

THOLOS

VOLUME 14

FEATURE

**Benjamin Henry
Latrobe's Capitol
Contributions**

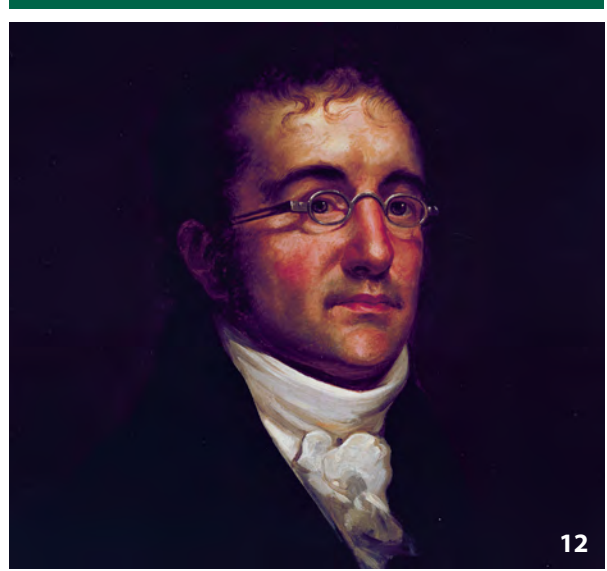
DOING GOOD

**U.S. Botanic
Garden Helps
Urban Agriculture
Programs at 28
Public Gardens
Affected by
COVID-19**



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Photo by Thomas Hatzenbuhler

SPOTLIGHT ON SAFETY

COVID-19 CLEANING PROTOCOLS

WRITTEN BY ERIN NELSON

As the COVID-19 pandemic unfolded, Architect of the Capitol (AOC) staff began working through the protocols we needed to keep our employees, members, staff and visitors safe. Resources were created and distributed to keep everyone informed of the changing environment. These resources are available on Compass and are updated on a regular basis. They include the Pandemic Operations Plan, which provides an in-depth look at the new normal, frequently asked questions for employees to navigate the pandemic, and new cleaning protocols implemented to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Here are a few photos of your colleagues that showcase these important cleaning protocols for vehicles, tools and office spaces.

THE PROCESS



Robert Hollins (top & bottom left) and Roger Hall (top & bottom right) clean high-touch surface areas and work spaces in the Library of Congress buildings. Photos by James Rosenthal



Clockwise from top: Richard Caselman, Frank Bussler and Anthony Littlejohn complete the COVID-19 cleaning protocols for AOC vehicles. Photos by Thomas Hatzenbuhler





AOC TRIBUTES

JOHN LEWIS' LYING IN STATE: A NEW NORMAL

WRITTEN BY MORGAN GREEN
PHOTOGRAPHY BY SEAN GREENE

After serving 17 terms as the representative for Georgia's 5th Congressional District, John Robert Lewis didn't leave many people on Capitol Hill without a story to tell about him. Representative Lewis was regarded as both an influential politician and prominent civil rights leader.

After his passing, it became clear that arrangements would be necessary for Americans of all generations to honor Lewis. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, hard-working Architect of the Capitol (AOC) teams prepared for visitors to say their farewells.

AOC TEAMS ADJUSTED TO THIS NEW

NORMAL AND SUCCESSFULLY SERVED

THIS UNPRECEDENTED EVENT.

A small funeral was held indoors for invited guests with social distancing practices in place. “We are used to having almost 1,000 people in the room for an event like this,” said Raynell Bennett, Capitol Building director of planning, evaluation and operations. Attendance for this event was less than 20 percent of the normal occupancy due to social distancing. Guests and congressional staff are invited to the Rotunda for funerals and other ceremonial events. Among the invited guests for Lewis’ funeral were Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor, former Vice President Joe Biden, Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell.

Preparations were also made for Lewis’ two-day lying in state, which required a cross-jurisdictional effort; it was no small feat. After much deliberation, AOC leaders with the help of the Speaker’s Office, House and Senate Sergeant at Arms and U.S. Capitol Police decided that the casket would be placed on the East Front Portico. The Capitol Building’s Carpentry Shop built a special platform to accommodate the casket that would be both visually appropriate and secure.

