian style and narrative scheme: while Leslie did maintain Pompeian tripartite division of the walls into a dado at the bottom, main central panel, and lunette at the top (just below the ceiling), his proposal utilizes a color scheme, style, figures, and narrative that are heavily influenced by the eighteenth-century Rococo style and far from the direct adoptions and adaptations employed by Brumidi. Meigs himself noted in his diary that Leslie's paintings "are more decoration," and indeed Meigs refers to Leslie along with another artist as "decorators."²¹ This evidence, both textual and artistic, seems to indicate that Meigs was an educated patron and was determined to decorate at least this room in the true Pompeian style—and that he had found in Constantino Brumidi an Italian-trained and experienced painter, capable of bringing Pompeii to the Potomac.

CONCLUSION

The recent study of S-127 offers important new insights into the design, execution, and messages of an early mural cycle in the Senate wing of the U.S. Capitol. We now know more about Brumidi's process of design through the identification of the exact publication he used as a model for the layout of the walls, specific figures, and individual motifs throughout the room. We understand the importance of the collection of the Library of Congress for both artist and patron working to complete the Capitol in the mid-nineteenth century. In addition, we have a specific example of the learned and discerning nature of Meigs as a patron of art. We also witness the use of art to shape the narrative and identity of early America: in order to "compete" on the world (European) stage, the young nation is depicted as both deriving and asserting her (naval) power and stature from that of the Graeco-Roman world.

Still, there is more work to do to further our understanding of this mural cycle's motifs, narrative, and contemporary reception. In terms of iconography and narrative, the personification of America in Native American

dress and the appearance of heads of Native Americans in the central band that divides the two bays of the ceiling offer an important window into the complex and often conflicted depictions of non-European populations in the art of the Capitol. Further background on the role of the Library of Congress and Wilhelm Zahn's volume will expand the intellectual and artistic contexts of the motifs and narrative in the room. Contemporary reactions to the room also deserve more attention, particularly in assessing the role of S-127 in the history of American interior décor. In fact, the coherent Pompeian-style and Graeco-Roman subjects of Brumidi's paintings for S-127 are some of the earliest examples (albeit in the public realm) of a new decorative trend that develops in private homes in the U.S. around the 1850s and continues well into the early twentieth century—Pompeian domestic interiors.²²



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I owe enormous thanks to both Barbara Wolanin, curator for the Architect of the Capitol emerita, and Michele Cohen, current curator, for inviting me to study and publish Brumidi's mural cycle in S-127, for sharing their deep knowledge of Brumidi and the art of the Capitol, for providing access to the murals and all of their related files, and for their warm and unfailing support. Victoria Singer, Jennifer Blancato, and Eric Paff in the Office of the Curator for the Architect of the Capitol also graciously provided all manner of assistance, and James Rosenthal and Thomas Hatzenbuehler took the gorgeous new images of the murals in S-127. I am extremely grateful to William diGiacomantonio, chief historian for USCHS, and for the support of a USCHS Fellowship that provided release time from teaching to undertake this study in fall 2017. Numerous experts from the Library of Congress assisted me in locating the original folio consulted by

Brumidi and in understanding that rare book's collection history. The results of this research would not be as rich without the help of Michael North, head of Reference and Reader Services, Rare Book and Special Collections Division; Jeffrey Flannery, head of Reference and Reader Services, Manuscripts Division; Barbara Natanson, head of Reference Section, Prints & Photographs Division; Mari Nakahara, curator of Architecture, Design and Engineering, Prints and Photographs Division; Cheryl Fox, archivist/historian of the Records of the Library of Congress; Michelle Krowl, Civil War and Reconstruction specialist, Manuscripts Division; John Cole, historian of the Library of Congress; and Janice McKelvey, Visitor Services coordinator. Dorothy Roberts, a transcriber of Pitman's Shorthand, graciously and enthusiastically assisted by reading an entry in Montgomery Meigs's journal. I have also benefited from conversations with colleagues in ancient art about my work, including Marden Nichols, Carol Mattusch, Elaine Gazda, Laetitia LaFollette, and Bettina Bergman. Barbara Wolanin, Michele Cohen, Carol Mattusch, and Marden Nichols all read drafts and offered invaluable input; any remaining mistakes, however, are my own. Financial support for research in the summer of 2017 came from a generous grant from the George Washington University Facilitating Fund.

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NOTES

1. The main publications on Brumidi and his work in the Capitol are Barbara A. Wolanin, *Constantino Brumidi: Artist of the Capitol* (Washington, DC, 1998) and Amy Elizabeth Burton, *To Make Beautiful The Capitol: Rediscovering the Art of Constantino Brumidi* (Washington, DC, 2014). For a preliminary discussion of the Pompeian influence on S-127, see Wolanin, *Constan-*

tino Brumidi, pp. 62–87. See also Carol C. Mattusch, *Pompeii and the Roman Villa: Art and Culture Around the Bay of Naples* (Washington, DC, 2008), p. 163. S-127 is also discussed in Francis O'Connor, "Constantino Brumidi as Decorator and History Painter: An Iconographic Analysis of Two Rooms in the United States Capitol," in *American Pantheon: Sculptural and Artistic Decoration*

of the United States Capitol, Donald R. Kennon and Thomas P. Somma, eds. (Athens, OH, 2004), pp. 204–219. Carol Mattusch also graciously shared her work, “The New World Discovers the Old: Brumidi, The U.S. Capitol, and The Classical Past,” a paper delivered at the symposium, “The Fourth Rome: Roman and Italian Influences on the Art, Architecture, and Culture of Washington, D.C. and the U.S. Capitol,” U.S. Capitol Historical Society, 1 Oct. 2004 (publication forthcoming).

