



PREFACE



One of the great pleasures of my tenure as secretary of the Senate has been working with the United States Senate art collection. As executive secretary to the Senate Commission on Art, I have become familiar with the challenges of preserving and interpreting these historic artworks. While many people have at least a passing acquaintance with the Senate's fine art, few realize that the Senate also possesses an extensive collection of graphic art. What started 30 years ago as a source of historical documentation and exhibition material has grown to an impressive study collection. This volume marks the first comprehensive publication of the almost one thousand prints in the holdings of the United States Senate.

Dating from 1830 to the early 20th century, this graphic art collection illustrates the people, places, and events that mark the history of the United States Senate and the U.S. Capitol building. The collection also reflects the advances in printing technology in America during the 19th century, from simple woodblock engravings to delicate steel etchings and colorful lithographs. Some of the images are limited-edition prints, but the majority are from the popular illustrated news magazines, such as *Harper's Weekly* and *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*. These inexpensive publications were one of the few sources of visual information about the events of the day. As such, they communicated important iconographic concepts about the Capitol, the Senate, and American democracy.

These illustrations record both the defining moments in the Senate's history and the rhythms of everyday life in the Capitol. They show women lobbyists using the Ladies' Reception Room to buttonhole passing senators to plead their cause. They offer glimpses of visitors dining in the Senate restaurant. They depict staff at work in the office of the secretary of the Senate and on the floor of the Senate. They remind us how much has changed and how much remains the same. They also provide charming images of the Capitol's surroundings. My personal favorite is the rain shower scene

on Pennsylvania Avenue, sketched in 1890. As you journey through the Capitol and consult this catalogue, you will surely find favorites of your own.

The Senate collection also contains scores of political cartoons from the famous humor magazines *Puck* and *Judge*, by such great satirists as Thomas Nast and Joseph Keppler. The use of the lithographic process in these publications imbues their images with rich, vibrant colors that are matched in intensity only by the lively, winsome, and sometimes scathing characterizations of the targets of their glee.

The United States Senate Catalogue of Graphic Art was produced by the Office of Senate Curator, which serves as staff to the Senate Commission on Art. Established in 1968, the Commission preserves, protects, and makes known the works of art, furnishings, historical objects, and specific architectural features that the Senate holds in trust for the American people. The graphic art collection was established in 1975 by James R. Ketchum, Senate Curator Emeritus, who recognized the importance of these prints as historical documents and had the vision to acquire the first engraving.

An earlier volume, the *United States Senate Graphic Arts Collection: Illustrated Checklist, Volume 1* (1995), presented all but the cartoon images then residing in the collection. A more recent Senate publication, *United States Senate Catalogue of Fine Art* (2002), features information on the 160 paintings and sculptures in the U.S. Senate. It is my hope that this new catalogue will become an indispensable reference for anyone interested in learning more about the Senate, the Capitol, and American political history. ❧

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