
APPENDIX

APPENDIX

A sampling of the most relevant newspaper articles and other printed material that Meigs pasted into his journal.

1.

Excerpt from Annual Report of Secretary of War to the President December 1, 1853¹

The work for the extension of the Capitol which, by your order of the 23d of March, was transferred from the Department of the Interior to the War Department, has been prosecuted with due diligence under the special charge of Captain M. C. Meigs, of the Corps of Engineers, and it gives me pleasure to bear testimony to the manner in which that officer has discharged his duty—fully sustaining his reputation for professional skill, zeal, and fidelity. He was placed upon this duty April 4, 1853, and directed specially to examine into the condition of the foundation, which had been previously laid, and minutely to inquire into the arrangements for warming, ventilating, speaking and hearing.

A thorough examination of the foundation was made by excavating down to the soil upon which it rested, and by cutting at different points into or through the masonry. The result was a report that less hydraulic lime had been used than was desirable, but that the strength of the foundation was sufficient for the proposed structure. The arrangements for ventilation and hearing were not found satisfactory, and these being the great objects sought in the proposed extension, certain alterations in the plans were designed, and a board, composed of Professors A. D. Bache and Joseph Henry, was commissioned, May 20, 1853, to make inquiries upon acoustics and ventilation, as connected with the adopted plan and proposed alteration. The board visited and made various experiments in the principal public rooms of the cities of Philadelphia, New York, and Boston. After full examination of the various rooms visited, and a discussion of the phenomena presented, they reported on the 24th of June last in favor of the modifications of the plans of the extension of the Capitol as proposed by Captain Meigs.

¹The version of the report that Meigs pasted in his journal was apparently an uncorrected draft. The version reproduced here is from the official report as published in the *Congressional Globe*, December 6, 1853, Appendix, page 37.

To construct a room of sufficient dimensions for the House of Representatives, so as to secure to each member the power to easily make himself heard from his seat at every point in the room, was an object of such high usefulness in legislation, and a problem of such difficult solution, as to require thorough investigation, with all the aids which science could lend; and in view of the many unsuccessful attempts which have been made in our own and other countries to attain that result, success will be, in addition to its utility, an object of just national pride.

In addition to this special object, the modifications proposed were believed otherwise to increase the convenience and facilitate the intercourse of the Houses of Congress, and materially to add to the architectural effect of the building. As soon as the plans submitted received your approval, the consequent changes in the foundation walls were pressed with all possible rapidity, and the work has, since then, been steadily prosecuted, without other delay than that which has necessarily resulted from occasional interruptions in the delivery of the material; and these have been overcome as far as might be, by purchases in other markets which could be made available. The stain which appeared upon the marble after it had been placed in the walls created some anxiety, and specimens were submitted to skillful chemists for analysis. The results gave assurance that the discoloration would disappear, and in some instances observation has sustained that expectation. This is the more gratifying, because the marble is of most beautiful quality, and it might not have been possible elsewhere to procure a material which would have corresponded with it.

I refer for further details to the report of Captain Meigs, and with a view to the rapid completion of the building, recommend to favorable consideration the estimate presented by him for the fiscal year ending in 1855.

2.

**Excerpt from the Annual Report of the Secretary of War,
December 1855**

(included in Meigs' diary for January 9, 1856)

I refer to the reports of the officer in charge of the Capitol and Post Office extensions for detailed information in regard to those works. The progress of the former has been seriously retarded in consequence of deficiency in the supply of marble for the exterior. The work is, however, so far advanced that the interior finish must now be considered. The original plan and estimate was for a finish similar to that of the main building, but this style would not be a fair sample of the present state of architectural skill, and it is supposed would not fulfil the wish of Congress; it has, therefore, been thought proper to have

prepared for inspection specimens of encaustic tiling, instead of brick and sand-stone, for the floor; of painting, instead of white-washing, for the walls and ceilings. These and other contemplated improvements, not included in the original plan and estimates, may be introduced to a greater or less extent, as Congress may provide. Modifications have already been made, such as the introduction of ornamental iron ceilings in the principal rooms, the substitution of iron for wood in the frames for the roofs and the doors and windows of the basement story, an increased thickness of the marble in the walls specially provided for by law, and a costly and extensive corridor required by the plan, but not contained in the original estimate.

At the last session Congress adopted a plan and made an appropriation for a new dome to the Capitol. No estimate of the cost of the work had been submitted, nor has any yet been prepared. In fact, at that time only the exterior had been studied, and a sketch made showing the general effect of the whole building as completed. The study of the details has since been entered into, and I refer to the report of the officer in charge for a narrative of his operations, as well as for a full description of the contemplated structure, which promises to be an object of rare architectural beauty. The resources exhibited in the machinery designed to raise the enormous masses of iron composing the dome, and to place them accurately in their elevated positions, reflect the highest credit upon the capacity and skill as an engineer of the officer in charge of the work.

3.

**Excerpt from Annual Report of the Secretary of War,
December 1, 1856**

The construction of the Capitol extension has advanced as rapidly as the supply of marble would permit. The building is roofed in, the ceilings of the Representatives and of the Senate Chamber are completed, and the interior finish is begun.

Several committee rooms have been finished, and others, though not yet painted, have been temporarily occupied by committees, in consequence of the deficiency of room in the old building. The decoration of these rooms was thus deferred, to be resumed during the recess of Congress.

The vast quantity of marble for the porticoes, in which there are a hundred columns, will require at least two seasons for its delivery; but the occupation of the building need not be delayed until the completion of these porticoes. As soon as the main body of the wings is completed, which, including the ventilating and heating apparatus, it is expected will be accomplished during the next summer, the building may be occupied.

In my last annual report, and in communications since made in answer to resolutions of Congress, it was announced that specimens of painting and decoration, of encaustic tile flooring, of cast iron window and door casings, had been prepared for the inspection of Congress, and that other improvements on the original plan were contemplated.

It was then stated, that if this higher style of finish was adopted, the cost of the building must be proportionally increased. And as the original plan and estimate was for the lower style of finish found in the main building, it was deemed proper to submit to Congress for decision the question of changing the style to the higher standard of the present state of architectural skill; and it was suggested that improvements might be introduced to a greater or less extent, as Congress might provide. Awaiting the decision of this question, no further appropriation for the Capitol extension was presented in the annual estimates of this Department. During the session, and with the understanding that it was the will of Congress that the higher style of finish should be introduced into the whole building, an estimate for the current year's expenditure was transmitted to Congress, and an appropriation was made in accordance with it. I have this year caused estimates to be made on the hypothesis that the building is to be completed, both as to material and workmanship, so as to conform throughout to those parts which have already been constructed; and it appears that the additional sum, which will thus be required, is two millions one hundred thousand dollars, of which a portion is asked in the annual estimate for the next fiscal year.

The work upon the new dome, suspended during the session of Congress, has been resumed.

The machinery for the removal of the masonry of the old dome and construction of the new has been erected, and the old dome has been completely demolished.

Great care is necessary in forming upon the old walls the foundations to support the iron work; and the means adopted and described in the report of the officer in charge seem well adapted to insure success.

