

CONSTRUCTING A PROFESSIONAL LEGISLATURE:
THE PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT OF CONGRESS, 1783-1851

By

JASON S. KASSEL

A DISSERTATION PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

2008

© 2008 Jason S. Kassel

To Lawrence C. Dodd

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I have dedicated this dissertation to Lawrence C. Dodd, or Larry to all who know him, for his support throughout the entire process. Larry was the essence of a mentor, a person who is caring, faithful, and focused on the success of all his students. He was always there to provide a reassuring word of encouragement and from him I learned to be both a better scholar and a better person. There is simply no way I can repay him for all he provided me over the years, including access to the beautiful beaches of Ipanema and Copacabana in Rio de Janeiro where I spent the summers of 2005, 2006, and 2007. In that beautiful locale, I was able to contemplate on the workings of the 19th century Congress, focus on my writing, and pull the dissertation together.

My initial research was supported by a Dirksen Congressional Grant I received that allowed me access to the National Archives in the summer of 2004. It was there that I encountered the key primary document, House Report 646, which brought empirical substance to the dissertation. This document is now available through the Lexis Nexis Congressional database and, for that, I thank the Internet.

My dissertation committee was invaluable throughout the process. In no order of importance let me thank them. Beth Rosenson helped me strengthen the portions of the dissertation focusing on professionalization. Dan Smith was an advisor who continually pushed me to write better and be focused in presenting an argument. Dan O'Neill helped me think theoretically about issues of conceptual change and American development. Finally, my outside committee member, Julie Dodd, was helpful and instructive throughout. All of them were extremely generous with their time and for that I extend a great deal of gratitude.

I also thank some of my fellow graduate students at the University of Florida, three of whom stand out. The most important influence on my development while there was Bryan Williams, an individual who is constantly theorizing about matters of state development and,

through sheer osmosis, manages to impart wisdom on all those around him. Special thanks are also extended to Susan Orr (Sox) who taught me the meaning of academic dedication and who may simply be the best student I have come across. Finally, I thank Amy Hager who provided wonderful friendship and the insights of youthful enthusiasms during our walks around the city of Gainesville. Of course, any faults with the work are entirely my own.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>page</u>
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	4
LIST OF TABLES	9
ABSTRACT	10
CHAPTER	
1 INTRODUCTION	11
Organizational Learning	17
Spatial Functionality	19
Five Periods of Early Congressional History	24
Period I: 1783-1789	24
Period II: 1789-1800	26
Period III: 1801-1814	27
Period IV: 1814-1829	28
Period V: 1829-1851	29
Conclusion	30
2 WANDERINGS OF THE CONFEDERATION CONGRESS	31
Primary Documents: Burnett’s Letters of Members of the Continental Congress	32
New Population of Letters	33
Temporal and Geographic Characteristics	34
Sender/Recipient Identities	35
Experiential Learning Narrative	37
Philadelphia Line Mutiny	39
Congressional Life in Princeton, NJ	41
Governing in Two Capitals	46
Functioning in New York	52
Constitutional Convention and Ratification	55
Creating the New Government	57
Conclusion	60
3 ESTABLISHING INSTITUTIONAL STABILITY	63
Congress: Institutional Context of the 1790s	65
Congress and the Seat of Government Policy Narrative	68
New York Provides a New Building	69
Seat of Government Policy Revisited 1790	70
Congress in Philadelphia	72
Washington’s Hobby Horse	74
Seat of Government Policy Revisited 1791	75

	Constructing a Capitol for the Ages	78
	Unexpected Dynamic: The Power of Pestilence	80
	Congress Becomes Involved	81
	Pestilence Returns	85
	Funding the Accommodation of Government	85
	Relocating the Seat of Government.....	88
	Conclusion	91
4	PRAGMATICALLY DEVELOPING A PHYSICAL WORK ENVIRONMENT.....	95
	Political Context	96
	Congress Develops a Physical Work Environment 1800-1814.....	99
	Congress Arrives in Washington, D.C.	99
	Jefferson’s Arrival.....	100
	Discovering Organizational Needs.....	103
	Debating Removal and Relocation.....	104
	House and Senate Cope with Construction Difficulties	109
	House Asserts Control.....	110
	Furnishing the Work Environment.....	112
	Intrusions Upon the Business of the House.....	114
	Administrative Oversight	115
	Complete and Finish.....	117
	More Committee Rooms, Please	119
	End to the Building Process	121
	Conclusion	123
5	PHYSICALLY CONSTRUCTING INSTITUTIONAL AUTONOMY.....	124
	Political Context	125
	Congressional Context.....	127
	Congressional Work Environment 1814-1829	128
	Situating the Destruction and its Aftermath	129
	Debating the Proper Building in which to Hold Debates	135
	Quest for Committee Rooms Continued	139
	Acoustic Problems and Searching for Committee Space	142
	Continuing to Search for Committee Rooms	146
	Distributing the Center Building’s Rooms	149
	Finishing, Furnishing, and Expanding.....	151
	Final Arrangements	156
	Conclusion	158
6	CONGRESSIONAL WORK ENVIRONMENT OF JOHN QUINCY ADAMS	159
	Increasingly Developed American State	162
	Experiencing the Physical Work Environment, 1829-1851	166
	Seeking a Legislative Solution for More Space	177
	Conclusion	180

7	CONCLUSION.....	182
	Research Question	182
	Congressional Work Environment	184
	Antebellum Congress.....	186
	New Directions	188
	Conclusion	189
	REFERENCES	191
	BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH	198

LIST OF TABLES

<u>Table</u>	<u>page</u>
3-1 Congresses: Year and Party Breakdown 1789-1801	66
4-1 Congresses: Year and Party Breakdown 1801-1813	97
5-1 Congresses: Year and Party Breakdown 1813-1829	125
6-1 Congresses: Year and Party Breakdown 1829-1851	161
7-1 Development of Congressional Work Environment: Five Time Periods.....	184

Abstract of Dissertation Presented to the Graduate School
of the University of Florida in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

CONSTRUCTING A PROFESSIONAL LEGISLATURE:
THE PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT OF CONGRESS, 1783-1851

By

Jason S. Kassel

August 2008

Chair: Lawrence C. Dodd
Major: Political Science

Since its inception, the U.S. Congress has grappled with the dilemma of providing a physical work environment in which members can conduct the nation's business. In working to solve the physical workspace problem, Congress continually re-established itself within the framework of the American political system. Each alteration in the physical environment resulted in the U.S. Congress becoming more entrenched within the political system and strengthened its position within the central state authority. In short, each iterative solution to the physical workspace problem resulted in an environment increasingly more conducive to the needs and demands of full-time legislators. The historical perspective provided supports an argument in favor of focusing on the manner in which the physical work environment contributed to the development of the congressional institution.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

The organizational development of the United States Congress from the end of the Revolutionary War to the onset of the Civil War is relatively unexplored in the annals of political science and is often relegated to mere history that has little to teach modern scholars.¹

Contemporary scholars focus on the lack of basic institutional accoutrements such as standing committees, career longevity, stable floor rules, and identifiable leadership positions. These identifiable attributes of a mature institution did not appear in measurably verifiable ways until the end of the Civil War when, according to the vast bulk of congressional scholarship, the modern Congressional institution emerged. This study challenges these basic assumptions.

