The U.S. Capitol Historical Society continued an annual tradition on February 13, when Historian of the U.S. House of Representatives Matthew Wasniewski spoke about Chicago politician and Member of Congress Oscar De Priest for our African American History Month Lecture. De Priest was the first black Member of Congress elected in a northern state and the first black Member to enter Congress in the
20th century (he arrived in Washington in 1929). Wasniewski was joined at the podium by two current Members of Congress, both from Illinois, Representatives Aaron Schock and Danny Davis, who each said a few words in praise of De Priest. The event was co-sponsored by the Illinois State Society of Washington, DC.

Wasniewski argued that De Priest, although largely passed over in current thinking about African Americans in politics, represents an important moment in that history. De Priest was a transitional figure who literally connected the first generation of black Members of Congress to an early version of the more confrontational tactics of future members like Adam Clayton Powell.

January brought two additional book talks at the U.S. Capitol Historical Society; each taught the audience more about the city in which we live and work. On January 9, Mark Ozer, author of Washington, DC Streets and Statues: Walking in the Steps of History, dished out nuggets of trivia about some of the reasons DC has so many squares and circles to navigate and how our streets got named. (Ex. Davenport St.: think Iowa; Garrison St.: think William Lloyd)

Abby and Ronald M. Johnson spoke on January 16 about Congressional Cemetery, currently beloved by Capitol Hill dogwalkers but long an important part of the city’s political life and pageantry. Ronald Johnson has contributed several pieces to our blog (uschs.wordpress.org) as well, including one that details the 1848 procession from the Capitol to Congressional Cemetery for the temporary internment of John Quincy Adams, former president and a sitting Member of Congress when he died.

Our noontime book signing series remains popular with both authors and audiences. Look out for coverage of our March and April events in the next issue of the Dome, and stay tuned for more lectures throughout the year. As always, they are free and open to the public.

In April, we welcome James H. Johnston, who will discuss his history of an African American family, From Slave Ship to Harvard: Yarrow Marmout and the History of an African American Family, on April 17. On April 24, Mike Canning joins us to talk about Hollywood on the Potomac: How the Movies View Washington, D.C. If you’d like to attend, please email uschs@uschs.org with your contact information or leave a message at (202) 543-8919 x38. Visit our website for details or to pre-register online.

Book Signing Brown Bag Lectures Continue

Ozer speaks about his book.

Rep. Aaron Schock

Historian of the House (and former USCHS historian) Matthew Wasniewski

Rep. Danny Davis

The Johnsons both spoke about their work.
The Society appreciates all of the Capitol Committee members, which include over 100 corporations, associations, and foundations, for their continued involvement and support of its educational mission. Thank you!

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On Wednesday, November 28, 2012, members of the U.S. Capitol Historical Society’s Leadership Council gathered in the Russell Senate Office Building for the inaugural Annual Trustee Breakfast. This new event, a benefit for members at the $25,000 Leadership Council level, brings together one of the many illustrious members of our Board of Trustees and guests of the Leadership Council for an intimate breakfast. This year, the breakfast featured Senator Richard Burr (North Carolina). Sen. Burr spent almost two hours with the group, chatting, joking, and answering questions on subjects ranging from bank regulation to air travel to his favorite parts of the Capitol.

The U.S. Capitol Historical Society would like to extend a thank you to Sen. Burr for his time and insight, to Sen. Burr’s staff for their organizational help, and to Express Scripts for their financial support.

Additionally, Minott earned a law degree from NYU’s School of Law. While at NYU, he was active on the Moot Court Board and served as co-chair of the Black Allied Law Student Association.

Now in his second year on the Development Committee, Minott is continuing to prove his dedication to advancing the causes of the Society. He has helped bring in a number of new Capitol Committee members. Even more impressively, we can always count on him to attend our early morning breakfast meetings—even though he is commuting into DC all the way from Delaware. Minott also enjoys golf, football, baseball, and soccer.

In the past five decades, Congress has enacted significant legislation addressing serious domestic and international issues. It has passed important civil rights and voting rights reforms benefiting millions of Americans. Economic legislation has stimulated economic growth, and a largely bipartisan foreign policy contributed to ending the Cold War, diminishing the threat of nuclear war, and confronting international terrorism.

Yet, since polls began tracking Congressional approval ratings in 1974, the public’s confidence in Congress has never been as low as it is today. Congressional scholars and commentators refer to Congress as “the broken branch,” “even worse than it looks,” “dysfunctional,” “gridlocked,” and perhaps most tellingly, “unrepresentative.” Are such criticisms accurate, and if so, how did Congress get where it is, what changes can be made to fix the problems, and how can we “get it back on track?”