The design which was originally adopted by Congress appears to have been in advance of a study of its details and an estimate of its cost. Inquiries by committees of the House of Representatives, and to which the Department replied, indicated a probable change in the plan of the dome; and under these circumstances it has been deemed advisable to await further action. Therefore no estimate is presented by this Department for the continuation of that structure, as the amount that will be required must depend upon the plan to be executed.

4.

**Excerpt from Article from the *Washington Star*
(undated, but apparently December 1857)**

LOCAL INTELLIGENCE.

ILLUMINATION OF THE NEW HOUSE HALL. . . . [The writer was among a group invited to "witness the first lighting up of the new Hall of Representatives. The proceeding began in darkness illuminated by a single torch.]

Then, while all was grim, forbidding, Plutonic, at a signal, as if a higher power had said, "let there be light," the hall was suddenly filled with a flood of the richest golden rays; every tongue was loosed, and the walls of the great room fairly rang with shouts of delight. At another signal every light was extinguished, and the hall, by contrast, seemed darker than ever. And again the torch was applied, and by the singular process now for the first time introduced, the fire was seen leaping along the jets eddying in a thousand graceful sinuosities until in the marvelously short space of twenty seconds the entire round was ignited.

And now for a few matter of fact details. The squares in the ceiling, 45 in number, are disposed in five rows, containing nine in each.

Each square (three feet in dimension) contains 28 burners, or 1,260 burners in all. But in addition to this magnificent fund, the curved carriers which lead the light to the squares are provided with jets to the immense number of 45,000, by which the light furnished by the squares can be almost indefinitely augmented. The carriers are constructed of brass, and are not liable to corrode. This novel and most successful mode of lighting is an idea of Capt. Meigs.

The carriers and squares are each supplied with a 4-inch main and stop-cock. To ensure a uniform flow two lengths of 4-inch mains are carried round the entire sky-light, and from these run 1½ -inch pipes connecting with and supplying the carriers and squares.

5.

Excerpts from Report of Special Committee, Dec. 15, 1857

The special committee to examine into and report on the condition of the new Hall of Representatives in the south wing of the Capitol, and when it will be safe to occupy it, respectfully report

That they visited and inspected the Hall on the morning of the 12th instant. Some of the members of the committee had supposed that, the room having been lately finished, the walls must necessarily be damp. But on consulting with the Superintendent, Captain M.C. Meigs, of the corps of engineers, they were informed that the walls of the chamber had been built for two or three years, and the interior walls

supporting the galleries, and the walls under the floor for several months; that they were all laid in brick and cement, which dries much more rapidly than common lime mortar. There was no appearance of dampness about the room or walls, excepting where the first plastering, having been injured in putting up the door-frames, had been removed and replaced to a small extent, by fresh plaster, which, of itself, had been upon the walls for some two weeks.

* * *

The members' retiring room, the Speaker's room, the Clerk's rooms, the room for the Sergeant-at-Arms, the current document rooms, the cloak and hat, and wash rooms, are conveniently arranged near the Hall, and are ready to be furnished and occupied.

The south lobby and the private stairs are so arranged as to admit of cutting off all the above rooms from the admissions of strangers, and reserving them for the sole use of the House; and this the committee recommend to be done by order of the House.

For the official reporters of the House, a convenient desk, immediately under the clerk's table, is provided; and for the accommodation of the reporters of the public press, there is ample room in the gallery, immediately over the Speaker's chair, and east of the railing. The committee recommend that this part of the gallery, and the room immediately behind it, in the third story, be set apart for their use, and provided with desks and conveniences for taking and writing out their notes. The telegraphic wires should also be introduced into this room, so as to permit the transmission of intelligence direct from the reporters to the distant press. By this means, the report of an hour's speech might be completely set up in New York within fifteen minutes after its delivery.

The corridors leading to the Hall are dry and comfortable. In some of them the tile floors are not yet laid; but there is no reason for waiting until this is done. The floors are of brick, and can remain in their present condition until the termination of the session, the tiles in the mean time being stored in the cellar.

For the present, the committees and the officers of Congress whom it may not be convenient to accommodate, can remain in the old building, to which there will be convenient access through a covered passage leading from the new directly to the old Hall, which it will enter by the window-door behind the Speaker's chair.

The committee made some trial of the acoustic qualities of the room. They found very little reverberation; so little as not to interfere with distinctness of hearing; and ascertained by trial that not only could all that was said at the Speaker's desk be heard on all parts of the floor and galleries, but that the voice from each member's desk or from

any part of the galleries could be easily made audible in all parts of the room, without raising it above the tone required in speaking across a table.

There may be some little inconvenience and interruption of work upon unfinished parts of the building outside of the Hall; but the Hall itself is completely ready for the use of the House; and, in view of the great advantages in the comfort, convenience, and health of the members—the great improvement in the transaction of the legislative business, from the perfect acoustic qualities of the room, insuring to every member, wherever his seat may be, the ability to be heard and understood when he may address the House—and, in view of the fact that the immense expenditure of the Capitol extension has been incurred solely for the purpose of providing such rooms for the deliberations of Congress—they cannot hesitate to recommend that the House avail themselves of the use of this room as soon as possible.

Some furniture and books for current use it will be necessary to remove; and some lumber and rubbish yet encumber the approaches. These can all, in their opinion, be removed by Wednesday morning; and they therefore recommend the adoption of the following resolution:

Resolved, That, when this House adjourns to-morrow, it will adjourn to meet in the new Hall of Representatives, in the south wing of the extension of the Capitol, on Wednesday at noon.

6.

Article from the *New York Tribune*

WASHINGTON, Tuesday, Dec. 15, 1857.

The removal of the House of Representatives from the hall it has so long occupied, and which is consecrated by so many high historical and personal associations, was strangely enough allowed to pass without public notice or commemoration of any sort. The House voted to move into the new hall with as little ceremony as if it were a mere ordinary adjournment. There was, however, a certain significance in the fact that the last two sessions in the old hall were devoted wholly to celebrating the deaths of Senators Bell and Butler.

The Senate Chamber in the new Capitol will be ready for use by this time next year, or perhaps sooner.

The old hall of the House of Representatives is 90 feet long by 60 feet high. The new hall is 139 feet long, 93 feet wide, and 36 feet high. The height is perhaps not great enough for proportion with the other dimensions, but if it were greater the effect on the adaptation of the hall to public speaking would be probably injurious.

Much of the unfavorable criticism on the decoration of the hall comes from the friends of inferior artists who could not get employed upon the work, and is the mere outpouring of envy and malice. Some of it, however, is from sheer ignorance. The hall is decorated in the style that is common in the old Ball in the case of edifices of the highest taste and cost. It appears strange and extravagant to those who have been accustomed only to the bare walls and whitewashed ceilings of this country. Those who compare it to Taylor's saloon and to North River steamboats are probably not aware that the decorations of the saloon and of the steamboats are copied, however imperfectly, from very good models. I will not vouch for the good taste of any particular decorations in the new Capitol, but I am confident that the general style is in richness and magnificence a great advance on the bald poverty and nakedness of our other public halls. It is well to have made a beginning in the application of art to the interiors of our edifices. If the details are not satisfactory, they can easily be changed. It is a point gained to have the public eye taught to look upon gilded ceilings and pictured walls. If the pictures are bad, future generations can cover them with something better. The stone and iron framework of the decorations will stand for ages, ready to receive fresh embellishment in each successive year.