It is undeniable that the Civil War was a period of intense, immediate expansion of state structures that had a profound impact on the U.S. Congress. It settled the power of the central state over the individual states through an expansion of transportation and communication structures and transformed a simple government into an expansive one. Scholars have noted the impact this had on the U.S. Congress through empirical measures concerning the rise of careerist legislators in late 19th century, growth of patronage-based state around which politics orients,

¹ Exceptions to this broad statement include the following: Gerald Gamm and Kenneth Shepsle, "Emergence of Legislative Institutions: Standing Committees in the House and Senate, 1810-1825," *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 14 (February 1989): 39-66.; Sarah A. Binder, "The partisan basis of procedural choice: Allocating parliamentary rights in the house, 1789-1990," *American Political Science Review*, 90 (March 1996): 8-20.; Sarah A. Binder, "Partisanship and Procedural Choice: Institutional Change in the Early Congress, 1789-1823," *Journal of Politics*, 57 (November 1995): 1093-1118.; Strahan, R., Gunning, M. and Vining, R.L., "From Moderator to Leader: Floor Participation by US. House Speakers, 1789-1841," *Social Science History*, 30 (Spring 2006): 51-74.; Strahan, R., Moscardelli, V.G., Haspel, M. and Wike, R.S., "The Clay Speakership Revisited," *Polity* 32 (Summer 2000): 561-593.; Jenkins, J.A. and Weidenmier, M., "Ideology, Economic Interests, and Congressional Roll-Call Voting: Partisan Instability and Bank of the United States Legislation, 1811-1816," *Public Choice*, 100 (September 1999): 225-243.; Jenkins, J.A., "Property Rights and the Emergence of Standing Committee Dominance in the Nineteenth-Century House," *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 23 (November 1998): 493-519.; Jenkins, J.A. and Sala, B.R., "The Spatial Theory of Voting and the Presidential Election of 1824," *American Journal of Political Science*, 42 (October 1998): 1157-1179.; Carson, J.L. and Engstrom, E.J., "Assessing the Electoral Connection: Evidence from the Early United States," *American Journal of Political Science*, 42 (October 2005): 746-757.; David Brady and Mathew D. McCubbins, ed., *Party, Process, and Political Change in Congress: New Perspectives on the History of Congress* (Stanford: Stanford University Press), 2002.

the rise of seniority, an increase of money into congressional campaigns, and so forth. Focusing almost exclusively on standard careerist and institutional measures, congressional scholars have repeatedly shown that after the Civil War the institution became more regularized.

Without disputing this broadly accepted finding concerning congressional institutionalization the study begins with the premise that the temporal period before the Civil War was important for understanding the congress that later emerged. In place of the single, dramatic moment of change currently put forward by congressional scholars, there is an emphasis on gradual development leading to a two-step process that created a professionalized Congress.

The first step was continually awarding the central state authority with more roles and responsibilities in the daily life, and policymaking activities, of the nation. The second step was the coming of careerist politicians into Congress, a step that occurred after the Civil War as careers at the state and local level became less attractive, as transportation became more available, and as the existing policy making capacities of the professional and institutionalized Congress became clearer to politicians who were considering a national-level career. Scholars have dwelled on this second step, that is, on the coming of a careerist Congress, but have largely ignored the first step. The result is that scholars overemphasize the role of the Civil War and punctuated equilibrium, and underemphasize the ways in which gradual and continual development laid critical foundations for this shift. This explanation implicitly relies on a narrow conception of the congressional internal organization as one channeling career opportunities.

Seeking to complicate the existing picture this study focuses on Congress as an organization, and employs a perspective emphasizing gradual and continual development. This

historical-organizational approach presents a developmental process stressing the growth of a concept labeled ‘Congressional Work Environment,’ the core of which has been identified but analytically ignored by congressional scholars. Assessing the impact of the Congressional Work Environment concept the work relies upon the organizational variables geography and architecture. The argument, in brief, is that since its inception the U.S. Congress has grappled with the dilemma of providing a physical work environment in which its members can conduct the nation’s business. In solving the work environment problem, Congress continually re-established itself within the framework of the American political system. Each work environment alteration resulted in the U.S. Congress becoming more entrenched within the political system and strengthening the central government. In short, each iterative solution to the work environment problem resulted in an environment increasingly more conducive to the needs and demands of full-time legislators. Stated simply, the study develops a sustained argument concluding that the drive for a secure and stable Congressional Work Environment was a consistent motif throughout early congressional history. Properly situating this drive within the temporal period 1783-1851 allows scholars to understand that congressional institutionalization did not appear magically at the end of the Civil War but can be traced back to the founding itself.

The Congressional Work Environment concept emerges from a belief that the U.S. Constitution bounds and structures the institutional development of the U.S. Congress in a path-dependent process.² This, in itself, is a relatively non-controversial statement as can be seen from the works on issues such as bicameralism, apportionment, terms, mode of election, internal

² Peter F. Nardulli, ed., *The Constitution and American Political Development: An Institutional Perspective* (Urbana : University of Illinois Press), 1992.

structure, and legislative powers.³ This body of work, however, neglects to analyze the ‘seat of government’ clause provided in Article I, section 8, clause 17 granting Congress the power to:

exercise exclusive Legislation in all Cases whatsoever, over such District (not exceeding ten Miles square) as may, by Cession of particular States, and the acceptance of Congress, become the Seat of the Government of the United States, and to exercise like Authority over all Places purchased by the Consent of the Legislature of the State in which the Same shall be, for the Erection of Forts, Magazines, Arsenals, dock-Yards, and other needful Buildings;

By inserting this clause within the constitution the founders set in motion geographic, architectural, and ideational innovations that gave physical form to, and provided the permanent structural space that helped foster, the institutionalization of the new government and bounded its evolutionary development. Thus, in contrast to other works this study is based on the belief that geography and architecture provide a means of understanding a core source of institutional development. Without a seat of government it would have been impossible for the Congress to debate, vote, and engage in strategic behavior. Likewise, the seat of government would have been of little value if buildings were not appropriated and constructed. In short, without a geographic location and an architectural structure, the U.S. Congress would not have been able to survive, develop, and become institutionalized.

Emphasizing the gradual and continual development of the Congressional Work Environment through organizational learning enables a re-interpretation of institutional history with the central contention being that the U.S. Congress and the American central state more broadly, learned to govern throughout the entire eighty year period between the end of the Revolutionary War and the onset of the Civil War. As the study demonstrates, a gradual process of learning led to a complex organization that was much more professionalized and

³ Charles Stewart III, “Congress and the Constitutional System,” in The Legislative Branch, eds. Paul J. Quirk and Sarah A. Binder, Oxford University Press, 2001.

institutionalized than congressional scholars fully appreciate. Throughout the historical learning process, Congress increasingly grew to actualize its responsibility to organize itself in an efficient manner that enabled it to do the business of the people in a responsive and attentive manner.

This observation leads to a unique contribution of congressional development demonstrated through empirical qualitative research revealing that the early Congress learned to govern, while also becoming more physically institutionalized. During this period, Congress took advantage of the 10-mile square area granted by the constitution and created, and recreated, a U.S. Capitol Building that would support an ever-evolving conception of Congress. This physical apparatus created a literal architectural structure that symbolized the importance of Congress and institutionalized a professional structuring of roles through physical committee rooms, lobby areas, Senate and House chambers, and space for organizational staff. The study argues that physical creation of a capital city containing a stand alone Congress building, and then the design and continual expansion of that Capitol building throughout the first half of the 19th century, laid the foundations for the rapid expansion of the American state during and after the Civil War.

