

THE CAPITOL DOME

IN THIS ISSUE:

ICONIZATION OF THE BILL
OF RIGHTS

THE FIRST
MISS
LIBERTY

THE
CAPITOL
BRONZE
SHOP

VIGNETTES
OF THE
CAPITOL

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FROM THE EDITOR:

The Capitol Dome has stood as an architectural expression of national unity and an icon of representative government for 150 years. *The Capitol Dome* you hold in your hand has served as the United States Capitol Historical Society's quarterly newsletter for the last 53 of those years. In 2003 its first semi-annual "Special Edition" appeared. Expanding beyond the scope of a traditional newsletter, it sought to deliver the most recent, scholarly, insightful, and engaging articles possible to the Society's varied membership—all in living color. The vividly illustrated art and architecture of the Capitol have understandably occupied center stage in these pages, but readers could also expect articles on political culture, institutional history, and some of the remarkable personalities that have populated the Capitol since 1800.

As the Society's Chief Guide Steven Livengood reminded a recent audience, the history of the Capitol's additions and remodeling reflects Democracy's own bumpy journey through constant reformation towards an ever-elusive perfection.

Like the Capitol, the *Dome* stands poised to change yet again. The existence of this "Letter from the Editor" is itself a sign of those changes. Other examples that the reader will notice over time include more political history and historical narratives, some new features, and an expanded treatment of some features that already exist. "The Documentary Record," for example, will continue to show how a historical document sheds light on an episode of congressional history. But future entries will reach beyond the traditional definition of "document" to illustrate how artifacts also can be "read." "Society News" will continue to appear, but the newly relaunched USCHS website (www.uschs.org) is now the principal go-to resource for information about the Society's public programming and membership events. *The Dome's* primary purpose will be to highlight not the Society's goings-on but the Capitol's stories and their many players.

The four articles in this issue address topics that are either little known or not typically thought of in connection with the Capitol or congressional history. Richard Chenoweth opens with his imagined recreation of a statue that has not been seen in more than two hundred years. His look at "the very first Miss Liberty," which once presided over the Speaker's chair no less dramatically than the Speaker presided over the House, is a fitting sequel to his article on Latrobe's first, pre-1814 House chamber, "The Most Beautiful Room in the World?" (*The Capitol Dome*, v. 51, 3[Fall 2014]:24-39). As he did in that article, Chenoweth brings his scholar's sense and his architect's sensibilities to tracing the tradition of aesthetics behind one of the first major iconographic statements incorporated into the interior design of the Capitol—a building distinguished for its iconography.

We chose this year's quasiquibicentennial (!) of the U.S. Bill of Rights to reflect on the sesquicentennial seventy-five years ago, in the dark days immediately preceding our nation's entry into World War II. It seems a fitting occasion for addressing the various historical relevancies of one of the most important documents ever produced by Congress. Dr. Kenneth Bowling, a leading historian of the Congress that passed the first ten amendments to the Constitution, brings the story forward 150 years to show how a "Charter of Freedom" devised to solve a civil rights crisis in 1789 was co-opted to help fight a human rights crisis in 1941. Look to a future issue of the *Dome* for Bowling's follow-up investigation into the fate of the physical copies of the Bill of Rights originally sent out to the thirteen states for ratification.

Over the course of just four years, the Capitol's bronze foundry produced some of the most striking examples of mid-nineteenth-century decorative art to be seen today. Their principal difference from a display piece in a great museum like London's Victoria and Albert is that the works produced by the Capitol bronze shop are still serving the everyday functions for which they were intended—as handrails, door handles, etc. As Jennifer Blancato (from the Office of the Curator for the Architect of the Capitol) explores, the foundry's ultimate "boss" was Capt. Montgomery C. Meigs, the supervising engineer who made sure that the Capitol Extension of the 1850s and '60s showcased the very latest designs and techniques available. Guides direct the visitors' gaze upward to the cast iron Dome for proof of Meigs's success, without always considering the more quotidian evidence hidden in plain sight all around them.

Other views of the Capitol hidden in plain sight are the engravings that pass through our hands every day in the form of U.S. currency. Margaret Richardson, Collections Manager for the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, tells this story in a heavily illustrated article that includes biographical profiles of the relatively unsung engravers. Their vision is literally imprinted in transactions that take place daily by people across the globe—although readers will undoubtedly lament that they don't get to see the artwork on the \$50 bill nearly often enough!

Look to upcoming issues of the *Dome* for stories about one of the newest and most unusual acquisitions of portraiture in the Senate collection, the Republic of Texas's "legation" to Congress (1836-45), and George Washington's empty tomb in the Capitol. We hope every issue of the *Dome* finds a welcome and permanent home on your bookshelf—or if, on your coffee table, it attracts the attention and admiration of guests, we hope you will encourage them too to subscribe by becoming a member of the U.S. Capitol Historical Society.

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Cover: Detail, doors to the House Chamber. See “The Little-Known History of the Capitol Bronze Shop,” beginning on page 16, for more on the bronze elements in the Capitol.



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Fig. 1. Author's recreation drawing of the House chamber before it was destroyed in August 1814

THE VERY FIRST MISS LIBERTY: LATROBE, FRANZONI, AND THE FIRST STATUE OF LIBERTY, 1807-1814

by Richard Chenoweth, AIA

When the U.S. Capitol burned on 24 August 1814, its principal chambers were gutted and a colossal masterpiece of American neoclassical sculpture, the nation's first Statue of Liberty,¹ was completely destroyed. The Liberty is not well known because, in its brief lifetime, no artist ever stopped to record it. All that remains are descriptions in letters of its design development and its placement in the famous Hall of Representatives (also known as the House chamber in the South Wing of the Capitol [fig. 1]; today, the site of the National Statuary Hall). Architect of the Capitol B. Henry Latrobe designed the Liberty in large part by giving instructions to the sculptor Giuseppe Franzoni, who carved her in plaster. Latrobe's goal was to copy the plaster model into Vermont Marble, but the opportunity never arrived. Liberty presided over the Hall only until that summer night in 1814, in the midst of a fire so intense that even Vermont Marble would have been reduced to lime.

Latrobe was in charge of the Capitol's design and construction from 1803-1811, a period charged with idealism and allegory as well as with scandal and misfortune.² The Liberty was organic to the architectural experience of the complete House chamber—it was not an afterthought and not mere sculptural decoration. Latrobe wrote: "The Statue is indeed essential to the effect of my Architecture."³ Latrobe's and Franzoni's Statue of Liberty represents the successful culmination of a long effort by early American designers to create a monumental personification of Liberty within a major public space.

ICONOGRAPHY AND EARLY ATTEMPTS

The idea of an American symbol of freedom was not new in 1805 (the year Latrobe first mentioned in his letters the idea of a Liberty sculpture for the Hall). Since colonial times, allegorical figures of American freedom were common (fig. 2). Usually personified as a female Native American in head-dress, she was known as *Liberty*, *Freedom*, or *Columbia*. Liberty evolved toward a Greco-Roman personification in the later eighteenth century, as interest in neoclassicism and archaeology increasingly influenced the arts.

Late in 1788, French architect Peter Charles L'Enfant was asked by the New York City government to renovate its City Hall for the first session of the First Federal Congress in April 1789. (Its predecessor, the Confederation Congress, had been meeting there since 1785.) The renovated building, thereafter known as Federal Hall, had two principal legislative chambers and a second story balcony for public events. The balcony's broadside overlooked the important intersection of Broad and Wall street, with its short side aligned axially with Trinity Church at the west end of Wall Street. It was considered a state of the art facility and was the nation's first building specifically designated for federal business. Federal Hall was demolished in 1812, and in 1842 the marble Greek Revival building now on the site was built—the New York Customs House.

L'Enfant's elegant additions and renovations of the interior were well received and described in print, but were



Fig. 2. Cartoon showing American Indian maiden Liberty embracing Britannia (ca. 1780-83), by Thomas Cooley

PRINTS DEPT., BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

not recorded as pictures or engravings. He established an early standard for the hierarchy and decoration of an important federal building, which included no small degree of iconographic representation, including a sunburst pediment. L'Enfant planned for a Statue of Liberty to be placed behind the Speaker's chair in Federal Hall but there is no record that this occurred.⁴

Only two sessions of Congress met in Federal Hall, but the important Residence Act of 1790 was passed here, creating the District of Columbia. The third session of Congress met at Congress Hall, Philadelphia, in December 1790, and would remain there until the removal of the government to Washington, DC, in 1800.

The Residence Act gave the president unprecedented oversight over every aspect of the relocation of the capital, and in early 1791 George Washington asked L'Enfant to design the new federal city. L'Enfant developed a plan of radiating avenues connecting salient higher elevations interwoven with a grid of smaller streets (fig. 3). By these formal devices the plan emphasized a hierarchical and symbolic expression of the new government, particularly of the rela-

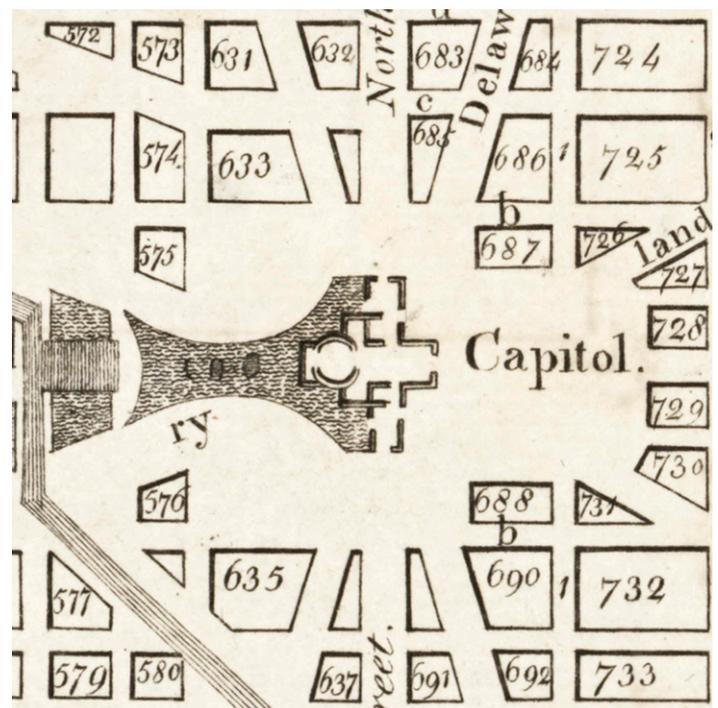


Fig. 3. Capitol Hill (detail of map by Samuel Hill, 1792)

CARTOGRAPHY DIVISION, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

tionship between the legislative and executive branches. In a letter to George Washington dated 22 June 1791, L'Enfant describes Jenkins Hill, an elevation of about ninety feet above sea level overlooking vast wetlands to the west and his choice for the site of the Capitol, as a "pedestal waiting for a monument." He suggested placing below the crest of the hill a "grand Equestrian figure," a reference to the bronze statue of George Washington that Congress had approved on 7 August 1783.⁵ The concept of Washington's equestrian statue became the core of the next serious attempt to personify an American Liberty.

Also in 1791, the Roman sculptor Giuseppe Ceracchi (fig. 4) arrived in America, "filled with a volcanic enthusiasm for Liberty and the Rights of Man."⁶ Ceracchi was fresh from Europe, where he had struggled mightily to establish himself as a top-tier sculptor of political leaders and political monuments. His busts and portraits were often excellent; his larger compositions, with their metaphors and allegories, were often complicated. Previous work included allegorical sculpture at London's Somerset House for Sir William Chambers, busts of a cardinal, a pope, and a field marshal, and a complex monument to Dutch liberty fighter Baron Joan Derk van der Capellen. Ceracchi's monument to van der Capellen was only partially executed, but three drawings from a private collection indicate his powers of triangulation

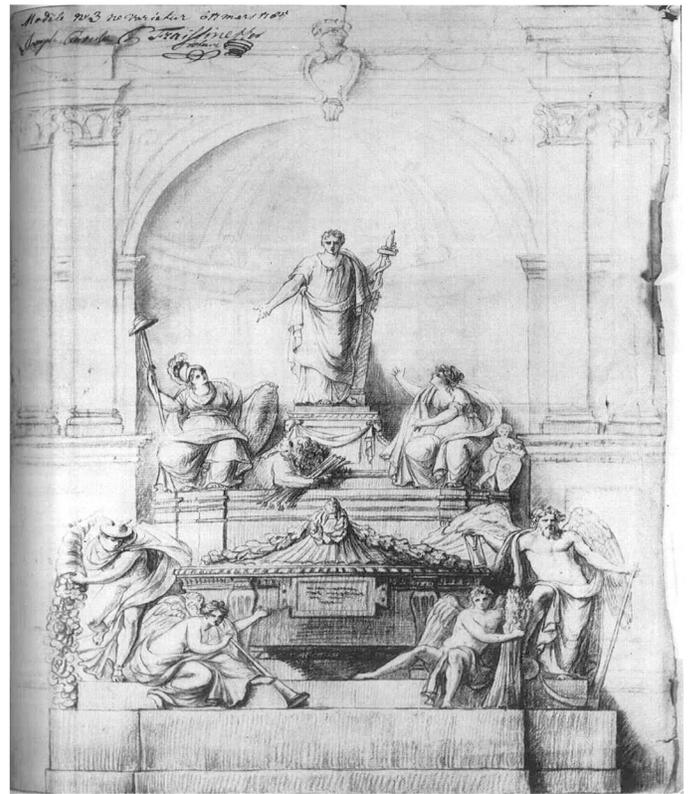


Fig. 5. Modèle No. 3 of van der Cappellen monument (1788), by Giuseppe Ceracchi

ART QUARTERLY 27[1964]:483



Fig. 4. Giuseppe Ceracchi (ca. 1792), by John Trumbull

MORRIS K. JESUP FUND, 1936, METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK

and allegory. The three figures that were executed are strong and animated in the Baroque fashion, but the figures never left Rome, and are now in the Borghese Gardens (fig. 5).

In a fluid, synthetic attempt to both bring glory to the revolutionary spirit in America, as well as invigorate his own career, Ceracchi proposed to Congress a "Monument designed to perpetuate the Memory of American Liberty." Based on Ceracchi's verbose description, his American national monument proposal was, in spirit, similar to the van der Capellen monument, and was topped by a fantastic personification of Liberty.

Ceracchi proposed his concept to Congress in 1791 and then again in 1795. Most likely, the statue was to be erected below Capitol Hill, at the base of what would become the West Front. In his opening paragraph (fig. 6), Ceracchi writes: "The Goddess [of Liberty] is represented descending in a car drawn by four horses, darting through a volume of clouds, which conceals the summit of a rainbow. Her form is at once expressive of dignity and grace. In her right hand she brandishes a flaming dart, which, by dispelling the mists of Error, illuminates the universe; her left is extended in the attitude of calling upon the people of America to listen to her voice. A simple *pileus* covers her head; her hair plays unconfined over her shoulders; her bent brow expresses the energy of her character; her lips appear partly open, whilst her

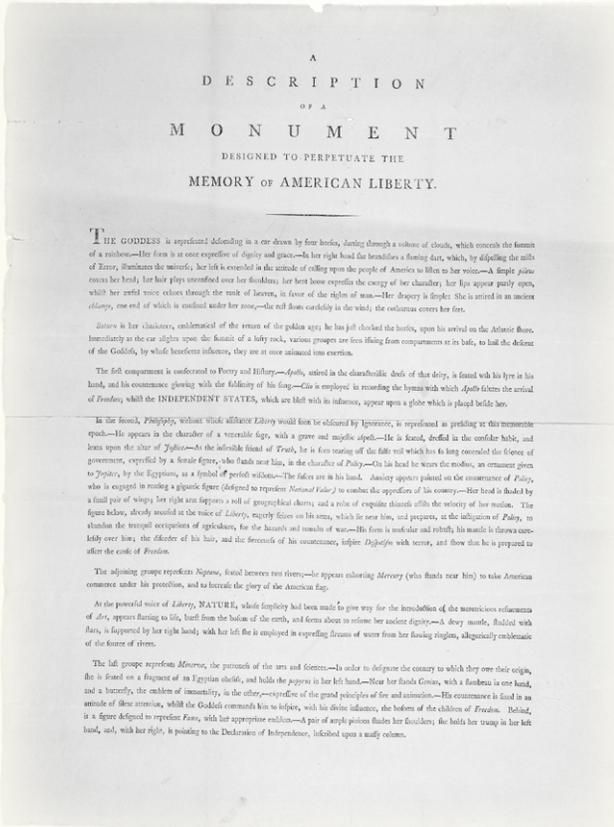


Fig. 6. Description of Giuseppe Ceracchi's proposed monument to the American Revolution (1795)

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awful voice echoes through the vault of heaven, in favor of the rights of man.” Ceracchi’s animated Statue of Liberty was the crowning piece of a monument that was to be, overall, sixty feet high, about fifty feet in diameter, and comprised of four more giant allegorical groups surrounding the original bronze equestrian statue of Washington. His six foot drawing of the monument was exhibited in public in a Philadelphia tavern in 1791, but is now lost.⁷

Ceracchi never had the opportunity to carve his grandiose monument to American Liberty. After a vain attempt to win the favor of leading members of the Washington Administration and of Congress by carving their portraits (fig. 7), followed by a return to Europe, an exile from Rome, and another trip to America, his subscription plan to finance the ambitious monument failed.⁸ Ceracchi’s technical approach to carving the sixty-foot high monument is not known, but it is difficult to imagine the complexity of carving the baroque Liberty descending through volumes of marble clouds and a rainbow in a horse-drawn chariot at a time when the construction of the Capitol was not yet even begun. His hyperbolic vision of American Liberty died in 1795, and a

handful of years later so did he. Marked by as great a passion and hubris as exemplified his time in America, he lived his remaining years in Paris increasingly disenchanted with Napoleon’s despotic usurpations, until he was implicated in an alleged assassination attempt against the “First Consul” in 1800. Perhaps some version of his chariot for the Capitol survived after all, in the triumphal chariot—said to be of his own design—that carried him to the guillotine early the next year.

While on his first American venture, Ceracchi did carve in terracotta a colossal bust, *Minerva as the Patroness of American Liberty*, nearly six feet tall, which was placed behind the Speaker’s dais in Congress Hall in 1792. Whether the *Minerva* was meant to be the Liberty is not clear, as in his own words, his *Minerva* figure occupied a lower place in the gigantic monument. Nor is *Minerva* integral to the design of this chamber. Because of its colossal scale, the bust was most likely intended to demonstrate the artist’s ability to execute his giant monument. The composite photograph by the author (fig. 8) shows the *Minerva*, in scale, as it might have appeared in the House chamber. *Minerva* (fig. 9) was given to the Library Company of Philadelphia when Congress moved to Washington in 1800, and it remains there today.