There is a good deal of grumbling among the gentlemen of the Press because the Speaker has seen fit to exclude them from the floor of the new House, and to assign them a special gallery. The truth is that the privilege of the floor has been shamefully abused. A great number of persons whose connection with the Press is wholly imaginary or very slight, such as the connection made by occasionally writing a letter to some country newspaper, have got themselves admitted to the floor, simply because they had axes to grind. The lobby has contrived in a great measure to confound itself with the Press, not much to the elevation or good repute of the latter institution. The noise and confusion of the ax-grinding in the neighborhood of the reporters' seats in the old House have generally been such that one could not tell, half the time, what was really going on in the House. In the gallery for the Press in the new hall all that is said or done can be easily heard and seen. I believe that those gentlemen of the Press who visit the Capitol simply to report and not to grind axes are well satisfied with the arrangement.

7.

**Letter from Senator Jefferson Davis to John B. Floyd,
Secretary of War
January 23, 1858²**

Washington, Jan. 23, 1858.

Dear Sir,

In accordance with the request of Capt. Meiggs, contained in his letter of the 21st. Inst. herewith enclosed, I have the honor to transmit copies of two letters from Mr Walter to Capt. Meiggs, and of one letter from Capt Meiggs to Mr Walter, with Photographs of designs for the Capitol extension which serve to explain the matters in issue, and which have led to the enclosed correspondence. In answer to the reference which Capt Meiggs makes to me in relation to the relative position of himself and Mr Walter I have to state:

That when the Construction of the Capitol extension was put under my general direction as Secretary of War the discredit brought, upon the manner in which the work was prosecuted, by Congressional investigation and legislation, required that the charge of the work should be transferred to other hands than that of the Architect who had previously administered it, and the reputation of Capt Meiggs, with whom I had no previous personal acquaintance induced me to select him, and upon my recommendation he was put in full charge of the work. Charged with the study of the difficult problems involved, for the solution of which, the highest scientific attainments were essential, and being invested with full authority to make all needful changes in the administration of the work, he was informed, that upon him would rest the responsibility of a proper, and economical construction of the buildings. Thence forward, Mr Walter became his subordinate, and was only retained in employment by the generous solicitation of Capt Meiggs that he should not be displaced, and it is but justice to that officer to say, that to the kindness, and delicacy which he avowed as motives prompting his solicitation for the retention of Mr Walter, was added the consideration, that being a skilful draughtsman of cultivated architectural taste, he (Capt M.) believed that Mr Walter could materially aid him in matters of decoration, and in the preparation of designs for proposed changes, and [for the] many details which were yet to be studied. Upon the great scientific problems involved in the principal objects of the extension, it will be found, that Capt Meiggs was put in consultation with Professors Bache & Henry. It certainly never occurred to me, and so far as I know, it did not to Capt

²Meigs did not include this letter in the journal although he referred to it on several occasions (See page 731). This version is from *The Papers of Jefferson Davis*, edited by Lynda Lasswell Crist and Mary Seaton Dix, Vol. 6, 1856–1860. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989, pp. 167–69. The punctuation and spelling are from that edition.

Meiggs, to take the advice of Mr Walter. Even in matters of Architectural style, a reference to the accompanying photographs will show how important have been the modifications of the original design.

Having been a member of the Committee on Public Buildings when the plan of extending the Capitol by wings was adopted, and having made the report, which accompanied by a drawing, was submitted to the then President Mr Fillmore, I have felt more than ordinary solicitude for the success of the work. The manner in which Capt Meiggs has discharged his duties as the Superintendent, & Constructing Engineer have commanded my entire approbation, and gratified me by the fulfilment of the highest hopes entertained.

The present relations between himself, and his Architect as exhibited in the correspondence, cannot fail to prove detrimental to the public interest, and I do not hesitate to express it as my conviction, that the continuance of Captn Meiggs upon the work, will best conduce to its successful completion; and that his Assistant Mr Walter, has offensively disregarded the obligations of his position.

I hope the matter will receive your careful consideration. I have the honor to be Very respectfully Your obt Servt

Jeffn Davis

8.

An excerpt probably from an article in the *Boston Journal* probably some time in April 1858, signed "Perley"

The much vaunted acoustic properties of the new hall do not stand the test of time, and every day we see members leaving their seats to hear better, or to be better heard. The low, barn-like roof deadens sound, and members read with envy of the new St. James' Hall recently erected by Mr. Owen Jones, in London, the ceiling of which is sixty feet in height; yet the acoustical effects are perfect. Mr. Jones is, however, an educated architect, and Mr. Meigs is a mere martinet, who has been entrusted with the disbursal of enormous sums.

9.

An unidentified newspaper article, probably from late September 1858

STRIKE OF THE PLASTERERS. Yesterday morning some seventy of the plasterers employed upon the Capitol extension struck for higher wages, as they had previously signified their intention of doing. From the following letter of Captain Meigs, which was read to them, it will be seen that he declines acceding to their demand:

OFFICE U. S. CAPITOL EXTENSION,
September 30, 1858.

DEAR SIR: I have received a letter from a number of the plasterers employed upon the Capitol extension requesting that the wages of all those receiving not more than two dollars a day shall be advanced to two dollars and a half per day from 1st of October, and informing me that if the advance is not granted they will cease work.

I have caused inquiry to be made, and have ascertained that the wages now and for some time past paid at the Capitol are fully equal to those paid by private employers in this city, and from 25 cents to 37½ cents per day higher than paid in Philadelphia and New York.

I lately sent you to New York in order to procure more mechanics capable of doing the finer work at the Capitol, not finding a sufficient number of skilful hands here unemployed.

You found, I understand, no difficulty in procuring as many as were needed, willing to come here and work till the end of the season, at the rates heretofore paid on the Capitol extension; and you found a large number of plasterers unable to obtain work in New York, and willing to come here for it, had they the means of paying their traveling expenses.

All these considerations lead me to believe that the wages paid are as high as in the present state of trade ought to be offered.

While I understand that every man has the right to carry his labor to the best market, and to demand for it the highest wages he can obtain, I do not think that when the full wages of the trade are being paid regularly, with steady work and proper treatment, workmen do right in endeavoring, by a combination, to take advantage of the supposed necessity of completing certain work before the meeting of Congress, and thus to compel an officer of the government to pay them wages above the ruling rates of their trade, and, therefore, extravagant.

If any man can get elsewhere higher wages, steadier work, better treatment, he has only to ask for his pay, and leave this work, with the good wishes of his foreman and myself for his success.