In presenting this argument, the study adopts a specific meta-narrative of American history that emphasizes dynamics and sequencing.⁴ An awareness of narrative dynamics and sequencing enhances the scientific quality of narrative reconstructions because both force the narrator to clearly identify cause and effect. Narrative dynamics are based on the premise that history is not a static process but contains interacting, and dialectically contentious, relationships that, across time, lead to changes in actors and preference structures. Narrative sequencing is based on the

⁴ Tim Buthe, "Taking Temporality Seriously: Modeling History and the Use of Narrative as Evidence," *American Political Science Review*, 96 (Sep., 2002): 481-493.

identification of conceptually clear causal explanations for temporal shifts. To identify dynamics and sequences, the study uses documents familiar to architectural historians but ignored by political scientists. In pointing to their historical utility, the work extends the historical method more broadly to further understanding of legislative institutionalization.⁵

The narrative of American political development contained herein covers the years 1783-1851 and tells a story of constant territorial expansion, ever-increasing stability of the central government, and a cementing of ties between citizens, incumbents and party machinery. Examining the early period of America's history as a new nation through the lenses of developmental processes that are common to all new nations highlights the unique role physical architecture played in the development of the U.S. Congress. By successfully developing an architecturally mature legislative environment members of Congress were able to enhance the position of the congressional institution within the central state authority. American political development, in other words, went hand in hand with a physical expansion of the congressional work environment. Simply put, legislating itself the act of meeting, deliberating and deciding - required an architecturally bounded strategic space. Without successfully developing this space, American legislators would not have been in a position to develop the American state.

The remainder of this chapter focuses on providing the theoretical and historical background necessary for the reader to understand the arguments concerning the continual and gradual development of the congressional institution. Beginning with a presentation of organizational learning and the concept known as legislative professionalization, the work then discusses the unique adaptation of legislative professionalization and spatial functionality into a new concept referred to as the Congressional Work Environment. Explaining its importance for

⁵ Ibid. p. 68.

understanding the history of congressional development the concept is then used to divide early congressional history into five distinct periods. The chapter concludes with an historical synopsis of each period.

Organizational Learning

This study crucially departs from reigning explanations of congressional development by adopting a theory of organizational learning.⁶ At the outset, the work recognizes that it is one thing to say that organizational learning occurs but another to specify how. This is because the concept of learning is difficult to define and measure.⁷

Broadly speaking, learning can be defined by identifiable empirical properties such as moments when knowledge responds to observation or performance.⁸ Learning can be said to occur whenever beliefs change through feedback, information acquisition, and/or modeling the behavior of others. Learning becomes visible in incremental decisional approaches through "learning by doing" or "trial-and-error" and can be more specifically defined as the detection and correction of errors, and error as any feature of knowledge or of knowing that makes action ineffective.

⁶ The most comprehensive and sustained work on learning within the congressional institution and across its historical development has been Lawrence C. Dodd. In particular, see the following works: Dodd, Lawrence C., "The Cycles of Legislative Change," in Herbert Weisberg, ed., *Political Science: The Science of Politics* (New York: Agathon Press, 1985); Lawrence C. Dodd, "A Theory of Congressional Cycles: Solving the Puzzle of Change," in Lawrence C. Dodd, Leroy N. Rieselbach, and Gerald C. Wright, eds., *Congress and Policy Change* (New York: Agathon Press, 1986); Lawrence C. Dodd, "Political Learning and Political Change: Understanding Political Development Across Time," in Lawrence C. Dodd, and Calvin C. Jillson, eds., *The Dynamics of American Politics: Approaches and Interpretations* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994); Lawrence C. Dodd, "Reenvisioning Congress: Theoretical Perspectives on Congressional Change," in Lawrence C. Dodd and Bruce Ian Oppenheimer, eds. *Congress Reconsidered, 8th edition* (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2005).

⁷ The rest of this section relies heavily upon the essay by Jack S. Levy, "Learning and Foreign Policy: Sweeping a Conceptual Minefield," *International Organization*, Vol. 48 (Spring, 1994): 279-312.

⁸ James H. Lebovic, "How Organizations Learn: U.S. Government Estimates of Foreign Military Spending," *American Journal of Political Science*, 39 (November 1995): 835-863; Chris Argyris, "Single-Loop and Double-Loop Models in Research on Decision Making," *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 21 (September 1976): 363-375.

Moving beyond the broad definition of learning, and moving to learning at the individual level, the work defines learning as change in beliefs or procedures as a result of observation and interpretation of experience. Under this definition, individual level learning is not a passive activity in which events magically generate lessons which actors absorb but is an active process.⁹

There are at least four ways in which learning requires active individual-level cognition processing. First, learning involves active analytic reconstruction of events through assumptions and worldviews.¹⁰ Second, learning involves the active search for information through trial-and-error experimentation.¹¹ Third, learning involves teaching and promoting experiential interpretations to others.¹² Fourth, learning involves actively learning new decision rules, judgmental heuristics, procedures, and skills that facilitate their ability to learn from subsequent experience.¹³

Turning to a definition of organizational learning it is important to note that organizations do not literally learn but they can be said to learn through the collection of individuals who serve and who encode individually learned experiences into organizational routines.¹⁴ Thus, organizational learning involves a multistage process in which environmental feedback leads to

⁹ Jack S. Levy, "Learning and Foreign Policy: Sweeping a Conceptual Minefield," *International Organization*, Vol. 48 (Spring, 1994): 279-312.

¹⁰ Barbara Levitt and James G. March, "Organizational Learning," *Annual Review of Sociology* 14 (1988): 324-334.

¹¹ Sam B. Sitkin, "Learning Through Failure: The Strategy of Small Losses," *Research in Organizational Behavior*, 14 (1992): 231-266.

¹² William W. Jarosz with Joseph S. Nye, Jr., "The Shadow of the Past: Learning from History in National Security Decision Making," in Philip E. Tetlock et al., *Behavior, Society, and International Conflict*.

¹³ Chris Argyris and Donald A Schon, *Organizational Learning* (Reading: Addison-Wesley, 1980).

¹⁴ Jack S. Levy, "Learning and Foreign Policy: Sweeping a Conceptual Minefield," *International Organization*, Vol. 48 (Spring, 1994): 279-312; Levitt and March, "Organizational Learning," p. 320; Argyris and Schon, *Organizational Learning* from Hugh Hecllo, *Modern Social Politics in Britain and Sweden* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1974); Bo Hedberg, "How Organizations Learn and Unlearn," in Paul C. Nystrom and William H. Starbuck, eds., *Handbook of Organizational Design*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981).

individual learning, which leads to individual action to change organizational procedures, which leads to a change in organizational behavior, which leads to further feedback.¹⁵ It is important to emphasize that nothing guarantees organizational learning. All that can be said for certain is that individual learning is necessary but not sufficient for organizational learning.

The study thus defines individual learning as a change in beliefs or procedures as a result of observation and interpretation of experience and defines organizational learning as the institutionalization of individually learned lessons into organizational routines and procedures.¹⁶ Organizational learning is thus understood as being cumulative and specific rather than non-cumulative or general. Furthermore, organizational learning reveals a bounded structure that suggests a process of making choices that are “good enough” rather than the “best.” Learning is a specific process that has clear moments of beginning and end.¹⁷

Within this study the above theories of learning are applied to congressional development through a focus on the increasing functional demands of the U.S. Congress during the period from 1783-1851.