Visitors from across the United States lined up 6 feet apart on East Capitol and First Streets to pay tribute to

Lewis’ life. “We knew even in the midst of the pandemic that there would be a line of people who wanted to pay their respects,” said U.S. Capitol Visitor Center Chief Executive Officer Beth Plemmons.

Social distancing and safety were the utmost priority for all in attendance. Capitol Grounds and Arboretum ran water lines for potable drinking water. “We were able to provide water for visitors in coordination and consultation with the Office of Attending Physician and the Office of Security Programs,” said James Kaufmann, Capitol Grounds and Arboretum director. The American Red Cross was also on site to assist with any medical needs due to the high temperatures.

COVID-19 has dramatically changed the way the AOC operates on a day-to-day basis and Lewis’ lying in state and public viewing were no different. Despite the challenges of hot weather and social distancing, AOC teams adjusted to this new normal and successfully served this unprecedented event.

What have AOC employees learned from this experience? It’s changed the way we think — prioritizing tasks, increasing efficiency and enforcing safe practices to carry out the mission of the AOC, each and every day.



The United States Capitol Police stands guard over Representative Lewis' casket on the East Front Portico of the U.S. Capitol.



FEATURE

BENJAMIN HENRY LATROBE'S CAPITOL CONTRIBUTIONS

WRITTEN BY KATE HOLDER
PHOTOS PROVIDED BY AOC PHOTO BRANCH

This September marks the 200th anniversary of the death of Benjamin Henry Latrobe, the second Architect of the Capitol who is considered by many to be the “father of American architecture.” Latrobe was one of the first fully trained architects in America; he helped popularize Neoclassical and Greek Revival architecture in the new nation.

Latrobe has the distinction of being hired by two U.S. presidents on two different occasions to help design, repair, build and rebuild the interiors of the U.S. Capitol, both before and after the War of 1812 when British troops burned the U.S. Capitol in August 1814. President Thomas Jefferson hired Latrobe in 1803 as Surveyor of Public Buildings to build the south (House) wing of the U.S. Capitol, a position Latrobe held until congressional funding for construction dried up in 1811. In 1815, Jefferson’s successor, President James Madison, hired Latrobe back as “Architect of the Capitol” to rebuild the gutted interior.

The U.S. Capitol has gone through many transformations since it was first occupied by Congress in 1800 in the north (Senate) wing, the only built portion of the building at that time. Until he resigned as Architect of the Capitol in 1817, Latrobe established a legacy of beautiful and innovative Neoclassical interiors, featuring elements of Greek antiquity as allegories of representative government. The following descriptions highlight Latrobe’s work in the U.S. Capitol — architectural designs now over 200 years old, admired by millions of visitors every year.

NATIONAL STATUARY HALL

Also known as the Old Hall of the House, Latrobe twice built the two-story room that served as the original House Chamber. First built in 1805-1807, it was elliptical in shape. At Jefferson’s insistence, Latrobe added 100 “panel” skylights to the domed ceiling alluding to those of the Halle au bled in Paris, France. Latrobe, however, was no fan of skylights calling them “great evils” that tended to leak and expose harsh light. After the British burned the hall in 1814, Latrobe rebuilt it more to his

Neoclassical taste — a semicircular, theater-style room under a coffered half dome capped with a windowed cupola. The natural “unity of light” cast from the cupola symbolizes the Enlightenment ideal of liberty. Huge Grecian columns lining the perimeter are variegated Breccia marble quarried along the Potomac River. Elaborate white Corinthian capitals topping the columns are modeled after those of the ancient Choragic Monument of Lysicrates in Athens, Greece.



The magnificent Corinthian capitals atop the hall’s columns were carved in Carrara, Italy.



The Old Senate Chamber was restored in 1976 for America's bicentennial.