When they combine to force a higher rate than I think myself justifiable in paying, I have only to regret their loss of the wages of whatever time they may remain idle, and to endeavor to supply their places from among the hundreds of plasterers who would rejoice to find work at the wages they reject.

As they request me to communicate my answer through you, I have to request that you will read this to them.

And I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

M. C. MEIGS, Capt. Engineers,

In charge U. S. Capitol Extension, &c, &c.

Mr. Z. Jones, foreman U. S. Capitol Extension.

10.

According to Meigs, an article from the *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin* of October 28, 1858

A Superb Work of Art.—The Stairway for the Capitol.

Promenaders on our fashionable thoroughfare have now an opportunity of seeing a magnificent and unique work of art, by stepping into the new establishment of Messrs. Archer, Warner, Miskey & Co., at No. 718 Chestnut street. This firm have, for some time, been engaged upon the construction of the bronze railing for the great stairway in the House of Representatives wing of the Capitol at Washington. A section of this railing has been put up in the store, and it deserves to be visited by all lovers of the beautiful, and all who take pride in American art.

The design of the railing is alone a remarkable composition, but our admiration of the design is lost in our astonishment and delight with the beauty of its execution. Beginning with a massive and richly moulded newel-post of bronze, we have thence ascending, on the angle of the stairway, a succession of American subjects, exquisitely wrought in the pure metal. The American eagle appears in large form and in several different positions, each of which shows the beauty of the noble bird in a way that ought to make the bird-fanciers of the Mint to blush at their ignorance of the capabilities of the national emblem as a design for our coins. Then near the top of the section is a very spirited and life-like buck—another national animal, that we have never before seen represented in metal. Distributed along the rail are figures of a nude child, at one place shrinking in terror from a serpent raised to strike him, at another grasping after fruits that surround him, and the little fellow is thus reproduced in seven different attitudes along the hundred and sixty feet of railing that are to be constructed by this house. The eagles, the buck and the child's figure—which may symbolize Young America, in the true and not the vulgar sense of the term—are the principal ornaments of the railing. But uniting them and distributed along the whole length, are faithful representations of American products—tobacco, cotton, corn, grapes, pine-apples, lilacs, roses and other growing plants are seen, and birds are lighting on their branches or fluttering from nests which rest among them. No description can give a good idea of the general effect of the whole railing, even in its present condition. When put in its proper place, with the white marble steps and the polished walls of the capitol for a background, its beauty will be very much enhanced.

The work of producing such bronze castings as are contained in the railing is not a slight one. The designs, in the first place, of the eagles, the small birds, the deer, the fruits and the flowers, are taken from

living subjects. The carving of each is a delicate task. Then comes the moulding for the casting, and this is the most delicate and difficult task of all—a single bunch of grapes, or a cluster of flowers, often requiring fifty or a hundred “false cores,” as they are called, of clay, each of which has to be separately handled before the subject can be produced in imperishable bronze. The care, delicacy and patience necessary for such work can only be appreciated when all this is thoroughly understood. Messrs. Archer, Warner, Miskey & Co. have been fortunate in their artists and their artisans, and we can imagine no bronze work more bold and beautiful in design or more elegant in execution than this remarkable railing. If it were in a European cathedral or palace, people would travel hundreds of miles to see it. But we have good authority for saying that there is no such bronze railing in Europe. It will be unique in the Capitol, and one of the most extraordinary curiosities of that palace of American art as well as of American legislation.

11.

Excerpt from Senate proceedings of January 4, 1859

Mr. CRITTENDEN. I move you, Mr. President and Senators, that we proceed at once to the consideration of this report, and that it be adopted. That is the purpose for which I rise. Before, however, submitting that motion to the vote of the Senate, I hope that I may be indulged in a few words of parting from this Chamber. This is to be the last day of our session here; and this place, which has known us so long, is to know us no more forever as a Senate. The parting seems to me, sir, to be somewhat of a solemn one, and full of eventful recollections. I wish, however, only to say a few words.

Many associations, pleasant and proud, bind us and our hearts to this place. We cannot but feel their influence, especially I, Mr. President, whose lot it has been to serve in this body more years than any other member now present. That we should all be attached to it, that my longer association should attach me to it, is most natural. Mr. President, we cannot quit this Chamber without some feeling of sacred sadness. This Chamber has been the scene of great events. Here questions of American constitutions and laws have been debated; questions of peace and war have been debated and decided; questions of empire have occupied the attention of this assemblage in times past; this was the grand theater upon which these things have been enacted. They give a sort of consecrated character to this Hall.

Sir, great men have been the actors here. The illustrious dead, that have distinguished this body in times past naturally rise to our view on such an occasion. I speak only of what I have seen, and but partially of that, when I say that here, within these walls, I have seen men

whose fame is not surpassed, and whose power and ability and patriotism are not surpassed, by anything of Grecian or of Roman name. I have seen Clay and Webster, and Calhoun and Benton, and Leigh and Wright, and Clayton, (last though not least,) mingling together in this body at one time, and uniting their counsels for the benefit of their country. They seem to our imagination and sensibilities, on such an occasion as this, to have left their impress on these very walls; and this majestic dome seems almost yet to echo with the voice of their eloquence. This Hall seems to be a local habitation for their names. This Hall is full of the pure odor of their justly-earned fame. There are others besides those I have named, of whom I will not speak, because they have not yet closed their career—not yet ended their services to the country; and they will receive their reward hereafter. There are a host of others that I might mention—that deserve to be mentioned—but it would take too long. Their names are in no danger of being forgotten, nor their services unthought of or unhonored.

Sir, we leave behind us, in going from this Hall, these associations, these proud imaginations so well calculated to prompt to a generous emulation of their services to their country; but we will carry along with us, to the new Chamber to which we are to go, the spirit and the memory of all these things; we will carry with us all the inspiration which our illustrious predecessors are calculated to give; and wherever we sit we shall be the Senate of the United States of America—a great, a powerful, a conservative body in the government of this country, and a body that will maintain, as I trust and believe, under all circumstances and in all times to come, the honor, the right, and the glory of this country. Because we leave this Chamber, we shall not leave behind us any sentiment of patriotism, any devotion to the country which the illustrious exemplars that have gone before us have set to us. These, like our household gods, will be carried with us; and we, the representatives of the States of this mighty Union, will be found always equal, I trust, to the exigencies of any time that may come upon our country. No matter under what sky we may sit; no matter what dome may cover us; the great patriotic spirit of the Senate of the United States will be there; and I have an abiding confidence that it will never fail in the performance of its duty, sit where it may, even though it were in a desert.

But it is yet, sir, not possible to leave this Hall without casting behind us many longing and lingering looks. It has been the scene of the past; the new Chamber is to be the scene of the future; and that future, I hope, will not be dishonored by any comparison to be made with the past. It, too, will have its illustrations of great public services rendered by great men and great patriots; and this body, the great preservative element of the Government, will discharge all its duties,

taking care to preserve the Union of the States which they represent—the source of all their honors, the source of the trust which they sit here to execute, the source as it has been and it will be of their country's greatness, happiness, and prosperity, in times to come as it has been in the time that is past.