Spatial Functionality

The study relies upon spatial functionality as a component of the concept “legislative professionalization.” Many measures of legislative professionalism focus on the expansion of resources such as pay, the length of the legislative session, legislative operating expenses, and

¹⁵ James G. March and Johan P. Olsen, *Ambiguity and Choice in Organizations* (Bergen: Universitets-forlaget, 1976).

¹⁶ Jack S. Levy, “Learning and Foreign Policy: Sweeping a Conceptual Minefield,” *International Organization*, Vol. 48 (Spring, 1994): 279-312.

¹⁷ James H. Lebovic, “How Organizations Learn: U.S. Government Estimates of Foreign Military Spending,” *American Journal of Political Science*, 39 (November 1995): 835-863.

staff assistance.¹⁸ Each of these is a component of legislative professionalism. Other components of legislative spending that enhance a legislature's professionalism include telephone, stationary and mailing costs, printing services, and office space. As used within this study, legislative professionalization is restricted to the legislature as an organization rather than as a behavioral measure of the members within.¹⁹ This follows the lead of others who distinguish between the effects of institutional professionalism and careerism:

Institutional professionalism refers to the improvement of legislative facilities, the increase in information available to the legislature, the size and variety of legislative staffs, and probably the time spent at legislative work. This concept lends itself to relatively convenient and reasonable measurement procedures. Careerism refers to qualities of legislators themselves, and several elements are pertinent: whether legislators work full-time or part-time at legislative tasks; how they identify themselves; whether they have substantial outside employment; and what their political ambitions are. These qualities are very difficult to measure unambiguously.²⁰

Nelson Polsby was the first to apply the concept of institutionalization to a legislative body.²¹ In his study of the U.S. House of Representatives, he defined an institutionalized

¹⁸ Examples of literature emphasizing legislative professionalization as organizational attributes include the following - Gary F. Moncrief, Joel A. Thompson and Karl T. Kurtz, "The Old Statehouse, It Ain't What It Used to Be," *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 21 (February 1996): 57-72.; Michael B. Berkman, "Legislative Professionalism and the Demand for Groups: The Institutional Context of Interest Population Density," *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 26 (November 2001): 661-679.; Joel A. Thompson, "State Legislative Reform: Another Look, One More Time, Again," *Polity*, 19 (Autumn, 1986): 27-41.; Christopher Z. Mooney, "Citizens, Structures, and Sister States: Influences on State Legislative Professionalism," *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 20 (February 1995): 47-67.

¹⁹ Some examples of legislative professionalization literature emphasizing behavioral attributes and measures include the following - William D. Berry, Michael B. Berkman and Stuart Schneiderman, "Legislative Professionalism and Incumbent Reelection: The Development of Institutional Boundaries," *The American Political Science Review*, 94 (December 2000): 859-874.; Peverill Squire, "Membership Turnover and the Efficient Processing of Legislation," *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 23 (February 1998): 23-32.; Peverill Squire, "Legislative Professionalization and Membership Diversity in State Legislatures," *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 17 (February 1992): 69-79.; Woods N.D., Baranowski M., "Legislative professionalism and influence on state agencies: The effects of resources and careerism," *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 31 (November 2006): 585-609.; Morris P. Fiorina, "Further Evidence of the Partisan Consequences of Legislative Professionalism," *American Journal of Political Science*, 43 (July 1999): 974-977.

²⁰ Alan Rosenthal, "State Legislative Development: Observations from Three Perspectives," *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 21 (May, 1996): 169-198, quote from p. 175.

²¹ Nelson W. Polsby, "The Institutionalization of the U.S. House of Representatives," *The American Political Science Review*, 62 (March 1968): 144-168.

organization as having three major characteristics. First, the organization is relatively well bounded. Second, the organization is relatively complex. Third, the organization relies on universalistic criteria and automatic rather than discretionary methods of conducting internal business.

There is a generally agreed upon understanding of the factors that contribute to organizational professionalization at the level of state legislatures. The most commonly cited characteristics are session length, staffing, and salary. Two additional characteristics are structure and space. Of these five, space has received the least amount of attention. What is surprising about this is that the link between institutionalization and office space was originally recognized by Polsby in his seminal article when he pointed to it as an indicator

of the growth of internal organization is the growth of resources assigned to internal House management, measured in terms of personnel, facilities, and money. Visitors to Washington are not likely to forget the sight of the five large office buildings, three of them belonging to the House, that flank the Capitol. The oldest of these on the House side was built just after the turn of the century, in 1909, when a great many other of our indices show significant changes.”²²

Additionally, the early literature on the professionalization of state legislatures pointed to the renovation of state capitol buildings and the construction of legislative office buildings in the 1970s and 1980s. These studies noted that the spatial improvements enhanced legislative capacity providing space for standing committees, legislative staff, and members. Thus, the concept of spatial functionality has its roots within both the institutionalization and professionalization literatures. However, while the importance of space has been acknowledged as an integral component of enhanced institutional capacity, there has never been an extended analysis focusing on its role. This study makes up for this deficiency with an application of the spatial variable to the historical study of the U.S. Congress.

²² Ibid., p. 158.

In emphasizing spatial functionality and institutional development, I am not approaching the subject *de novo*. From the wanderings of legislative committees in the 18th century to the massive Capitol Complex of today, congressional scholars, reporters, and political actors have all identified geography and architecture as indicators of power or institutional development.²³ What has been missing, however, has been a systemic perspective integrating the myriad anecdotes correlate with the process of institutionalization.

In learning how to solve the physical workspace problem, Congress continually experimented with different solutions. The collective search was for a functionally efficient and capable physical environment that would enable the legislative branch to more effectively carry-out its increasing role within the political system. In short, the legislative branch continually made small, iterative solutions to their physical workspace that ultimately resulted in an environment increasingly more conducive to the needs and demands of legislators engaged in the process of governing.

These small, iterative solutions account for the development of the Congressional Work Environment. An analysis of primary documents reveals a temporal correlation between congressional institutionalization and architectural transformations. Evidence sustains the argument that multiple generations of congressional actors learned to manage the central state while experimenting with how to best construct a bounded physical structure. This learning process enabled them to fulfill the ever-expanding obligations required of the legislative branch in the central government.

²³ See, for example Woodrow Wilson, *Congressional Government: A Study in American Politics* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981), pp. 73-74.; Ralph V. Harlow, *The History of Legislative Methods in the Period Before 1825*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1917), p. 112.

The design and continual expansion of the Capitol Building throughout the first half of the 19th century helped the rapid expansion of the American state prior to the Civil War. The physical institutionalization of Congress came, most critically, through continuous, incremental decisions made between the end of the Revolutionary War and the onset of the Civil War. More than 50 distinct policy decisions across approximately 70 years are identified which gradually constructed a building that supported and sustained standing committees, organizational support staff, and structures conducive to constituent service. In doing so, legislators consciously laid the foundations for an increasingly activist Congress, providing ready-made space to house the great expansion in congressional workload that occurred in the late 19th century.

The conscious development of this physical Congressional Work Environment created a concrete organizational structure that fostered Congress's growing role in the development of the American state. The existence of large areas of such space by the 1850s created ongoing expectations that future Congresses and future members would use this functional space to enhance their professional activities. All of this occurred after the founding, and was firmly solidified in the workings of the congressional branch a decade prior to the Civil War.

Thus, according to this perspective, American political development is intimately bound together with the establishment of a physical working environment. In working to solve the ever-present problem with physical space, Congress continually re-established itself within the framework of the American political system. Each alteration in the Congressional Work Environment resulted in the U.S. Congress becoming more entrenched, and strengthened its position, within the central state authority. In short, each gradual, iterative solution to the physical workspace problem resulted in an environment increasingly more conducive to the needs and demands of full-time legislators.