OLD SENATE CHAMBER

Latrobe rebuilt this room twice — first (1808-1810) to correct design and decay issues, second (beginning in 1815) after British incendiaries reduced even its columns to rubble. The most significant change of Latrobe's first rebuild, in addition to replacing rotting timbers and falling plaster, was to raise the original, two-story chamber one floor directly above so that the ground-story space would become what is now known as the Old Supreme Court Chamber (see next page). Today visitors can see the second rebuild, finished in 1819 by Latrobe's successor Charles Bulfinch, and occupied by the U.S. Senate until 1859. A semicircular room covered by a richly coffered half dome, Latrobe expanded the diameter of the chamber by 15 feet to accommodate additional senators representing the growing nation. Along the east wall behind the vice president's desk, eight stately marble columns of the Ionic order support the visitor's gallery above. The columns are based on those found at the ancient Greek temple, Erechtheion, located on the Acropolis of Athens.

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THAT TENDED TO
LEAK AND EXPOSE
HARSH LIGHT.

OLD SUPREME COURT CHAMBER

Latrobe's U.S. Capitol masterpiece, built in 1808-1810, is distinguished by its stunning vaulted ceiling. An unprecedented architectural achievement for its time, Latrobe ingeniously designed the magnificent ribbed vaults so that the masonry ceiling is held up by a foundation of columns and piers independent of the older exterior walls that had already defined the space. To support the chamber vaults on the east side, Latrobe constructed a three-bay arcade resting on sandstone Doric columns patterned after those of the ancient Greek Temple of Poseidon. On the opposite side,

Latrobe built a semicircular arcade of robust piers positioned just inside the western wall. When in 1814 the British torched the Senate Chamber above, the Supreme Court's vaults and columns withstood the conflagration but were damaged enough to require rebuilding. The Supreme Court used the chamber from 1810 until 1860, when it moved upstairs into the Old Senate Chamber after the Senate moved into its present-day space. The Supreme Court moved permanently to its own building in 1935.



Latrobe's vaulted ceiling has evoked visual comparisons to a pumpkin or an umbrella.

LATROBE TOOK THE UNPRECEDENTED STEP OF
“AMERICANIZING” THE CLASSICAL ORDER OF SOME OF THE
COLUMNS HE BUILT FOR VESTIBULES IN THE SENATE WING.