2. For this quote from Brumidi, see Wolanin, *Constantino Brumidi*, p. 9, and Burton, *To Make Beautiful the Capitol*.

3. For more history on Brumidi’s “audition” painting and his hiring by Meigs, see Wolanin, *Constantino Brumidi*, pp. 52–59, 66–67.

4. For example, two different floating groups on the south wall of the tablinum in the House of the Dioscuri were painted against blue backgrounds: Bettina Bergmann, “A Tale of Two Sites: Ludwig I’s Pompejanum and the House of the Dioscuri in Pompeii,” in *Returns to Pompeii: Interior Space and Decoration Documented and Revived, 18th–20th Century*, Shelley Hales and Anne-Marie Leander-Touati, eds. (Stockholm, 2016), pp. 211–212, figs. 9.36–37.

5. For the incident with West and references about it in Meigs’s journals as well as the subjects of the murals, see Wolanin, *Constantino Brumidi*, pp. 68–9 and note 18.

6. For the post-antique popularity of these floating figures, see Nancy H. Ramage, “Flying Maenads and Cupids: Pompeii, Herculaneum, and Eighteenth-Century Decorative Arts,” in *Rediscovering the Ancient World on the Bay of Naples, 1710–1890*, Carol C. Mattusch, ed. (Washington, DC, 2013), pp. 162–76. On floating figures in the ancient world, see Hérica N. Valladares, “Four Women from Stabiae: Eighteenth-Century Antiquarian Practice and the History of Ancient Roman Painting,” *Antiquity Recovered: The Legacy of Pompeii and Herculaneum*, eds. Victoria Coates and John Seydl (Los Angeles, 2007), pp. 73–93, and Hérica Valladares, “Pictorial Paratexts: Floating Figures in Roman Wall Painting,” in *The Roman Paratext: Frame, Texts, Readers*, Laura Jansen, ed. (Cambridge, UK, 2014), pp. 176–205.

7. For a summary of original discoveries in the Casa del Naviglio (located in Region VI,

block 10, doorway 11/VI.10.11 in Pompeii), see Mario Pagano and Raffaele Prisciandaro, *Studio sulle provenienze degli oggetti rinvenuti negli scavi borbonici del regno di Napoli*, (Naples, 2006), p. 136. For extensive photographic documentation on the current state of the Casa del Naviglio, see “Pompeii in Pictures,” <https://www.pompeii-inpictures.com/pompeiiinpictures/R6/6%2010%2011.htm> (accessed 9 Jan. 2019).

8. Zahn also published two subsequent volumes under the same title in 1844 and 1862.

9. For a biography of Wilhelm Zahn see Alfred Gotthold Meyer, “Zahn, Wilhelm Johann Karl,” in *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie, herausgegeben von der Historischen Kommission bei der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, 44 (1898): 668–670, https://de.wikisource.org/w/index.php?title=ADB:Zahn,_Wilhelm_Johann_Karl&olid=2510231 (accessed 9 Jan. 2019). For Zahn’s publications and their contribution to color lithography, see Arnd Hennemeyer, “Wilhelm Zahns Pompeii-Publikation: eine Inkunabel der Farblithografie,” in *Maltechnik & Farbmittel der Semperzeit*, (Munich, 2014), pp. 98–123.

10. Wolanin, *Constantino Brumidi*, p. 240.

11. Jane Brown and Gregory Jones, “The English Struwwelpeter and the Birth of International Copyright,” *The Library*, ser. 7, v. 14, 4(2013):393–396.

12. Library of Congress, Catalog of the Library of Congress, 1849, p. 865.

13. These elephant folios must have survived the infamous fire of 1851, perhaps because their large size meant that they were stored in a different area than the regular collections. In a letter of 25 Dec. 1851 to Congress, Librarian of Congress John S. Meehan reports that “about twenty thousand volumes of books that were in the law room and in the two rooms adjoining the saloon of the library are safe” (as quoted in William Dawson Johnston, *History of the Library of Congress*, Volume I, 1800–1864 (Washington, DC, 1904), p. 278.

14. Letter from Edward Clark (Architect of the Capitol) to Senator Justin S. Morrill says: “When the books for Brumidi arrives [sic], I will dispose of them as you request” [AOC Letter-book 1873, pp. 247–248].

15. Wolanin, *Constantino Brumidi*, pp. 18–19.

16. For the role of Meigs as a patron of the arts, see Barbara A. Wolanin, “Meigs the Art

Patron,” in *Montgomery C. Meigs and the Building of the Nation’s Capitol*, William C. Dickinson, Dean A. Herrin, and Donald R. Kennon, eds. (Athens, OH, 2001), pp. 133–165. For the quote, see letter from Montgomery Meigs to J. Durand, 11 Oct. 1856, Capitol Extension and New Dome Letter-books, Records of the Architect of the Capitol.

17. We know from Meigs’s journals that he consulted various books on Pompeii and Raphael’s works in the Vatican and that he felt that especially the book on the Vatican loggias could serve as models for murals in the Capitol; see Wolanin, *Constantino Brumidi*, p. 52.

18. Colin Amery and Brian Curran Jr., “The Legacy of Pompeian Style,” in *The Lost World of Pompeii* (Los Angeles, 2002), pp. 169–183.