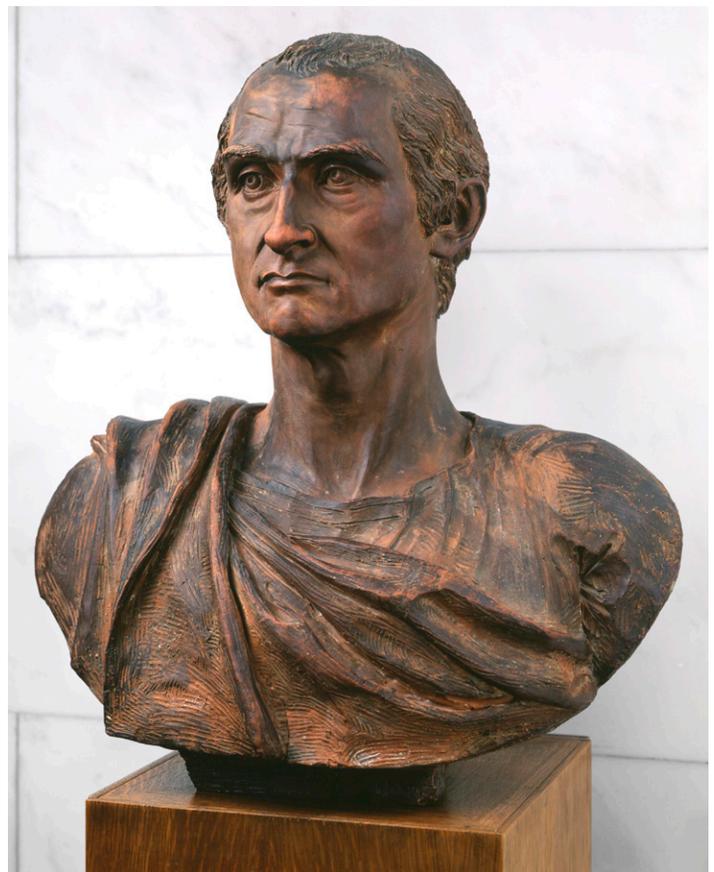


Fig. 7. John Jay (terracotta, 1792), by Giuseppe Ceracchi

COLLECTION OF THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

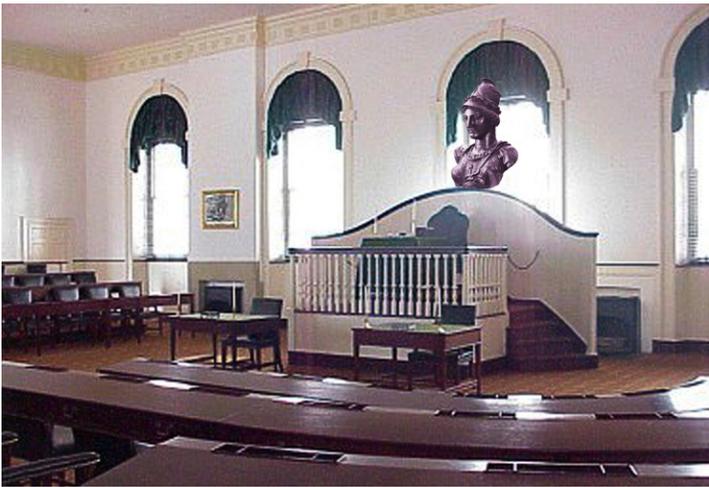


Fig. 8. Author's composite depiction of Giuseppe Ceracchi's Minerva as it would have appeared in Congress Hall, ca. 1792

ART IN EARLY AMERICA

In his 6 March 1805 letter to Philip Mazzei, Jefferson's confidante in Italy, Latrobe stated that "the Capitol was begun at a time when the country was entirely destitute of artists." From Latrobe's perspective as a classically educated European, this was true; painting, sculpture and architecture were fledgling arts in 1792. In 1811, in a formal address in Philadelphia to the Society of Artists of the United States, however, he expressed his optimism that in a free republic, it is inevitable that the arts will flourish. "The days of Greece may be revived in the woods of America," he predicted, "and Philadelphia become the Athens of the Western world."⁹

In the same address, Latrobe identifies architecture as the most advanced of American arts in the year 1800. First, he lauded Samuel Blodgett's First Bank of the United States (1797), in Philadelphia, for its use of marble. Secondly, he lauded his own client Samuel Fox for having the vision and courage to build The Bank of Pennsylvania. Latrobe shyly neglects to mention that this latter masterpiece was his own design. The Bank of Pennsylvania, the first Greek revival building in America, built of white marble, was innovative for any modern city in 1800. Masonry-vaulted, naturally lit, unencumbered of ornament, and sleekly elevated by elegant Greek angles, it must have been breathtaking to see in the context of brick-red Philadelphia.

In painting, Latrobe suggests that America was on the cusp of greatness, but that America's painters lacked good commissions and Europe valued our great painters more than we did. Latrobe thought that America rivaled Europe in portraits, most likely referring to Gilbert Stuart and John Trumbull. Though personally slighted by the brilliant and profligate Stuart, Latrobe held his work in high esteem.

In 1800, America languished in sculpture. American figurative sculpture in the late eighteenth century mainly consisted of decorative woodcarving, such as in the making of nauti-

cal figureheads, or the decorative carving of fine furniture. Stone carving in the eighteenth century mainly consisted of the carving and incising of gravestones.

America's best figural sculptor of the period was William Rush of Philadelphia, who, with Charles Willson Peale, founded the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. Rush (1756-1833), a wood-carver, made figureheads for ships, which Latrobe regarded very highly and considered an art form in and of itself. Rush carved the allegorical *Water Nymph and Bittern* that stood as the center landscape feature in Centre Square, Philadelphia, directly in front of Latrobe's Greek-style pump house of the Water Works. Today, this site is occupied by Philadelphia's City Hall.

Latrobe did not call Rush to duty, however, when hiring sculptors for the Capitol, although Rush was a mere one hundred forty miles north of Washington. Latrobe stated quite simply that Rush's medium was wood; and though extremely talented, he was never considered for work on the Capitol. Rush's carved wood figure of George Washington (1814, fig. 12) demonstrates great talent. It is a sophisticated sculpture, alive and animated in contrapposto.

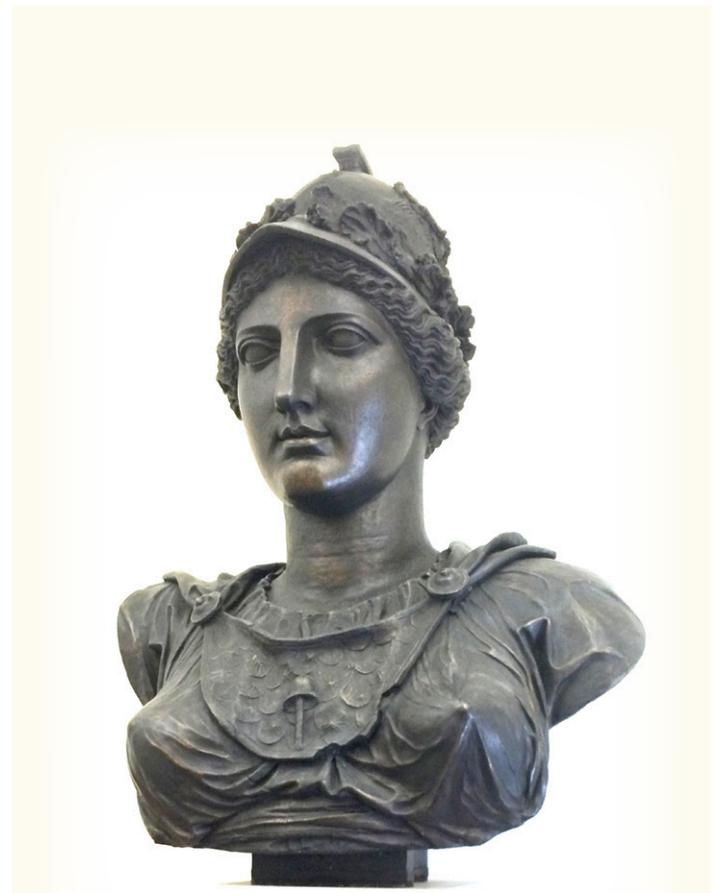


Fig. 9. Minerva (terracotta, ca. 1791-92), by Giuseppe Ceracchi

AUTHOR



Fig. 10. Left to right: Minerva models, Giuseppe Ceracchi, for the van der Capellen monument (1788); Johann Gottfried Schadow, for the Brandenburg Gate (1792); and by B. Henry Latrobe, for the Capitol (c. 1810)

ART QUARTERLY 27[1964]:483; COURTESY OF DEMETRIUS CHRYSSIKOS; PRINTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS DIVISION, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

SOME OF LATROBE'S ARTISTIC INFLUENCES

Latrobe deeply admired the sculpture of Englishman John Flaxman (1755-1826) from his London days, as well as that of the world's top sculptors working in Rome. Charles Brownell has pointed out that Latrobe emulated Flaxman figures in his own sketches on at least two occasions.* Besides Latrobe's admiration of the artistry of Flaxman, Canova, and the Danish sculptor Bertel Thorvaldsen (ca. 1770-1844), he certainly saw and admired other neoclassical sculptors in Europe prior to coming to America in 1796. He must have known the work of Germany's leading neoclassical sculptor, Johann Gottfried Schadow (1764-1850). Schadow's model for Minerva at the Brandenburg Gate (1792), when reversed, is strikingly similar to Latrobe's drawing of a Minerva for the Capitol from about 1810 (as well as his drawing of Liberty), and similar also to Ceracchi's Minerva from the van der Capellen monument (fig. 10). He certainly knew Jean-Antoine Houdon's masterful busts of Jefferson and Franklin and the full standing figure of Washington in Virginia's statehouse, which Latrobe would have seen when he toured Richmond immediately upon arriving in America the year the statue was unveiled.

A large and striking image of a sitting Liberty was painted by Samuel Jennings (active 1789-1834), a native Philadelphian who worked mostly in England (fig. 11). “Liberty Displaying the Arts and Sciences” was commissioned by the Library Company of Philadelphia in 1792 for its new building, and remains in its possession to this day. Jennings’s Liberty is very similar in style and allegory to Latrobe’s small sketch in the Library of Congress from a dozen years later, but with the addition of its powerful abolitionist theme. Given Latrobe’s long tenure in Philadelphia beginning in 1799, it is very likely he knew this painting.

**Latrobe Correspondence* 1:164. For Flaxman’s influence on Latrobe, see Charles Brownell, “An Introduction to the Art of Latrobe’s Drawing,” in Edward C. Carter II, John C. Van Horne, and Charles Brownell, eds., *Latrobe’s View of America, 1795-1820* (New Haven, Conn., 1985), pp. 17-24, 29.



Fig. 11. Liberty Displaying the Arts and Sciences (1792), by Samuel Jennings

THE LIBRARY COMPANY OF PHILADELPHIA

THE LATROBE-FRANZONI SITTING LIBERTY

Latrobe first mentioned the idea of a Statue of Liberty in his 6 March 1805 letter to Philip Mazzei (fig. 13), requesting assistance in hiring sculptors in Italy to work on the Capitol. Latrobe wrote to Mazzei at President Jefferson's behest. Mazzei and Jefferson had maintained a varied and robust correspondence over the decades since Mazzei left America; he cheerfully referred to America as his adoptive country and was glad to assist his American friends in the effort to build the Capitol.

In the letter, Latrobe asked Mazzei to recruit "a good *Sculptor of Architectural decorations*" for the south (House) wing. He also asked Mazzei to obtain a bid price from Antonio Canova, one of the most celebrated sculptors working in Rome, to carve the "sitting figure of Liberty" for the House chamber. On 12 September 1805 Mazzei responded that hiring Canova was impossible due to the artist being overbooked. Mazzei also had requested a price from the esteemed Danish sculptor Bertel Thorvaldsen, also working in Rome, but the price was exorbitant. Then Mazzei told of the young sculptors whom he did hire, Giuseppe Franzoni and his brother-in-law, Giovanni Andrei. Mazzei backed up his selection with the claim that Franzoni "will soon be a second Canova." The two new hires departed Italy by ship with their families in November 1805 bound for the United States.¹⁰

THE DESIGN AND CREATION OF THE SITTING LIBERTY

On 28 March 1806, the two Italian sculptors Franzoni and Andrei arrived from Rome. In Mazzei's estimation, Franzoni's "masterful strokes [*strokes*]" would make him a first rate sculptor of the figures, and Andrei would be a first rate sculptor of the flora and decorative pieces. On 29 May, in a letter to Mazzei, Latrobe lamented that Franzoni must carve the large eagle in the frieze before he can even "*think* much of our Statue of Liberty." For the time being, "I have distributed the department of *animals* to Franzoni, and of *vegetables* to Andrei." Based on this letter, no model existed of the Statue of Liberty as of 29 May 1806.¹¹

But, on 2 June 1806, a model was underway, or so it seemed. Latrobe wrote to his brother Christian: "Flaxman is I think one of the first Sculptors in the world. Franzoni was his pupil. He is engaged in modeling for me a figure of Liberty, sitting, of colossal size. It promises to be a classical Work. This is one of many efforts I am making to introduce into this country something superior to the mean sti[le] brought hither and spread by English joiners and measurers, and to the absurd impracticalities of American book architects."¹²



Fig. 12. George Washington (painted wood, 1814), by William Rush

COURTESY OF INDEPENDENCE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

Latrobe's letters provide key dimensions and parameters of the figure itself and its accoutrements. Subjectively, Latrobe's letters muse about his favorite sculptors, his proclivities in art, and his emotional response to stylistic ideas and elements. Both the parameters of his design and his aesthetic vision are important. When Latrobe puts pencil to paper, his ideas are clear. Therefore, the one design drawing of Liberty that exists (fig. 14), although of small scale, is detailed and informative.

In his first (March 1805) letter to Mazzei, Latrobe described the Liberty as 9'0" tall while seated. The only existing sketch of her appears in a drawing that was delivered to Jefferson prior to August 1805. It is a south-looking, east-west section of the Hall demonstrating the extreme angles of light rays entering the chamber. At the scale of 1/8" to 1'0", the Sitting Liberty is shown exactly 1 1/2" high, therefore 12'0" tall per the drawing's scale, including her plinth. The drawing demonstrates the powerful image Latrobe developed in his mind of entering the chamber from the north, and seeing the colossal Liberty opposite, framed by 26-foot columns and crimson drapery.

Even at small scale, details about Latrobe's intentions for the Sitting Liberty are obvious. She wears a Greek style gown with décolletage and a high waist, a large ornament at her breast, and her hair piled up with a tiara—a very fashionable look for 1805 (fig. 15). Her left arm holds a liberty pole with the Phrygian liberty cap. Her right foot is raised. An eagle in repose, with an outward look as though in a defensive stance, is on her right. Two books are resting on her left, possibly a reference to the two books in Gilbert Stuart's famous Landsdowne portrait of Washington (thought to be the *Federalist Papers* and the *Congressional Record*), a painting well known to Latrobe.

Writing to Mazzei on 19 December 1806, Latrobe expressed some confusion whether Thorvaldsen had actually been commissioned to carve the statue. If Mazzei had commissioned him, it was without Jefferson's approval of the high price. Latrobe also told Mazzei he had already given the work to Franzoni. Latrobe wrote that Franzoni "will not disgrace us by his Sculpture, but that Canova, probably Thorvaldsen, and Flaxman are his superiors to a great degree."¹³

Latrobe apparently did not approve of the direction of development of Franzoni's model. In a letter of 31 December 1806, to his Clerk of the Works John Lenthall, Latrobe expressed misgivings about the model: "Lady Liberty... seldom behaves much like a Lady." Franzoni had sculpted allegorical elements that Latrobe thought inappropriate or heavy-handed: a club and doves nesting in a helmet. "It may be correct *Symbolology*... to give Dame Liberty a Club or Shelelah, but we have no business to exhibit it so very publicly."



Fig. 13. Filippo Mazzei (ca. 1790), by Jacques-Louis David

LOUVRE, PARIS

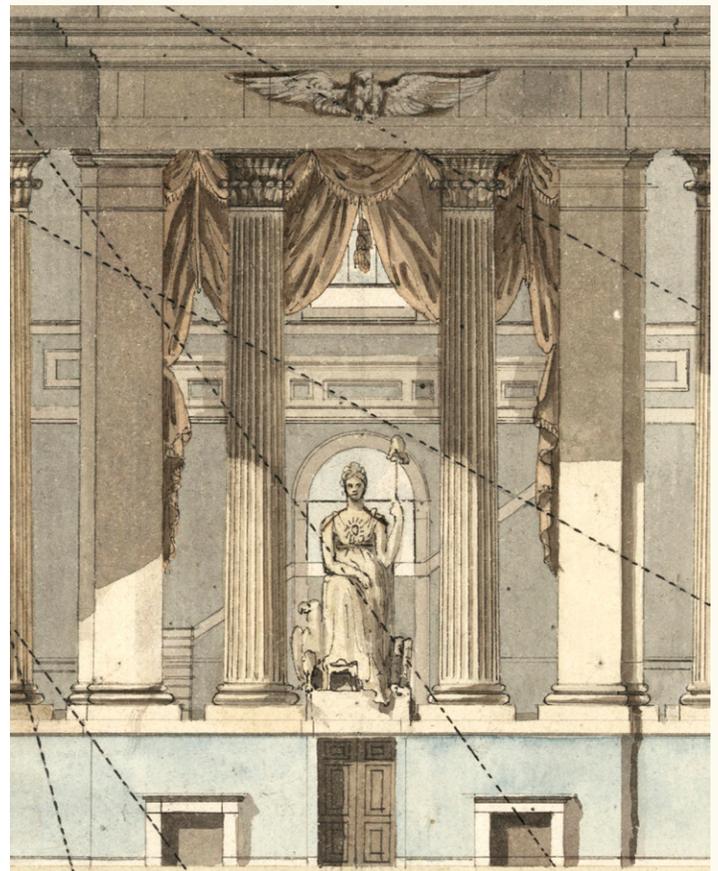


Fig. 14. Hall of Representatives (detail of watercolor on paper, 1804-05), by B. Henry Latrobe

PRINTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS DIVISION, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



Fig. 15. An example of a fashionable lady: Madame Raymond de Verninac (1799), by Jacques-Louis David

LOUVRE, PARIS

Latrobe instead demanded one arm close in to her body, resting in her lap, and one arm raised, resting “on a Wig block, or *capped stick* (which is as much more honorable than a Wig block as the cap is more honorable than the Wig.) *for ought I care.*” (This is essentially the torso arrangement shown in Latrobe’s own sketch.) In this letter Latrobe pondered reducing Liberty to 7’0” in height. Though often beset by his own scathing and sardonic wit, Latrobe maintained exactly the right balance of allegorical propriety he thought proper for the chamber, and continued to steer Franzoni in the design of the Liberty.¹⁴

On 1 September 1807, Lenthall’s men took down the scaffolding around the Speaker’s Chair, revealing two finished columns and the sitting Statue of Liberty (fig. 17). Latrobe wrote Jefferson later that day: “the figure of Liberty, which, tho’ only a Model, is an excellent work and does Franzoni infinite credit.” She was in service from that day.¹⁵

Almost two months later, in a report on the south wing of the Capitol solicited by the editor of DC’s premier newspaper of record, the *National Intelligencer*, Latrobe described the complete tableau of the House chamber:

Between the two columns opposite to the entrance, behind the Speaker’s Chair, sits on a pedestal a colossal figure of liberty. The present figure is only a plaister model hastily executed in three weeks by Mr. Franzoni, but has great merit. It is proposed to place a marble figure of the same size in its room. . . . The figure, sitting, is 8’-6” in height. By her side stands the American eagle, supporting her left hand, in which is the cap of liberty, her right presents a scroll, the constitution of the United States. Her foot treads upon a reversed crown as a footstool and upon other emblems of monarchy and bondage.¹⁶

In the course of her design in the first nine months of 1807, Liberty’s eagle shifted from her right side to her left (from east to west), and her pole and liberty cap were replaced with a more relaxed arrangement with a cap and constitution.