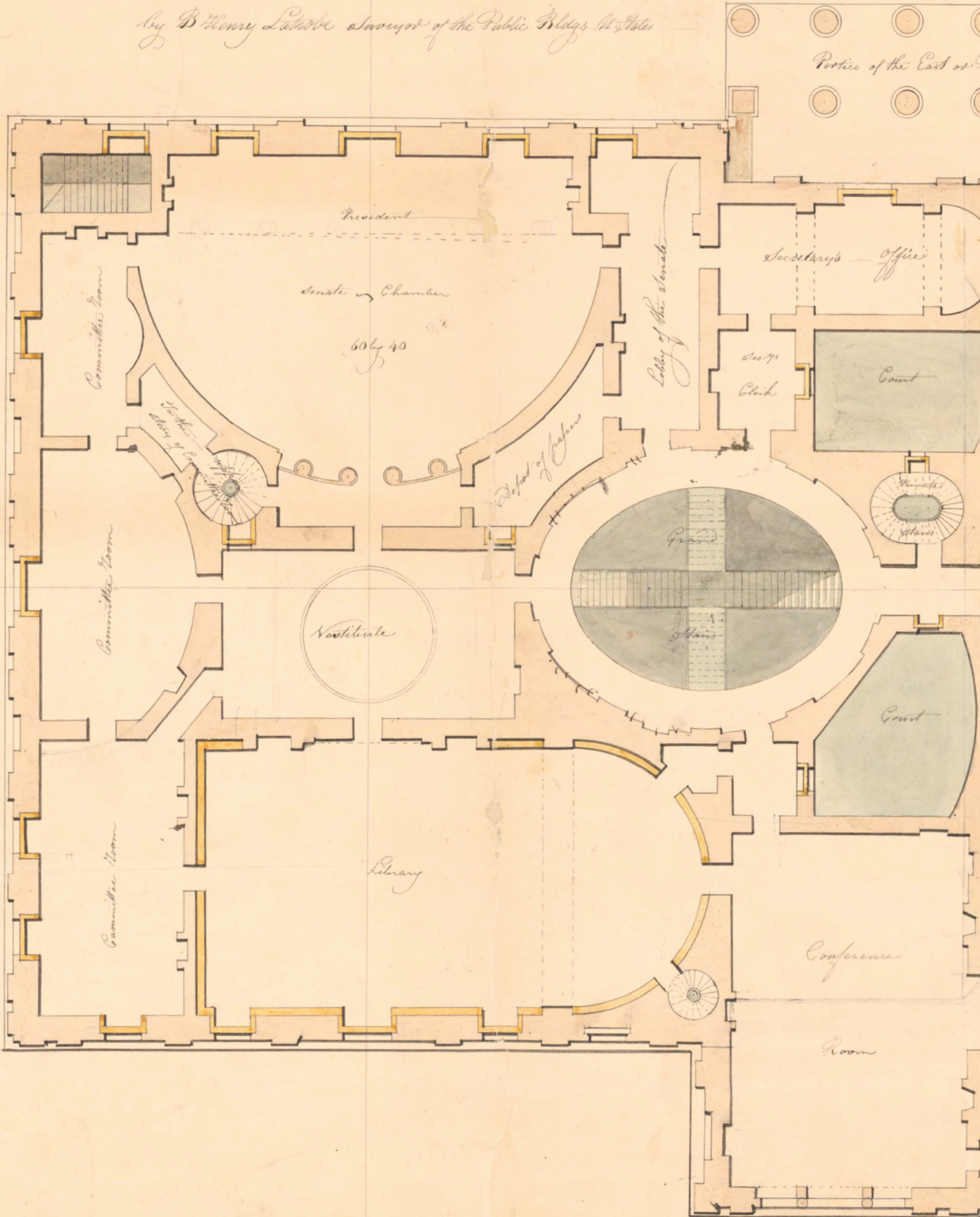
CORNCOB AND TOBACCO LEAF COLUMNS

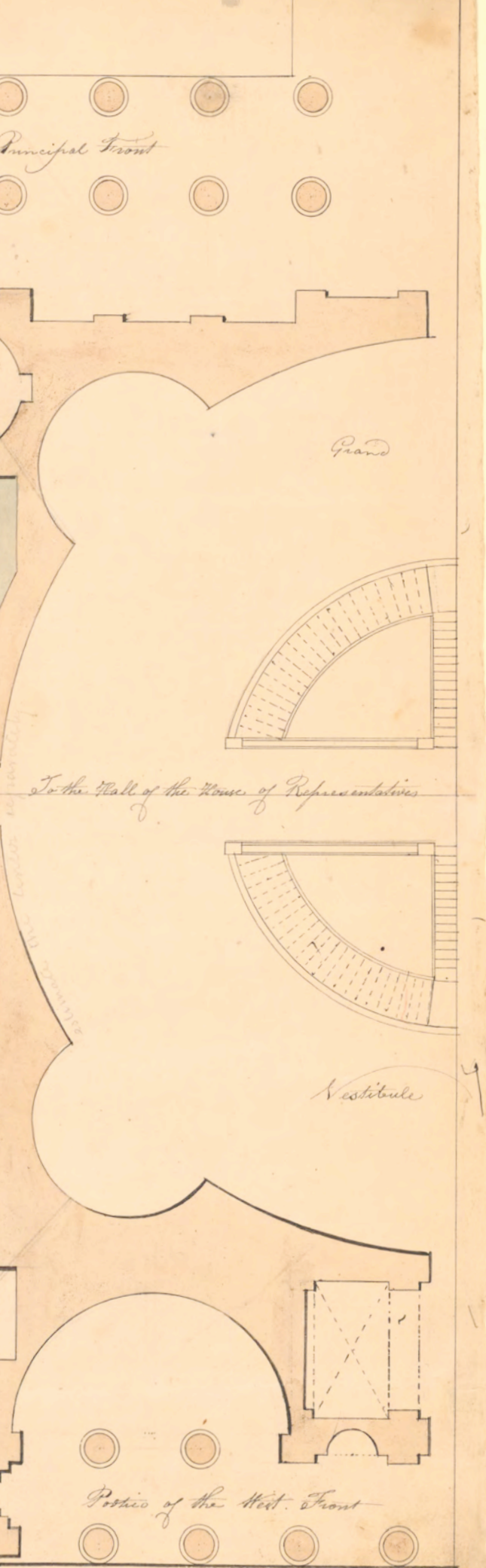
Helping to create a new iconography for the young democracy, Latrobe took the unprecedented step of “Americanizing” the classical order of some of the columns he built for vestibules in the Senate wing. The most popular are the six “corncob” columns built in 1809 to help support the vaulted ceiling in the Senate Vestibule. Carved from Aquia Creek sandstone, the columns are fluted to resemble bundles of cornstalks with rope necking at the top; the capitals display corn husks folded back to reveal their cobs. The columns were a huge hit among lawmakers given the homage paid to an important American crop. Circa 1816, Latrobe built the small Senate rotunda adjacent to the Senate Vestibule. The rotunda includes a circular colonnade of 16 columns whose capitals feature broad tobacco leaves and delicate tobacco flowers. Tobacco was then America’s second largest export product and a symbol of the nation’s growing commercial strength.