Five Periods of Early Congressional History

In arguing in favor of this view of congressional development, the early 19th century is divided into five periods of congressional development. In the first, 1783-1789, political actors focused on theoretical issues, and sectional cleavages, that hindered the establishment of a seat of government. During the second, 1789-1800, congressional actors learned to adjust their ideological beliefs, and solved sectional cleavages, in order to establish a functional of a seat of government. In the third, 1801-1814, congressional actors fought with the Executive for administrative control of legislative space. During the fourth period, 1814-1828, members of Congress acted in a manner that revealed they had learned that a mature institution was an absolute necessity for governing an expanding nation. Finally, in the fifth, 1829-1851, ideological concerns that existed in the first and second stages are completely absent from congressional discourse and, in their place, members had established a permanent, mature Congressional Work Environment. Each of these periods is discussed below.

Period I: 1783-1789

During the Revolutionary War, the Continental Congress lacked a stable location and continually relocated. At the war's conclusion, in the midst of all the other significant decisions they faced, the Continental Congress passed the Ordinance of 1784 that established a seat of government in two small villages.²⁴ Multiple factors led to this policy decision but two are most pronounced. First, clear sectional cleavages divided the nascent country into three geographic regions, all of which were vying for the seat of government. Second, elites in the new nation had an attachment to a governing philosophy known as republicanism that emphasized a small,

²⁴ Princeton, New Jersey and Annapolis, Maryland

limited central government. Concerning the seat of government, this governing philosophy held that, “a perambulatory Congress favors republicanism.”

It was the combination of these two factors – sectional cleavage and republican ideology – that led the Continental Congress to pass the Ordinance of 1784. However, once the Congress relocated and began functioning a tension emerged between practical governance and political ideology. Assessing letters written by members of the Continental Congress, three complaints immediately appeared. First, members were extremely disappointed with living and working conditions. Second, and extremely problematic for a country interested in becoming recognized on the world stage, the meager locations were roundly criticized and deemed unworthy in European capitals. Third, routine administrative details become extremely burdensome under these conditions where paperwork had to be packed and shipped from one location to another. Because of these complaints, the perambulatory experiment was shelved and the Continental Congress passed the Ordinance of 1785 which relocated the government to the city of New York.

The experience provided by the Ordinance of 1784 led members to learn that a mobile seat was impractical. The lesson enabled them to discard the ideological biases and sectional divisions which were preventing them from reaching a decision on where the seat of government should be located. By 1789, at the end of this period, the ideological belief that connected a perambulatory seat of government with the correct structuring of the central government had become transformed and a new ideology, expressed in the constitutional requirement for a ten-mile square area (larger than contemporary Paris or London) had been designated as the seat for the new nation.²⁵

²⁵ Article I, section 8, clause 17 – “Congress shall have the power to exercise exclusive legislation in all cases whatsoever, over such District (not exceeding ten miles square) as may, by cession of particular states, and the acceptance of Congress, become the seat of the government of the United States, and to exercise like authority over

It is noteworthy that the members of the Constitutional Convention included the seat of government clause in Article I along with the other powers of Congress. They had learned from experience that a stable location mattered. They learned that an unstable environment meant that members could not be as effective as possible in their positions and were therefore circumscribed in their ability to govern the country. They learned that the congressional administrative organization, small as it was, was unable to manage organizational needs. Seemingly mundane tasks such as keeping track of paperwork and proper filing of legislative proposals become tremendous hurdles when the seat was continually being moved from one location to another. Perhaps equally as important as these organizational lessons, however, was the lesson that a stable seat was required if the new nation was going to be respected by European powers. Thomas Jefferson's experience in Paris revealed the extent to which these nations judged and assessed the nation by the accoutrements provided diplomats. When diplomats returned with stories of nonexistent or paltry surroundings, it mattered for the nation's reputation.

The culmination of these experiences was the establishment of a 10-mile square seat of government that was intended to glorify the nation and symbolize national pride. In doing so, the republican notion of a seat of government captured in the Ordinance of 1784 had become radically transformed and been replaced by the seat of government clause in the U.S. Constitution.

Period II: 1789-1800

After the issue of a locating the central government within a single 10-mile square area was resolved, members of the new U.S. Congress learned the importance of a robust and functional physical building. Through experience, members of Congress learned that their role

all places purchased by the consent of the legislature of the state in which the same shall be, for the erection of forts, magazines, arsenals, dockyards, and other needful buildings.”

in governing the new nation required a physical building conducive to growing needs. Apart from the 1st session of the 1st Congress, the U.S. Congress operated out of the Pennsylvania State House and, by the middle of the decade, began to realize that this arrangement was insufficient for their needs. They required their own building.

Organizational demands enhanced functional requirements. It was during this period that many significant events occurred that scholars of congressional development have pointed to as turning points. Most importantly was the creation of the Committee on Ways and Means in the fourth congress. Throughout the period, two functional lessons emerged. First, space and resources reserved solely for the U.S. Congress were required if select and standing committees were to function properly. Second, members were learning that as constituents came to Philadelphia to interact, and petition, members they lacked space in which this could be done successfully. Members also learned another lesson about the importance of physical environment, specifically the environmental context of the city Philadelphia. The city suffered severe Yellow Fever epidemics throughout the decade and the plagues of 1793, 1797, and 1798 were enough to convince them that they needed to relocate to a new environment.

Period III: 1801-1814

At the beginning of the 2nd session of the 6th Congress, they had physically relocated to the new seat of government, and occupied the still uncompleted Capitol Building. Throughout this period, the U.S. Congress continued to invest in a pragmatic physical working environment that emphasized spatial functionality rather than governing ideology. As early as 1800, before Thomas Jefferson's first term, a conceptual shift had taken place in American political thought that impacted debate on the importance of a permanent, stable seat of government. During Jefferson's terms - as the country became more expansive, populous, wealthy, and stable within the international community - the theoretical understanding of the seat of government shifted as

well. By 1814, the political ideology that led to the Ordinance of 1784 no longer corresponded with governing needs and, by the end of this period, philosophical debates concerning the idea of a seat of government had been pragmatically reconsidered.

The entire period was one of learning from experience that physical space was necessary if the Legislative Branch was going to play a role in the continuously expanding nation created by Jefferson. Congress was becoming more organizationally structured and its internal operations were becoming more routine, identifiable, and predictable. There was a growth in the number of standing committees and a clear move away from select committees. Likewise party leadership began to become more visible. As an organization, the congress began to benefit from the development of administrative support that functioned as an extended arm of executive-legislative relations.

Overall, the time period of 1801-1814 witnessed the first clear emergence of a robust Congressional Work Environment within a functionally adept physical location. Experience in governing had taught members of Congress that governing required an expansive physical structure capable of meeting functional needs.

Period IV: 1814-1829

The fourth period was one of rebuilding and expansive growth during which time the Congressional Work Environment underwent radical alterations. The physical destruction of the Capitol Building in 1814 created organizational hindrances that needed to be solved. Over the course of 15 years four stages of rebuilding can be identified. The first occurred in the immediate aftermath of the destruction when solutions were put forward. After this, Congress became focused on the issue of accommodating the central government with decisions concerning form, function, and administrative control. During the third stage, the Congressional Work Environment regained stability. Finally, policy questions revolved around finishing,

furnishing, and enlarging the physical structure. It is important to point out that though decisions were reached at each of the stages, few decisions finalized issues. Most carried over so that problems 'solved' at one time were dilemmas at another.

