

THOLOS

VOLUME 16

PROJECT UPDATE

Olmsted Lanterns
Restoration

SPOTLIGHT ON SAFETY

Safely Sharing Two
Special, Stinky Blooms

BY THE NUMBERS

Presidential
Inauguration 2021



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HONORING THE U.S. CAPITOL GUIDES BURIED IN CONGRESSIONAL CEMETERY

WRITTEN BY BLAKE LINDSEY



**Photo of Congressional Cemetery courtesy of the AOC
Photography Branch.**

Having a sense of one's past is an important human need, and as an agency that traces its roots to 1793, the Architect of the Capitol (AOC) is fortunate to have a richly documented history. It is empowering to learn about the experiences of our visitor guide predecessors. Their history informs what we do and connects us to the long tradition of serving Congress and the U.S. Capitol.

Among those traditions is the centuries-old practice of hosting visitors from around the country and the world eager to see Congress and its monumental home. From the U.S. Capitol's beginning in the early 19th century, local residents styled themselves as guides and shepherded visitors through the U.S. Capitol's corridors.

Vastly increased visitation and concerns about public safety led to the creation of a professional Capitol Guide Service in late 1876. The Capitol Guide Service was the U.S. Capitol's public face to visitors for more than a century, until increased visitation and the need for improved security and additional amenities necessitated change. In December 2008, Congress opened the U.S. Capitol Visitor Center, where a team of professional, educated and highly trained staff continues today to inform, involve and inspire guests.

VASTLY INCREASED
VISITATION AND CONCERNS
ABOUT PUBLIC SAFETY LED
TO THE CREATION OF A
PROFESSIONAL CAPITOL
GUIDE SERVICE IN LATE 1876.



Guides Lauren Shiflet, Scott Jung, Nicholas Oristian, Laurel Martin, Joe Wasiak, Carrie Gallagher, Blake Lindsey, Janet Clemens and Dan Pearson at the grave of John Witel. The group placed markers at the graves of the Capitol guides. Photo by Jamal Gordon

SEVERAL OF THE MEN WHO FIRST LED TOURS THROUGH THE U.S. CAPITOL ARE BURIED IN CONGRESSIONAL CEMETERY.

Information about our visitor guide predecessors must be patched together from cursory newspaper references, obituaries and incomplete census records. Several of the men who first led tours through the U.S. Capitol are buried in Congressional Cemetery.

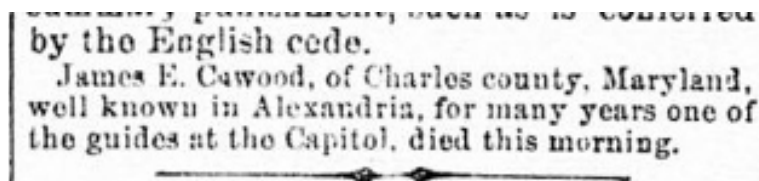
Located in southeast Washington, D.C., just yards from the Stadium-Armory Metro station, Congressional Cemetery marks the final resting place of these first guides as well as senators, representatives, military veterans, Vice Presidents Elbridge Gerry and George Clinton, John Philip Sousa and J. Edgar Hoover. Walking the rows of worn gravestones reminds us that while our time on Earth is transitory, we often leave lasting legacies.

In December 2019, a group from the Capitol Visitor Center Social Committee gathered at the cemetery to place markers on the graves of these guides and learn more about their lives.

Born in 1840 in Charles County, Maryland, **James E. Cawood** grew up in a humble farming household. He married a Virginian, Amie Horton, in the 1860s,



Photo of Congressional Cemetery courtesy of the AOC Photography Branch.

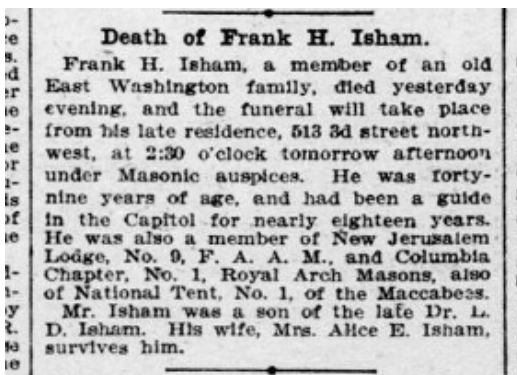


The Alexandria Gazette noted James E. Cawood's passing.

and they had four children. In 1876 James was among the first people the U.S. Capitol Police hired to provide tours of the U.S. Capitol as part of the new Guide Service. He lived on 6th Street, NE, where his neighbor was fellow guide, George McCauley.