The corncob columns’ popularity likely helped Latrobe secure more appropriations for his work.

III Proposed to the Consideration of the President of the United States

by B. Henry Latrobe Surveyor of the Public Bldgs. U. States





ORIGINAL LATROBE DRAWINGS DISCOVERED DURING REPAIRS

On April 2, 1964, electricians employed by the Architect of the Capitol to rewire the Senate Library then on the fourth floor of the U.S. Capitol made a priceless discovery. While removing old conduits and wires, the workers found a set of old drawings atop an interior wall. An investigation determined that the drawings were original plans made in November 1806 by Benjamin Henry Latrobe as part of a report submitted to President Thomas Jefferson.

The plans depict some of the alterations Latrobe envisioned for the Senate wing of the U.S. Capitol. The plan to the left is an unaltered view of what was then the top floor of the north wing (on the left) and Latrobe's vision of half of the larger, unbuilt center section of the U.S. Capitol (on the right). The semicircular Senate Chamber is shown at the top (east side) and the rectangular Library of Congress with the curved south wall is at the bottom (west side). The half-circle on the right would eventually become the Rotunda.

Soon after Jefferson appointed Latrobe in 1803 to be the Surveyor of Public Buildings, the architect was alarmed by the structural problems plaguing the north wing of the U.S. Capitol, which was then only 3 years old. Latrobe denounced the "extremely injudicious" building materials and methods used, and in February 1804 wrote "the want of air and light in the cellar story had begun to produce decay in the timbers . . . the roof is leaky, and the ceilings and walls of several of the apartments were thereby injured . . ."

In 1807, as dangers and demands for more committee space mounted, Congress appropriated funds for Latrobe to begin the badly needed renovations. Ultimately, he would recast much of the north wing's interior in Neoclassical splendor.

DOING GOOD

U.S. BOTANIC GARDEN HELPS URBAN AGRICULTURE PROGRAMS AT 28 PUBLIC GARDENS AFFECTED BY COVID-19

WRITTEN BY DEVIN DOTSON

The U.S. Botanic Garden (USBG) is working to help food-growing programs at public gardens affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The USBG has partnered with the American Public Gardens Association to establish the Urban Agriculture Resilience Program to grow capacity, prevent shortfalls, and gather best practices from the U.S. public garden community.

“Especially now, during this unprecedented health and economic crisis, communities need access to healthy, fresh foods,” said Saharah Moon Chapotin, executive director of the U.S. Botanic Garden. “We are proud to be able to support our fellow public gardens in their vital work of helping local communities grow and gain access to more fruits and vegetables and achieve better nutrition.”

Right: Children pick beans in the Bruno Vegetable Garden at Birmingham Botanical Gardens in Alabama.



Created in June 2020, the partnership has awarded \$378,000 to 28 public gardens in 19 states and Washington, D.C. to ensure they are able to continue growing and distributing produce to communities with food access challenges, offering urban agriculture and other food growing education programs, and promoting wellness and nutrition. Still in its early stages, the program has already begun to have a positive impact. Grumblethorpe House & Gardens in Pennsylvania is using their award to keep their Youth Farmstand running, offering produce grown on-site on a sliding scale, pay-what-you-can basis. The Youth Farmstand employs local teens over the summer as a first summer job.