The period between the end of the war and the beginning of the presidency of Andrew Jackson was recognized, by contemporaries, as one of unimaginable growth and expansion. As the country continued to develop in ways unforeseen by earlier generations, the congressional institution likewise underwent internal transformation. Standing committees continued to become the norm. Political parties became ever more entrenched in the political process and were extremely visible in the process of congressional governance. Congressional party caucuses were increasingly being used to choose and elect presidential candidates. Geographically, the country underwent a tremendous expansion that was coupled with a population boom. With the increase in numbers the House of Representatives underwent a structural demand for more space in which they could be accommodated.

The congressional experience during this period cemented the lesson that functionality was of paramount importance in a physical work environment. With a continual process of learning, members created a Congressional Work Environment that met these expanding needs.

Period V: 1829-1851

The fifth period reveals a mature professionalized Congressional Work Environment with organizational and individual Congressional Work Spaces in existence within the broader Environment. By this time, any remnant of the political philosophy that led to the Ordinance of 1784 had disappeared completely from political discourse. It was not only an accepted reality that the Congress needed a functional environment in which to work, it was inconceivable that it could be any other way. By the end of the period, the Congress demanded a functionally distinct

environment by appropriating money for a Capitol Expansion that would more than double the physical space.

Conclusion

In the chapters that follow, these five periods are expanded in great detail and reveal the process through which political actors learned about the importance of a physical working environment. In doing so, the work provides an empirically detailed history of the development of a Congressional Work Environment, revealing the importance it occupied in the early republic. Using primary documents, the work shows the conscious nature of these developments and the way in which members of the early congresses actively sought out the construction and enhancement of their physical work environment so that they could better govern the growing nation. In doing so, they developed a legislative institution that acquired professional characteristics and laid the groundwork for future institutionalization in the period following the Civil War.

CHAPTER 2 WANDERINGS OF THE CONFEDERATION CONGRESS

This chapter addresses the specific historical question, “Why did the Founding Fathers include Article I, section 8, clause 17 (the seat of government clause) in the U.S. Constitution?”

This clause reads:

Congress shall have the power to exercise exclusive legislation in all cases whatsoever, over such District (not exceeding ten miles square) as may, by cession of particular states, and the acceptance of Congress, become the seat of the government of the United States, and to exercise like authority over all places purchased by the consent of the legislature of the state in which the same shall be, for the erection of forts, magazines, arsenals, dockyards, and other needful buildings.

The question is a historical puzzle when one considers that the Articles of Confederation made no mention of a seat of government and that the Continental Congress resettled in eight different locations from 1774-1788. The broader question thus becomes, “To what extent was the seat of government clause connected to the transformation that culminated in the demise of the Articles of Confederation and the establishment of the U.S. Constitution?”

The chapter accomplishes three tasks. First, it establishes a foundational historical narrative linking the legislative branch with the question of a seat of government. Second, it shows how the question of a seat of government was connected to a broader ideological concern about the nature of the early American state. Third, it reveals how pragmatic concerns about the future of the state's development worked against this ideological foundation. As a whole, the chapter reveals that, during the period between the end of the Revolutionary War and the ratification of the U.S. Constitution, political elites learned that a stable and functionally capable seat of government was a necessary component of a future central government. This argument relies on personal letters members of the Continental Congress wrote one another. These primary documents provide insights that are fleshed out through the use of an experiential learning paradigm.

Throughout the policy debate, delegates to the Continental Congress learned the following three lessons. First, the seat of government policy was connected to institutional respect. It was absolutely necessary for the Congress to have a stable and secure seat of government, if they were going to be respected at home and in Europe. Second, functional capacity was intimately bound with geographic stability and architectural efficiency. If the federal government was going to become a capable organ of governance, it required a stable institutional environment conducive to organizational efficiency. Third, sectional strategizing prevented an easy solution. All of the regions engaged in intense strategic behavior and used the seat of government policy to manipulate the agenda and impede governing decisions.

The experiential learning narrative can be summarized in the following manner. Eighteenth century sectionalism and organizational design induced strategic behavior that led to cycling and non-binding policy decisions. Preferences were altered incrementally across time as the three regional actors began to develop a unified preference from strengthening the federal government. As they attempted to govern from the small village locations of Princeton, Trenton and Annapolis, the members learned that the federal government required a level of functional capacity that necessitated, at a minimum, locating themselves within a medium-sized seaboard city.

Primary Documents: Burnett's Letters of Members of the Continental Congress

This finding is substantiated through an original analysis of letters written by members of the Continental Congress between 1783 and 1789. The theory of experiential learning takes ideas seriously and letters, understood as receptacles of ideas, are excellent sources of data. They provide a unique multi-layered dynamic perspective of “collective epistemologies” and “phased and segmented transformations of paradigms” during a period of institutional crisis and

reform.¹ As such, the letters offer kaleidoscopic insights into the metaphorical language of the 18th politics and are of enormous value to social scientists.

The letters come from volumes VII and VIII of Edmund Burnett's eight-volume *Letters of Members of the Continental Congress*.² An analysis of footnotes and references in the major historical texts on the Continental Congress revealed extensive use of these letters. Since the first volume was published in the 1920s, reviewers have praised Burnett's volumes for accuracy and presentation.³ For nearly 70 years, scholars on the Continental Congress have relied on them. In short, they have been vetted in the marketplace of ideas and are accepted as valid pieces of historical 'reality.'

New Population of Letters

The letters contained in Burnett's volumes are not specific to the seat of government policy. It was therefore necessary to first read through all of the letters contained in the two volumes (N=1733) to see which, if any, contained an explicit or implicit conceptual reference to the seat of government policy. In identifying letters that discussed the seat of government policy, letters were excluded that simply referenced trips to and from the seat of government, as well as those that used the geographic location of the seat of government simply to add context. This coding scheme produced a new, targeted population of 317 letters (18% of the original), all of which contained an implicit or explicit conceptual reference to the policy of a seat of

¹ Lawrence C. Dodd, "Re-Envisioning Congress: Theoretical Perspectives on Congressional Change – 2004," in Lawrence C. Dodd, Bruce I. Oppenheimer, eds., *Congress Reconsidered* 8th edition, (Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 2005).

² Edmund C. Burnett, ed., *Letters of Members of the Continental Congress*, (Washington, D.C.: The Carnegie institution of Washington, 1921-36).

³ Evarts B. Greene, "Review of Letters of Members of the Continental Congress by Edmund C. Burnett," *The American Historical Review*, 42 (July 1937): 789-792; Samuel E. Morison, "Review of Letters of Members of the Continental Congress by Edmund C. Burnett," *The New England Quarterly*, 12 (March 1939): 139-142; H. Hale Bellot, "Review of Letters of Members of the Continental Congress by Edmund C. Burnett," *The English Historical Review*, 53 (January 1938): 144-147.

government. The findings and inferences contained within this chapter are limited to this new population. These 317 letters are not a ‘sample population’ used to make larger generalizations about the contents of the entire eight-volume set of letters but are a systematically refined population that provides the foundations for assessing experiential learning on the seat of government policy.