Latrobe described the scene at entry and the viewer understands at once that the architecture and the sculpture are integral and essential to the sequence: “One large ample curtain is suspended in the space between the columns opposite the entrance, and being drawn in easy folds to each pilastre, discloses the statue of Liberty. The effect of this curtain of the statue and of the Speaker’s chair

and canopy... is perhaps the most pleasing assemblage of objects that catch the eye in the whole room.” Latrobe adds that, “To give an adequate idea of a building by a description unaccompanied by drawings, is always a vain attempt, and no one who has not seen the Hall of Congress can, from what I have said, understand exactly the effect and appearance of the room.”¹⁷



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topics as well as the architecture and landscape of Washington, DC, where he lived for nearly 20 years. His design for the Washington, DC Metro canopy program has been replicated numerous times around the Washington region. Richard’s research into the Jefferson-Latrobe era Capitol (1803-1814), which resulted in a detailed interactive digital reconstruction of the Capitol, was supported in part by two U.S. Capitol Historical Society Fellowships. His first article on the subject was published in the Fall 2014 issue of *The Capitol Dome*. An earlier version of this paper was published in the French journal *Le Libellio d’Aegis*, v. 8, 2 (Summer 2012):67-74.

AUTHOR’S INTERPRETATION OF THE LATROBE-FRANZONI SITTING LIBERTY:

My project to recreate the Jefferson-Madison Capitol, the one that was burned in 1814 and was never visually depicted or recorded, required that I include the Statue of Liberty that was in the House of Representatives chamber.* Based on the parameters from the drawing and letters, ideas of dress and style, and a deep understanding of Latrobe’s aesthetics, I sculpted this first Statue of Liberty myself. It was scanned three-dimensionally by a computer science professor from Princeton University.

*See Richard Chenoweth, “The Most Beautiful Room in the World? Latrobe, Jefferson, and the First Capitol,” *The Capitol Dome*, v. 51, 3 (Fall 2014):23-39.

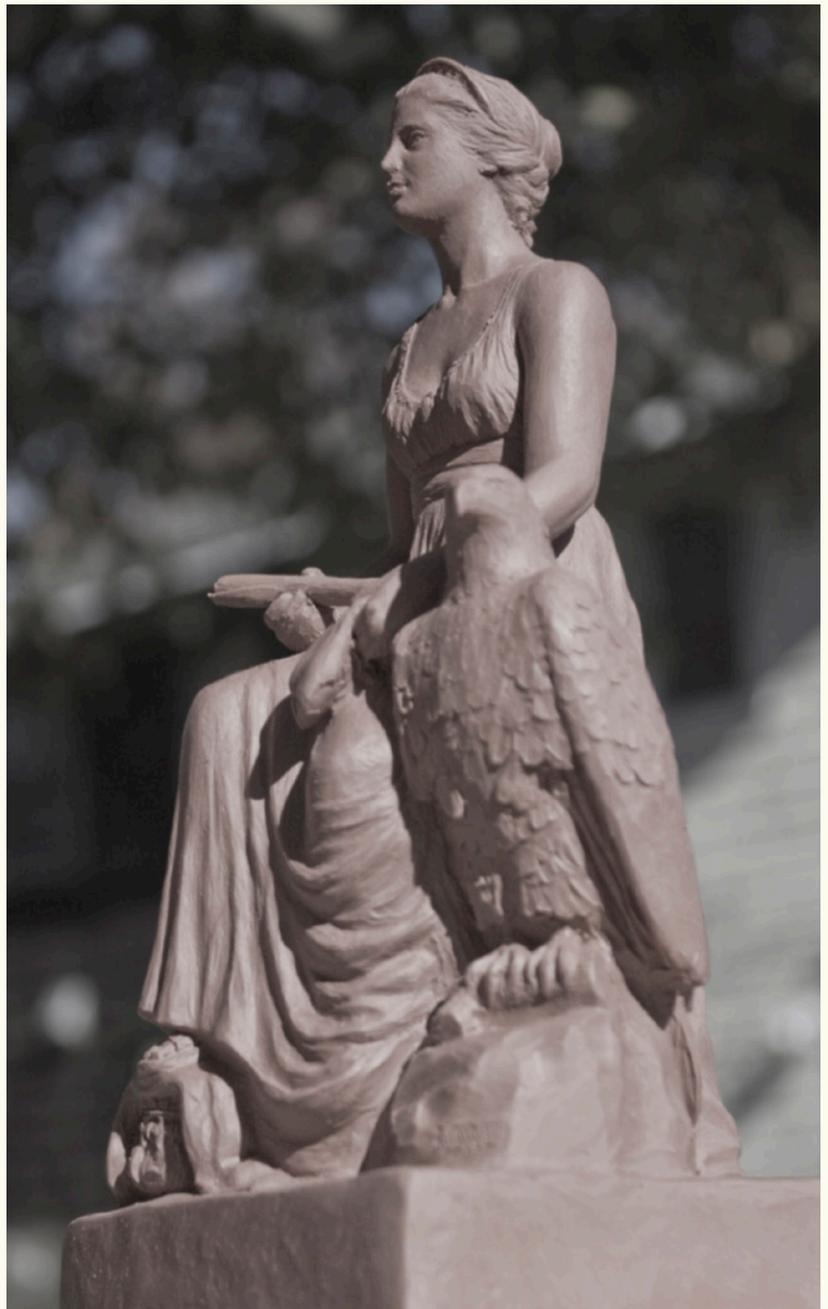


Fig. 16. Author’s recreation of Sitting Liberty (clay, 2011)



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Fig. 17. Author's recreation drawing of the House chamber (1814), from the entry looking south

Notes

1. The term “Statue of Liberty” connotes for many people the actual size and stance of the later statue by Frédéric Auguste Bartholdi, *Liberty Enlightening the World*, conceived in the early 1870s and finally installed in New York Harbor in 1886. The term is also sometimes applied, mistakenly, to Thomas Crawford’s “Statue of Freedom” installed on top of the Capitol dome in 1863. (Crawford never saw it raised. He died in 1857 before the plaster version was shipped from his studio in Rome.) Within the Capitol itself, another “Statue of Liberty,” called *The Genius of the Constitution* by its sculptor Enrico Causici (ca. 1790-1833), was installed in a niche high over the entablature of Statuary Hall in the late 1820s. As of 2016, it is still in its plaster state, in that same room, although it has come to be known as *Liberty and the Eagle*. This article discusses the development of the idea of a personification of a monumental Liberty sculpture leading up to 1807; Causici’s, Crawford’s, and Bartholdi’s statues embody the same ideals, but they are different examples of artistic expression from different periods. The term “Statue of Liberty” is used throughout this article on the premise that the statue itself is part of the “concept.” Latrobe himself often referred to it in his letters as the (lower case) “statue of Liberty,” making it a less formal concept.

2. This period corresponds to a period known as Latrobe’s “first construction campaign,” when he served as “Surveyor of the Public Buildings of the United States at Washington” from March 1803 until July 1811. He returned, this time as “Architect or Surveyor of the Capitol,” from April 1815 until his resignation in November 1817.

3. Latrobe to Philip Mazzei, 12 April 1806, in John C. Van Horne et al., eds., *The Correspondence and Miscellaneous Papers of Benjamin Henry Latrobe* (3 vols.; New Haven, Conn., 1984-88) 2:229n.

4. For the only two contemporary newspaper descriptions of both the interior and exterior of Federal Hall, which were reprinted dozens of times from New Hampshire to North Carolina, see Charlene Bangs Bickford, Kenneth R. Bowling, Helen E. Veit, and William Charles diGiacomantonio, eds., *The Documentary History of the First Federal Congress, 1789-1791* (19 vols. to date; Baltimore, 1972-) 15:32-35.

5. Peter L’Enfant to George Washington, 22 June 1791, in Dorothy Twohig et al., eds., *Papers of George Washington: Presidential Series* (17 vols. to date; Charlottesville, Va., 1987-) 8:290.

6. Albert Ten Eyck Gardner, “Fragment of a Lost Monument,” *Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, v. 6, 7 (March 1948):189. Ceracchi (1751-1801) studied in Rome but spent his first formative years as a professional artist in England.

7. “A Description of a Monument...” [14 Feb. 1795], Printed Ephemera Collection, Portfolio 222, folder 3, Library of Congress;

Ceracchi to Alexander Hamilton, 16 July 1792, in Harold C. Syrett, ed., *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton* (26 vols., New York, 1961-79) 12:36-37. The “Description,” which circulated as a broadside, included “a plan by which the means for the undertaking are to be provided,” and in some cases, at least, was accompanied by a printed letter signed by sixty prominent men (presumably committed subscribers to the plan), who included President Washington, Secretary of State Edmund Randolph, Attorney General William Bradford, Secretary of the Treasury Oliver Wolcott, Jr., and Secretary of War Timothy Pickering (“An Appeal for Funds for a Monument... 14 February 1795,” in Syrett, *Papers of Alexander Hamilton* 18:271).

8. Ceracchi’s busts of notable Americans include Benjamin Franklin (now at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts), Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson (at “Monticello,” Virginia), President George Washington (at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York), and Chief Justice John Jay (at the U.S. Supreme Court), illustrated here (fig. 7).

9. *Latrobe Correspondence* 2:21-24, 3:76. Mazzei (1730-1816) had first come to America in 1773, where his neighbor Thomas Jefferson encouraged his experimental horticulture. For much of the Revolutionary War he served as arms agent for Virginia, but in 1785 he settled permanently in Pisa, Italy.

10. *Latrobe Correspondence* 2:21-24, 141-45. Antonio Canova (1757-1822) was the most famous Italian neoclassicist sculptor of his day.

11. *Latrobe Correspondence* 2:225-31. Latrobe summarized their modified contract on 6 April 1806 (*Ibid.*, 2:219-22). Both Giovanni Andrei (1770-1824) and Giuseppe Franzoni (ca. 1777-1815) would also work under Latrobe in a private capacity, when work at the Capitol slowed; several works in Baltimore can be attributed to them. Franzoni is sometimes confused with his younger and reputedly more talented brother Carlo (1789-1819), who was recruited to work on Latrobe’s second building campaign in 1815 and completed Statuary Hall’s famous *Car of History* just before his death (*Ibid.*, 3:802). Unlike Giuseppe, Carlo is memorialized in a portrait, currently located in the Office of the Curator of the Architect of the Capitol.

12. *Latrobe Correspondence* 2:233-35. The formal definition of “colossal” as a term in sculpture is a figure at least twice the life-size.

13. *Latrobe Correspondence* 2:328-29.

14. *Latrobe Correspondence* 2:346-48.

15. *Latrobe Correspondence* 2:475-76.

16. To Samuel Harrison Smith, 22 Nov. 1807, *Latrobe Correspondence* 2:499-506.

17. *Ibid.*

THE LITTLE-KNOWN HISTORY OF THE CAPITOL BRONZE SHOP, 1855-1859

by Jennifer Blancato



Fig. 1. Captain Montgomery C. Meigs

“We cast a bronze figure today about 3 feet in height. It was cast in plaster and brickdust mold. This had been cooked and baked in the shop in an envelope of sheet iron till it was perfectly dry. Then buried in a hole dug in the floor of the foundry and sand carefully rammed around it, so as to make it very firm and secure.

160 pounds of bronze, of copper 8/10, tin 1/10, with an addition of zinc 1/50. The weight of the statue and its jets, as shown by the wax used in the model, was to be 110 pounds.

The model was melted in 3 chambers in the small furnace in the bronze foundry, which is blown by a tube from the fan at the smith shop. It took about 2 hours to melt the metal. The casting was perfectly successful, and when the mold was broken after dinner, the casting having been made at 11 ½ a.m., the figure came out with no apparent defects.”

Montgomery C. Meigs's Journal,
March 27, 1857¹

Between 1855 and 1859, when only a few bronze foundries were operating in America, the Capitol Bronze Shop produced cast bronze and decorative architectural elements for the Capitol Extension, which was then under construction. The resourceful supervising engineer, Captain Montgomery C. Meigs (fig. 1), was also in charge of the building's decoration and established the Bronze Shop as part of his program to enrich the building with the work of fine artists and craftsmen. For over four years its foremen and workers cast fine and architectural art sculpture, and they eventually also produced a variety of functional objects. Unfortunately, the shop's first foreman died in 1857, and under his successor its last two years of operation were marred by infighting and accusations of impropriety. Its closure near the end of the Extension project was certainly hastened by this conflict, and the shop ceased operation in 1859. However, it remains worthy of attention today because of its contributions to the Capitol Extension—some of which can still be seen—and its place in the early history of bronze casting in America.

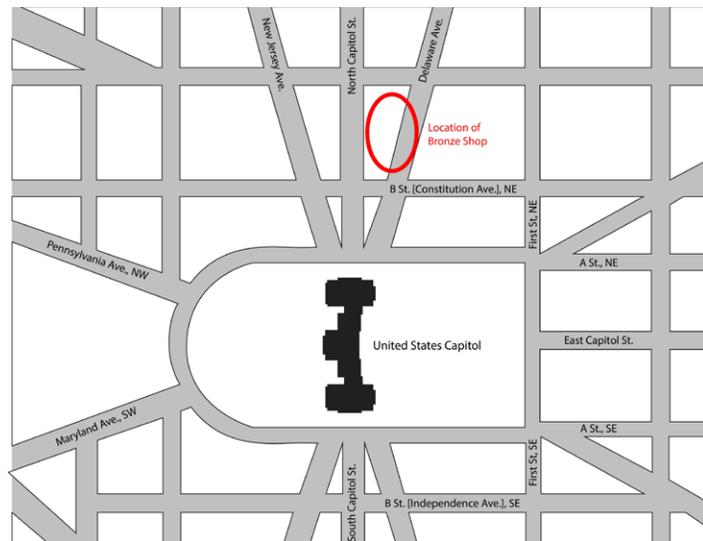
Located between B and C streets near Delaware Avenue, now the Senate Park across from the Russell Senate Office Building (fig. 2), the Bronze Shop (referred to at times as the foundry or Bronze Works) was part of Montgomery Meigs's ambitious art program for the

Capitol Extension. Architect Thomas U. Walter's initial plan for the new wings of the Capitol was to include only limited decoration, in the public lobbies and chambers. Meigs, however, believed the Extension should be an object of national pride in displaying the best examples of art—both in the interior and on the exterior. Trained as an engineer at the United States Military Academy at West Point, Meigs studied art as part of the required curriculum, and his instructors included painters Seth Eastman and Robert Weir.² While a cadet and later as supervising engineer of the Extension, he cultivated his knowledge and interest in art through books and visits to artists' studios and galleries.³ For the Extension, he engaged foreign artists and craftsman working abroad and in the United States, including on site in Washington, DC. Playing an active role in the creative process, Meigs gave the artists recommendations for books to aid their historical research and also gave input on choices of subject matter as well as suggestions for style and technique.⁴ His hands-on

approach resulted in the creation of a range of artworks in a variety of mediums, including the murals and frescoes of the Brumidi Corridors and the Rotunda by Constantino Brumidi; the sculpture of the Senate pediment and the Statue of Freedom atop the dome by Thomas Crawford; the richly patterned floor tiles in the Senate and House wings by Minton, Hollins and Company; stained glass by J. & G.H. Gibson; the bronze *Columbus Doors* by Randolph Rogers; and the sculpture and ornamental bronze work of the Bronze Shop.

Establishing a foundry for the Extension at this seminal moment for bronze casting in the United States was in keeping with Meigs's strong interest in adopting useful new technology, for bronze casting in America had only just begun in 1850. In *Bronze Casting and American Sculpture, 1850–1900*, Michael Shapiro examines the shift from plaster, marble,

and wood to bronze sculptures driven by the desire of Americans to celebrate their national heroes with outdoor public sculptures. Noting that bronze, of course, is a strong metal and better able to endure the outside elements than the other materials mentioned, Shapiro also observes that, in the larger view, bronze casting reflected America's increasing self-confidence as a nation ready to develop "technical and artistic independence" from Europe.⁵ Europe had long possessed the tradition, and



ALL IMAGES THIS ARTICLE: ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL

Fig. 2. The bronze shop was located near the Capitol.

the knowledge, tools, and craftsmen, for bronze sculpture, and foundries were operating in the cities of Munich, Paris, Rome, and Florence.⁶ In America prior to 1850, metalwork was limited to iron foundries, which cast such functional objects as stove ornaments and weathervanes in iron and copper and produced a few iron sculptures.⁷ This situation began to change with the establishment of American bronze foundries in the 1850s. Among them were Clark Mills's Foundry (Washington, DC); Ames Manufacturing Company (Chicopee, Massachusetts); Archer, Warner, Miskey & Co. (Philadelphia); and Cornelius & Baker (Philadelphia)—all of which cast bronze works of art for the Capitol Extension. In establishing a bronze shop, Meigs, who embraced new developments, advancements, and opportunities, entered this still small and relatively new group producing bronze casts in America.

This new role was in part the result of one that Meigs had already assumed during his work at the Capitol: he had sud-

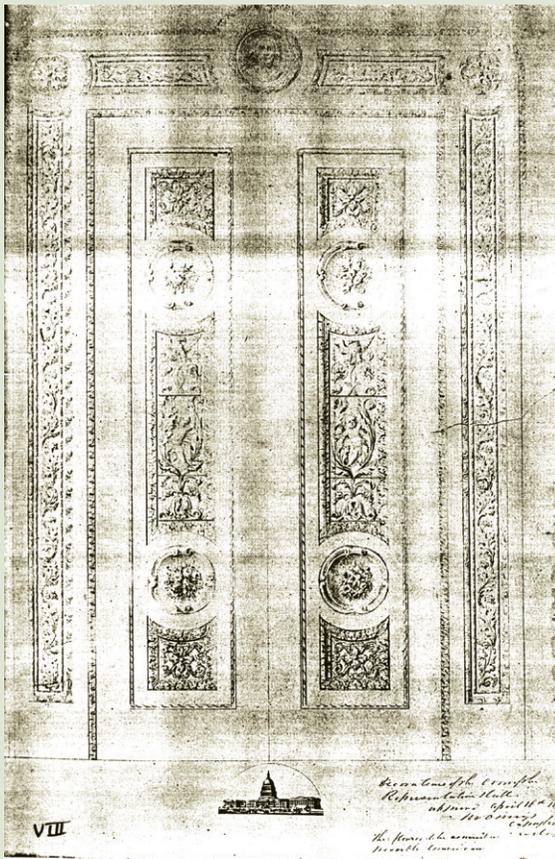


Fig. 3. Sketch for the gallery doors for the House of Representatives



Fig. 4. East entry to the House chamber

denly become “America’s foremost patron of the arts.”⁸ His desire to beautify the Capitol with murals and sculpture had become widely known, and artists sought eagerly for his attention. Thus it was that the Roman fresco painter Brumidi was introduced to him in late 1854. It may have been no coincidence that in early April 1855 Federico Casali, also from Rome and friend and travel companion of Brumidi, approached Meigs seeking work as a modeler and bronze founder.⁹ As was Meigs’s custom when working with artists, he asked Casali to produce a trial sketch. In his journal, Meigs wrote “I told him to make me a sketch for the decoration of a door, and thus to let me see what he could do, and then I could give him an answer.”¹⁰ A sketch for the gallery doors for the House of Representatives dates from the time and, although signed by Meigs, is likely the requested sketch by the hand of Casali (fig. 3).¹¹ Meigs hired Casali within a few days to “do some work on the doors of the Extension,” and the modeler and founder went to work quickly.¹² Initially, he seems to have worked alone and with modest tools, but eventually Meigs hired workmen and built new equipment, including a bronze furnace and chimney. Casali’s earliest work consisted of modeling ornaments for the doors and casting snakes, the latter of which was the focus of much of his first year at the Capitol.