19. Meigs, 7 Nov. 1854, “our people’s palace,” *Capitol Builder*, p. 144.

20. Brumidi’s proposal in the format of a watercolor, in the archives of the Architect of the Capitol, is signed as approved by Meigs on 20 Aug. 1856 (Wolanin, *Constantino Brumidi*, p. 240). The proposal by James Leslie is mentioned by Meigs, 27 and 28 Aug. 1856, *Capitol Builder*, p. 426. It should be noted that in both of these notes, Meigs mentions that the proposal is made by Leslie along with another man, Henry Sharp, though Sharp’s role in the proposal is unclear. Three watercolor drawings signed by Leslie alone are in the Prints and Photographs Division of the Library of Congress, Unprocessed in PR 13 CN 2001:127, “Architectural and interior design drawings and prints for the U.S. Capitol by James Leslie,” (<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2010634895/>). These drawings were purchased at auction by the Library of Congress in 1998 (auction in Los Angeles on 13 February, 1998, Sale 6768, Lot 4315 in “Fine Books and Manuscripts” by California Book Auction Galleries, a division of Butterfield & Butterfield). Barbara Wolanin, then curator for the Architect of the Capitol, believed these to be the proposal by James Leslie and Henry Sharp mentioned by Meigs in his journal (27 and 28 Aug. 1856, *Capitol Builder*, p. 426), in part because the watercolors came from the collection of Charles Frederick Thomas. Thomas had served as superintendent of ironwork for the Dome of the Capitol (ca. 1857–64), and Wolanin believes that Meigs gave some of the artwork related to the decoration of the U.S. Capitol to him. (In the Butter-

field & Butterfield catalog these drawings are erroneously attributed to Thomas.)

21. Meigs, 15 May 1856, *Capitol Builder*, p. 397 (“decorators”); Meigs, 27 Aug. 1856, *Capitol Builder*, p. 426 (“more decoration”).

22. For a study of depictions of non-Europeans in the art of the Capitol, see Vivian Green Fryd, *Art and Empire: The Politics of Ethnicity in the United States Capitol, 1815–1865* (New Haven, CT, 1992; reprint, Athens, OH, 2001). For a recent study of Pompeian domestic interiors, see Marden Nichols, “Domestic Interiors, National Concerns: The Pompeian Style in the United States,” in *Housing the New Romans: Architectural Reception and Classical Style in the Modern World*, K. T. von Stackelberg and E. Macaulay-Lewis, eds. (Oxford, UK, 2017), pp. 126–152.

IMAGE CREDITS

Fig. 1. Architect of the Capitol

Fig. 2. Architect of the Capitol

Fig. 3. Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Naples, Italy; Photograph: Scala/Art Resource, NY.

Fig. 4. Adapted from Francis O’Connor (see note 1), p. 210, fig. 5

Fig. 5. Architect of the Capitol

Fig. 6. Architect of the Capitol

Fig. 7. Architect of the Capitol

Fig. 8. Rare Book and Special Collections Division, Library of Congress (image digitally enhanced for legibility)

Fig. 9. Architect of the Capitol

Fig. 10. Rare Book and Special Collections Division, Library of Congress (image digitally enhanced for legibility); Architect of the Capitol

Fig. 11. Rare Book and Special Collections Division, Library of Congress (image digitally enhanced for legibility); Architect of the Capitol

Fig. 12. Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Naples, Italy (© Vanni Archive/Art Resource, NY); Rare Book and Special Collections Division, Library of Congress (image digitally enhanced for legibility)

Fig. 13. Rare Book and Special Collection Division, Library of Congress

Fig. 14. Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress

HITLER EXPOSED:

80 Years Ago, a Future Senator and Presidential Candidate Pursued the Full Truth about Hitler's *Mein Kampf*

by Lorraine Tong

"The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing."—Edmund Burke

In 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt established the Office of Facts and Figures (OFF), a government public information office. He asked Archibald MacLeish, librarian of Congress, Pulitzer Prize winner, and presidential speechwriter, to manage OFF from the Library of Congress. It was in this Capitol Hill office in the Library of Congress Adams Building that Alan MacGregor Cranston began his public service career. The librarian hired Cranston as chief of the OFF's Foreign Language Division to set up the division and direct its policies and programs. At its peak, Cranston led a staff of 18 plus 60 translators on contract to communicate with America's foreign-speaking groups on public policy issues. A year later, OFF was combined with other agencies and merged with the Office of War Information (OWI).¹ In the years before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, there was no consensus on whether the United States should be involved in another foreign war. When the U.S. entered WWII, OWI explained to various ethnic communities the reasons America was fighting the war.

In 1944, Cranston enlisted in the Army but was not deployed. Instead he was assigned to be a writer for *Army Talk*, where his experience and skills would do the most good. Cranston's vantage point from the Library of Congress to the Capitol complex gave him a clear view of the Statute of Freedom atop the Capitol Dome and proximity to the House and Senate office buildings. These symbols