Temporal and Geographic Characteristics

The population of letters has the following temporal and geographic characteristics. The letters are temporally spread over six years, but are significantly biased toward the first year. Over forty percent of the letters come from this year. If this were a statistical study, this ‘problem’ would require weighted regressions and other elaborate computational techniques in order to avoid inferential mistakes. As a substantive qualitative study, though, the ‘1783 bias’ is not a problem but enhances my confidence in the population’s utility. The distribution accords with the standard understanding of the period. There was a lot of activity in 1783 when the Congress wandered from one location to another until it settled in New York in 1785. Then, because it remained stationary in New York, a lull occurred until the Constitutional Convention when the issue reemerged. The issue remained on the agenda until the Congress’ final days. The uneven distribution of letters thus correlates with historical accounts, increasing my confidence in the population’s validity. The two-stage model of experiential learning assumes that letters written during the second stage will contain references to a lesson from the first stage. In other words, one test of the theory’s validity is whether the letters from 1787-1788 contain remarks about experiences from 1783-1786. To the extent that these historical references are made, it will enhance our ability to make inferences using the experiential learning model.

The letters are distributed across all thirteen states, but are heavily biased toward Virginia. The data population clearly contains a ‘Virginia bias.’ Politicians from this state received more

than a third of the letters. The two large states of Pennsylvania and Massachusetts combined make up less than a quarter of the population. States such as Georgia and South Carolina are barely represented at all. Thus, this population is not a representative sample of the opinions all members of the Continental Congress and we need to be careful when making inferences. The theory driving this study is not interested in aggregate findings. The theory argues that policy entrepreneurs emerge and disseminate their ideas. According to all historical accounts of the period, the Virginians were the most active politicians in seeking a solution to the seat of government policy. Any historical data that did not have a 'Virginia bias' would therefore be suspect. As the same time, it is important to be careful about drawing negative conclusions. That is, simply because an overwhelming number of letters do not exist from North Carolina, that doesn't mean we can infer that North Carolina politicians were not interested in the seat of government policy.

One way to enhance our inferential ability is to view the data by geographic region. When looked at in this way, the data is more evenly distributed and there appears to be enough data to make substantive observations about the New England and Middle Atlantic regions. The 'Virginia bias' does create a 'Southern bias,' but when Virginia is removed the direction of the 'Southern bias' changes. That is, without Virginia the Southern region is the least represented.

Sender/Recipient Identities

In addition to these temporal and geographic characteristics, the letters can also be distinguished through the identity of the sender and recipient. The letters contain three conceptually distinct sender identities - individuals, state delegations, and organizational members of the Continental Congress. The letters also contain three conceptually distinct recipient identities - individuals, state leaders, and members of the federal government. As a

letter always contains both identities, the data needs to be viewed in terms of sender/recipient relationships.

Letters sent by state delegations are identified by authors such as, "The Virginia Delegates," or, "The Massachusetts Delegation." Because they are addressed from a collection of individuals, the inference is that they contain state-level preferences rather than individual-level. Of particular interest are the letters written from the state delegations and sent to the state leaders (N=39) which are identified them as an expression of 'state-level belief' and allows for state-level generalizations. Letters sent by organizational members of the Continental Congress (N=40) are identified as originating from, "The President of Congress," or, "The Secretary of Congress" and are expressions of 'organizational-level belief' which enable generalizations about organizational responses. Regarding letters sent and received by individuals, a 'Madison bias' exists with James Madison having sent and received a combined 54 letters. Within the recipient list Edmund Randolph (N=19) and George Washington (N=19) were the only other individuals to enter double digits.

These characteristics provide confidence on two levels. First, the population conforms to my understanding of the historical process as described in the literature. Second, all of the unequal distributions, which would be so damaging to a statistical analysis, are helpful for my qualitative study. There is ample evidence pointing to the roles of the Virginians, and particularly Madison, Washington and Jefferson, in promoting a resolution to the seat of government policy. That is, they are routinely identified as policy entrepreneurs. Not only on the seat of government policy, but on all policies connected to the broader transformation from the Articles of Confederation to the U.S. Constitution. Thus, the population of letters provides ample evidence for assessing a narrative based on two-stage experiential learning.

Experiential Learning Narrative

Throughout the period, the Continental Congress voted multiple times on moving the seat of government to a new location. Sectional differences made the issue difficult to resolve. The policy debate took place within a broad ‘voting game’ consisting of three regional actors – New England, Middle and Southern states – and a small number of independent states.⁴ The coalitions had the following preferences. The Middle States coalition, containing Philadelphia, represented the status quo. The New England States coalition was geographically ineligible as a host for the capital, a position that made them “particularly sensitive” to the power and influence the capital would bring.⁵ This coalition tended to be most cohesive in opposition to locating the government in the city of Philadelphia. Finally, the Southern States coalition followed a strategy of obstructionism. They wanted a residence chosen only when they could insure its location in the South. Each region knew keenly the value of residing close enough and all three believed proximity to the seat of government meant access to federal officials and offices as well as the opportunity to take quick advantage of and influence information, legislation, contracts and jobs and that the federal residence promised to enhance greatly the commercial and political influence of the state and section in which it was located.

⁴ H. James Henderson, *Party politics in the Continental Congress*, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1974); Joseph L. Davis, *Sectionalism in American politics, 1774-1787*, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1977); Calvin C. Jillson and Rick K. Wilson, *Congressional Dynamics: Structure, Coordination, and Choice in the First American Congress, 1774-1789*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994); Jack N. Rakove, *The Beginnings of National Politics: An Interpretive History of the Continental Congress* 1st edition, (New York: Random House, 1979).

⁵ Lawrence Delbert Cress, “Whither Columbia? Congressional Residence and the Politics of the New Nation, 1776 to 1787,” *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 32 (October 1975): 581-600; Kenneth R. Bowling, *The Creation of Washington, D.C.: The Idea and Location of the American Capital*, (Fairfax: George Mason University Press, 1991).

In addition to these material preferences, the three regions developed distinct sectional political cultures that were held together through a common republican ideology.⁶ Three aspects of republicanism impacted the seat of government policy debate.⁷ The first concerned attitudes toward commercial cities. Republicanism held that the legislature should operate in a frugal environment. American leaders looked at existing seats of government such as London and Paris, and saw sites of political and moral degeneracy. The second concerned mobility. It was widely believed, particularly among northern and New England elites, that a republican form of government required a mobile capital. New Englanders, who traced their political ancestry to the Radical Whigs of Augustine England, believed stationary governments were corrupt and that mobility would prevent the development of systems of patronage. Continuous travel, they argued, would lead to small bureaucracies, staffed by men devoted to the public good, not to private interests. Finally, the search for a geographic location, cast in terms of geographic centrality, rested on the conviction that the capital had to be as near and as easily accessible through central location to the citizens as possible. The greatest possible centrality would preserve the electorate's ability to watch over its representatives, improve representation, and limit corruption.

⁶ Robert E. Shalhope, "Republicanism and Early American Historiography," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 39 (April 1982): 334-356.

⁷ Kenneth R. Bowling, *The Creation of Washington, D.C.: The Idea and Location of the American Capital*, (Fairfax: George Mason University Press, 1991); Rosemarie Zagari, "Representation and the Removal of State Capitals, 1776-1812," *The Journal of American History*, 74 (March 1988): 1239-1256.