The bronze snakes were among the most notable of Casali’s

works, in large part because they were cast from nature. Meigs had been interested in obtaining such castings even before hiring Casali, valuing their accuracy and liveliness. The bronze work at the Capitol gained the attention of *The Crayon*, which in the fall of 1855 published an article entitled “Casting from Life,” praising the snakes and the work of the very competent artist (unnamed, but surely Casali). While visiting work sites for Fort Madison (a now-abandoned site in present-day Annapolis, MD) and the Washington Aqueduct, Meigs caught black snakes and copperheads and gave them to Casali for casting. Casali took molds directly from the bodies of the snakes, which were unfortunately killed in preparation for that process. Meigs wrote often in his journals about catching snakes and even kept the reptiles in his office. *The Crayon* article singles out a cast of a copperhead, noting that “every curve and scale...is preserved, with a fidelity to nature with which mere art cannot vie,” and goes on to say that the work is of the highest artistic and mechanical merit and demonstrates the progress of fine art in the United States.¹³

Four notable snake castings by Casali are door handles still in place today on a pair of doors at the east entry to the House Chamber (fig. 4). The idea for them came to Meigs on a trip catching snakes with his son Monty, when he captured two 5-foot-long black snakes. Believing they would

make good bronze rings for door handles, he brought them to Casali the following day.¹⁴ Seamlessly combining the form and function of his subjects, Casali coiled the long, lean bodies of the snakes in the shape of almost the figure eight, with the looped tail serving as the handle (see front cover). Perfectly captured scales cover the snakes' bodies, which intertwine with branches of leaves and acorns; encircling the snakes are wreaths of acanthus leaves with bead-and-reel decoration. While Meigs's snakes were most often black snakes and copperheads, he also had a rattlesnake that he instructed Casali to mold before the reptile was spoiled by the cold weather, but he warned Casali to be careful because the snake was venomous and could give the modeler a fatal wound.¹⁵

While casting snakes, Casali and the Bronze Shop also made patterns for the foliage of the Dome column capitals, but they still spent time on the ornaments for the House Chamber gallery doors. The annual reports on the Extension for 1855 and 1856 mention "bronze work for the doors of the galleries of the legislative halls."¹⁶ In 1857, with the completion of the House Chamber nearing, Meigs was attentive to the progress of the doors. He arranged for the Capitol gardener to give Casali access to flowers, leaves, and branches to help ensure the accuracy of his modeling. Meigs also gave Casali a patina formula for the ornaments with instructions on how to apply it: "apply...to the bronze with a camel hair pencil having first warmed the casting. Repeat the wash until the color desired is obtained."¹⁷ Furthermore, he specifically recommended that Casali try the wash on the grape branches, which were used to decorate the frames of the doors. In making these recommendations and directives, Meigs was speaking from an informed position, having taken the time to study bronze and sculpture techniques. He even suggested bronze alloy compositions for Casali's castings.

The bronze ornaments cast by Casali and the Bronze Shop decorated twenty-four doors surrounding the visitor's gallery of the new House Chamber (seven of which were dummies added for architectural symmetry).¹⁸ Measuring approximately nine feet in height and three feet in width, the doors were made of baywood mahogany veneered with bird's-eye maple by Capitol master carpenter Pringle Slight and mounted with bronze ornaments that are influenced both in subject and arrangement by classicism as well as Renaissance and Baroque art.¹⁹ In a comparison of the sketch for the House doors dated from the time Casali was hired with those executed, there is little difference; they are almost identical in design. As in the sketch, flora and fauna decorate the valves of the doors with acanthus quatrefoils repeating at the top and bottom; below an eagle, rinceaux cascade down to acanthus surrounding putti (fig. 5) and then gracefully open into hanging grape bunches. Rosettes decorate the two



Fig. 5. Putti figures from the House Chamber Gallery Doors



Fig. 6. Valves of the House Chamber Gallery Doors

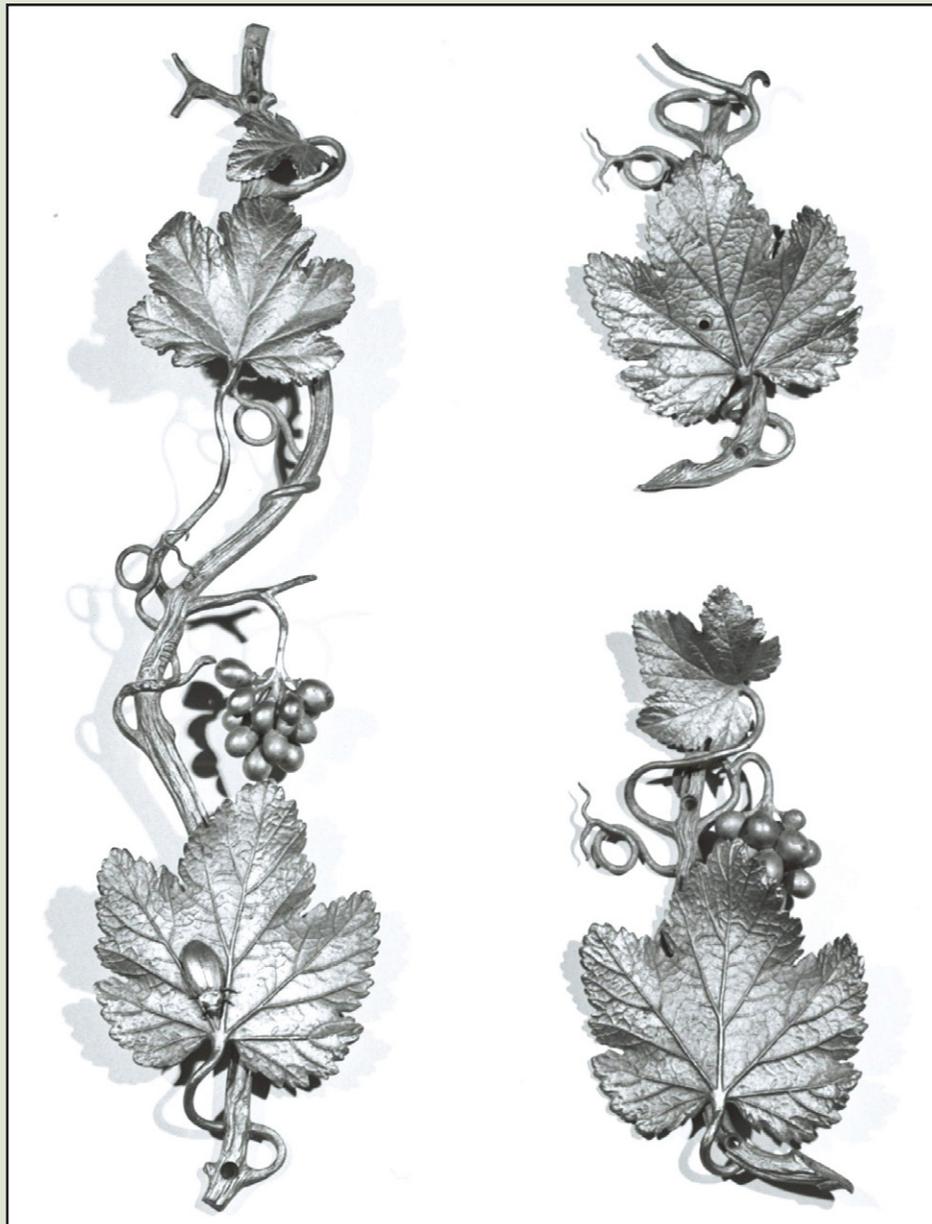


Fig. 7. The door frames of House Chamber Gallery Doors were decorated with grapevines.

roundels inset in the valves (fig. 6). The door frames, also baywood mahogany with bird's-eye maple veneer, were embellished on the sides with grapevines where insects sit on the leaves (fig. 7). This is one of the few instances where the sketch and the executed doors differ: in the sketch, oak leaves rather than grapevines appear in the frames. Above each door is the bronze head of a classical female figure encircled with a wreath of bay leaf that was modeled by Joseph Wilson of New York. Other details of the doors also include rope, acanthus, and egg-and-dart moulding. The gallery doors were in place from c. 1857 until the 1949–1950 renovation of the House Chamber, at which time they were removed. The House Chamber gallery doors were, perhaps fittingly, the beginning and the end of Meigs's and Casali's work together.

Unfortunately, Casali never completed these doors: after a brief and sudden illness he died in July 1857. Upon his death, Meigs wrote in his journal: "I lost a man Saturday, a great loss to my work. Casali, Federico Casali, the bronze artist is dead.... I know of no man who can take his place in our bronze works. He was an artist as well as a workman, and I could leave, as I did, everything in the shop to his direction with confidence in his honesty, integrity and skill."²⁰ The completion of the doors was left to the French-born Joseph Lassalle, who was made foreman approximately a week after Casali's passing. Lassalle lobbied aggressively for the promotion, only days after Casali's death writing a letter to Meigs asking to be considered for the position and stating he had been working in the shop for the last five months, and even that he had tended to Casali's work, which he claimed was his rather

than that of the much-admired deceased. Documents confirm that Lassalle was in the shop as early as March of 1857, but whether he really executed Casali's work is unknown; Casali's death was unexpected, so illness would not have kept him from performing his duties. Lassalle was also able to secure letters from others on his behalf, and Meigs (perhaps with some reluctance or apprehension) hired him. He was given the pay of \$5.00 a day, a dollar less than Casali, because Meigs found Casali to be "an artist of greater skill and taste than this one [Lassalle]" but believed that Lassalle might show himself to be a good manager with enough necessary knowledge to finish the work at hand.²¹ Under Lassalle the shop averaged 17 workers in positions such as chaser (i.e., a worker with fine tools who "heightens" surface details), founder, bronze filer, finisher, and laborer. Per Meigs's instructions at the time he was promoted, Lassalle regularly reported on the men hired and the work of the shop.

A memo submitted by Lassalle and other supporting doc-

umentation show that the shop was then casting a variety of functional objects, such as a bronze handrail for the House Chamber gallery, hot-air registers, hat and coat hooks, and keys for the south wing among other work.²² However, the Capitol Bronze Shop was also still casting ornamentation and fine art sculpture, two of its most notable works being William Henry Rinehart's *Indian Fountain* and the bronze bust of Be shekee after Francis Vincenti. Rinehart's *Indian Fountain* was cast by the Bronze Shop for the extension of the General Post Office, for which Meigs also served as the supervising engineer. The fountain represents an Indian holding a shell and directing his gaze toward the stream of water falling into the rocky pool he sits beside (fig. 8). In the fall of 1856, Meigs requested sketches from both Francis Vincenti, an Italian modeler and stonecutter, and George R. West, a painter, who were working at the Capitol, of a "small figure as a fountain...pouring water into a shell – or offering a cup of water."²³ Shortly after being called upon by William Henry Rinehart in early January 1857, Meigs suggested to



Fig. 8. *Indian Fountain for the General Post Office* by William Rinehart (1858)

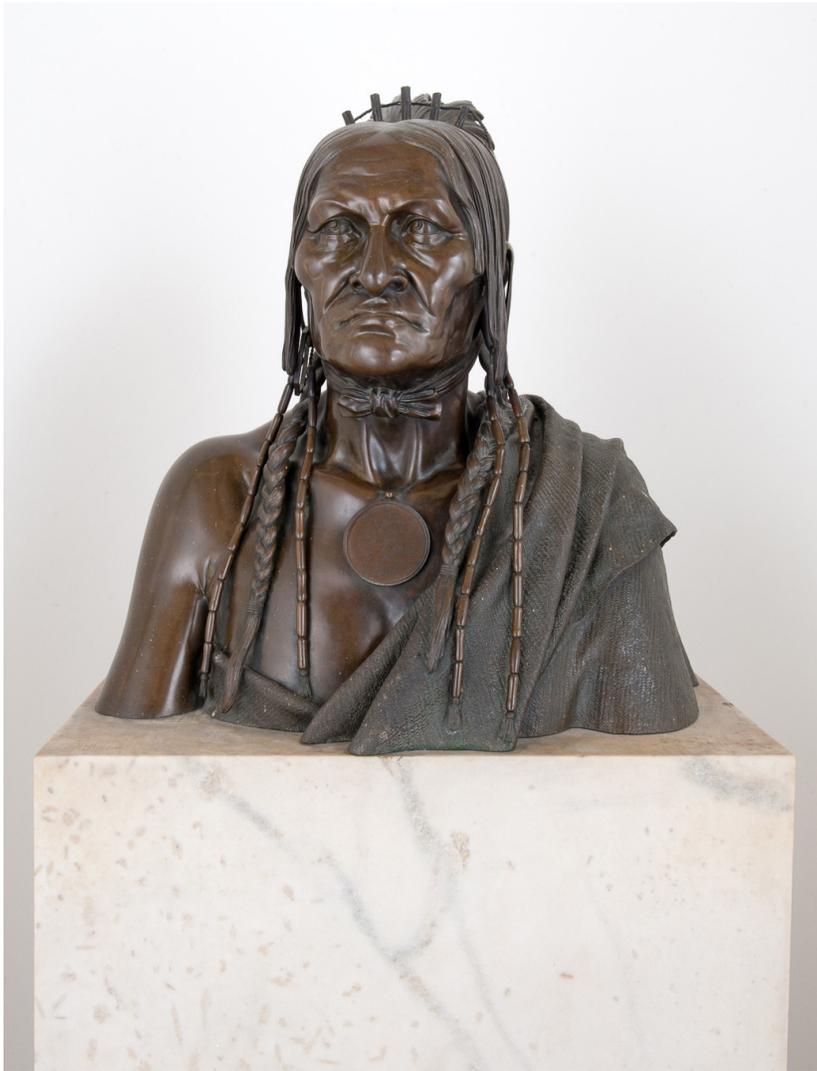


Fig. 9. Be sheekee, Joseph Lassalle (1858)

the sculptor that he, too, should make a sketch for the fountain.²⁴ Rinehart did so and Meigs, pleased with what he saw, authorized Rinehart to make a plaster model for the fountain. In November of that year Meigs paid Rinehart \$250.00 for the fountain, which he described as “very good.”²⁵ The fountain was being cast in the shop approximately three months later in 1858 and was installed in the courtyard of the General Post Office.²⁶

That same year Lassalle also cast the bronze bust *Be sheekee* (fig. 9). This sculpture is the only known work in the Capitol signed and dated by Lassalle. The bust is after the earlier marble bust of Be sheekee by Vincenti, for whom Be sheekee sat while on a trip to Washington as part of a delegation to discuss treaties with the United States government; it was another work of art in which Meigs was engaged, for he suggested that it be carved in marble and placed in the Extension.²⁷ In all likelihood, Lassalle worked from Vincenti’s clay or plaster model. Lassalle, who considered himself not just a shop foreman but also an artist, made changes to several details, specifically the tubes of the headdress, the tassels at the end of beads, and the folds and texture of the blanket. The most notable difference, however, is the addition of the medallion placed around Be sheekee’s neck. The medallion, reminiscent of an Indian peace medal, is inscribed and reads in part “...after nature by/F. Vincenti AD 1854 [sic] /Copied in



Fig. 10. Medallion from Be sheekee

Bronze by/Jos. LasSalle/AD 1858.” (fig. 10).²⁸

With the casting of the *Indian Fountain* and the bust of Be sheekee, 1858 was a productive year for Lassalle, but it also marked the beginning of troubles for the foreman and ultimately the shop itself. It was the first time—with others to follow—that his honesty and integrity were called into question by workmen in the shop. In a number of letters to Meigs, Lassalle supports the pay requests of newly hired workmen, and in some instances he requests pay increases for certain employees, which perhaps suggests that the foreman had good relations at one point with the men in the shop. In 1858, however, Lassalle had an encounter with an apprentice in the shop who was behaving poorly and was terminated. This apprentice, by the name of Joyce, reported that Lassalle was allowing work to be made in the shop for private use and therefore stealing from the government. Meigs investigated the claims, but found no evidence for action against the foreman.²⁹

Nevertheless, complaints against Lassalle continued into the next year, beginning with a letter signed by several dismissed workmen claiming that the foreman had unjustly removed them. Lassalle acknowledged that he dismissed the men, but defended his actions to Meigs as a matter of following the instructions to employ as few men as needed and to retain the best workmen who could perform a variety of jobs in the shop. The most significant complaints were voiced by the German chaser and moulder Francis Heunish, who at the time was working on the doors of the Senate Chamber gallery. In October 1859, Heunish sent letters to Meigs and Secretary of War John B. Floyd with claims that Lassalle struck him, and that the foreman neglected or betrayed his duties by sleeping during the workday, petty theft of government property, bad treatment of others, etc. Apparently, Meigs had already been aware of

Heunish’s dissatisfaction, for before the letters were written he had directed assistant engineer Charles G. Talcott to investigate the complaints, taking the statements of others as well as those of Heunish and Lassalle. Lassalle denied all accusations, including striking Heunish, although he agreed that there had been an argument and stated that Heunish threatened him. Meigs believed that there was “some truth,

though much malice” in Heunish’s charges.³⁰ Meigs’s infrequent journal entries seem to suggest that he had a more distant and less collaborative relationship with Lassalle than he had with Casali. When writing about the claims against Lassalle, Meigs said that he never felt the “proper confidence” in the foreman but was not able to find a better man to take charge of the shop. He felt it was important, though, to finish the work already under way.³¹

Regrettably, Meigs did not get to see the attainment of this goal: in the following two months he was replaced as engineer in charge and the Bronze Shop was closed. Meigs, who had been experiencing his own contentious circumstances at the Capitol, was reassigned to Florida to oversee the construction of Fort Jefferson, and Captain

William B. Franklin of the Corps of Topographical Engineers was placed in charge of the Extension and Dome.³² On November 7, 1859, after less than a week on the job, Franklin wrote Lassalle requesting by December 1 a list of the materials, tools, etc. in the shop. On December 28 Franklin wrote Lassalle again, this time directing the closing of the shop. He instructed Lassalle to “discharge all of the men in the bronze shop, and turn over the public property in [his] charge to Mr. Denmead” and informed him that his services would no longer be required.³³ The foreman had no choice but to comply with the peremptory order.