McCauley is famous as the guide who rescued artist Constantino Brumidi from certain death in 1879 after the aging artist fell from the scaffolding while creating the "Frieze of American History" around the Rotunda. Luckily for them, most of Cawood and McCauley's days were not so interesting, but they nonetheless witnessed the Rotunda become what it is today.

James Cawood died in November 1886. A guide for 10 years, his service was essential to establishing today's Visitor Services Division.



The Alexandria Gazette noted Frank H. Isham's passing.



Photo of Congressional Cemetery courtesy of the AOC Photography Branch.

Frank H. Isham was born in New York in 1856. During the 1860s, the Ishams moved to Washington, D.C., where his father served as a doctor in Union army hospitals. Frank married Alice Elmore, an art teacher, on Christmas Eve 1879. Frank had many skills; during the 1880s, he was listed as a plate printer and a government clerk.

By 1887, he was part of the Capitol Guide Service, serving for 18 years and likely filling the roster spot vacated by the passing of James Cawood. Frank and Alice rose to some prominence in the Washington community, as Frank became a Freemason and an active member in many area lodges. He died at the age of 49. Alice continued her work as an art teacher and was remarried by 1920.

John Witel was born in 1841 in England and immigrated to the United States as a young child. He grew up in New Jersey and married Martha Furman on New Year's Eve 1866. They lived in Trenton, where John worked alternately as a shoemaker and a police officer. Martha died 20 years later in 1886, and by the end of the year, John had moved to Washington, D.C., and was listed as "Guide Cap" in the city directory. By 1900, he had remarried and had three children. He died of tuberculosis in 1907.

The stories of these public history pioneers are ordinary, and their names don't resonate with the power of some of the others buried at Congressional Cemetery. John Witel's final resting place, for example, is just feet from the grave of former Washington, D.C. mayor, Marion Barry. Yet the legacy of those who built, maintained and served the U.S. Capitol remains as alive as ever.



SPOTLIGHT ON SAFETY

SAFELY SHARING TWO SPECIAL, STINKY BLOOMS

WRITTEN BY DEVIN DOTSON

PHOTOGRAPHY BY THOMAS HATZENBUHLER

As summer was winding down in Washington, D.C., two of the famous corpse flowers (*Amorphophallus titanum*) came into bloom at the U.S. Botanic Garden (USBG). In years past, thousands of people have visited the Conservatory's Garden Court to witness the growth and opening of these enormous, stinky, short-lived blooms. Since the Conservatory is temporarily closed to the public to reduce the risk of transmitting COVID-19, the Architect of the Capitol (AOC) set up a live camera feed to safely engage the public in this rare botanical event.

In planning how to safely share the blooms with the public, the idea of displaying the plants in a different location than the usual Garden Court room in the Conservatory was discussed. The possibility of placing these tropical plants outdoors was considered, but it was determined that to protect the health of the plants, they had to be kept inside the greenhouses of the Conservatory. The fluctuating summer weather of Washington, D.C., and the potential love they might receive from outdoor USBG visitors could present too many dangers to the plants' health.

This species' conservation status in the wild is endangered, with less than 1,000 individuals believed to exist in its native range in Sumatra, Indonesia. Both of the recently bloomed plants are accessions in the USBG's rare plant collection. They were brought to the Conservatory from the USBG's Production Facility, where they are grown in a greenhouse with consistent high heat, high humidity and ceilings tall enough to accommodate the plants' 15-foot-tall leaves.

With the safety of visitors, employees and the plants in mind, the USBG reached out to AOC colleagues in the Information Technology Division (ITD) and the Photography Branch to create a livestream inside the Conservatory. Safety for all AOC employees involved in setting up such a system was discussed, and an

installation plan was created after it was determined how each group would create and install the necessary pieces in a safe manner following COVID protocols.

Within 24 hours of a phone meeting, the team fully developed and executed a logistical plan to showcase the blooms. The USBG built a custom stand in the Garden Court for the camera and technology hardware, the Photography Branch installed and calibrated both a video for the live streaming and a still camera to capture images for creating a time-lapse video, and ITD installed streaming servers, cables and hardware. After some final modifications to ensure the setup could endure the heat, humidity and mist inside the Conservatory room, the live camera system was ready to go.