Mr. President, I cannot detain you longer. I move that the vote of the Senate be now taken on the report which has been presented, and that it be adopted.

The VICE PRESIDENT.³ The question is on agreeing to the report of the committee.

The report was adopted *nem. con.*

The VICE PRESIDENT. Senators, I have been charged by the committee to whom you confided the arrangements of this day, with the duty of expressing some of the reflections that naturally occur in taking final leave of a Chamber which has so long been occupied by the Senate. In the progress of our country and the growth of the representation, this room has become too contracted for the representatives of the States now existing and soon to exist; and accordingly you are about to exchange it for a Hall affording accommodations adequate to the present and the future. The occasion suggests many interesting reminiscences; and it may be agreeable, in the first place, to occupy a few minutes with a short account of the various places at which Congress has assembled, of the struggles which preceded the permanent location of the seat of Government, and of the circumstances under which it was finally established on the banks of the Potomac.

The Congress of the Revolution was sometimes a fugitive, holding its sessions, as the chances of war required, at Philadelphia, Baltimore, Lancaster, Annapolis, and Yorktown. During the period between the conclusion of peace and the commencement of the present Government, it met at Princeton, Annapolis, Trenton, and New York.

After the idea of a permanent Union had been executed in part by the adoption of the Articles of Confederation, the question presented itself of fixing a seat of Government, and this immediately called forth intense interest and rivalry.

That the place should be central, having regard to the population and territory of the Confederacy, was the only point common to the contending parties. Propositions of all kinds were offered, debated, and rejected, sometimes with intemperate warmth. At length, on the 7th of October, 1783, the Congress being at Princeton, whither they had been driven from Philadelphia, by the insults of a body of armed men, it was resolved that a building for the use of Congress be erected near the falls of the Delaware. This was soon after modified by requir-

³John C. Breckinridge.

ing suitable buildings to be also erected near the falls of the Potomac, that the residence of Congress might alternate between those places. But the question was not allowed to rest, and at length, after frequent and warm debates, it was resolved that the residence of Congress should continue at one place; and commissioners were appointed, with full power to lay out a district for a Federal town near the falls of the Delaware; and in the mean time Congress assembled alternately at Trenton and Annapolis; but the representatives of other States were unremitting in exertions for their respective localities.

On the 23d of December, 1784, it was resolved to remove to the city of New York, and to remain there until the building on the Delaware should be completed; and accordingly, on the 11th of January, 1785, the Congress met at New York, where they continued to hold their sessions until the Confederation gave place to the Constitution.

The Commissioners to lay out a town on the Delaware reported their proceedings to Congress; but no further steps were taken to carry the resolution into effect.

When the bounds of union were drawn closer by the organization of the new Government under the Constitution, on the 3d of March, 1789, the subject was revived and discussed with greater warmth than before. It was conceded on all sides that the residence of Congress should continue at one place, and the prospect of stability in the Government invested the question with a deeper interest. Some members proposed New York, as being "superior to any place they knew for the orderly and decent behavior of its inhabitants." To this it was answered that it was not desirable that the political capital should be in a commercial metropolis. Others ridiculed the idea of building palaces in the woods. Mr. Gerry, of Massachusetts, thought it highly unreasonable to fix the seat of Government in such a position as to have nine States of the thirteen to the northward of the place; while the South Carolinians objected to Philadelphia on account of the number of Quakers, who, they said, continually annoyed the southern members with schemes of emancipation.

In the midst of these disputes, the House of Representatives resolved, "that the permanent seat of Government ought to be at some convenient place on the banks of the Susquehanna." On the introduction of a bill to give effect to this resolution, much feeling was exhibited, especially by the southern members. Mr. Madison thought if the proceeding of that day had been foreseen by Virginia, that State might not have become a party to the Constitution. The question was allowed by every member to be a matter of great importance. Mr. Scott said the future tranquillity and well-being of the United States depended as much on this as on any question that ever had, or could, come before Congress; and Mr. Fisher Ames remarked that every principle of

pride and honor and even of patriotism were engaged. For a time, any agreement appeared to be impossible; but the good genius of our system finally prevailed, and on the 28th of June, 1790, an act was passed containing the following clause:

That a district of territory on the river Potomac, at some place between the mouths of the eastern branch and the Connogocheague, be, and the same is hereby, accepted, for the permanent seat of the Government of the United States.

The same act provided that Congress should hold its sessions at Philadelphia until the first Monday in November, 1800, when the Government should remove to the district selected on the Potomac. Thus was settled a question which had produced much sectional feeling between the States. But all difficulties were not yet surmounted; for Congress, either from indifference, or the want of money, failed to make adequate appropriations for the erection of public buildings, and the commissioners were often reduced to great straits to maintain the progress of the work. Finding it impossible to borrow money in Europe, or to obtain it from Congress, Washington, in December, 1796, made a personal appeal to the Legislature of Maryland, which was responded to by an advance of \$100,000; but in so deplorable a condition was the credit of the Federal Government that the State required, as a guarantee of payment, the pledge of the private credit of the commissioners.

From the beginning Washington had advocated the present seat of Government. Its establishment here was due, in a large measure, to his influence; it was his wisdom and prudence that computed disputes and settled conflicting titles; and it was chiefly through his personal influence that the funds were provided to prepare the buildings for the reception of the President and Congress.

The wings of the Capitol having been sufficiently prepared, the Government removed to this District on the 17th of November, 1800; or as Mr. Wolcott expressed it, left the comforts of Philadelphia "to go to the Indian place with the long name, in the woods on the Potomac." I will not pause to describe the appearance, at that day, of the place where the city was to be. Contemporary accounts represent it as desolate in the extreme, with its long, unopened avenues and streets, its deep morasses, and its vast area covered with trees instead of houses. It is enough to say that Washington projected the whole plan upon a scale of centuries, and that time enough remains to fill the measure of his great conception.

The Senate continued to occupy the north wing, and the House of Representatives the south wing of the Capitol, until the 24th of August, 1814, when the British army entered the city and burned the public

buildings. This occurred during the recess, and the President immediately convened the Congress. Both Houses met in a brick building known as Blodget's Hotel, which occupied a part of the square now covered by the General Post Office. But the accommodations in that house being quite insufficient, a number of public spirited citizens erected a more commodious building, on Capitol Hill, and tendered it to Congress; the offer was accepted, and both Houses continued to occupy it until the wings of the new Capitol were completed. This building yet stands on the street opposite to the northeastern corner of the Capitol Square, and has since been occasionally occupied by persons employed in different branches of the public service.

On the 6th of December, 1819, the Senate assembled for the first time in this Chamber, which has been the theater of their deliberations for more than thirty-nine years.

And now the strifes and uncertainties of the past are finished. We see around us on every side the proofs of stability and improvement. This Capitol is worthy of the Republic. Noble public buildings meet the view on every hand. Treasures of science and the arts begin to accumulate. As this flourishing city enlarges, it testifies to the wisdom and forecast that dictated the plan of it. Future generations will not be disturbed with questions concerning the center of population, or of territory, since the steamboat, the railroad, and the telegraph have made communication almost instantaneous. The spot is sacred by a thousand memories, which are so many pledges that the city of Washington, founded by him and bearing his revered name, with its beautiful site, bounded by picturesque eminences, and the broad Potomac, and lying within view of his home and his tomb, shall remain forever the political capital of the United States.