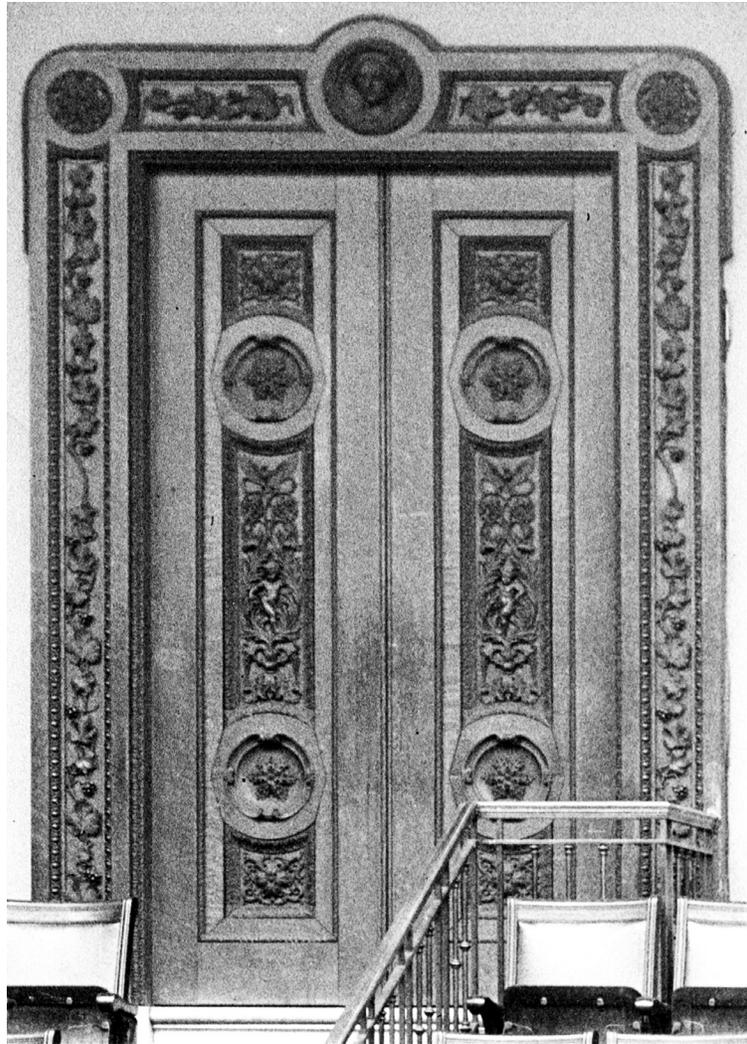


Fig. 11. Senate Chamber Gallery Doors

In June 1860, Lassalle wrote to Secretary of War Floyd in an attempt to be reinstated. Floyd consulted Franklin, who explained that by the time Lassalle was dismissed the Extension work was nearly complete and it was then more cost effective to have a commercial bronze business finish the work. The doors for the Senate Chamber gallery were in fact finished by a bronze business operated by two workmen formerly employed in the Capitol Bronze Shop. Images and descriptions of the doors and frames suggest that they were the same in design as the twenty-four in the House Chamber gallery (fig. 11). They differed in number, with only 16 used in the Senate, four of which were dummies (again added for architectural symmetry), but they were made of the same wood and measured approximately the same size.³⁴ The bronze embellishments on the door fronts and frames were again cherubs, rosettes, grapevines, acanthus, and, above each door, a bronze head of a classical female figure. Charles W. Neale and James Smith, who had been previously employed in the Bronze Shop as chaser and a bronze filer, respectively, were by this time operating a bronze finishing company called Smith & Neale. The company was paid for preparing bronze work for the Senate Gallery doors from 1860 to 1861 and also for finishing one bronze caryatid for a mantel.

In July 1860 Lassalle continued to plead his case to be hired to finish the remaining bronze work. He sent Franklin a letter with a proposal for the work on the Senate Gallery doors and the mantle as well as some hat and coat hooks for the House of Representatives. The story of Lassalle and the Bronze Shop draws near its conclusion with a letter from Franklin to the War Department in August with which he forwards Lassalle's letter and proposal. In his letter, Franklin states that he has engaged the firm of the two previous Shop employees and that the work can be done cheaper by them than what Lassalle proposes; he summarizes his position succinctly:

Lassalle may be a good workman. But he has acted badly in this business, and does not deserve any consideration.

His bid certainly ought not be accepted, and to put the work in his hands to do by days' labor will give great trouble and annoyance on account of the fact that he and his men were always squabbling and sometimes fighting....

If the Secretary desires, I will make an official report on the subject, but I think the proposition of Lassalle ought not be considered.³⁵

The records of the Architect of the Capitol contain only one additional letter, written ten days later by the chief clerk of

the War Department to Franklin requesting a list of the prices agreed upon for the remaining work and the prices Lassalle proposed to charge for the work, but no subsequent letters or documents about the shop are known and the turbulence surrounding it dwindles into silence.

Despite the unfortunate and precipitous manner of its closing, the Bronze Shop and those who worked there are worthy of being remembered for their contribution to the Capitol Extension and American art. Situated among the trade shops for the Extension because of the mechanics of its operation, and while it would eventually cast functional objects, the Bronze Shop was first and foremost established for casting ornamentation and fine art. Although Meigs did not hesitate to employ established foundries when they were the best for the job, he was pleased to have on site a well-staffed shop that could do excellent work on smaller projects, as is evident in the works that still exist and can stand beside the work of other foundries of the day displaying flawless casting and skilled chasing. The Shop was unique in that among the early bronze foundries in America, it was the only one at the time operated by the government. Meigs, an army officer and engineer, was participating in the support and perpetuation of this new medium of sculpture in the U.S. that symbolized technical and artistic independence from Europe and at a building that was being expanded because of the growing size and power of America.



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Notes

1. Wendy Wolff, ed. *Capitol Builder: The Shorthand Journals of Montgomery C. Meigs, 1853-1859, 1861* (Washington, DC, 2001), p. 500. Entries relating to the Capitol in the Montgomery C. Meigs Journal, Papers of Montgomery C. Meigs, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, were transcribed by William Mohr for the U.S. Senate Bicentennial Commission (MCM Journal).

2. Barbara A. Wolanin, "Meigs the Art Patron," in *Montgomery C. Meigs and the Building of the Nation's Capital*, ed. William C. Dickinson, Dean A. Herrin, and Donald R. Kennon (Athens, Ohio, 2001), p. 134. Paintings by both Eastman and Weir hang in the Capitol; Weir's *Embarkation of the Pilgrims* was installed in the Rotunda in 1843, and Seth Eastman's works depict army forts.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 138.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 143.

5. Michael Edward Shapiro, *Bronze Casting and American Sculpture, 1850-1900* (Newark, 1985), p. 15.

6. *Ibid.*, pp. 24-29.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 29.

8. Barbara A. Wolanin, *Constantino Brumidi: Artist of the Capitol* (Washington, DC, 1998), p. 39.

9. When Brumidi first met Meigs, he was accompanied by a "bronze worker." Meigs does not identify the person by name in his journal, but it might well have been Casali, who had traveled with Brumidi from Mexico to New Orleans in December 1854 (MCM Journal, Dec. 28, 1854, in Wolff, *Capitol Builder*, pp. 180-81).

10. MCM Journal, April 9, 1855, in Wolff, *Capitol Builder*, p. 262.

11. The inscription on the drawing reads "Decoration of the [illegible] / Representative Hall / approved April 16th 1855 / MC-Meigs / Capn/Eng / in charge / The flowers to be as much as / possible American."

12. MCM Journal, April 12, 1855.

13. "Casting from Life," *The Crayon*, Oct. 31, 1855.

14. MCM Journal, April 27 and April 28, 1855, in Wolff, *Capitol Builder*, pp. 266-267.

15. Captain Montgomery C. Meigs to Federico Casali, Jan. 31, 1856, Capitol Extension and New Dome Letterbooks, Records of the Architect of the Capitol (hereafter AOC/LB).

16. Reports on the Capitol Extension, Re-Construction of the Dome, and Post Office Extension, Office of the Extension of the Capitol, Washington City, November 1856.

17. Meigs to Casali, Jan. 17, 1857, AOC/LB.

18. William C. Allen, *History of the United States Capitol: A Chronicle of Design, Construction, and Politics* (Washington, DC, 2001), p. 265.

19. The details and features of the doors and their arrangement

are similar to Constantino Brumidi's work at the time on the walls of the 1st floor Senate wing, known today as the Brumidi Corridors, and his design of the bronze railings in the House and Senate Wings. Brumidi's training and experiences in Rome gave him an understanding of ancient Roman, Renaissance, and Baroque styles and symbols. Little is known about Casali, but he too was from Rome, and given the similarities to Brumidi's work it may be concluded that Casali had training and experiences much like those of his travel companion and friend.

20. MCM Journal, July 13, 1857, in Wolff, *Capitol Builder*, p. 515.

21. MCM Journal, July 18, 1857, in Wolff, *Capitol Builder*, pp. 515-516.

22. Memo submitted by Lassalle listing articles made by him and the Bronze Shop from July 21, 1857, through December 1859. The memo includes a short description of each item, their quantity, and their cost. It is the most comprehensive list known of the work performed by the shop.

23. Meigs to Francis Vincenti, Sept. 18, 1856, and Meigs to West, date unknown, AOC/LB.

24. MCM Journal, January 27, 1857, and MCM Journal, March 14, 1857, in Wolff, *Capitol Builder*, p. 498, and MCM Journal, March 18, 1857.

25. MCM Journal, Nov. 23, 1857. Also, see MCM Journal, March 18, 1857.

26. In 1876, with the Post Office undergoing remodeling and there no longer being a place for it, the fountain was accepted by the Joint Committee on the Library and moved to the Capitol, where it remains today.

27. MCM Journal, Feb. 20, 1855.

28. The date of 1854 on the medallion appears to be incorrect, given that Be sheekee traveled to Washington, DC, in 1855 to negotiate a land treaty; it was during this visit that he sat for the portrait bust by Francis Vincenti.

29. MCM Journal, Jan. 9, 1858.

30. MCM Journal, Oct. 21, 1859.

31. *Ibid.*

32. Criticism of Meigs and his art program, including his use of foreign artists, as well as his long-strained working relationship with architect Thomas U. Walter, led to his removal.

33. Captain William B. Franklin to Lassalle, Nov. 7, 1859, AOC/LB

34. Materials of Historical Interest Removed from the Senate Chamber During its Renovation in 1949-1950, to be Disposed of by the Architect of the Capitol Under the Direction and Approval of the Special Senate Roof and Chamber Committee, Pursuant to the Provisions of Sec. 3 of Public Law 731, 81st Congress, Approved August 25, 1950. Records of the Architect of the Capitol, Washington, DC.

35. Franklin to W.R. Dunkard., Esq., Chief Clerk, War Department, Aug. 13, 1860, AOC/LB.



NAZI GERMANY, THE NEW DEAL, AND THE ICONIZATION OF THE FEDERAL BILL OF RIGHTS

by Kenneth Bowling

December 15, 2016, marked the 225th anniversary of the ratification of the first Ten Amendments to the Constitution. Although it shares the same wording, the iconic document called the federal Bill of Rights enshrined in the imposing rotunda of the National Archives is actually much younger. Like the building in which it resides it is a creation of the New Deal.

Despite all the discussion about the need for a Bill of Rights during the debate over ratification of the Constitution and during the first federal election, the Amendments to the Constitution debated and adopted by the First Federal Congress and transmitted to the states for possible ratification were not referred to as the Bill of Rights.¹ After the ratification of ten of the twelve over the course of the next two years, and throughout the nineteenth century, during which Americans basically forgot their existence, they were generally known as the first Ten Amendments to the Constitution if they were referred to at all.² One such rare mention is noteworthy. In May 1897 a newspaper reporter ventured into an office in Indianapolis. On the wall he noticed a large, beautifully handwritten manuscript signed by John Adams, president of the United States Senate, and Frederick Augustus Muhlenberg, Speaker of the House of Representatives. The

occupant of the office told the reporter that he had purchased it for five dollars in 1866 from a Union soldier who had discovered it in North Carolina's magnificent Greek Revival capitol when he had visited Raleigh with General William T. Sherman a year earlier. The resulting *Indianapolis News* article reported that there then existed in the city North Carolina's copy of "the twelve amendments to the constitution" proposed to the states in 1789.³

In arguing against James Madison's belief about the ineffectiveness of paper bills of rights, Thomas Jefferson presciently commented on "the legal check which it puts into the hands of the judiciary."⁴ At the beginning of the twentieth century, as the Supreme Court of the United States struggled for a decade over the question of whether its provisions extended to the territories acquired from Spain—"does the Constitution follow the flag?"⁵—politically conscious Americans discovered Jefferson's "legal check" as well. Between 1900 and 1930 the term "First Ten Amendments" gradually gave way to "Bill of Rights" and "federal Bill of Rights." The latter terms appear in letters to the editor, in historical and constitutional analyses, in political party discourse, and in various public policy debates reported by the *New York Times*.⁶



Fig. 1. This cartoon appeared in the Washington Herald in the 1930s.

THE WASHINGTON HERALD

A 1927 letter to the editor captures the issue nicely: “the Bill of Rights, commonly known as the first Ten Amendments.”⁷ The 700th anniversary of Magna Carta in 1915 provided an obvious occasion to refer to it as the ancestor of the Bill of Rights. In 1928, newspaper articles announced a New York City lecture on it and credited the First Federal Congress (1789–1791) for affixing it to the Constitution.⁸ As early as 1902 a Democrat called the Democratic Party an expression of its principles. During the 1912 presidential campaign a Republican described a supporter of Theodore Roosevelt and the Progressive Party as someone who “despises the Bill of Rights.” A year earlier a Socialist Party spokesman had asserted that when the United States became a socialist republic, little of the Constitution and none of the Bill of Rights would have to change.⁹

Some of the public policy debates in which participants referred to the Bill of Rights include the treatment of anarchists, prohibition, military justice reform, the Ku Klux Klan, the right to bear arms, territorial governance, and the Great War in Europe.¹⁰ Three others are of particular interest. In a 1908 brief to the Supreme Court in an anti-trust case, Standard Oil argued that a fine imposed on it by a federal district court violated the Bill of Rights. A year later British suffragette Emmeline Pankhurst told a Boston audience that the right of American women to vote was based on the Bill of Rights. And during the fight over the League of Nations and ratification of the Treaty of Versailles, former Republican Attorney General George Wickersham noted that the first Ten Amendments formed “what may be termed” the Constitution’s bill of rights and argued in defense of treaty ratification that we should follow the lead of the founders:

ratify and then amend.¹¹

Certain usages of the terms are especially significant because of the context or person involved. In 1915 Senator Henry Cabot Lodge of Massachusetts published an essay, “The Constitution and the Bill of Rights.” An article in 1919 declared that a large body of American public opinion believed that the Bill of Rights “has been flagrantly violated during the last few years.” As early as 1923 naturalization officers began to suggest “that the so-called Bill of Rights in the Constitution should be given prominence and thoroughly explained” to immigrants.¹²

That the Bill of Rights was not yet on the level of the Constitution and Declaration of Independence is best symbolized by a 1921 event. So that Americans could view them, President Warren Harding transferred the latter two documents to the Library of Congress from the Old Executive Office Building. The Bill of Rights remained behind.¹³ As concern about the rise of Nazi Germany mounted in the mid- and late 1930s, particularly among American Jews, the Bill of Rights became the focus of much greater media attention, especially during the sesquicentennials of the Constitution (1937–1939) and the Bill of Rights (1941). It was in the fertile soil of 1937–1941 that the term Bill of Rights set deep roots.

Some events making Americans aware of the Bill of



Fig. 2. This cartoon by Edmund Waller “Ted” Gale appeared in the Los Angeles Examiner on December 15, 1938.

LOS ANGELES EXAMINER

Rights at this time, not directly associated with the sesquicentennials, were particularly noteworthy. In 1937 Missouri Senator Champ Clark delivered to the American Newspaper Publishers Association an address on the history of the Bill of Rights. The next year Justice Harlan Fiske Stone's opinion for the Supreme Court in *United States v. Carolene Products* held that the "Fourteenth Amendment 'embraced' the 'fundamental freedoms' of the Bill of Rights," making them applicable to the states while at the same time signaling that the New Deal Court (and it turned out, its successors) would be less interested in property rights and more interested in human rights than its predecessors. Most importantly, in January 1939 historian James Truslow Adams's article, "Shield of Our Liberty: The Bill of Rights," appeared in the widely read and profoundly influential *Readers Digest*.¹⁴

Franklin D. Roosevelt served as either chairman or honorary chairman of both sesquicentennial commissions and became a key voice in the iconization of the Bill of Rights. He first mentioned it in a "fireside chat" on 28 June 1934. His sesquicentennial Constitution Day address on 17 September 1937, in the aftermath of the "court packing" fight, declared that "nothing would so surely destroy the substance of what the Bill of Rights protects than its perversion to prevent social progress." He mentioned it several times in 1939: the annual message to Congress; the special address to Congress on the occasion of the sesquicentennial of the meeting of the First Federal Congress on 4 March; at the opening of the New York World's Fair where he called it "sacred"; and in his address at the laying of the Jefferson Memorial cornerstone. In accepting his third term nomination by the Democratic Party convention in 1940 he observed that "we must live under the liberties that were first heralded by Magna Carta and placed in glorious operation by the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States and the Bill of Rights." His last mention of the document before the sesquicentennial of its ratification was in his 1941 inaugural.¹⁵

Along with Roosevelt, three other persons in particu-

lar brought about the iconization. All were American Jewish leaders. This should be no surprise. They saw the Bill of Rights as protection against the legal discrimination their parents—and ancestors—had faced in the countries they emigrated from. The United States, as they and hundreds of thousands of American Jews saw it, guaranteed Jews equal citizenship under law.

Herbert Bayard Swope was the son of Jewish immigrants from Germany. He launched his career as a reporter during World War I and won the first Pulitzer Prize for reporting in 1917, for his series of articles "Inside the German Empire." One of the most influential journalists of his generation, Swope served as editor of the innovative *New York World* during the 1920s. His 1921 three-week editorial campaign against the politically powerful Ku Klux Klan earned the newspaper a Pulitzer Prize for public service. In retirement Swope served the United States government in various capacities, including chairing the 1941 Bill of Rights Sesquicentennial Commission.¹⁶



Fig. 3. Herbert Bayard Swope (ca. 1920)

NEW YORK WORLD-TELEGRAM AND THE SUN NEWSPAPER PHOTOGRAPH COLLECTION, PRINTS & PHOTOGRAPHS COLLECTION, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Representative Sol Bloom of New York City's Upper East Side was the son of Jewish immigrants from Poland. He established his national reputation in 1893 when he created what he named the "Midway Plaisance" at the Chicago World's Fair, a mile long fantasy of enticing games and exhibitions. Bloom won his seat in the House of Representatives in 1922 and served until his death in 1949, most prominently as chairman of its foreign relations committee from 1939 to 1947. He chaired the 1932 George Washington Bicentennial. Two years later he introduced a House resolution to establish a Constitution Sesquicentennial Commission. Bloom became its director general. In 1937 it published *The Story of the Constitution* and in 1940, *History of the Formation of the Union under the Constitution*, with his name as the author of both. In 1939 he wrote but apparently did not publish an article on the Bill of Rights.¹⁷

Philadelphian Abraham Simon Wolf (A.S.W.) Rosenbach was the descendant of a Dutch Jew who immigrated to the city during the 1760s. By the 1930s he was the leading rare book dealer of his generation, building collections for



Fig. 4. Sol Bloom, ca. 1923, shortly after standing as Tammany Hall's Democratic candidate for Congress and narrowly winning the Republican-leaning 19th Congressional District in New York City's Upper East Side. He would go on to serve thirteen consecutive terms in the House.