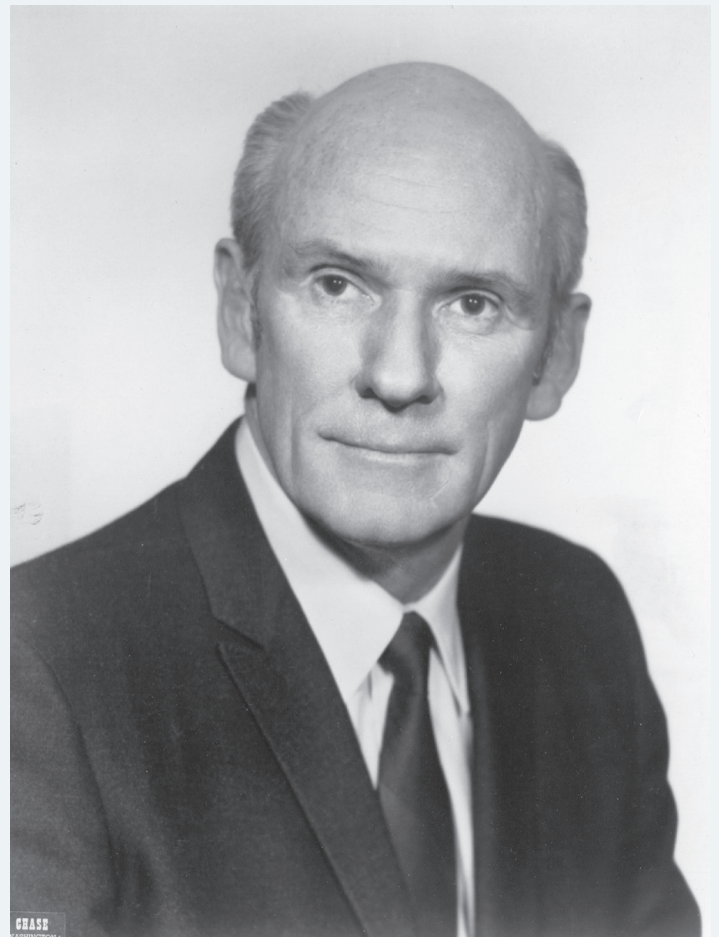


Fig. 1. Alan Cranston early in his service as a senator, c. 1969



Fig. 2. This c. 1939 aerial photograph of Capitol Hill includes the two Library of Congress buildings then in existence. The domed Thomas Jefferson Building appears below the Capitol and its grounds. The John Adams Building, then known as the Annex, appears just below it; it housed the U.S. Copyright Office and, later, Archibald MacLeish's Office of Facts and Figures (OFF).

of democracy must have been sources of inspiration to draw him back over two decades later. After spending years in his beloved California, Cranston returned to Capitol Hill as a United States senator representing California (fig. 1). Of the 24 years he served in the Senate (1969–1993), he was elected as the Democratic whip for 14. His office initially was located in the Russell Senate Office Building and subsequently moved to the Hart Senate Office Building. As whip, he had the privilege of having an additional leadership office in the Capitol with a direct view of the Washington Monument. In 1984, he ran on a peace and jobs platform but was unsuccessful as a Democratic candidate for president. At his core, Cranston believed passionately that nuclear weapons were impractical, unacceptably risky, and unworthy of civilization. Working tirelessly to abolish nuclear weapons globally

until his death, he founded the Global Security Institute (GSI) in 1999. GSI continues Cranston's life-long mission to create a nuclear-free, just, humane, and peaceful planet for this and future generations.²

A little-known and long-forgotten episode sparked Cranston's dedication to public service 80 years ago. As a 24-year-old foreign correspondent recently returned from Europe, he made a stunning discovery about Adolf Hitler's plans for Europe. He took immediate action to expose the full measure of Adolf Hitler's evil ideology laid out in *Mein Kampf*. In response, Hitler's American publisher filed a copyright infringement lawsuit. Ironically, the U.S. Copyright Office, where Cranston registered his application for copyright in 1939, was then housed in the Adams Building—where Cranston worked for the OFF during WWII (fig. 2).



Fig. 3. This photograph of Alan Cranston racing while attending Stanford University (c. 1936) still hangs on the wall of the Cranston family home.

Cranston and Hitler: An Intersection of Lives

Alan Cranston was born on 19 June 1914 in Palo Alto, California. Nearly 6,000 miles away in that same year, 25-year-old Adolf Hitler began serving in the 16th Bavarian Reserve Infantry Regiment of the German army. 1914 also marked the year WWI began. Cranston and Hitler could not have been more different. Their upbringing, temperament, values, and ideology were a study in stark contrasts, yet their lives were destined to intersect.

Hitler's childhood and youth were not ideal, stable, or comfortable. He had aspired to be an artist but was rejected by an art school and became nearly destitute when he lived in Austria. After his army service, he became politically involved in the overthrow of the German government. Hitler was tried and sentenced for his role in the Beer Hall Putsch of 1923, but only served nine months of his five-year sentence. It was in Lands-

berg prison that he wrote *Mein Kampf*.

He originally named it *Four and a Half Years Struggle Against Lies, Stupidity and Cowardice* but was persuaded by the publishing company's manager that a shorter title would be more marketable; the result was *Mein Kampf* (English translation: *My Battle*). Hitler's manuscript was originally written in two volumes. The first volume (1925) was subtitled *Eine Abrechnung (A Reckoning)*, and the second volume (1927) was *Die Nationalsozialistische Bewegung (The Nazi Movement)*. The volumes were then combined into one book, *Mein Kampf*. It is perverse irony that the German government that he sought to overthrow essentially financed the time, solitude, room, and board for Hitler to write his manifesto, which would become known as The Nazi Bible. It was the blueprint for him to secure supreme power and the rise of the Third Reich for world domination.

Mein Kampf became a best seller by 1933, the year Hitler became chancellor of Germany. Once nearly destitute, Hitler enjoyed skyrocketing book sales commensurate

with the increased power he wielded. Eventually, *Mein Kampf* made Hitler a millionaire. By 1939, Hitler had already begun executing the plans he spelled out in *Mein Kampf*.