It would be interesting to note the gradual changes which have occurred in the practical working of the Government, since the adoption of the Constitution; and it may be appropriate to this occasion to remark one of the most striking of them.

At the origin of the Government, the Senate seemed to be regarded chiefly as an executive council. The President often visited the Chamber and conferred personally with this body; most of its business was transacted with closed doors, and it took comparatively little part in the legislative debates. The rising and vigorous intellects of the country sought the arena of the House of Representatives as the appropriate theater for the display of their powers. Mr. Madison observed, on some occasion, that being a young man, and desiring to increase his reputation, he could not afford to enter the Senate; and it will be remembered, that, so late as 1812, the great debate which preceded the war and aroused the country to the assertion of its rights, took place in the other branch of Congress. To such an extent was the idea of seclu-

sion carried, that, when this Chamber was completed, no seats were prepared for the accommodation of the public; and it was not until many years afterwards that the semi-circular gallery was erected which admits the people to be witnesses of your proceedings. But now, the Senate, besides its peculiar relations to the executive department of the Government, assumes its full share of duty as a coequal branch of the Legislature; indeed, from the limited number of its members, and for other obvious reasons, the most important questions, especially of foreign policy, are apt to pass first under discussion in this body, and to be a member of it is justly regarded as one of the highest honors which can be conferred on an American statesman.

It is scarcely necessary to point out the causes of this change, or to say that it is a concession both to the importance and the individuality of the States, and to the free and open character of the Government.

In connection with this easy but thorough transition, it is worthy of remark that it has been effected without a charge from any quarter that the Senate has transcended its constitutional sphere—a tribute at once to the moderation of the Senate, and another proof to thoughtful men of the comprehensive wisdom with which the framers of the Constitution secured essential principles without inconveniently embarrassing the action of the Government.

The progress of this popular movement, in one aspect of it, has been steady and marked. At the origin of the Government no arrangements in the Senate were made for spectators; in this Chamber about one third of the space is allotted to the public; and in the new apartment the galleries cover two thirds of its area. In all free countries the admission of the people to witness legislative proceedings is an essential element of public confidence; and it is not to be anticipated that this wholesome principle will ever be abused by the substitution of partial and interested demonstrations for the expression of a matured and enlightened public opinion. Yet it should never be forgotten that not France, but the turbulent spectators within the Hall, awed and controlled the French Assembly. With this lesson and its consequence before us, the time will never come when the deliberations of the Senate shall be swayed by the blandishments or the thunders of the galleries.

It is impossible to disconnect from an occasion like this, a crowd of reflection on our past history, and of speculations on the future. The most meager account of the Senate involves a summary of the progress of our country. From year to year you have seen your representation enlarge; time and again you have proudly welcomed a new sister into the Confederacy; and the occurrences of this day are a material and impressive proof of the growth and prosperity of the United

States. Three periods in the history of the Senate mark, in striking contrast, three epochs in the history of the Union.

On the 3d of March, 1789, when the Government was organized under the Constitution, the Senate was composed of the representatives of eleven States, containing three millions of people.

On the 6th of December, 1819, when the Senate met for the first time in this room, it was composed of the representatives of twenty-one States, containing nine millions of people.

To-day it is composed of the representatives of thirty-two States, containing more than twenty-eight millions of people, prosperous, happy, and still devoted to constitutional liberty. Let these great facts speak for themselves to all the world.

The career of the United States cannot be measured by that of any other people of whom history gives account; and the mind is almost appalled at the contemplation of the prodigious force which has marked their progress. Sixty-nine years ago, thirteen States containing three millions of inhabitants, burdened with debt, and exhausted by the long war of independence, established for their common good a free Constitution, on principles new to mankind, and began their experiment with the good wishes of a few doubting friends and the derision of the world. Look at the result to-day; twenty-eight millions of people, in every way happier than an equal number in any other part of the globe! the center of population and political power descending the western slopes of the Alleghany mountains, and the original thirteen States forming but the eastern margin on the map of our vast possessions. See besides, Christianity, civilization, and the arts given to a continent; the despised colonies grown into a Power of the first class, representing and protecting ideas that involve the progress of the human race; a commerce greater than that of any other nation; free interchange between the States; every variety of climate, soil, and production to make a people powerful and happy—in a word, behold present greatness, and, in the future, an empire to which the ancient mistress of the world in the height of her glory could not be compared. Such is our country; ay, and more—far more than my mind could conceive or my tongue could utter. Is there an American who regrets the past? Is there one who will deride his country's laws, pervert her Constitution, or alienate her people? If there be such a man, let his memory descend to posterity laden with the execrations of all mankind.

So happy is the political and social condition of the United States, and so accustomed are we to the secure enjoyment of a freedom elsewhere unknown, that we are apt to undervalue the treasures we possess, and to lose, in some degree, the sense of obligation to our forefathers. But when the strifes of faction shake the Government, and

even threaten it, we may pause with advantage long enough to remember that we are reaping the reward of other men's labors. This liberty we inherit; this admirable Constitution, which has survived peace and war, prosperity and adversity; this double scheme of Government, State and Federal, so peculiar and so little understood by other Powers, yet which protects the earnings of industry, and makes the largest personal freedom compatible with public order; these great results were not acquired without wisdom and toil and blood—the touching and heroic record is before the world. But to all this we were born, and, like heirs upon whom has been cast a great inheritance, have only the high duty to preserve, to extend, and to adorn it. The grand productions of the era in which the foundations of this Government were laid, reveal the deep sense its founders had of their obligations to the whole family of man. Let us never forget that the responsibilities imposed on this generation are by so much the greater than those which rested on our revolutionary ancestors, as the population, extent, and power of our country surpass the dawning promise of its origin.

It would be a pleasing task to pursue many trains of thought, not wholly foreign to this occasion, but the temptation to enter the wide field must be rigorously curbed; yet I may be pardoned, perhaps, for one or two additional reflections.

The Senate is assembled for the last time in this Chamber. Henceforth it will be converted to other uses; yet it must remain forever connected with great events, and sacred to the memories of the departed orators and statesmen who here engaged in high debates, and shaped the policy of their country. Hereafter the American and the stranger, as they wander through the Capitol, will turn with instinctive reverence to view the spot on which so many and great materials have accumulated for history. They will recall the images of the great and the good, whose renown is the common property of the Union; and chiefly, perhaps, they will linger around the seats once occupied by the mighty three, whose names and fame, associated in life, death has not been able to sever; illustrious men, who in their generation sometimes divided, sometimes led, and sometimes resisted public opinion—for they were of that higher class of statesmen who seek the right and follow their convictions.