PRINTS & PHOTOGRAPHS COLLECTION, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

the Folger Shakespeare and Henry E. Huntington libraries. And he personally owned the most important private collection of American constitutional documents. By 1937 he had added to it one of the original fourteen handwritten copies of the first Ten Amendments, which he called the most important document in American Jewish history and “one of the most precious in American history.” His devotion to the Bill of Rights was so strong that he allowed the document to be displayed publicly on several occasions, most prominently on 1 October 1939, Bill of Rights Day at the New York World’s Fair. Fair Commissioner Sol Bloom spoke on the occasion.¹⁸

In 1939, as part of the sesquicentennial celebration, the legislatures of Connecticut, Georgia, and Massachusetts belatedly ratified the Bill of Rights—the latter somewhat defensively, after reluctantly accepting the State Department’s claim that it had failed to ratify in the eighteenth century.¹⁹ By 1941 several organizations existed that celebrated the document; among them were the Bill of Rights Commemorative Society, the National Federation for Constitu-

tional Liberties, and the Society of the National Shrine of the Bill of Rights. Herbert Bayard Swope’s Bill of Rights Sesquicentennial Commission published and widely distributed *Our Bill of Rights: What it Means Today* to educate the American people. Upon receiving his copy, Roosevelt thanked Swope, calling the Bill of Rights “that precious document . . . one of America’s greatest contributions to the happiness of mankind.”²⁰

On 27 November 1941 President Franklin Roosevelt designated 15 December as Bill of Rights Day—a day which twenty-five governors and a hundred mayors called upon their citizens to observe. A variety of events occurred throughout the nation. One broadside proclaimed that “Today our lives, our fortunes, our stature as free men, all are jeopardized before the shot and shell of fascist guns.” A thousand people attended the Bill of Rights Defense Rally luncheon in New York City to hear First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt and others speak. The distinctive, throaty voice of actress Ethel Barrymore reading Rosenbach’s copy of the Bill of Rights electrified the audience. Many Americans concluded the day by turning on their radios to hear “We Hold These Truths,” an hour-long docudrama broadcast simultaneously on all major radio networks. It was written and produced by radio innovator Norman Corwin, the son of English Jewish immigrants and a man deeply influenced by his religious heritage.²¹

The program concluded with an address by the President. Roosevelt focused on Adolph Hitler and the Nazi Party:²²

. . . today, with the exception of Germany, Italy, and Japan, the peoples of the whole world . . . support its [the Bill of Rights’s] principles, its teach-



Fig. 5. Dr. A.S.W. Rosenbach and group with the Bill of Rights at the 1939-40 World’s Fair in Flushing, New York

NEW YORK WORLD’S FAIR 1939-40 RECORDS, MANUSCRIPTS AND ARCHIVES DIVISION,
THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

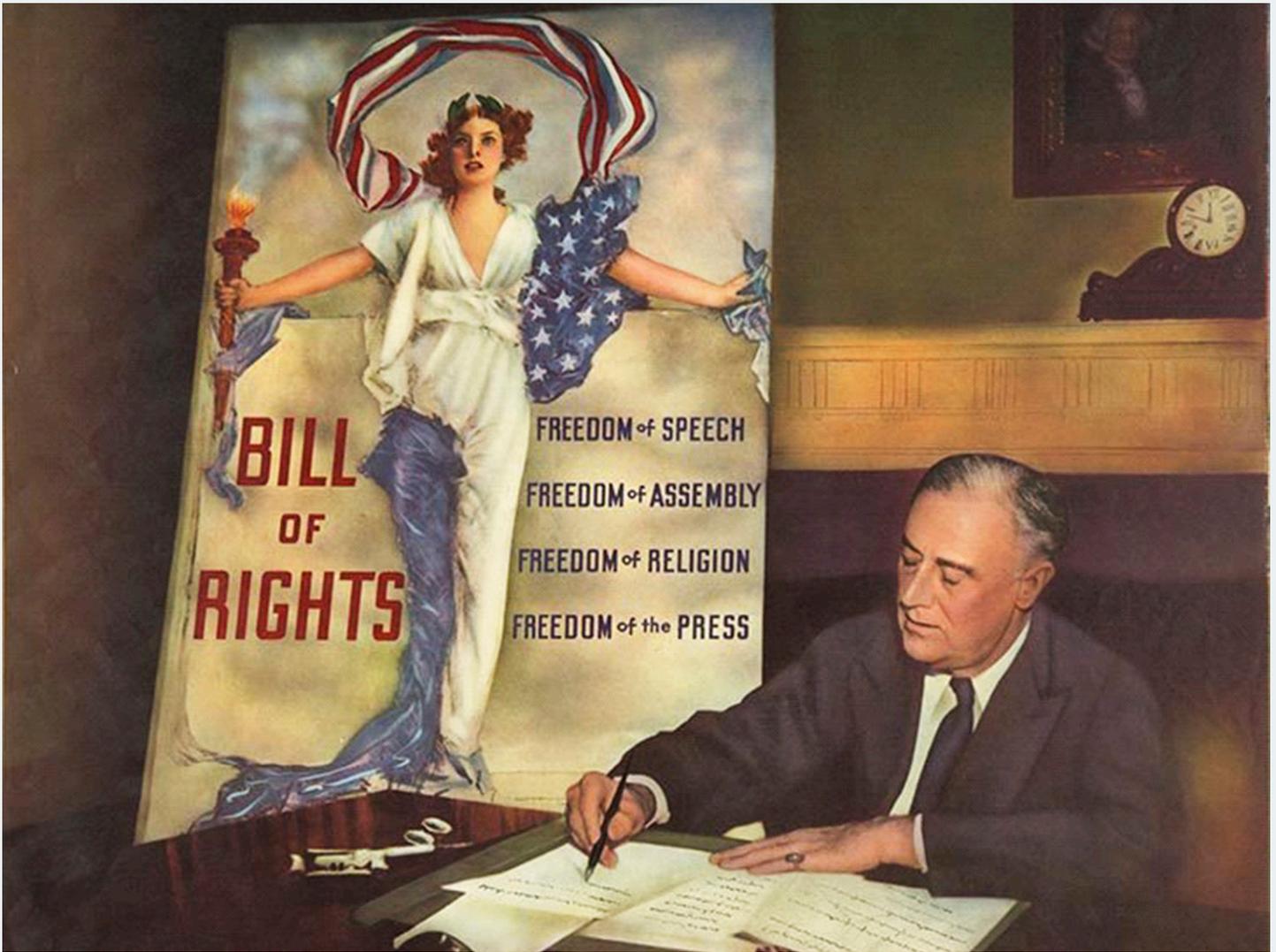


Fig. 6. Franklin Delano Roosevelt with poster by Howard Chandler Christy (1942)

DANIEL STERN

ings, and its glorious results In the year 1933, there came to power in Germany the clique of ambitious and unscrupulous politicians whose . . . entire program and goal . . . was nothing more than the overthrow, throughout the earth, of the great revolution of human liberty of which our American Bill of Rights is the mother charter. . . . We will not, under any threat, or in the face of any danger, surrender the guarantees of liberty our forefathers framed for us in our Bill of Rights. . . . We are solemnly determined that no power or combination of powers of this earth shall shake our hold upon them.

As the historian Michael Kammen has observed, the new status of the Bill of Rights after 1941 required a reorientation in American thinking that “must be considered nothing less than a sea-change in U.S. constitutionalism.”²³

With World War II won, in 1946 William Coblenz, the assistant director of public information at the Justice Department and the son of Russian immigrants who were probably Jewish, had an idea. Why not put some captured Nazi documents and, for contrast, documents related to the Bill of Rights, on a special train and send them around the country for Americans to view? Coblenz got the support of the National Archives. Attorney General Tom Clark, a loyal New Dealer, not only gave the idea his blessing but soon took over the leadership of the celebration. He invited Rosenbach to lunch to discuss the “far-reaching national educational campaign for the building of a deeper respect and understanding of the intent of the Bill of Rights and other priceless documents that have implemented our heritage of liberty.” The concept changed during the year, and by the time the red, white, and blue striped, seven-car Freedom Train hit the rails in 1947, the Nazi documents were not aboard but the

federal government's copy of the Bill of Rights was. When the train arrived back in Washington in 1949, the now iconic federal Bill of Rights returned to the National Archives where it had resided since 1938, when the State Department transferred a large body of official records. It has been on display alongside the Constitution and Declaration of Independence since 15 December 1952.²⁴



KENNETH BOWLING, a sometimes board member of the Society, received his Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin in 1968. He is the author of “‘Tub to the Whale’: The Founding Fathers and the Adoption of the Federal Bill of Rights,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 8(Fall 1988), and “Overshadowed by States’ Rights: Ratification of the Federal Bill of Rights,” Ronald Hoffman and Peter J. Albert, eds., *The Bill of Rights: Government Proscribed* (Charlottesville, VA and London, 1997). Along with his colleagues at the First Federal Congress Project, he edited *Creating the Bill of Rights: The Documentary Record from the First Federal Congress* (Baltimore, 1991).

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Notes

1. The legislative history of the Amendments that became the Bill of Rights, the House debate on them, and contemporary correspondence and newspaper articles related to their adoption by Congress, are conveniently compiled in Helen E. Veit, Kenneth R. Bowling, and Charlene Bangs Bickford, eds., *Creating the Bill of Rights* (Baltimore and London, 1991) from Charlene Bangs Bickford, Kenneth R. Bowling, Helen E. Veit, and William C. diGiacomantonio, *The Documentary History of the First Federal Congress, 1789-1791* (20 vols. to date; Baltimore, 1968-present), vols. 4, 11, and 15-17. The most comprehensive scholarly article on their adoption by Congress is Kenneth R. Bowling, “‘A Tub to the Whale’: The Founding Fathers and the Adoption of the Federal Bill of Rights,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 8(Fall 1988):223-51. I am bemused that, like most Americans of his generation, the author assumed that by 1792 the first Ten Amendments were “widely referred to as the Bill of Rights” soon after their ratification by the states (p. 250), and I am grateful to the late historian Pauline Maier for calling this error to my attention and thereby launching the research that led to this article.

2. At least one scholar did call it the Bill of Rights before 1900 (Albert O. Wright, *An Exposition of the Constitution of the United States* (Madison, Wis., p. 263 in both the 1884 and 1898 editions). Wright states that the First Congress prepared a list of Amendments “to form a bill of rights” but this is an assumption on his part and is not what the First Congress thought it was doing. For an account of the non-controversial ratification process, see Kenneth R. Bowling, “Overshadowed by States’ Rights: Ratification of the Federal Bill of Rights” in Ronald Hoffman and Peter J. Albert, *The Bill of Rights: Government Proscribed* (Charlottesville, Va., 1977), pp. 77-102.

3. David Howard, *Lost Rights: The Misadventures of a Stolen American Relic* (Boston and New York, 2010), Ch. 4. In the 1970s and 1980s the document hung on an Indianapolis continuing care retirement community wall (p. 189).

4. Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, 15 March 1789, Charles F. Hobson, Robert A. Rutland, William M. E. Rachal and Jeanne K. Sisson, eds., *The Papers of James Madison* 12(Charlottesville, Va., 1979):13.

5. The debate over this issue arose almost immediately after the war ended and continued beyond the so-called 1901 insular cases; see among numerous examples 13 Dec. 1898, 25 Jan. 1900, 9 Aug. 1900, 16 Dec. 1900, 16 June 1901, 21 Feb., 4 June,

11 Aug, 1902, 9 May 1910, *New York Times* (Historical) database [NYT] under the search heading “bill of rights.”

6. The term “federal Bill of Rights” never appeared in the newspaper between its founding in 1851 and 1900. “Bill of Rights” occurs occasionally; prominent examples are a governor’s veto message that references John Marshall’s famous 1833 decision in *Barron vs. Baltimore* (11 April 1854); the New York City mayor’s welcome to the banquet on the occasion of the centennial of George Washington’s inauguration notes that Congress adopted the Bill of Rights in New York (1 May 1889); a book review of John Ordronaux’s *The Fundamental Law* (26 July 1891); the Constitution originally did not contain one (30 July 1891); the American Federation of Labor claims a Pennsylvania court decision violates it (17 Dec. 1891); the defense argument in the famous Lizzie Borden case (13 June 1893); the University of North Carolina commencement address (5 June 1896); and as a reassertion of Magna Carta (22 March 1897).

7. NYT, 14 April 1927.

8. NYT, 1 June 1913, 13 June 1915, 14 Oct. 1928.

9. NYT, 16 Feb. 1902, 14, 16 Aug. 1911, 5 June 1912.

10. NYT, 23, 24 Sept. 1901; 13 March, 29 June 1919, 1, 14 Feb. 1920, 4 Dec. 1927; 7 April 1919; 12 Nov. 1923; 31 Aug., 6 Sept. 1911; 21 Feb., 4 June, 11 Aug. 1902, 9 May 1910; and 18 June 1915.

11. NYT, 20 Dec. 1908; 23 Oct. 1909; 17 Aug., 5 Oct. 1919.

12. NYT, 18 April 1915, 21 Sept. 1919; Michael Kammen, *A Machine That Would Go of Itself: The Constitution in American Culture* (New York, 1987), p. 337.

13. Kammen, *Machine*, p. 73.

14. NYT, 22 April 1937; Greg Ivers, *To Build a Wall: American Jews and the Separation of Church and State* (Charlottesville, VA and London, 1995), p. 12; NYT, 20 Nov. 1938.

15. The American Presidency Project database. See also Secretary of War George Dern’s comments about FDR and the Bill of Rights (NYT, 19 Feb. 1936).

16. www.spartacus-educational.com. Before assuming the chairmanship, Swope’s knowledge about the Bill of Rights was woefully inadequate. In September 1941 he inquired of A. S. W. Rosenbach, “In whose writing is it—Jefferson’s, or George Morris’ [Mason’s] of Virginia? What’s its history? Why should there be two copies?” (19 Sept. 1941, Rosenbach Company Papers, Rosenbach Museum and Library, Philadelphia).

17. Phone conversation with Peter Samson, author of the forthcoming biography of Emanuel Celler, who was elected to the House from New York at the same time as Bloom, 29 March 2016; Kammen, *Machine*, p. 282; Bloom to John C. Fitzpatrick, 27 Sept. 1939, Box 15, Fitzpatrick Papers, Library of Congress. In addition to the books, Bloom’s Commission issued a series of contemporary maps of the states at the time of ratification of the

Constitution, which are still in use seventy-five years later. The Bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution Commission in 1987-1988 accomplished very little by comparison, leading this author to conclude that it served as little more than an ego trip for its chairman, retired Chief Justice Warren Burger.

18. Edwin Wolf II and John F. Fleming, *Rosenbach: A Biography* (Cleveland, OH and New York, 1960), p. 14; Kammen, *Machine*, p. 297; A.W.S. Rosenbach and Free Library of Philadelphia, *Historical Documents Commemorating the 150th Anniversary of the Constitution* (Philadelphia, 1937); *New York Herald Tribune*, 4 March 1939; Jacob Rader Marcus, *United States Jewry, 1776–1985* (Detroit, MI, 1990) 4:286; Rosenbach to Herbert Bayard Swope, 18 Sept. 1941, Rosenbach Company Papers, Rosenbach Museum and Library; NYT, 1, 2 Oct. 1939.

19. Bowling, “Overshadowed”, p. 89; Gov. Leverett Saltonstall to Secretary of State Cordell Hull, 3 March 1939, RG 11, National Archives.

20. Kammen, *Machine*, p. 339; Jewish Telegraphic Agency, 3, 4 December 1939; *Important . . . Americana from the Albert M. Small Collection*, Christie Catalog 2655 (18 May 2012).

21. The American Presidency Project database (www.presidency.ucsb.edu); NYT, 10 Dec. 1941; Kammen, *Machine*, p. 340 (quoted); Jewish Telegraphic Agency, 14, 15 Dec. 1941; Obituary, NYT, 19 Oct. 2011. Eleanor Roosevelt mentioned the Bill of Rights in her “My Day” columns of 13 December 1939, 28 November 1941, and 28 October 1943.

22. www.presidency.ucsb.edu. Interested readers can hear FDR deliver the address as part of “Amending America,” an exhibit at the National Archives through August 2017.

23. Kammen, *Machine*, pp. 388-89. Not everyone was happy with the name change. Historian Charles Beard, who along with Max Farrand had declined to serve on the 1937-39 commission, referred to the first Ten Amendments as the “Bill of Rights, so-called” as late as 1944, but that perhaps had something to do with his disdain for Sol Bloom (Kammen, *Machine*, pp. 307-08; Beard, *The Republic: Conversations on the Fundamentals* [New York, 1944], p. 151).

24. <https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:XQ5B-L54>; phone conversation, 28 March 2016, with Kathy Haas, curator of the Rosenbach Museum’s 2016 exhibit about the Freedom Train; Thomas C. Clark to A. S. W. Rosenbach, 14 Nov. 1946, American Heritage Foundation, Rosenbach Museum and Library; Milt Gustafson, “Travels of the Charters of Freedom,” 34(2002):274.

VIGNETTES OF THE CAPITOL FROM THE BUREAU OF ENGRAVING AND PRINTING

by Margaret Richardson



NATIONAL NUMISMATIC COLLECTION, NATION MUSEUM OF AMERICAN HISTORY (NMAH), SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION (SI)

Fig. 1. \$50 Federal Reserve Note, uniform back. The Capitol vignette was engraved by Louis S. Schofield in 1927.

One of the most recognized images of the U.S. Capitol measures only two by four inches. It was originally engraved by Louis S. Schofield in 1927 (fig. 1), and an updated version was made by Thomas R. Hipschen in 1996 (fig. 2). There are 1.5 billion copies of the image in circulation around the globe,¹ and millions more will be printed in 2016.

Which Capitol image is this? It is the engraving on the back of the \$50 bill.

While this view of the Capitol is familiar to most Americans, it is far from the only engraving of the iconic building—even on other forms of U.S. paper currency.

THE BUREAU OF ENGRAVING AND PRINTING

United States paper currency is produced at the Bureau of Engraving and Printing (BEP) at the directive of the Federal Reserve. The BEP also creates products for several other government agencies, such as identification cards, certifi-

cates, and official portraits. Almost every item the BEP has made—including individual design components for each item, some equipment used in production, and artifacts related to the history of the BEP itself—are housed in the bureau's Historical Resource Center (HRC). The HRC's growing collection includes more than two million artifacts.



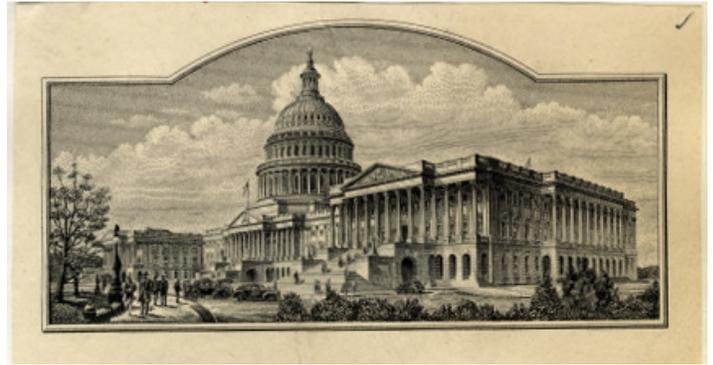
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Fig. 2. \$50 Federal Reserve Note, Series 2004, back. The Capitol vignette was engraved by Thomas R. Hipschen in 1996.