Cranston had grown up in what is now Silicon Valley in California with his father William, mother Carol, and sister Ruth Eleanor. A brother had died before he was born. William Cranston's real estate business suffered as a result of the 1906 San Francisco earthquake and then again with the Great Depression. However, his fortunes improved, and he provided Alan with a comfortable and happy childhood enjoying life in a home with a farm and acres of velvet green meadows where he thrived under the California sun and the serene vista. Here, he grew to love nature and later became a champion of preserving the environment for generations to come. He was close to his supportive parents and sister and shared a love of travel that included trips to several European countries while he was in his teens. Cranston developed a passion for track and field, adventure, and journalism. A voracious reader, he also showed an early talent for writing. His dream was to become a foreign correspondent, which he envisioned would be a glamorous life full of adventure. He began filing stories for the school and local newspapers while still in his early teens. He grew up idolizing his father's good friend, Fremont Older, a pioneer in journalism in California. The Cranston family had a wide range of friends, including writers and creative people from all walks of life, so young Alan was exposed to a diversity of views. He was also a track star at Stanford University (fig. 3), where he clocked in at 9.9 seconds for the 100-yard dash and 48 seconds for the 440. He was fast but he missed making it to the Summer Olympics. He resolved to work harder and gained greater discipline which was to serve him well for the rest of his life. He maintained that discipline later in life and set a world record in the 100-yard dash for seniors at 55 years old (12.6 seconds). He was called the fastest man in the Senate.³

Cranston honed his marketing skills at Stanford by fundraising for the campaign of a non-sorority student in an election for prom queen. He hired an airplane service to skywrite her name. The stunt, unusual for its time, was a tremendous attention-getter and broke fundraising records. However, their success only served to the rally their opponents, so they went all out even more aggressively to raise funds. Unfortunately, Cranston's candidate lost the election. Still, it showed that Cranston wasn't afraid to try something new and demonstrated a flair for marketing. He was fast on the track and also easily made his deadlines while reporting for *The Stanford Daily*.

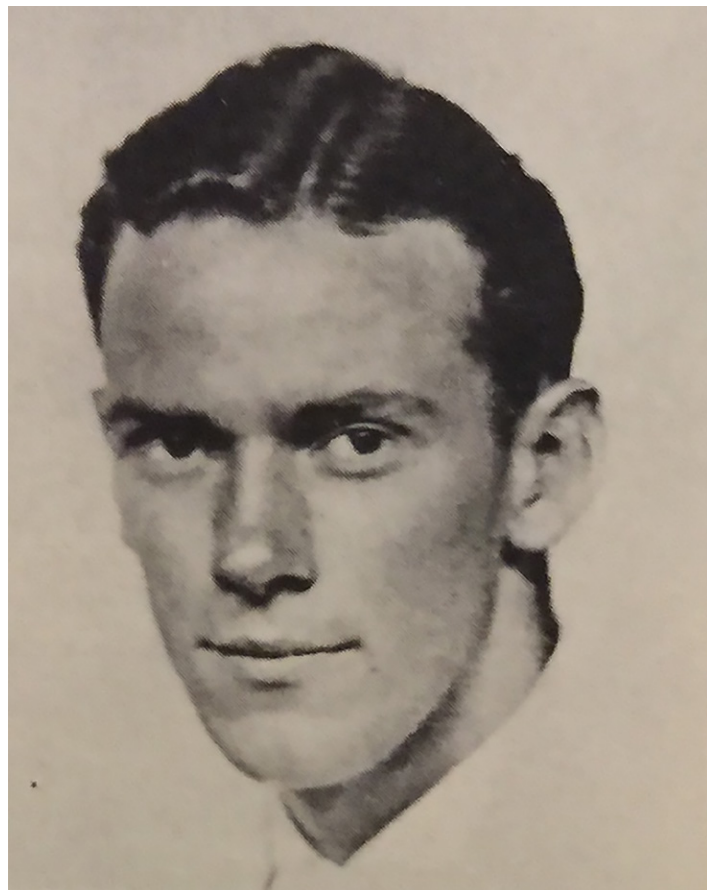


Fig. 4. Cranston's 1936 Stanford University graduation picture

After graduating from Stanford in 1936 (fig. 4), Cranston was hired by the International News Service (INS), a news wire service that was part of the William Randolph Hearst media empire. INS was later merged with UPI. He traveled to Europe and filed reports from Ethiopia, Rome, and London covering Italy's longtime fascist dictator Benito Mussolini and the rise of Adolf Hitler. The increasing power of Hitler was especially disturbing to him because of his eyewitness experience: he had toured Europe, including Germany, with his family and had spent a semester of study in Germany mingling and getting to know Germans in 1934. His travels enhanced a working knowledge of the language, including reading *Mein Kampf* in its original German. In addition to German, Cranston had also studied Spanish and French during college and spent a summer studying at the University of Mexico. Cranston studied at Pomona College in California (June 1932 to December 1933) before transferring to Stanford in January 1934.

One night on the streets of Munich, Cranston got a clear look at Hitler—close enough to describe the chancellor as having a glazed look in his eyes. He had watched on the sidelines at one of Hitler's speeches and the

public's reaction. Hitler could talk for long stretches of time, and Cranston observed that the attention of his audience did not wane or wander at any point. Hitler's energetic speaking style exuded supreme confidence. The extreme devotion of Hitler's followers was almost religious in its fervor. Cranston sought out ordinary Germans to learn from them, to ask questions about their views of Hitler, and to understand the core of Hitler's mass appeal.