Over the next several weeks, thousands of online visitors were able to watch as the plants grew to more than 100 inches tall and opened to reveal their brilliant colors in a showy display. The quick, thoughtful collaboration of AOC employees created a technological solution to share the popular blooms in a way that was both safe for the public and safe for the plants, too.

Learn more at www.USBG.gov/CorpseFlower.

THIS SPECIES' CONSERVATION STATUS IN THE WILD IS

ENDANGERED, WITH LESS THAN 1,000 INDIVIDUALS BELIEVED

TO EXIST IN ITS NATIVE RANGE IN SUMATRA, INDONESIA.



Q&A WITH CHIEF SECURITY OFFICER VALERIE HASBERRY

WRITTEN BY MORGAN GREEN
PHOTOGRAPHY BY SEAN GREENE

This past summer, Architect of the Capitol (AOC) Chief Security Officer Valerie Hasberry spoke with faculty at a Texas university engineering school on the effects of race in educational choices and the importance of diversity in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields.

Q: How did the opportunity come about to speak with faculty at the Texas engineering school?

A: I was asked by my previous boss who is an advisor at the engineering school and is also an alumni of the university.

Q: How was it speaking with the faculty virtually?

A: The call was over Zoom. I think there are some challenges when you're having a discussion with people you've never met before. It's the challenge of "How do you connect virtually and ensure that you're getting your message across?" There were opportunities for me to provide my story and opinion but also for the participants to weigh in

with their reactions to current events. Because of the facilitated, virtual format of the call, we were able to keep the conversation going and it helped to break through any awkwardness. The call was originally scheduled for an hour but ended up extending beyond that time because there was active conversation.

Q: How can conversations about the effects of race in education impact students in STEM?

A: We talked about how we can recruit students and get more diversity in engineering. I think it could have an impact to share those opinions with prospective students because seeing people who

represent different groups that have achieved what those students are trying to achieve — it gives an air of possibility to show it can be done and there are paths to get to where they want to be.

Q: How can we make engineering career paths and internships more accessible to students of color?

A: You have to show the opportunities to elementary and middle-school students in their STEM programs. We need to start young to interest students in engineering and the other sciences we use within the agency. We need to cultivate those relationships from the beginning stages all the way through college and that includes mentoring.

Q: What are your hopes for seeing more diversity in the engineering industry?

A: We're beginning to see more diverse success stories like the recent female recipients of the Nobel Prize for Chemistry (Emmanuelle Charpentier and Jennifer Doudna). If people see themselves represented, they can visualize the potential and the possibility. The more diversity that's evident in a profession, the more we'll see the industry evolve. In some cases, people don't realize what opportunities exist for themselves, because they don't see people who look like them in those career fields.





PROJECT UPDATE

OLMSTED LANTERNS RESTORATION

WRITTEN BY KATE HOLDER
PHOTOGRAPHY BY DEWITT ROSEBOROUGH

Frederick Law Olmsted, considered the founder of American landscape architecture, is admired as much for his hardscapes as his landscapes. Commissioned in 1873 by the U.S. Congress to design the enlarged grounds of the U.S. Capitol, Olmsted spent the next 20-plus years overseeing the development of the 58.8-acre site. His plan included not only planting hundreds of trees and shrubs but also constructing walls, walkways, fountains and the massive marble terraces surrounding the north, west and south sides of the U.S. Capitol.

To help light walkways on the grounds, Olmsted also designed and constructed numerous lanterns with the help of his young architectural associate, Thomas Wisedell. Between 1882 and 1894, 14 of their most elaborate lanterns — featuring four different styles — were added to entry piers along the stone walls on or near First Street at the West Front. Four of the 14 were recently restored during the first of a two-year restoration project.

Located just off Garfield Circle and Peace Circle, the four restored lanterns mark the entrance to the two Olmsted walkways that lead in straight diagonals to the west terrace of the U.S. Capitol. The large bronze and glass lanterns are mounted on stately sandstone piers with intricately carved sandstone caps.

“We recently completed a metals inventory,” said Mary Oehrlein, the Architect of the Capitol’s (AOC) historic preservation officer. “The inventory gives us a condition assessment of each element and then we prioritize that list, so these fixtures rose to the top of the needs list,” Oehrlein said.