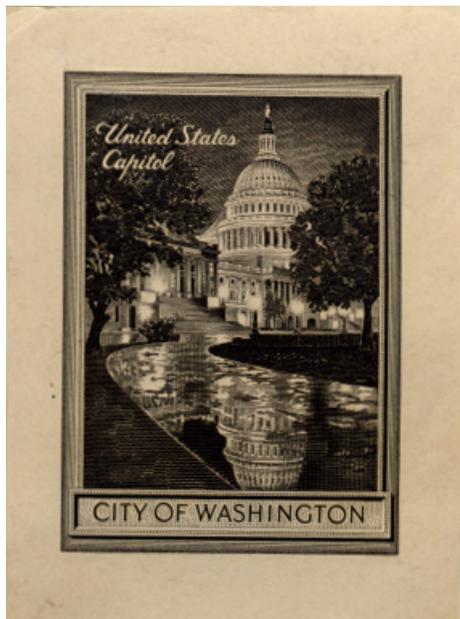
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Fig. 3. U.S. Capitol, aerial view



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Fig. 4. U.S. Capitol, 1943



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Fig. 5. Scene of the U.S. Capitol for the Plate Printer's and Engraver's Union, 1946



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Fig. 6. "Head of America," 1917

Since the BEP was established in 1862, the Capitol complex has been engraved dozens of times. It has appeared on currency, postage stamps, revenue stamps, souvenirs, admission tickets, and even a Brazilian Exhibition memento from 1922. It has been engraved from almost all directions, including an aerial view (fig. 3); surrounded by pedestrians, horse-drawn carriages, and automobiles (fig. 4); during the day and at night (fig. 5); and from different angles that emphasize the House, the Senate, or both sides equally. There are also engravings of the Statue of Freedom (fig. 6), which stands at the peak of the Capitol Dome.

The Capitol has been a naturally popular subject for BEP engravers. It is instantly recognizable as the seat of government, but it is also a symbol of democracy, freedom, and patriotism. The Capitol is a strong, familiar image that can be used on numerous product types, so engravings of the building are in high demand. The only other buildings that have been as favored by BEP engravers are the Treasury Department (of which the BEP is a part) and the White House. In fact, small engravings (or *vignettes*) of the Capitol and the White House were often used in tandem as design components on political or government documents, such as Woodrow Wilson's 1924 memorial service invitation (fig. 7) or President William McKinley's 1897 Inaugural Ball souvenir (fig. 8).

The engraving process itself is meticulous and time-consuming. Engravings are typically executed on small pieces of steel, called dies, using hand tools and acid etching. The dots, lines, and dashes cut into the die surface are miniscule—sometimes just fractions of a millimeter wide and deep. By varying the width, depth, length, and spacing of these cuts, the engraver is able to create an image that appears three-dimensional. Banknote engraving, the style employed at the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, is a complex, demanding skill; even today, engravers must undergo between seven and ten years of apprenticeship before they become professional engravers, or *journeymen*.²

To make a print, ink is applied to the die and then wiped



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Fig. 7. Woodrow Wilson memorial service souvenir, 1924

away, leaving ink only in the design cut into the die's surface. Paper is then pressed against the die so forcefully that it wedges into the engraving, absorbing the ink and leaving a raised impression. The result is an image that can be felt by running a finger across the surface of the paper. This type of engraving is called *intaglio*.³ The tactile quality of intaglio serves as a significant counterfeit deterrent, since less sophisticated printing methods do not result in an image that can be felt when touched.

Each vignette can take months to engrave, depending on the size of the image, the level of detail, and the skill of the engraver. For example, the vignette of the Capitol on the \$50 bill engraved by Schofield in 1927 was reported to take 479 hours (about three months) to complete, at a labor cost of \$1,400.84. Even just the tiny central vignette of the Capitol from the \$2 postage stamp, series 1922, required more than 105 hours (almost three weeks) of work by Schofield.⁴

THE ENGRAVERS

Schofield was just one engraver who was tasked with creating vignettes of the Capitol. Others include Luigi Delnoce, William Chorlton, G.F.C. Smillie, Charles Schlecht, and Thomas R. Hipschen.

Before the establishment of the BEP in 1862, most bank note engravings were executed by a handful of private companies—namely the American Bank Note, the National Bank Note, and the Continental Bank Note companies. They each engraved and printed stocks, bonds, state bank notes (for the 1,600 state banks issuing currency before the Civil War), and other secure documents. Some of these companies were founded in the late eighteenth century, and others, such as American Bank Note (founded in 1858, from an amalga-



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Fig. 8. William McKinley inaugural ball program page, 1897

mation of seven companies), still exist today.⁵

The act that launched the BEP was approved and signed into law on July 11, 1862. It authorized the Secretary of the Treasury, upon deeming it “inexpedient” to procure U.S. notes by contract, to have them engraved and printed at the Treasury Department in Washington and “to purchase and provide all the machinery and materials, and to employ such persons and appoint such officers as may be necessary for this purpose.”⁶

The first engraver to be directly employed by the BEP was James Duthie, who had previously worked for private bank note companies and was hired in August of 1862. Duthie was soon assigned with traveling to New York City to persuade other engravers from established bank note companies to come to Washington. By late November, a “nucleus” of an engraving staff was at work. Spencer Clark, the first Bureau Chief, then drew up a list of talented American engravers and began recruiting them as well.⁷

One of the first engravers to do work for the BEP was Luigi (or Louis) Delnoce. A native of Italy, Delnoce (1822-90) was an independent contractor for the BEP from about 1868 until at least the early 1880s. He also worked for American Bank Note, Franklin Bank Note, Homer Lee Bank Note, and other companies. He was a skilled instructor, and several of his students would become accomplished engravers themselves.⁸

Ten years after the start of the BEP, William Chorlton was hired by the Engraving Department. Chorlton was engraving for National Banknote by the time he was sixteen years old. He joined the BEP in 1872, but died just two years later. His son, Harry L. Chorlton, would become an accomplished engraver in his own right, working at the BEP for over twenty years.⁹



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Fig. 9. Engraver Louis S. Schofield, c. 1909

Louis S. Schofield (fig. 9) was employed by the BEP from 1888 to 1935. He was a member of the renowned Sartain family of Philadelphia; his grandfather John Sartain was a famous mezzotint engraver, and several of John's children were accomplished artists. During his almost 50 years at the BEP, Schofield engraved hundreds of postage stamps and vignettes, and was considered to be one of the Bureau's most talented engravers.¹⁰ In addition to the Capitol vignette on the back of the \$50 bill, he engraved the vignette of the Treasury Department that appeared on the back of the \$10 bill from 1928 to 1999. Schofield was also an amateur photographer who enjoyed taking pictures of his coworkers, a hobby that has greatly benefitted the historic collections of the HRC (fig. 10).

George Frederick Cumming Smillie (1854-1924), also known as G.F.C. or Fred, was one of the most prominent and prolific engravers ever to work for the BEP (fig. 11). As a younger member of "one of the most active and influential families in the art circles of New York City," he seems genetically destined to have become a bank note engraver. His Scottish-born father William Cumming Smillie (1813-1908) and uncle James Smillie (1807-85) were pioneers in bank note engraving. (Uncle James worked for both the National and American Bank Note companies at various times, and engraved the Post Office's famous 1869 pictorial issue stamps of three of the historic scenes depicted in the Capitol Rotunda.) James's son James David Smillie (1833-1909) was a famous painter and illustrator, as was his other son, Fred's cousin George Henry Smillie (1840-1921), and



BEP HISTORICAL RESOURCE CENTER

Fig. 10. Louis Schofield photographing fellow engraver George U. Rose, Jr.

George's wife Nellie Sheldon Jacobs Smillie (1854-1926). Fred himself worked at several private bank note companies before joining the BEP in 1894 as principal engraver. His talent was so highly valued that he was paid \$6,000 per year—a figure that the *Washington Times* noted was a full \$1,000 more than the salary of BEP Director Joseph E. Ralph. Smillie's most recognized engraving is the portrait of George Washington on the \$1 bill (based on Gilbert Stuart's "Athenæum Portrait" of 1796).¹¹

Charles Schlecht (1843-1905) immigrated with his family from Germany to the U.S. in 1852, and his apprenticeship at American Banknote began seven years later. He contracted for the BEP before going full-time in 1893, but only stayed until 1900.¹² One reason why Schlecht left the Bureau was his displeasure with G.F.C. Smillie. In a letter dated 1897, Schlecht wrote to fellow engraver George Casilear:

I felt justified in thinking that favoritism was shown to Mr. Smillie by the [Bureau] Chief, Mr. [Claude M.] Johnson. I know that this feeling was shared by mostly all of the engravers in the Engraving Division. – Then Smillie bragging with the influence he claimed to have with Mr. Johnson and the intimacy which existed between them; after Smillie and myself were no longer on speaking terms I was at least spared from hearing that.¹³

After leaving the BEP, Schlecht engraved independently for a time before returning to American Bank Note.¹⁴

As technology changed over time, private bank note companies began to fold and the profession of engraving waned. Today, it is not necessary to have an engraving background to become a BEP engraver. The craft is learned during the decade-long apprenticeship. What is required, however, is a strong arts background. Thomas R. Hipschen, for example, who engraved the Capitol on the \$50 back in 1996, had studied art at several universities in Washington, DC before becoming a BEP apprentice at the young age of 18 in 1968.¹⁵ Aspiring apprentices must have artistic talent and focus and be committed to spending their careers as bank note engravers.

THE CAPITOL ON CURRENCY

The initial appearance of a portion of the Capitol on U.S. paper currency was one of the first notes ever made by the U.S. Government: the \$5 Demand Note, Series 1861 (fig. 12). Until that time, 1600 independent state banks issued their own notes that were subject to inflation, easily counterfeited, and generally unreliable.¹⁶ When the Civil War began, the economy faltered and citizens started hoarding



BEP HISTORICAL RESOURCE CENTER

Fig. 11. Engraver G.F.C. Smillie (c. 1905) as photographed by Louis S. Schofield

coin currency, or specie, since gold and silver were more valuable than inconsistent paper notes. As a stopgap measure to pay for wartime expenses, the US government centralized currency and issued demand notes in 1861. The paper note was a substitute for specie, essentially acting as an IOU. It was promised that a note could be presented at any bank to receive its value in coin upon demand, hence the name "demand note."¹⁷ Since the Treasury was not yet printing currency, the first demand notes were made by the American Bank Note Company in New York City. The \$5 note features a full-length engraving of the Statue of Freedom, as well as



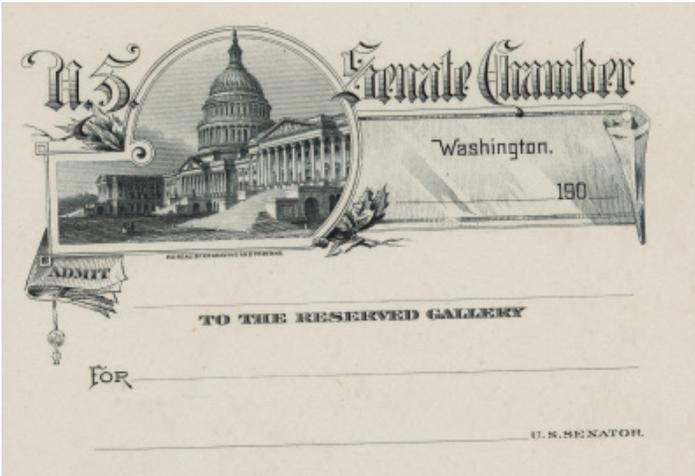
NATIONAL NUMISMATIC COLLECTION, NMAH, SI

Fig. 12. \$5 Demand Note, Series 1861, face



NATIONAL NUMISMATIC COLLECTION, NMAH, SI

Fig. 13. \$2 United States Note, Series 1880



BEP HISTORICAL RESOURCE CENTER

Fig. 14. Admission Ticket to the Reserved Gallery for the US Senate, 1900



Fig. 15. Passes for the House and Senate Galleries for the 114th Congress

a portrait of Alexander Hamilton, the first secretary of the Treasury.

Demand notes were successful at first. But as wartime expenses ballooned and citizens redeemed demand notes too quickly, banks began to run out of coin.¹⁸ The only solution for the Treasury was to turn paper notes from simple IOUs into legal tender. The value of paper was now based solely on faith in the government's credit, rather than on physical stockpiles of gold or silver.¹⁹ President Abraham Lincoln signed the Legal Tender Act on February 25, 1862, and United States Notes, or "greenbacks," were born.²⁰

Greenbacks earned their nickname from the green ink printed on the note backs. While the reason for the ink color is not definitively known, it possibly served two purposes. First, counterfeiters at the time forged notes photographically, so the green would register as gray on film. Second, it may have covered up traces of "security ink" that was used on note faces and tended to bleed through the paper. Security ink, which was green due to the presence of a chromium compound, provided another deterrent to counterfeiting because forgers might chemically remove any colored ink before photographing the black designs, create the counterfeit note from the photograph, and then reapply color to the fake note, but security ink could not be washed off of the paper without destroying the note. Green ink had been printed on the backs of currency prior to United States Notes, but the latter were the first to be widely known as "greenbacks."²¹

The full Capitol was used for the first time on the \$2 United States Note, Series 1869 and retained until Series 1928 (fig. 13). The note features the earliest known BEP vignette of the building, attributed to Luigi Delnoce in 1868. The view is from the northeast, with the Senate wing in the foreground. There are no trees, lawns, or shrubbery, but the scene is busy with carriages and pedestrians. A glimpse of the cityscape can be seen on the far right. This engraving was also used for a \$2 Treasury note, the \$5 National Currency note of 1882, President McKinley's Inaugural Ball souvenir, and a Senate chamber admission ticket (fig. 14). This is an example of how one engraving can be used multiple times across different product types, usually to save time and money during the production process. The current (114th Congress) House and Senate Gallery passes take this flexibility one step further, by simply reversing Delnoce's Series 1869 Capitol to give either the House or Senate wing prominence by placing it in the foreground, depending on which legislative chamber the pass grants access to (fig. 15).

HIGH-DENOMINATION NOTES

The Capitol appears on another United States note, the \$5,000 series 1878 (fig. 16). The vignette printed on the back

of the note features several national and patriotic symbols. In the foreground, positioned on a rock, is an eagle holding five arrows and a branch, possibly olive or laurel. (The eagle, of course, is a well-known symbol of America; the branch and arrows most likely represent peace and war, as they do on the Great Seal.²²) The eagle is standing on a shield decorated with the stars and stripes of the American flag. In the background, the Capitol is on the left, and a sailing ship is on the right. This vignette was engraved in 1872 by William Chorlton.²³

High-denomination notes were issued from the Civil War era until the mid-twentieth century. Notes of various classes worth \$500, \$1,000, \$5,000, \$10,000, and even \$100,000 were printed. Although some of these notes appeared in circulation, they were mostly used in transfers between banks and for other high-value transactions. As technology advanced through the twentieth century and banking transactions were increasingly made over the telephone and wire, demand for high-denomination notes decreased.²⁴ However, the notes were still used by organized crime syndicates and drug cartels to circulate large amounts of currency. Due to the dropping popularity of the notes and in an effort to fight crime, President Richard Nixon discontinued all notes above \$100 in 1969.²⁵

Although the \$5,000 United States Note of 1878 is no longer in production, the back vignette of the eagle is still in active use. Most recently, it appeared on a Presidential Appointment Commission Certificate from President Barack Obama. The commission appoints the recipient to a specific office until the end of the next Senate session.

EDUCATIONAL SERIES

The Capitol was also incorporated into allegorical female vignettes, another common design motif employed by BEP engravers. These allegories are typically women in white robes, accessorized and positioned to represent such grand concepts as “Justice,” “Victory,” “Diplomacy,” and “Peace.” For example, in “Liberty,” engraved by G.F.C. Smillie in 1919, a robed woman holds up an American flag in her right hand and a miniature Statue of Liberty in her left (fig. 17). She is emerging from clouds above the Capitol Dome. The engraving was used for the coupon backs of the Second Liberty Loan in 1927.²⁶ For an image such as this, representing “Liberty,” the Capitol is a logical choice for integration into the symbolic design.

Perhaps the most well-known allegorical image featuring the Capitol is the face of the \$5 Silver Certificate, Series 1896 (fig. 18). Now known as the Educational Series, the three denominations of notes printed in 1896 were intended to be more artistic than previous currency. Prominent artists



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Fig. 16. \$5,000 United States Note, Series 1878, back



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Fig. 17. “Liberty,” 1919



Fig. 18. \$5 Silver Certificate, Series 1896, face

from New York City were contracted to design the notes. Walter Shirlaw (1830-1909)—another Scottish-born engraver also known for his work as an illustrator—designed this \$5 face and was paid \$800 for his work.²⁷

The image is called “Electricity Presenting Light to the World,”²⁸ or “Electricity as the Dominant Force in the World.” The winged woman in the center symbolizes Electricity, holding a light bulb high. On the left is Jupiter, who represents force, in a chariot and holding lightning bolts that are powering Electricity’s lamp. Fame is in the foreground, symbolizing progress and announcing Electricity’s presence with a long trumpet. On the right is Peace, raising her arm to touch a dove flying above her head.²⁹ The background on the right shows a glimpse of the Capitol Dome.

The Capitol is also on the \$1 note from the same series (fig.19), in the background of a vignette entitled “History Instructing Youth.” It was engraved by Charles Schlecht in 1895, and was based on a design by William H. Low.³⁰ The image features a partially-reclining woman (“History”) wearing white robes with a star pattern across her lap. Her right arm is around a boy (“Youth”) standing at her side. She points with her left hand towards a vista of Washington, DC, with the Washington Monument, Capitol, and Potomac River. On the right is a book open to a page with text from the United States Constitution.

Expectations for the 1896 silver certificates were high

before they even began circulating. “It is a very beautiful change from the old conventional bank note design,” said the *New York Times*.³¹ “The new issue of United States silver certificates...ranks, by virtue of beautiful design and effective engraving, as the most artistic paper money ever put into circulation,” declared the *Washington Post*.³²

Unfortunately, when the first notes in the Education Series entered into circulation, problems immediately arose. Bank tellers complained that the images were too dark, making it difficult to see the denominations. To remedy this, the BEP created new plates for the notes with lighter colors and clearer denominations. Problems continued, however. Ink easily smudged, and designs were so dense that it was hard to tell if the notes were printed on genuine currency paper.³³ Furthermore, the female nudity featured on the \$5 note offended Victorian sensibilities, and the note was even “banned in Boston” due to the state of undress.³⁴ The BEP promised to ensure that the ladies would be properly clothed on future notes, but this and the other problems became too great. Production on the Educational Series was eventually abandoned with only three of nine planned denominations printed.³⁵

While this series was despised when it was first issued, its popularity has soared in recent years. The value of a crisp, uncirculated \$5 note has increased from \$275 in 1960 to \$16,000 in 2006. The notes from this series are now widely



Fig. 19. \$5 Silver Certificate, Series 1896, face

NATIONAL NUMISMATIC COLLECTION, NMAH, SI

considered to be some of the most beautiful U.S. currency ever produced.³⁶

AN ENDURING SYMBOL

The Capitol with its famous dome has stood as a powerful icon since it was completed more than 150 years ago. As the seat of government, the building has appeared on dozens of products, including official documents, mementos, allegorical illustrations, stamps, and—of course—currency. It has become incorporated into our country's shared con-

sciousness as the embodiment of patriotism, democracy, and America itself. It has been, and will continue to be, a representation of the United States on billions of small pieces of paper circulating the globe.