On the night of 9 November 1938 and into the next day, widespread violence was orchestrated and committed against Jews in Germany after a Jewish teenager was blamed for the assassination of a German embassy official in Paris. This horrific widespread attack on Jews was known as *Kristallnacht* (the Night of Broken Glass) because broken glass littered the streets from the debris caused by damage to over 7,000 Jewish shops, schools, homes, hospitals, and synagogues. Dozens of Jews were killed while German authorities did nothing to stop the rampage. Instead, German Jews were blamed for the very violence committed against them, and 30,000 Jews were sent to concentration camps where they died from the brutality. Subsequently, German laws made it legal to take Jewish property and livelihood, which led to the mass emigration of Jews.

Kristallnacht was the ominous harbinger of even darker times ahead. While he was convinced his profession was a noble one, to report the truth to the public, Cranston came to see its limitations. He wanted to make things happen, not watch silently with frustration, unable to take part to make a difference. He wanted to act rather than react to injustice. He determined to become involved in American politics or government in some way. Even as a teenager, he had written in his diary, "I want to make a real dent in the world."⁴

It was time to come home to America.

America's Dilemma: Isolationism or Interventionism

What did Americans really know about Adolf Hitler and Nazi Germany, and what were their views about the possibility of another European war? There was no consensus on whether the United States should fight in another European conflict if tensions deteriorated. Isolationists and interventionists held widely divergent opinions that were influenced by myriad concerns and domestic issues, including the struggle to recover from the Depression. Economic hardship contributed to an America-first mentality tempered by aversion to foreign conflicts and mem-

ories of the high cost of WWI in both lives and treasure. Some believed war was inevitable and that America would eventually be drawn again into the European arena. Moreover, though Hitler's anti-Semitism was not new, it became harder to ignore the blatant and increasing persecution of Jews. The 1935 Nuremberg Laws officially barred Jews from German citizenship and institutionalized the legal definition of who was a Jew.

Roosevelt was preoccupied with domestic issues such as the New Deal and the economy as Americans were still digging out of the Depression. On 5 November 1940, Roosevelt won an unprecedented third term as president. Although he was not oblivious to the plight of those persecuted by Hitler, he had promised not to send American troops into foreign wars during the campaign. He faced even greater responsibilities and challenges in and out of the public eye than were known at the time. A master politician and statesman juggling the complex relationships with his Cabinet, Congress, labor unions, business community, the press, the public, foreign leaders, and his political adversaries, Roosevelt was not easy to read, an enigma known by some as "The Sphinx."⁵

As Hitler's strength continued unabated, the debate between American interventionists and isolationists gained traction. Interventionists sided with U.S. allies alarmed over the rise of Nazism and fascism, yet were unsure what role America could or should play. Congressional isolationists against America entering a war included Senators William Borah (ID), who served on the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Burton Wheeler (MT), and Gerald Nye (ND). Isolationists in the House included Representatives Hamilton Fish (NY), Dewey Short (MO), and Karl Mundt (SD). Roosevelt's immediate predecessor, former President Herbert Hoover, was vocal about his views. In August 1939, only a month before Germany invaded Poland, Hoover reminded the public in vivid detail of the horrors of WWI. In an article, "Shall We Send Our Youth to War?" he stated in part:

We were actually at the front in this war for only a few months, but it cost us the lives of 130,000 men. It has cost us 40 billions of dollars. A large segment of our people has already been impoverished for a quarter of a century. And the end is not yet. We may need to go to war again. But that war should be on this hemisphere alone and in defense of our fire-sides or our honor. For that alone should we pay the price.⁶

Stunning Discovery

Cranston came home to New York City in time for Christmas in 1938. At Macy's his attention was drawn to a book display featuring *Mein Kampf*. Curious, he picked up a copy of the English translation of the book that he had originally read in German. The American edition was noticeably thinner. Flipping through the book, he realized that the edition had been sanitized.

The revelation propelled Cranston to meet with his good friend, Hearst editor Amster Spiro, the seasoned former city editor of the *New York Journal*. Spiro, the son of East European Jewish immigrants, had been helpful to Cranston when he was job-hunting after graduation by introducing him to potential employers in the journalistic community. For some time both Cranston and Spiro had been exploring innovative ways of publishing that would offer less expensive options to American readers. Now, with this jarring discovery, Cranston immediately turned to Spiro. Together they came to the same conclusion: Hitler posed an unacceptable existential danger to the world. He must be stopped.

In 1939, Americans got their news mainly from newspapers, radio broadcasts, and magazines because television was not yet a fixture in the homes of average Americans. What would be the most expedient, effective, and economic way to alert the Americans to the Hitler danger? They devised a strategy to publish a shorter version of *Mein Kampf* translated from the original German, with annotations that would be easy to read and digest.

A sense of real urgency spurred them to action. Cranston and Spiro each brought their particular strengths to the mission. Spiro's business acumen proved essential to establish Noram Publishing Company (incorporated on 31 March 1939). He moved quickly to contract services for printing and distribution with Caslon Publication Service, Inc., and Interborough News Company.