Since Brooklyn Botanic Garden is still closed to the public and cannot hold on-site classes this summer, they are using the funding to serve members of their local community in need. They have transformed their Children's Garden into a production farm growing vegetables that are shared with the public through food distribution centers across Brooklyn.

“WE ARE PROUD TO BE ABLE TO SUPPORT OUR FELLOW PUBLIC GARDENS IN THEIR VITAL WORK OF HELPING LOCAL COMMUNITIES GROW AND GAIN ACCESS TO MORE FRUITS AND VEGETABLES AND ACHIEVE BETTER NUTRITION.”



Above left: Staggered, low planters allow for smaller visitors to engage in vegetable growing at the State Botanical Garden of Georgia. Above right: Students from the University of North Carolina care for growing beds as part of North Carolina Botanical Garden's "Edible Campus UNC" program.

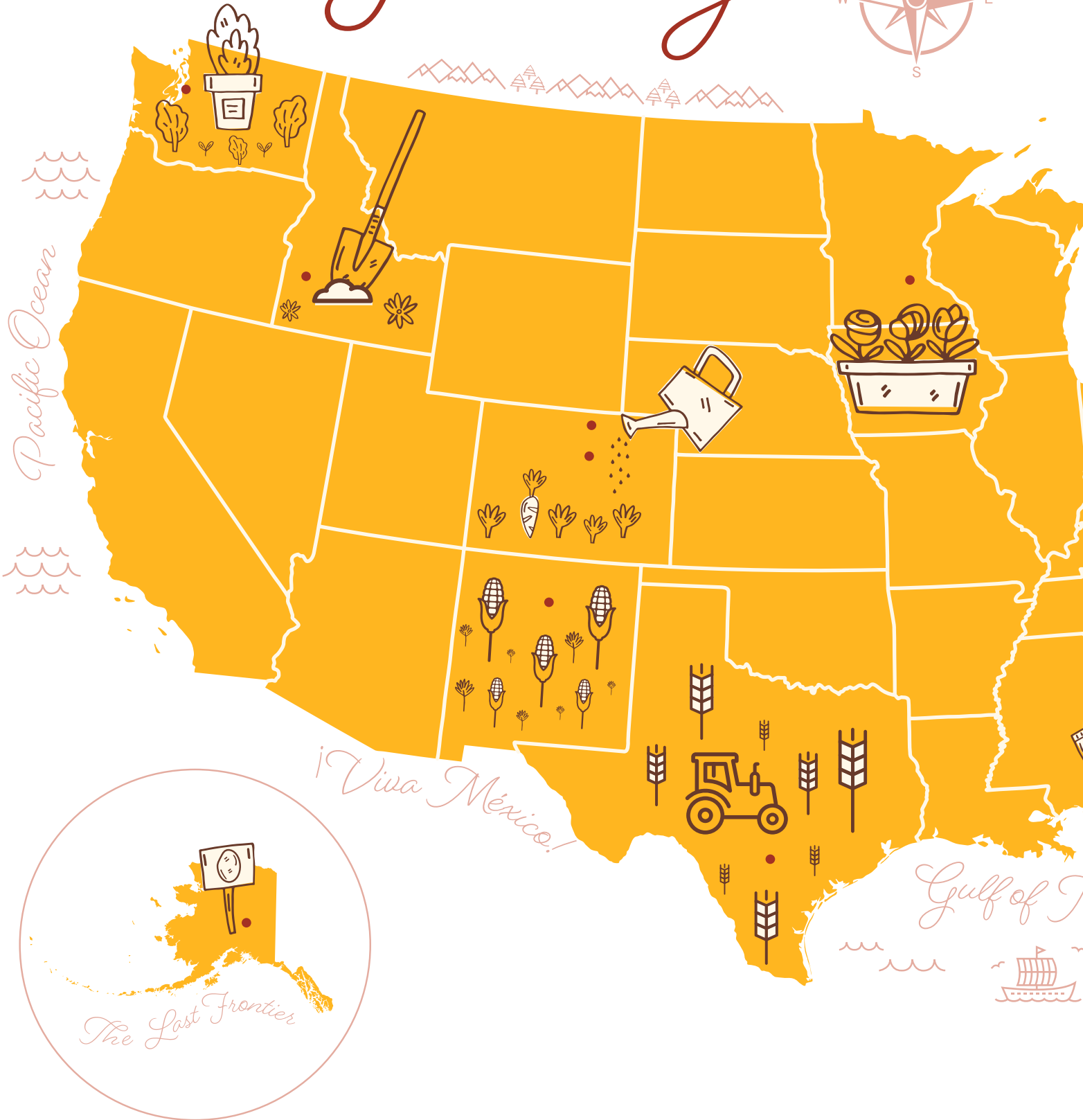


Visitors of all ages engage in urban agriculture and food growing programs around the country. Clockwise from top left are: Cape Fear Botanical Garden, North Carolina, San Antonio Botanical Garden, Texas, and Tower Hill Botanic Garden, Massachusetts.

With the program's support, similar food production and distribution efforts are continuing at Denver Botanic Gardens, Tower Hill Botanic Garden and many others. The University of Tennessee Gardens is using the funding to hire additional capacity for their program. Their new employee will work in their Helping Hands Kitchen Garden to expand food production and contribute to community education programs.

Beyond providing immediate support, the Urban Agriculture Resilience Program will gather insights on successful approaches and future opportunities for public gardens to improve food access and advance food and agriculture education. Best practices learned through this program will be shared with the public garden community to have an even longer-lasting impact across the country. See the list of 28 garden awardees, photos and more at www.USBG.gov/UrbanAgResilience.

Gardens Awarded Funding



Pacific Ocean