There sat Calhoun, *the* Senator, inflexible, austere, oppressed, but not overwhelmed by his deep sense of the importance of his public functions; seeking the truth, then fearlessly following it—a man whose unsparing intellect compelled all his emotions to harmonize with the deductions of his rigorous logic, and whose noble countenance habitually wore the expression of one engaged in the performance of high public duties.

This was Webster's seat. He, too, was every inch a Senator. Conscious of his own vast powers, he reposed with confidence on himself; and scorning the contrivances of smaller men, he stood among his peers all the greater for the simple dignity of his senatorial demeanor. Type of his northern home, he rises before the imagination, in the grand and granite outline of his form and intellect, like a great New England rock, repelling a New England wave. As a writer, his productions will be cherished by statesmen and scholars while the English tongue is spoken. As a senatorial orator, his great efforts are historically associated with this Chamber, whose very air seems yet to vibrate beneath the strokes of his deep tones and his weighty words.

On the outer circle, sat Henry Clay, with his impetuous and ardent nature untamed by age, and exhibiting in the Senate the same vehement patriotism and passionate eloquence that of yore electrified the House of Representatives and the country. His extraordinary personal endowments, his courage, all his noble qualities, invested him with an individuality and a charm of character which, in any age, would have made him a favorite of history. He loved his country above all earthly objects. He loved liberty in all countries. Illustrious man! orator, patriot, philanthropist—whose light, at its meridian, was seen and felt in the remotest parts of the civilized world; and whose declining sun, as it hastened down the west, threw back its level beams, in hues of mellowed splendor, to illuminate and to cheer the land he loved and served so well.

All the States may point, with gratified pride, to the services in the Senate of their patriotic sons. Crowding the memory, come the names of Adams, Hayne, Wright, Mason, Otis, Macon, Pinckney, and the rest—I cannot number them—who, in the record of their acts and utterances, appeal to their successors to give the Union a destiny not unworthy of the past. What models were these, to awaken emulation or to plunge in despair! Fortunate will be the American statesmen who, in this age, or in succeeding times, shall contribute to invest the new Hall to which we go, with historic memories like those which cluster here.

And now, Senators, we leave this memorable Chamber, bearing with us, unimpaired, the Constitution we received from our forefathers. Let us cherish it with grateful acknowledgements to the Divine Power who controls the destinies of empires and whose goodness we adore. The structures reared by men yield to the corroding tooth of time. These marble walls must molder into ruin; but the principles of constitutional liberty, guarded by wisdom and virtue, unlike material elements, do not decay. Let us devoutly trust that another Senate, in another age, shall bear to a new and larger Chamber, this Constitution vigorous and inviolate, and that the last generation of posterity shall witness

the deliberations of the Representatives of American States still united, prosperous, and free.

In execution of the order of the Senate, the body will now proceed to the new Chamber.

The Senate, preceded by the Vice President, the Secretary, and the Sergeant-at-Arms, proceeded to the new Chamber.

12.

Article from the *Baltimore Sun*, probably of January 5, 1859

THE SUN

The New Senate Hall.

The formal proceedings of the United States Senate yesterday in connection with its migration from the old to the splendid new chamber prepared for that august body in the capitol extension were imposing and interesting. They are given in our Congressional report. Of the new hall itself we annex the following detailed description:

The general aspect of the new hall is light and graceful. In shape and dimensions it is similar to the new Hall of Representatives, but to the eye appears more finely proportioned. The style and character of decoration are nearly the same in both Houses, except that in the Senate the tone of color is much more subdued. The area of the floor is 80 feet by 48 feet; and of the roof 112 by 80 feet, the difference being occupied by a continuous gallery around the four sides of the apartment, and is capable of seating 1,200 persons. The inner roof or ceiling, of iron, is flat, with deep panels, twenty-one of which are fitted with ground glass, having in the centre of each pane a colored medallion representing the printing-press, steam-engine, cornucopia and other symbols of progress and plenty. The light is supplied wholly through the window in the roof, and the effect is good, a flood of light falling on the reverend signors on the floor, while the galleries remain in half-shadow. The gas apparatus is placed above the ceiling, so that the light, streaming through the panes, may seem like a softened effect of sunlight.

The ceiling is 35 feet from the floor, but presents an appearance of greater altitude. It is encrusted with floral and other embellishments in high relief and all of iron. The floor of the chamber is covered with 1,700 yards of tapestry carpeting, having a large pattern of flowers on a purple ground. The effect is not unpleasing—Had time permitted a carpet would have been manufactured of color and design to harmonize—as for instance of red stars on a buff ground. The Vice President's desk is a modest table of mahogany, as unlike as possible to the marble bar on which the Hon. Speaker pounds. The places of Senators are arranged in three circular rows.

The spectators' galleries are upholstered in drab damask, rather too blue in tone for good effect.—Ample accommodation is supplied, even to the extent of a ladies' robing room. Access to the galleries is attained through doors of maple, inlaid with bronze. The gallery set apart for the press is fitted with desks for about twenty persons, and it is understood that no one will be permitted within it unless specially accredited by the Vice President.

When the dust of a few sessions shall have taken the gloss off it, and the *genius loci* had time to settle himself, there can be little doubt this new chamber will be found every way more fitting than the old.

The wings of the capitol being of the Roman-Corinthian order of architecture, the interior fittings and decorations are of course in harmony therewith. The hall itself is approached by two grand stairways, the east of Tennessee marble—the west entirely of white marble of extreme purity. Neither is yet completed, but enough is shown by the broad marble steps, the massive balustrades of the same material, and the superb columns, with their capitals heightened with bronze, to indicate the magnificence of the design. Both stairways are lighted from the roof, with special adaptation to the walls, being covered with historical paintings. This situation is considered the most favorable in the building for the execution of some work of art recording the deeds of history.

The Senators' retiring room and ante-chamber are the most highly finished rooms in the capitol. They are in totally different styles. The retiring room is entirely of marble; the roof supported by columns of rare beauty. It is impossible to desire any effect more chaste than this apartment presents with the cold glitter of its walls and roof, "unadorned, adorned the most." Three mirrors, inserted as panels in the walls, are each of the dimensions of 120 inches in height by 60 inches wide. The ante-room is excessive in ornamentation, and is yet unfinished. The walls are divided by gilded work in *relievo*, into spaces for fresco paintings. The domed ceiling of the room is paneled, each panel being filled with a rosette of burnished gold. The four spandrils and the centre of the dome have allegorical paintings executed in a superior manner, and forming a contrast to certain medallions in another portion of the building, where one represents a celestial being with a dislocated hip, and another the goddess of melancholy dancing the bolero.

The President's and Vice-President's apartments, and the committee rooms, enter from the level of the Senate floor. All are decorated. Some few are finished, but the greater number are incomplete in consequence of the action of Congress in withholding supplies. The corridors and passages are likewise in progress of embellishment. All are paved with encaustic tiles. The arched roofs are, generally speaking,

finished in geometric designs enclosing landscape and heraldic devices. The walls are covered with trellis-work of flowers and foliage, on which cupids and native American birds, beasts, and creeping things are ascending and descending, with more or less resemblance to nature. Some of the flower and fruit pieces are gems. They might be cut from the wall and framed as originals of L.....