Cranston's analytic skills, ability to read and write quickly, and laser-like focus on various tasks were all critical to achieve their goal. He consulted various editions of *Mein Kampf*, then translated, analyzed, and wrote a condensed English version with explanatory notes and



Fig. 5. On January 29, 1988, Cranston was photographed in his Senate office with a rare copy of his edition of *Mein Kampf*. Decades after its publication, Cranston had purchased this copy for \$50 from a private seller.

commentary. The Cranston edition highlighted passages from the original *Mein Kampf* that revealed the full extent of Hitler's ideology of Aryan supremacy, his chilling anti-Semitic beliefs, and his plans for world domination. For readability, Cranston boiled down Hitler's labored repetitive prose and rants, yet retained the essence and tenets of Hitler's intent. Cranston's annotations were not relegated to footnotes but were made right next to the most alarming statements. Writing at breakneck speed over eight days, he hired a battery of secretaries to produce the translation.⁷

One secretary became suspicious of the tireless tall lanky fellow who spoke rapidly with words that echoed

some of Hitler's heinous pronouncements. She reported her unease to the Anti-Defamation League (ADL). Shortly thereafter, Benjamin Epstein of the ADL visited Cranston in his apartment. Cranston quickly cleared up the misunderstanding by taking Epstein into his confidence about his purpose. Epstein, who had lived in Berlin as a student a few years earlier, unhesitatingly offered his assistance to the mission. Cranston's personal files show that Epstein introduced Cranston and Spiro to people who would lend their connections to expand distribution of the Cranston edition in San Francisco, Los Angeles, and other Western cities.⁸

The finished Cranston product was a condensed version of the original book from about 270,000 to a more digestible 70,000 words in 32 tabloid-size pages (fig. 5). The title—*Adolf Hitler's Own Book Mein Kampf (My Battle)*—was emblazoned on the cover of the publication. The cover also boldly stated that this version provided “Critical Comments and Explanatory Notes” and “Complete in this Issue....Unpublished Nazi Propaganda

Maps Exposing Hitler's 10 Year Plan for Conquest of Europe.” In cartoon style, splashes of bold red color accented the book cover showing Hitler hovering over a map of Europe—each hand holding shapes of Italy and Great Britain as if they were puzzle pieces to fit into his master plan. The Cranston edition's “Publisher's Foreword” stated:

Rival publishers have recently put two unabridged unexpurgated editions on the American market. They are bestsellers. People throughout the United States must wait months for their turn to obtain *Mein Kampf* from lending libraries. But *Mein Kampf* should be read today!

Operating on a startlingly short deadline and limited budget, Cranston and Spiro contacted as many news dealers as they could to make the case for their version and to maximize distribution. They urged news dealers to display a flyer they had provided, to draw attention to the Cranston edition.

The race against Hitler was on.

Alan Cranston's Literary Works

The Big Story (1940)

This play, based on Cranston's experiences as a journalist, was co-written with his friend Lee Falk, creator of the comic strips *The Phantom* and *Mandrake the Magician*.

The Killing of the Peace (1945)

The book is about the role of the Senate and isolationists in the failure of the League of Nations. The *New York Times* called it one of the 10 best books of 1945.

The Sovereignty Revolution (2004)

(Edited by Kim Cranston, with contributions by Jane Goodall, Mikhail Gorbachev, GSI President Jonathan Granoff, and Jonathan Schell)

This posthumous book contains Alan Cranston's vision of how sovereignty could be redefined in the twenty-first century to allow humanity to resolve challenges from international terrorism to climate change to regional wars and genocide.

Hitler's American Publisher Sues

On 10 April 1939, the Cranston edition hit the newsstands, selling for 10 cents a copy to make it accessible, affordable, and readable for greater exposure and distribution than a book might have. Not only would this edition expose Hitler but its low price could deprive Hitler his share of the 40 cents' royalty from his publisher. Half a million copies were sold in less than two weeks and plans were underway to expand distribution.

The edition attracted buyers but it also drew the anger of nefarious elements. In St. Louis, New York, and elsewhere, some newsstands selling the Cranston edition were attacked with stink bombs, and some stands were overturned. Cranston attributed these acts to Hitler's minions or other Nazi sympathizers. Rather than their intent to intimidate, the attacks proved to Cranston and Spiro that they were on the right track and striking the right chord with Nazi sympathizers. There were no other attacks to obstruct or stop the Cranston version. History tells us that at the time, Hitler was occupied with implementing the next steps in his grand plan of conquest. Hitler's army had already invaded and occupied Czechoslovakia on 15 March 1939.

Hitler's American publisher, Houghton Mifflin Company, warned Noram to cease the publication of

the Cranston edition. Noram refused. On 26 April 1939, Houghton Mifflin filed a complaint against Noram Publishing Company, Caslon Publication Service, Inc., and Interborough News Company. A copyright infringement lawsuit was filed in the Southern District U.S. Court of New York.⁹ In *Houghton Mifflin Company v Noram Publishing Company*, Houghton Mifflin contended that the Noram edition competed with the Reynal & Hitchcock version (with which it had entered into an agreement to publish a full translation of *Mein Kampf*) and would diminish the value of its edition. The law firm of Hines, Rearick, Dorr & Hammond represented Houghton Mifflin. Hoguet, Neary & Campbell, Esq. represented the defendants, Noram Publishing Company, Inc., Caslon Publication Service, Inc., and Interborough News Company.

On 14 July 1939, U.S. District Judge Edward Conger ordered a preliminary injunction against Noram. The judge cited the Cranston-translated edition's "Publisher's Foreword" as sufficient evidence on which to base his ruling. In issuing the preliminary injunction, Judge Edward Conger wrote, in part:

I am satisfied that a temporary injunction should issue. I am not unmindful of the cases cited in defendant's brief, that the court should be chary about issuing a temporary injunction; that, in effect, it amounts to an adjudication before trial and that in many cases, irreparable harm may come to a defendant, with no appreciable benefit to a plaintiff by such injunction. However, it seems to me in this case, all of the facts warrant an injunction. I am satisfied that the issuance and sale of defendant's edition is real competition to plaintiff's copyrighted book.... It appears to me that the defendant, Noram Publishing Co., knowing, or at least suspecting, the claimed copyright of the plaintiff to the book "*Mein Kampf*," attempted to take advantage of the public interest in Hitler and devised this form of pamphlet or edition, to profit by the desire of the public to read about Hitler.¹⁰

Conger enjoined Noram Publishing Company, Inc., Caslon Publication Service Inc., Interborough News Company, and the officers of Noram Publishing from "directly or indirectly publishing, printing, reprinting, translating, copying, distributing, vending or offering for sale a certain copyrighted work entitled 'Mein Kampf' by Adolf Hitler, or part of said work, and from in anywise

infringing the rights on said work" pending resolution of the lawsuit.