A restoration company based in New Hampshire traveled to Washington, D.C., last fall and removed the large bronze lanterns from the sandstone piers; they

took the lanterns back to their shop where they completely dismantled and refurbished the bronze while replacing some damaged framing on two of them. The bronze on all of the lanterns had corroded, so the contractors cleaned it, patinated the metal to return it to its original brown color, and then lacquered the bronze to seal and preserve the metal.

Meanwhile, AOC masons cleaned the stonework and AOC high voltage electricians rewired the piers. Temporary lights were installed on the stone piers to light the walkways while awaiting the return of the restored lanterns.

The Olmsted lanterns were originally lit with 12 gas jets. To replicate the original look as much as possible, new light fixtures were constructed to hold 12 LED



Touching up protective lacquer on the bronze framing of a lantern before it was reinstalled on its stone pier.



Screwing in new LED lightbulbs styled to resemble the flames of the lanterns' original gas jets.

lightbulbs. Although the lightbulbs have standard-sized sockets, the bulbs themselves are cylindrical in shape and cast yellow light that resembles a flame.

New glass replaced the white plastic sheeting that had been installed in the lanterns some years before. Here, too, the goal was to return the lanterns to their original look, which included clear glass. "It's partially replica historic glass," said Oehrlein. "The outside face of it is replica historic glass, but the inside face is a laminated glass system for safety reasons, to make it shatterproof." After the historic glass arrived, the reinstallation of the lanterns was completed in early August.

The ornamental styles of the stone carvings and bronze lanterns reflect an eclectic mix of Oriental and Victorian era influences that were popular in the second half of the 19th century.

"WE WERE
PLEASED TO
COMPLETE THE
RESTORATION
OF THE FOUR
LANTERNS
DESPITE THE
PANDEMIC."

Drew Coulson, landscape architect and project manager for the Capitol Grounds and Arboretum jurisdiction, helped coordinate the project. His role included working closely with the Construction and Security Division of the U.S. Capitol Police to secure contractor access to the work site and scheduling the AOC electricians who participated in the project.

"We were pleased to complete the restoration of the four lanterns despite the pandemic," said Coulson. "Everyone adjusted and did a great job."

By the end of this fiscal year, the remaining 10 of the 14 Olmsted lanterns on First Street will all be restored to their original glory, lighting the way for visitors to enjoy the U.S. Capitol Grounds as Olmsted had envisioned more than a century ago.

BY THE NUMBERS

PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURATION 2021

WRITTEN BY ERIN NELSON

Every four years Americans cast their vote for president in November and watch as the newly elected president takes the oath of office the following January. Architect of the Capitol (AOC) staff also spend these months preparing for the inauguration at the U.S. Capitol.

Presidential inaugural ceremonies are one of the most well-known of the numerous official events held at the U.S. Capitol. The AOC builds the inaugural platform on the U.S. Capitol's West Front, sets up the seating and fencing on the grounds, and coordinates other activities with the Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies.

While many of us may have picked up drills, hammers and nails for personal home improvement projects during the pandemic, it'd be hard to match the number of materials needed to set the stage for one of our country's most cherished traditions. Much goes into the presidential inauguration; here are a few numbers that help make that special day possible.

ZERO

LOST TIME INJURIES AND
0 RECORDABLE INJURIES

177

TONS (234,000 POUNDS)
OF SAND TO FILL THE
WEST FRONT FOUNTAIN

1,244

GALLONS OF PAINT

3,424

STRUCTURAL
CONNECTORS

430

SHEETS OF FOAM
INSULATION FOR
PROTECTION OF
EXISTING SURFACES

1,363

SHEETS OF PLYWOOD =
43,616 SQUARE FEET = ACRE+

17,900

CONSTRUCTION MAN HOURS; 5,600 HOURS
FOR THE POST-INAUGURATION DISMANTLE

160,000

POUNDS OF SCAFFOLDING AND BLEACHERS

552,700 NAILS

20,160

357

CONCRETE MASONRY UNITS
FOR THE FOUNDATION

POUNDS OF GROUT AND
MORTAR FOR FOUNDATIONS

110,038

LINEAR FEET OF DIMENSIONAL LUMBER



Legislative and Public Affairs
U.S. Capitol, Room SB-16
Washington, DC 20515

Tholos Fall 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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FRONT COVER PHOTO BY:

SEAN GREENE

BACK COVER PHOTO BY:

THOMAS HATZENBUHLER