¡Viva México!

Gulf of Mexico

The Last Frontier

- ATLANTA BOTANICAL GARDEN, GEORGIA
- BROOKGREEN GARDENS, SOUTH CAROLINA
- BROOKLYN BOTANIC GARDEN, NEW YORK
- CAPE FEAR BOTANICAL GARDEN, NORTH CAROLINA
- DELAWARE CENTER FOR HORTICULTURE, DELAWARE

- DENVER BOTANIC GARDENS, COLORADO
- FRANKLIN PARK CONSERVATORY AND BOTANICAL GARDENS, OHIO
- FRIENDS OF BIRMINGHAM BOTANICAL GARDENS, ALABAMA
- FRIENDS OF THE NATIONAL ARBORETUM, WASHINGTON, D.C.
- GEORGESON BOTANICAL GARDEN, ALASKA
- GRUMBLETHORPE HOUSE & GARDENS, PENNSYLVANIA
- IDAHO BOTANICAL GARDEN, IDAHO
- KNOXVILLE BOTANICAL GARDEN AND ARBORETUM, TENNESSEE
- MATTHAEI BOTANICAL GARDENS AND NICHOLS ARBORETUM, UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN, MICHIGAN
- MINNESOTA LANDSCAPE ARBORETUM, MINNESOTA
- NORTH CAROLINA BOTANICAL GARDEN, NORTH CAROLINA
- PAUL J. CIENER BOTANICAL GARDEN, NORTH CAROLINA
- PENNSYLVANIA HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY, PENNSYLVANIA
- PHIPPS CONSERVATORY AND BOTANICAL GARDENS, PENNSYLVANIA
- QUEENS BOTANICAL GARDEN, NEW YORK
- SAN ANTONIO BOTANICAL GARDEN, TEXAS
- SANTA FE BOTANICAL GARDEN, NEW MEXICO
- STATE BOTANICAL GARDEN OF GEORGIA, GEORGIA
- THE GARDENS ON SPRING CREEK, COLORADO
- TOWER HILL BOTANIC GARDEN, MASSACHUSETTS
- UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND COMMUNITY LEARNING GARDEN, MARYLAND
- UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE GARDENS, TENNESSEE
- UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON BOTANIC GARDENS, WASHINGTON





C. GREENWELL
LEADER
Electrical Dir.

ARCHITECT
OF THE
CAPITOL



COOL TOOLS

"THE BOX"

WRITTEN BY KATE HOLDER
PHOTOGRAPHY BY SEAN GREENE

Across the Capitol campus, Architect of the Capitol (AOC) electricians are on constant alert to respond to emergency events and power outages that can disrupt electrical systems at any time. House Office Buildings electricians now have a "cool tool" that allows them to practice their emergency response without disrupting the live systems or even leaving the House Electrical Shop.