Noram's attorneys based their defense on technicalities. They argued that Hitler's *Mein Kampf* was in the public domain because Hitler was a stateless person when he wrote it. First, Hitler was no longer an Austrian citizen when he served in the German army during WWI and did not become a German citizen until 1932. Second, Hitler's copyright on *Mein Kampf* was registered in Austria and since Hitler's German army had subsumed Austria into the German state, the copyright no longer existed.

Only 49 days after the preliminary injunction was ordered, Germany invaded Poland on 1 September 1939—the catalyst for Britain, France, Australia, and New Zealand to declare war on Germany two days later. Two days after the outbreak of war, the United States proclaimed its neutrality. After the fall of Poland and several months' pause in warfare until 9 April 1940, Germany's offensive resumed with its invasion of Denmark and Norway. Facing the formidable, well-trained, well-pre-

For half a century, Alan Cranston
kept in his wallet the Chinese philosopher
Lao Tzu's ideal of a good leader:

A leader is best
When people barely know
That he exists,
Less good when
They obey and acclaim him,
Worse when
They fear and despise him.
Fail to honor people
And they fail to honor you.
But of a good leader,
When his work is done,
His aim fulfilled,
They will all say,
"We did this ourselves."

pared German military forces, European countries then fell like dominos with Germany's May 10 invasion of France, Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands. Later the same month, Holland and Belgium surrendered to Germany followed by Norway's surrender in June. Germany also invaded Romania and Yugoslavia that year. Italy declared war on Britain and France in June 1940. Germany began air raids on London and declared a blockade of the British Isles. As America's allies came under attack, Germany, Italy, and Japan signed a mutual defense treaty, the Tripartite Pact, on 27 September 1940. The three nations together came to be known as the Axis Powers. As Hitler ignited a conflagration across Europe, the American court finally made its ruling.

Court Decision

On 23 January 1941, 558 days after the preliminary injunction against Noram Publishing, the court's final ruling was made against Noram on the basis of copyright infringement.

U.S. District Judge Murray Hulbert presided over the consent judgment on *Houghton Mifflin Company v. Noram Publishing Company*. The court ordered the impoundment and destruction of all remaining copies of the Cranston-translated, Noram-published edition of *Mein Kampf*. Payment of damages for the plaintiff was ordered, adjudged, and decreed. Amster Spiro, who was primarily responsible for Noram's establishment and operations, was fined \$1,000. In the months prior to the final ruling, Noram Publishing's office in New York City had ceased operations and the company came to an end.

By the beginning of 1941, Hitler's plan to spread the Third Reich across the continent was well underway, yet there was still no consensus in America on Hitler and Nazi Germany. Germany's aggression continued with the invasion of Russia in June 1941. It was not until the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941 that the United States entered WWII. The day after this attack, the United States and Britain declared war on Japan.

On 11 December Germany and Italy declared war against the United States. Isolationism could not be sustained in the face of the blatant and brutal attack. Congress acted swiftly to declare war, with one lone vote cast against war with Germany. Lifelong pacifist Rep. Jeannette Rankin (MT)—the first woman to be elected to Congress, in 1916—was the only Member of Congress to vote against U.S. entrance into both WWI and WWII.

Aftermath

Noram and its officers made no profits from the Cranston edition due to its low selling price, and the expenses incurred for its printing and distribution negated any gains. Moreover, the court ordered that all unsold copies were to be destroyed. How many of these copies survived over the decades is unknown. If the court had not ruled against Noram, how many more people in the United States might have read and heeded Alan Cranston's dire warning about Hitler? Would the Cranston edition have ignited a more meaningful and impactful discussion in America to stop Hitler in the months leading to and the early days of WWII? Would more time have made it possible to marshal support from the public, the press, government officials, legislators, and other decision makers? If so, would the Cranston edition's influence have extended beyond America's borders? Would exposing the full measure of Hitler's evil ideology in this way have put him on trial in the court of world opinion and made a difference? We will never know.

Of the half million copies that were sold, we have no way of knowing how many of them survived the past 80 years. We do know for certain that at least two American citizens own original copies of the Cranston edition. Alan Cranston located and bought a copy of his own work from a private seller decades later for \$50, a remarkable markup from its original price of 10 cents. The other person who searched for and purchased a copy from a private source is the author of this article, who also worked for Cranston during his service in the U.S. Senate.



LORRAINE H. TONG was Sen. Alan Cranston's foreign policy legislative aide and advisor for eight years. Her work included nuclear arms control, human rights, and US-China-Taiwan issues. She also worked for Sen. Jacob Javits. After working in the Senate, she was an analyst for many years at the Congressional Research Service (CRS). This article and the views expressed are her own, and do not reflect or represent in any way those of CRS. Tong is the author of *Hitler on Trial: Alan Cranston, Mein Kampf, and The Court of World Opinion*.