MARGARET RICHARDSON is the Collections Manager, under contract, at the Bureau of Engraving and Printing (BEP). This article was researched and written on her own time and does not represent the opinions of the BEP.

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January – December 2015

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SOCIETY NEWS

APRIL 25 LUNCH FEATURES DAVID STEWART OF WAYS AND MEANS



David Stewart speaks to USCHS Capitol Committee members.

David Stewart, majority staff director to Chairman Kevin Brady (TX) of the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Ways and Means, was the U.S. Capitol Historical Society's honored guest at the Congressional Staff event on April 25, 2016.

Stewart joined over 30 members of the USCHS Leadership Council and Constitution Signers for lunch in the American Council of Life Insurers' beautiful space overlooking the Capitol. Stewart thoughtfully commented on the Capitol Rotunda as a place for reflection. He also recited the poem on the bust of Václav Havel in Freedom Foyer of the Capitol

to highlight the call to service, a theme that permeated his remarks. During Q&A, Stewart provided insight into the issues facing the Ways and Means Committee, including tax reform and trade.

USCHS wishes to thank the American Council of Life Insurers for generously hosting and exclusively supporting this event.



From left, clock-wise: **Jenna Hamilton** (Capitol Legislative Strategies, LLC), **Marc Cadin** (AALU), **Jim McGreevy** (Beer Institute), and **Michelle Dimarob** (Altria).

For information on upcoming events like this, please contact Marilyn Green at mgreen@uschs.org.

CAPITOL COMMITTEE UPDATES

USCHS thanks those who renewed, upgraded, or joined the Capitol Committee (January – May 2016).

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USCHS Honors 90th Anniversary of the Joint Committee on Taxation

The U.S. Capitol Historical Society celebrated the 90th anniversary of the Joint Committee on Taxation (JCT) at an evening reception on February 24, 2016, in National Statuary Hall of the U.S. Capitol. Chairman **Kevin Brady** (TX), Chairman **Orrin Hatch** (UT), Ranking Member **Sandy Levin** (MI), and Ranking Member **Ron Wyden** (OR) made remarks to current JCT members, committee staff, staff alumni, former JCT Chairmen **Bill Thomas** and **Dave Camp**, and USCHS members.

The celebration continued the following morning with a symposium exploring the history and role of the Joint Committee on Taxation in the legislative process. **Ronald Pearlman**, a

former Chief of Staff for the Joint Committee, moderated the lively presentations in the Congressional Auditorium of the Capitol Visitor Center. Notable participants included **George Yin**, **Joseph Thorndike**, **Bob Shapiro**, **Randall Weiss**, **Jeffrey Birnbaum**, **John Samuels**, and **Mel Schwarz**.

Two of the panels aired on C-SPAN in March. Go to www.c-span.org and search for “U.S. Capitol Historical Society” to find these and other USCHS events. Visit www.uschs.org/explore/historical-articles to read the papers presented at the symposium.

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USCHS President **Ron Sarasin** presents marble sculptures of the Capitol Dome to Sen. Hatch, Sen. Wyden, and **Janice Mays** (Ways & Means Committee).



All of the symposium speakers with moderator **Ron Pearlman**, JCT Chief of Staff **Tom Barthold**, and USCHS President **Ron Sarasin**

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The Society deeply appreciates all the Capitol Committee members for their continued involvement and support of its educational mission. For more information about the many terrific benefits available to you as a Capitol Committee member, please contact Marilyn Green, Director, Corporate Giving at (202) 543-8919 x21 or mgreen@uschs.org.

USCHS Events for Volunteers and Members



KATIE GARLOCK/PORTRAITONS

Christiana Cunningham-Adams (left) speaks to USCHS members about her work conserving the Brumidi Corridors.

Every year the U.S. Capitol Historical Society honors our members and our volunteers. Without them, we would not be able to accomplish the work we do every day.

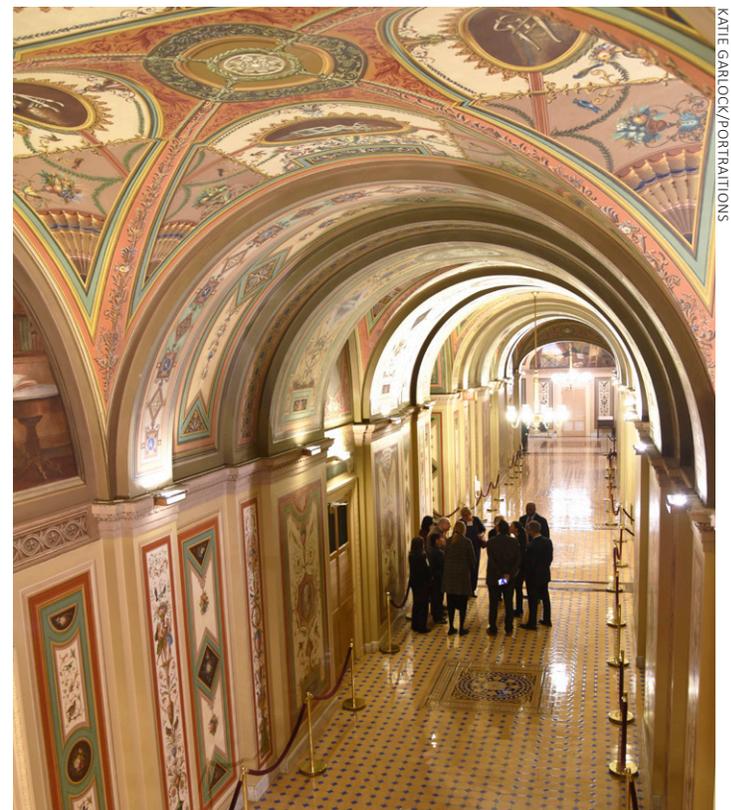
The Volunteer Appreciation Reception was held at the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian this year. Guest speaker **Abbie Kowalewski**, Office of History and Preservation of the House of Representatives, discussed nineteenth-century Speakers of the House.

On February 2, a special reception and educational event was held in honor of USCHS members. Sen. **Roy Blunt** (MO) and Architect of the Capitol **Stephen Ayers**, FAIA, LEED AP welcomed more than 50 guests, who then traveled in small groups to meet experts and learn first-hand about the history, art, and conservation of the Capitol's Brumidi Corridors. This was a rare occasion to climb the scaffolding to see how the experts are rescuing these extraordinary works of art from more than 100 years of paint and grime. This unparalleled event gave all a deeper understanding of Brumidi's

vision as well as the practical challenges of art conservation.

USCHS thanks Sen. Blunt, the Architect of the Capitol, the Office of the Curator, Cunningham-Adams Conservation, and the Office of the Secretary of the Senate for such a memorable and educational event.

The U.S. Capitol Historical Society would like to thank all of our volunteers and supportive members for helping us drive our mission forward and bring the beauty and history of the Capitol to everyone.



KATIE GARLOCK/PORTRAITONS

A USCHS Fellow discusses her work in the Brumidi Corridors.

2016 History Events

During the first half of 2016, the U.S. Capitol Historical Society hosted numerous lectures and held its annual history symposium. Similar events will continue through the remainder of the year.

In February, the annual Black History Month Lecture focused on black Members of Congress during the nineteenth century, especially Sen. Blanche K. Bruce. Historian of the House of Representatives **Matthew Wasniewski** offered background information on nineteenth century black Members, eight of whom were born into slavery. Senate Historian **Betty Koed** detailed the life of Blanche K. Bruce, who was the first black senator to be elected to a full term and successfully built coalitions to support blacks after the Civil War, including through the use of patronage appointments. Finally, Senate Curator **Melinda Smith** spoke about artist Simmie Knox and the 2001 portrait he painted of Bruce; her discussion touched on the sources Knox relied on for the portrait, primarily a Matthew Brady image of Bruce. The Illinois State Society co-sponsored the event.

Also in February, USCHS partnered with the Woolly Mammoth Theatre to offer a panel discussion as an enrichment event during the run of *Guards at the Taj*. Panelists **Richard Chenoweth** (architect, former Capitol Fellow, and author of the first article in this issue of the *Dome*), **Steve Livengood** (USCHS chief guide), and **Jane Hudiburg** (frequent *Dome* contributor) reflected on different themes of the play as they related to the Capitol in “The Price of Beauty: History and Legend in the Heart of the Capital.”

March brought several events tied to Women’s History Month. First, author **John Norris** spoke with **Don Ritchie**, Senate historian emeritus, about his book, *Mary McGrogyr: The First Queen of Journalism*, which delved into McGrogyr’s career and life in Washington journalism, especially her columns focusing on Congress. She wrote about the Army-McCarthy hearings, won a Pulitzer for commentary for her Watergate coverage, and continued reporting and writing through the 1980s. The second event in March, a book talk with author **Cindy Gueli**, was postponed until May, when Gueli spoke about her book, *Lipstick Brigade: The Untold True Story of Washington’s World War II Government Girls*. The talk included music, film, and images of women who came to Washington to work in military or civilian offices during the war and touched on many topics, from crowded housing and entertainment options to types of work and workplace conditions and segregation in DC.

Mau van Duren visited USCHS in April to discuss



An attendee at the Black History Month Lecture talks with Senate Historian Betty Koed, who spoke at and moderated the event.



Author Cindy Gueli signed her book and spoke with attendees after her presentation.



Mariela Olivares speaks during the annual symposium.



Ron Duquette as Albert Gallatin, with a C-SPAN camera in the background, takes questions from the symposium audience.

his book, *Many Heads and Many Hands: James Madison's Search for a More Perfect Union*. The book explores the varied European antecedents of American democracy, especially from the Netherlands. Van Duren structured his talk around the peregrinations of Francis Doughty through the American colonies, and the Forrest Gump-like ways that Doughty experienced growing interest in and experimentation with representative government.

The first week of May brought the annual symposium on the history of Congress. This year the symposium focused on immigration from 1790 to 1990. **Paul Finkelman** (University of Saskatchewan and University of Pennsylvania), symposium director, also gave the keynote address on Thursday evening. Guests enjoyed a reception and then drank in Finkelman's overview of immigration trends and "American" feelings about immigrants, which was peppered with anecdotes and personal stories. In fact, many symposium speakers included some of their family immigration history in their presentations.

The day-long event kicked off Friday with **Andrew Gyory** (Facts on File) examining the depictions of Chinese in Gilded Age dime novels. In both words and images, fictional Chinese immigrants were bundles of complex, even contradictory stereotypes who had more agency than their real-world counterparts. **Lance Sussman's** (Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel and Gratz College) talk focused on one particular person, Rep. Emanuel Celler, who worked to bring Jewish refugees from Europe to the U.S. before and during WWII and went on to work on civil rights legislation and the 1965 Immigration Act. The morning session concluded with **Jack Chin** (University of California, Davis School of Law), who offered two propositions: the 1965 Immigration Act was the most successful civil rights legislation since Reconstruction, and Members of Congress knew the act would change the makeup of the immigration stream before they passed it.

During lunch, historical interpreter **Ron Duquette** appeared in the guise of Albert Gallatin, an early secretary of the Treasury who was a Swiss immigrant. In a short statement before taking questions, he noted that four of the first six Treasury secretaries were immigrants.

Mariela Olivares (Howard University School of Law) began the afternoon session with a discussion of the 1986 immigration act and its effects on Latino/a immigrants, including some of the historical context of the act and its consequences—including the fact that the act ended up legalizing more men than women immigrants. **Renee Redman** (University of Connecticut) provided a short history of asylum in the U.S., including a clarification: asylum seekers are people who arrive here and then ask for asylum, while refugees are people who are brought here. Redman noted that which groups are granted asylum tends to be influenced by foreign policy at that moment. Finally, **Kunal Parker** (University of Miami School of Law) explored how the U.S. has used the "foreign" or "alien" designation to control groups (such as Native Americans) or limit citizenship (such as blacks and women). The symposium closed with a final Q&A panel with all the speakers.

In June, **Fergus Bordewich**, a historian and longtime friend of USCHS, spoke about his book, *The First Congress: How James Madison, George Washington, and a Group of Extraordinary Men Invented the Government*. His talk covered several personalities and episodes from the First Federal Congress, such as Members' opinions of James Madison and his political abilities, Madison's stance on topics like the early amendments, and his role in passing different pieces of legislation.

C-SPAN recorded many of our lectures and talks and has aired them on American History TV. Once they have aired, all the talks are available at www.c-span.org (search for "U.S. Capitol Historical Society"). Our annual summer lecture series runs on Wednesdays from July 27 through August 31, and we're planning occasional talks for the fall as well. Visit www.uschs.org for updates on recently scheduled events!



Symposium speakers Kunal Parker (left) and Andrew Gyory (right) listen to keynote speaker and symposium director Paul Finkelman during the concluding panel.

2016 Freedom Award Honors David McCullough

ALL: KATIE GARLOCK/PORTRAITIONS



2016 Freedom Award Honoree David McCullough

On May 11, more than 200 Members of Congress and USCHS members joined the family and friends of author **David McCullough** in National Statuary Hall as USCHS presented its Freedom Award to McCullough in recognition of his empathetic, nuanced, and fundamentally human approach to telling the American story. “That evening of the Capitol Historical Society’s Freedom Award ceremony was one of the great occasions of our lives. To have been so honored and in such a setting was incomparable,” wrote McCullough.

Every guest was honored to hear McCullough tell stories of the Capitol as only he can. “Within these walls” he said, “there is an abundance of story such as to be found in no other one structure in our country.”

The U.S. Capitol Historical Society annually recognizes individuals that have advanced greater public understanding and appreciation for freedom as represented by the U.S. Capitol and Congress. The Society initiated its Freedom Award on September 17, 1993, the eve of the 200th anniversary of the laying of the U.S. Capitol Cornerstone by George Washington in 1793. It is named for the statue that graces the Capitol Dome.



USCHS Chairman of the Board Hon. **Tom Coleman** (left) listens as House Majority Leader **Kevin McCarthy** (CA) praises McCullough. Other speakers included **Dan Jordan**, president emeritus of the Thomas Jefferson Foundation, and Rep. **John Larson** (CT), co-chair of the Congressional History Caucus, who presented McCullough with a flag flown over the Capitol in honor of this event.

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You can see the entire presentation as recorded by C-SPAN through uschs.org.



Rep. **Nancy Pelosi** (CA), House Democratic Leader, congratulates McCullough.

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★ MARKETPLACE ★



PATRIOTIC EGG TRINKET BOX

This fine collectible is made of pewter and decorated with European lacquers and fine crystals. (1 3/4" D x 2 1/2" H, .6 lbs.) Gift boxed.

#002785 \$32.00 Members \$28.80



D.

A.



PATRIOTIC PINS & BROOCHES

Choose from a selection of tie pins and brooches to demonstrate your patriotic pride in the upcoming election year.

A. Rhinestone Elephant	#001379	\$45.00	Members	\$40.50 (2 3/4" x 1 1/2")
B. Rhinestone Donkey	#001380	\$45.00	Members	\$40.50 (2 3/4" x 1 1/2")
C. Flag Pin	#002923	\$ 2.95	Members	\$ 2.65 (1/2")
D. Rhinestone Map	#002903	\$24.00	Members	\$21.60 (3 1/2" x 2")

B.



RHINSTONE FLAG BROOCHES

Rhinestone-encrusted American flag waving on flag pole with goldtone or silvertone metal alloy base. (1" x 1 1/4"). Sparkle with patriotic pride. Gift Boxed.

#002905 (Goldtone)	\$24.00	Members	\$21.60
#002906 (Silvertone)	\$24.00	Members	\$21.60



C.



ENAMEL EAGLE BROOCH

Classic elements of patriotism—the American eagle in red, white, and blue colors—unite in this unique enamel and crystal pin. Three inches long by 1 1/2" high, this pin makes a statement.

#002582	\$22.00
Members	\$19.80



★ MARKETPLACE ★

A.



B.

PATRIOTIC TRINKET

Choose your party favorite in this fine collectible made of pewter and decorated with European lacquers and fine crystals. Store rings, stamps, or special treasures. Elegantly gift boxed.

- A. #002865 (Donkey)
- B. #002866 (Elephant)
- Each \$32.00
- Members \$28.80



2017 "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 the Capitol and other major Washington, DC landmarks. It has become a treasured collectible to many because of the annual themes commemorating historic events in American history. The 2017 edition commemorates "The Era of Good Feelings 1817-1825" and has a daily factoid notation from 200 years ago. Shrink-wrapped with chipboard.

#002933 \$10.95

Members \$9.85

2016 ARCH MARBLE CAPITOL ORNAMENT

This classic Capitol design is crafted from the marble of the east front steps removed during the 1995-96 renovations. The Capitol rests on a 24kt gold filigree and enameled design. Elegantly gift boxed with provenance card. (3" x 2 1/4")

"Proudly Made in America"

#002925 \$26.00

Members \$23.40

2016 LED CAPITOL DOME

This three-dimensional replica of the U. S. Capitol's crowning symbol of freedom and democracy is lit from within by an LED light with switch and enamelled in white over 24 kt. gold. Beautiful windowed gift boxed. (3"T x 2"W x 1"D)

"Proudly Made in America."

#002926 \$28.00

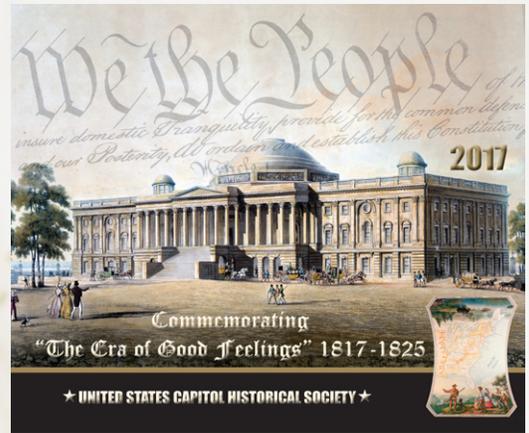
Members \$25.20

FLAG PEN

This finest quality rollerball pen features details of the American Flag on the barrel and is engraved with U. S. Capitol. (5 1/4") Gift boxed in leatherette case.

#002942 \$68.00

Members \$61.20





★ UNITED STATES CAPITOL HISTORICAL SOCIETY ★

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Foundation and USCHS Award Local Teachers

Congratulations to the 2016 winners of the We the People Constitution Challenge sponsored by The Brown Rudnick Charitable Foundation! More than 30 schools participated in the We the People Constitution Tour during the 2015-2016 school year and six winning teachers received awards and shared the prize money. Congratulations to:

LaTonya Davis from
Paul PCS, Middle School

Danielle Durham from
Friendship PCS—Blow Pierce Campus

Karin Harrison from
School Without Walls

Ian Milne from
Stuart–Hobson Middle School

January Morrison from
Cesar Chavez PCS—Chavez Prep

Dwight Weingarten from
Cesar Chavez PCS—Parkside Campus

Visit uschs.org for more information about this and other programs supported by your donations and membership dues.



LEFT: Diana Nelson of Brown Rudnick LLP presents the award to teacher Dwight Weingarten, principal Erin Fisher, and students from Cesar Chavez PCS—Parkside Campus. **RIGHT:** Students from Cesar Chavez PCS—Chavez Prep on the We the People Constitution Tour visit the Lincoln Memorial.