The cool tool is a Systems Demonstration Box — affectionately known simply as "The Box." A closet-sized, wooden cabinet on rollers, The Box contains stand-alone, fully operational electrical components on all four of its sides that are the same models, albeit on a smaller scale, as the live systems maintained by House electricians.

Left: Charles "Buddy" Greenwell III in front of "The Box."

Rectangular in shape, the narrow sides of The Box contain a standard electrical panel on one side and an automatic transfer switch (ATS) module on the other side. The wide sides of The Box feature two fire alarm systems on the upper sections, and light bulbs, switches and outlets on the lower section of one side.

The fire alarm systems on The Box match those currently used in the field: one for the Rayburn, Longworth and Ford House Office Buildings, and the part of the Cannon House Office Building not yet renovated; and another, newer model for the system installed in the renewed part of the Cannon Building.

The Box was originally built three years ago as a demonstration device for Take Your Child to Work Day.

“We wanted to create something to show the kids how electrical systems like lighting and fire alarms work,” said House Electrician Leader Charles “Buddy” Greenwell III. “We asked the Carpentry Shop to build a

large cabinet to house components and this is what they came up with,” Greenwell said as he stood before the imposing, cherrywood cabinet that reached his height.

During Take Your Child to Work Day that year, the children enjoyed an interactive experience with The Box. They took turns switching the light bulbs on and off and then watched as a House electrician held up a can of smoke and sprayed the smoke directly at one of the fire alarms on the other side of The Box.

The alarm shrilled as its strobe light flashed, which, you could say, got the children’s attention. It proved a memorable example of what AOC electricians deal with on the job.

During a more recent demonstration of The Box, Greenwell re-created how to activate the fire alarm by picking up a can of smoke and spraying it at the alarm.

“WE WANTED TO CREATE

SOMETHING TO SHOW KIDS HOW

ELECTRICAL SYSTEMS LIKE

LIGHTING AND FIRE ALARMS WORK”



Greenwell points out the fire alarm control boards; underneath are the light bulbs and electrical switches that children played with during Take Your Child to Work Day.



Greenwell sprays a can of smoke on one of the fire alarms to set it off.

It blinkered and blared with a vengeance.

“When a fire alarm goes off,” Greenwell said over the deafening peal of the alarm, “first the Capitol Police investigate. If it’s a false alarm, they make sure everything is safe, then they’ll call us to come out and reset the zone.” The zone is the area of a building covered by that particular alarm. Greenwell then turned to the display portion of the system directly under the fire alarms and went through the steps to turn off the alarm and reset the zone.

Peace returned to the House Electrical Shop.

Rotating The Box to one side, Greenwell next demonstrated how the ATS module works. Located in electrical rooms throughout the House office buildings, ATS units provide backup generator power in the event of a power outage. When power from the electric company is lost, the ATS is activated and soon switches the power over to the alternate power of the generator. The model on The Box allows electricians to simulate a power outage by “turning off” the regular power to the ATS to activate the switch.

"It's really nice to be able to show these systems to employees without worrying about doing something wrong," Greenwell said.

Which is how The Box has become a truly cool tool. "We use it to introduce our systems to all new employees," said Greenwell. "We'll also use it to help employees get promoted, by testing their skills and knowledge of components on The Box."

For House Electrician Shane Spalding, helping to install the electrical components on The Box when it was first built in 2017 helped him secure a promotion. "I was fairly new to the AOC at that point, so helping install the electrical panel and the ATS module showed my supervisor that I had the knowledge and skills to get the promotion," Spalding said. "It definitely helped me out."



Greenwell operates the automatic transfer switch.



Communications and Congressional Relations
U.S. Capitol, Room SB-16
Washington, DC 20515

Tholos Summer 2020

The Architect of the Capitol strives to meet its mission 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to **serve** Congress and the Supreme Court, **preserve** America's Capitol, and **inspire** memorable experiences for all who visit the buildings and grounds.

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BACK COVER PHOTO BY:

James Rosenthal