The Hon. Ronald Sarasin, USCHS President, remarked, “The 2012 Heritage Lecture explored a half century of Congressional history, form, and function. The rich and extensive personal experiences of the panelists, all long-serving former Members of Congress, provided lively conversation and fascinating insights into the changes that have taken place in Congress since the 1960s.” The discussion was filmed by C-SPAN and can be viewed at http://www.c-spanvideo.org/program/309781-1.

The National Heritage Lecture was established in 1991 by the USCHS, the White House Historical Association, and the Supreme Court Historical Society. Its purpose is to enhance the knowledge and appreciation of the American system of government and the principles upon which it was founded. Hosted in turn by each of the three historical societies, the National Heritage Lecture annually explores one of the three branches of government and the momentous events and personalities associated with its history. The three historical societies hosting the lecture are private, non-partisan, non-profit organizations dedicated to research, education, and publication.
Society Welcomes New Board Members

As a managing director in the Washington National Tax Services office of PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), Don Carlson provides strategic advice as well as legislative, executive branch, and regulatory representation for domestic and international clients of PwC.

Donald G. Carlson* Managing Director, WNTS PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP

David W. Regan oversees all operations of the National Automobile Dealers Association’s (NADA) Capitol Hill office, including communicating with Members of Congress and their staffs, directing strategy for legislation that affects new-car and -truck dealers, and helping to coordinate NADA’s Washington Conference each fall. Regan also oversees the Dealers Election Action Committee, NADA’s political action committee. Before joining NADA in 1999, Regan served as legislative counsel for Sen. Wendell Ford (KY). Regan also practiced law for several years. In the Washington, D.C. area, his practice focused on representing clients before the U.S. Congress. Regan holds a B.A. in Economics from Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, NC, and a J.D. from the University of Kentucky College of Law. He is admitted to practice in many different states and has represented clients in the U.S. Supreme Court.

David Regan* Executive Vice President, Legislative Affairs National Automobile Dealers Association

Mark Shields has worked in Washington through the administrations of ten U.S. presidents. He was an editorial writer for The Washington Post, where he began writing his column in 1979. Since 1988, Shields has provided weekly political analysis and commentary on national campaigns for PBS NewsHour. For 17 years, Shields was moderator and panelist on CNN’s Capital Gang and is now a regular panelist on Inside Washington. A native of Weymouth, MA and a graduate of the University of Notre Dame, Shields served as an enlisted man in the U.S. Marine Corps before coming to Washington, where he began working in 1965 for Senator William Proxmire (WI). Shields worked on Robert F. Kennedy’s presidential campaign and later helped manage campaigns from the courthouse to the White House in some 38 states. In addition to attending 22 national party conventions and working on or covering the last 12 presidential elections, Shields has taught American politics and the press at the University of Pennsylvania and Georgetown University; he was a fellow at Harvard.

Mark Shields Political Analyst PBS NewsHour and Syndicated Columnist

LaTourette has been responsible for securing federal funding for health care institutions, as well as advocating for their health policy priorities. She has effectively represented both individual organizations and consortium projects. Initially, LaTourette worked for Members of the House and Senate for a decade, with various responsibilities for advising on legislative issues and project requests and working with committee staff. She earned her Bachelor of Arts degree from Wellesley College and her Juris Doctorate from Georgetown University Law Center.

Jennifer LaTourette Vice President, McDonald Hopkins Government Strategies

Hon. Ellen O’Kane Tauscher (CA) served seven terms in the U.S. House of Representatives. She then served as Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security Affairs but retired from full-time government service in February 2012. While in Congress, Tauscher served in leadership positions for centrist Democrats and on the House Armed Services Committee; she also served on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

John Tuck originally joined Baker, Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell & Berkowitz, PC in 1992. He has served within the government in many different functions, most recently as Senior Adviser to Ambassador Howard H. Baker Jr. at the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo. Prior to joining Baker Donelson, Tuck served as Under Secretary of the U.S. Department of Energy and was also chief operating officer for the department. Earlier, he served in the White House as Assistant to President Ronald Reagan, as Deputy Assistant for Legislative Affairs, as Executive Assistant to the White House Chief of Staff, and as Special Assistant to the President for Legislative Affairs in the Senate. His Capitol Hill career began in 1974 where he was assistant to the Republican leader of the House of Representatives before becoming Chief of Minority Floor Information Services. In 1981 he moved to the Senate, where he was named Assistant Secretary for the Majority. Tuck received his B.S. from Georgetown University and was commissioned in the U.S. Navy in 1968, rising to the rank of Captain in the U.S. Naval Reserve until his retirement in 1997.