The heating and ventilating arrangements are said to be the largest in the world, those of the English House of Parliament not excepted. Every portion of the capitol—that mountainous mass of marble—is at once ventilated and warmed by one apparatus. Eight boilers convey steam to coils set in different places of the cellarage, supplying any required degree of heat, and, at the same time, motive power to two fans in either wing—One of these fans sends continual breezes of medicated air through the smaller apartments, while the other performs the same service for the Senate chamber. The air is graduated according to the atmospheric temperature without and the political excitement within—during an electional debate never to exceed 90 deg., and on ordinary occasions to range between 70 and 73 deg. Thirty thousand cubic feet of air are circulated through the chamber per minute, which quantity may be increased to eighty thousand. The apparatus is completely under control. Any proportion of moisture may be imparted, from the delicious freshness of morning to the feeling that precedes a thunder shower, or even till the atmosphere

“Thaw and resolve itself into a dew.”

It may be prudent to add that as each room is furnished with flues and registers, Senators, on the first symptoms of asphyxia, can protect themselves from the indiscretion of operators.

As regards the exterior of the edifice, the ground is yet in the possession of the workmen. The approaches are encumbered with keystones, suggestive (with no disrespect to the able officer in charge) of

Meigs among the ruins of Carthage.

13.

Statement by Montgomery Meigs to the foremen and other workers at the Capitol in farewell, on November 2, 1859
(as printed in the *National Intelligencer* of November 3, 1859)

Gentlemen: I have called you together to read to you the order of the Secretary of War, received this morning, relieving me from the charge of the public buildings which we have together constructed.

As I shall not have the opportunity again of seeing you together, I wish now to express to you my thanks for the steady,

faithful, and effectual assistance you have rendered to me for nearly seven years. In all that time I can scarce call to mind a harsh word or a disagreeable feeling between any of you and myself.

Believing that authority has its duties as well as its rights; that the humblest laborer has, so long as he does his duty in his sphere, the right to the protection of his employer, I have stood as stoutly for your rights and for his as I have for my own.

If in the press of business I may at any time have seemed to speak too quickly, believe it was from preoccupation, not from impatience of intent. That we have worked faithfully the walls around us will bear witness.

Much has been said in regard to the decoration of this building, but as yet little intelligent criticism upon it has been published. After the petty envies and jealousies of the day are past Justice will be done to the skilful artists whose hands have aided me; and I leave the work with confidence to the unbiased verdict of the American people, who will, I doubt not, in time set the seal of their approbation upon it.

To each and all of you I again tender my thanks; and, assuring you of my earnest wishes for your future welfare, I retire from my post, asking you to extend to my successor and my friend, Capt. Franklin, the same support which has enabled me to meet so long the heavy responsibilities of directing those great works, while administering the expenditure among the working-men of over eight millions of dollars.

With Capt. Franklin I doubt not you will find, as I trust you have with me, that the (at one time) much decried military superintendence is consistent with the truest regard for the rights of the workman, and that, rightly administered it has nothing inconsistent with the independence of the citizen.

Mr. John C. Harkness responded to this address in a feeling and eloquent manner, as follows:

My associates connected with this great national work under your superintendence, having heard with feelings of deep emotion your letter communicating the painful intelligence of your withdrawal from the work, are unwilling to let the occasion pass without assuring you of the exalted estimation in which you are held by those who have long been associated with you, and who have had ample opportunities of testing your social and moral worth. They have, therefore, solicited me to represent

them in this regard. This duty being so much in unison with the feelings of my own heart, I consent most cheerfully, although conscious of my inability to do justice to their wishes.

Our associations with you in this great work, embracing a period of nearly seven years, we have highly appreciated, and will hereafter refer to them as among the most pleasant recollections of the past. Your uniform gentlemanly bearing toward your subordinates in office, under the most arduous toils and trying scenes incident to your onerous and responsible position, has secured for you the sincere affection of us all, and in your hands the most humble of us have felt that their rights were safe.

Your genius and skill are indelibly impressed upon these walls, and the imperishable building which now surrounds us shall stand as the monument thereof as long as our beloved country shall endure. Aye, more! In connexion with that genius and skill is impressed the yet nobler fact that Capt. M.C. Meigs is an honest man—"the noblest work of God."

These sentiments are not wrung from our lips by coercive force, nor have they been suggested by motives of selfishness. They well up from our heart of hearts, and are in perfect accordance with the utterances in our private circles. And in submitting to the necessity which separates us we suffer from the sense of bruised and wounded feelings.

To whatever field of labor you may be hereafter assigned, be assured, dear sir, you will bear with you the unanimous esteem of these my collaborators whom I represent; and for your present and future welfare they will continue to cherish the most ardent wishes.

14.

Article from the *National Intelligencer* of November 10, 1859

LOCAL MATTERS

RESOLUTIONS OF RESPECT TO CAPT. MEIGS.

The following preamble and resolutions tendered us for publication we cheerfully give place. They are expressive of the profound respect for and heartfelt interest entertained by the employés of the public buildings designated below in their late Superintendent, whom high intellectual power, scientific acquirements, and unsullied official fidelity do not more distinguish than the mingled firmness and kindness with which he invariably accompanies all his intercourse with those subordinate to his direction:

We, the foremen and others employed under the late superintendence of Capt. M.C. Meigs upon the Capitol and Post Office Extensions and the New Dome, sincerely regretting his separation from us, and subscribing to the sentiment that "honor should be rendered to whom honor is due," cannot refrain from giving publicity to the exalted views which we entertain of his superior skill and moral worth: Therefore,

Resolved, That the administration of Capt. M.C. Meigs in the construction and superintendence of the above-mentioned national works has been marked by unsurpassed ability, untiring devotion, and sound discretion; that these great works, noble piles of which our country may well be proud, in their architectural grandeur and durability, will ever stand commemorative of his due share in their erection, the creative powers of his genius, and the richness of his intellectual store.

Resolved, That the unyielding integrity and moral purity of our late Superintendent have been indelibly impressed upon every department of these great national enterprises. The judicious and wholesome discipline conceived and wisely enforced by him has been promotive of the highest interest of the Government, has secured a harmony among the employed never surpassed and rarely equalled in works of such magnitude and long continuance, and given to the whole a moral aspect refreshing to all the lovers of good order.

Resolved, That the bland and courteous demeanor of Capt. M.C. Meigs, continued without faltering under the most trying circumstances and in the midst of his accumulated toils towards the humblest of his subordinates, has secured for himself the heartfelt esteem of us all.

Resolved, That, to whatever field of labor he may be assigned, we feel confident that the prowess of his genius and his tireless industry will be exerted in adding to his country's fame and in elevating the moral and social condition of the workingman.

Resolved, That the interruption of our associations, so long and pleasantly existing, has occasioned in us emotions of deep regret. On leaving this important field of labor, Capt. M.C. Meigs will bear with him our kindest regards, and for him we claim of his grateful country a prominent place in that bright constellation of talent which constitutes her history and her fame.