John C. Tuck* Senior Public Policy Advisor Baker, Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell & Berkowitz, PC

Jennifer LaTourette brings nearly two decades of experience, both as a professional lobbyist and as a Congressional staff member, to her work at a major independent lobbying company. She has created and overseen campaigns to change the perspectives of both the general public and official Washington, resulting in major changes in legislation, policy, and opinion. Her clients have included various educational, municipal, medical, transportation, financial services, corporate, and nonprofit entities, for whom she has provided policy and appropriations support.

Jennifer LaTourette* Legislative Director, WNTS PricewaterhouseCoopers

David Regan was born in Newark, NJ and graduated in 1974 from Seton Hall University, where she obtained a Bachelor of Science degree in early childhood education. She then began a 15-year Wall Street career. At age 25, she became one of the first women to become a Member of the New York Stock Exchange and later served as an officer of the American Stock Exchange, after which she worked as an investment banker. In 1989, Tauscher moved to California and eventually founded the first national research service to help parents verify the background of childcare workers. She is also the author of The Childcare Sourcebook and headed the Tauscher Foundation, which provided funds for elementary schools to buy computers and Internet access.

The Honorable Ellen O’Kane Tauscher

The Honorable Ellen O’Kane Tauscher Special Envoy for Strategic Stability and Missile Defense State Department

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5 THE CAPITOL DOME
In the past year, there have been a number of changes on the USCHS staff. In the Development/Membership Department, Maggie Esteves and Laurent Piereth have moved on (or out of town). In their stead, Dorothy Mejia-Smith is our new Director of Membership Programs and Sarah Lewis has taken over the Development Coordinator spot. In History/Educational Outreach, we bid Joanna Hallac a fond farewell in December. William DiGiacamontonio recently joined the department part-time and is working on research and writing projects. At our front desk, receptionist Ann McNeil retired in February after training Samantha Neveleff in phone management and merchandise fulfillment. Please join us in a hearty hello to all our new staff members when you see them in the offices or at our events!

USCHS STAFF CHANGES

2013 ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM
WILL EXAMINE DOMESTIC ISSUES DURING THE CIVIL WAR

“Congress, the Home Front, and the Civil War” is the subject of this year’s annual symposium. The day-long conference will be held in Room G-50 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building on Capitol Hill at Constitution Avenue and 1st Street, NE. On May 3 the conference begins at 9:00 and concludes at 4:30 with a reception. The event is free and open to the public but preregistration is requested. You can preregister online at www.uschs.org; via email to uschs@uschs.org; or by calling 202-543-8919 x38.

Congressional legislation during the Civil War transformed the nation in many ways. The Homestead Act of 1862 opened large areas of the American West to settlement on more affordable terms. The authorization of the transcontinental railroad not only stimulated economic growth by providing transport to the vast agricultural and livestock areas of the West. The Morrill Land Grant College Act likewise transformed higher education in ways that were not foreseen at the time. The federal government’s role in fiscal policy expanded with the issuance of greenbacks, the National Banking Acts of 1863 and 1864, and the first federal income tax.

Symposium Director Paul Finkelman, the President William McKinley Distinguished Professor of Law and Public Policy at Albany Law School, will moderate the conference and present a paper on President Abraham Lincoln’s pardon of 264 of the 303 Dakota Indians sentenced to be executed for crimes committed during the Dakota War of 1862. Other speakers include R. Owen Williams, President of Transylvania University, who will discuss the federal judiciary during the war; Jenny Bourne, professor of economics at Carleton College, on the impact of fiscal legislation; Peter Wallenstein, professor of history at Virginia Tech, on the Land Grant College Act; Kenneth J. Winkle, Thomas C. Sorenson Professor of History at the University of Nebraska, on Congress and emancipation and civil rights in the District of Columbia; and Guy Gugliotta, author of Freedom’s Cap, who will discuss the construction of the Capitol as a symbol of Union.

The unfinished Capitol dome formed the backdrop to Lincoln’s first inaugural in 1861. The continuation of work on the Capitol during the Civil War bolstered Northern morale as a sign of the Union’s strength.

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