Philadelphia Line Mutiny

Beginning the narrative with the experience known as the Philadelphia Line Mutiny.⁸ In 1783, at the end of the War of Independence, four hundred drunken Philadelphia Line soldiers surrounded the Pennsylvania State House where Congress met, and threatened Congress with violence unless they received back pay. Fearing for their safety, members of Congress requested assistance from the Pennsylvania Executive and Council of the State. Both resisted and told Congress that unless the mutineers made Congress a prisoner the state militia would not be provided. Congress reacted by simultaneously calling on George Washington to march into Philadelphia to protect Congress and by relocating to Princeton, New Jersey.

The dominant interpretation of this event by members of Congress appears to have been the need for institutional respect. The need for institutional respect was based on a concern that the mutiny would have a negative impact on the nation's reputation, particularly among Europeans. They thought the Mutiny "might have in ill appearance in Europe"⁹ and that returning to Philadelphia would "obviate suspicions abroad of any dissatisfaction in the mass of so important a state to the federal government."¹⁰ The Governor of Connecticut received notice that "it will soon be of very little consequence where Congress go, if they are not made respectable as well as responsible."¹¹ Members thought the "mutinous insult"¹² was an

⁸ Though references are made to the event in later letters, I bound the 'experience' with the letters from June 21-July 17, 1783, beginning with a letter from the President of Congress to George Washington announcing the mutiny. It ends with a letter from James Madison to Thomas Jefferson interpreting the event. Letter 231 (June 24, 1783) is the proclamation made by the President of Congress and sent to the Several States announcing the move from Philadelphia to Princeton. Letter 252 (July 5, 1783) is an interpretive account sent by the President of Congress to George Washington. Letter 262 (July 15, 1783) is a dry journalistic version sent by the President of Congress to the Ministers Plenipotentiary at Paris.

⁹ Edmund C. Burnett, ed., *Letters of Members of the Continental Congress Volume 7*, (Washington, D.C.: The Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1921-36), Letter 240.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, Letters 259, 268.

¹¹ *Ibid*, Letter 261.

“outrageous insult”¹³ that had “grossly insulted”¹⁴ the central government. They were appalled at the “scandalous neglect of the Executive of Pennsylvania”¹⁵ which they found “either too timid or undecisive”¹⁶ “to the last degree weak and disgusting”¹⁷ “produced nothing but doubts”¹⁸ and “not very pleasing to the brave and virtuous parts of the community.”¹⁹

While the need for institutional respect was the dominant interpretation, there is evidence of rival interpretations. Pennsylvanians attempted to spread the interpretation that “no insult or mischief was intended against Congress”²⁰ but that the mutineers circled the State House only to protest the policies of the Pennsylvania Council which was sitting at the time. The evidence offered in support of this interpretation was that the mutineers acted on a Saturday, when the Council normally sat and Congress did not. Pennsylvanians were also spreading the interpretation that Alexander Hamilton used the mutiny as pretext to remove Congress from Philadelphia.²¹ Pennsylvanians actively promoted these rival interpretations. James Madison reported that Philadelphia’s citizens “disavow the idea that they were unwilling to take arms in

¹² Ibid, Letter 244.

¹³ Ibid, Letter 253.

¹⁴ Ibid, Letter 243.

¹⁵ Ibid, Letter 238.

¹⁶ Ibid, Letter 234.

¹⁷ Ibid, Letter 239.

¹⁸ Ibid, Letter 244.

¹⁹ Ibid, Letter 247.

²⁰ Ibid, Letter 237.

²¹ Ibid, Letter 254.

defense of Congress”²² “and are uniting in an address rehearsing the proofs which they [have] given of attachment to the federal authority, professing a continuance of that attachment”²³ “and declaring their readiness to support the dignity and privileges of Congress.”²⁴ In spite of these active attempts to reinterpret the experience, the dominant interpretation of the Philadelphia Line Mutiny experience remained that the Executive of Pennsylvania failed to protect the Continental Congress and led to an overwhelming sense of wounded institutional pride.

Congressional Life in Princeton, NJ

Congress fled the commercial city of Philadelphia to the village of Princeton.²⁵ The experience began in fear, anger and wounded institutional pride. They immediately found the village unsuitable as a national capital and began debating a new location. Regional jealousies prevented an immediate solution. The letters reveal an evolving experience defined by sectional strategizing, concerns about functional capacity, and the new nation’s reputation among Europeans.

Intense sectional strategizing marked the congressional experience at Princeton. The New Englanders considered the Princeton experience a “very happy affair for America” primarily because they believed it weakened the political power of Philadelphia politicians.²⁶ They were determined to prevent Congress from returning to Philadelphia,²⁷ and believed New Jersey an

²² Ibid, Letter 259.

²³ Ibid, Letter 268.

²⁴ Ibid, Letter 264.

²⁵ The event is bounded within the 115 letters from June 27-November 11, 1783.

²⁶ Ibid, Letters 300, 329.

²⁷ Ibid, Letter 317.

ideal location.²⁸ They also thought “those who wish a return to Philadelphia will continue to obstruct business here as much as may be in their power.”²⁹ Pennsylvania wanted Congress to adjourn to Philadelphia,³⁰ New York to New York City,³¹ and Maryland to Annapolis.³² Southerners were united in three beliefs. They opposed returning to Philadelphia,³³ believed the seat of government should be situated according to geographic centrality,³⁴ and that they were being bullied by the New England and Middle states.³⁵ They also expressed the most ‘continental’ perspective, emphasizing that “the attention and of course the trade of Europe must ever be drawn in a particular manner to that part of empire where Congress resides.”³⁶ They also focused on functional capacity, believing that the “convenience of the delegates [and] the general

²⁸ Ibid, Letters 329, 336.

²⁹ Ibid, Letters 336, 348.

³⁰ The Pennsylvania perspective is contained in a multi-layered motion by Richard Peters to adjourn to Philadelphia (letter 392). The move to Princeton was “avowedly for a temporary purpose.” Princeton contained, “no conveniences as to render it an eligible place of residence.” The continued residence away from Philadelphia was causing, “great uneasiness to the government and citizens of Pennsylvania.” The decision to move away from Philadelphia was, “produced by temporary inconveniences and dictated by events sudden in their rise and short in their duration.” Princeton lacked buildings, “for the accommodation of Congress, foreign ministers and the officers in the civil departments who are now separated from Congress by the inconveniences attending their present situation to the great injury of the public business.” Furthermore, Philadelphia had recently, “presented to Congress a most respectful and affectionate address, wherein they have given solemn assurances ‘that Congress may repose the utmost confidence in its inhabitants not only to prevent any circumstances but to aid in all measures to support the national honor and dignity.’ Thus, “in the view of the people both of America and Europe,” a residence in Philadelphia, “would be more consonant with the honor and respectability of Congress.”

³¹ Letter 400 contains the perspective of disappointed New Yorkers who informed their Governor, “We have used our endeavors to draw the attention of Congress to the state of New York agreeably to the views of the legislature expressed in their resolves at their last meeting, but we found them vain.” They also reported that, “Princeton is found on experience to be incapable of accommodating Congress alone exclusive of our public officers and foreign ministers.”

³² Ibid, Letters 296, 303, 393, 439.

³³ Ibid, Letters 301, 325, 333, 334, 403.

³⁴ Ibid, Letters 284, 418.

³⁵ Ibid, Letter 436.

³⁶ Ibid, Letter 418.

convenience to government in their transaction of business with Congress” should be considered when choosing a seat.³⁷

Strategic behavior was responsible for the seat of government policy expanding into the two policies of temporary and permanent seats.³⁸ Some states were strategically manipulating the voting process to detain Congress in Princeton, while others were avoiding Princeton to force Congress to return to Philadelphia.³⁹ Committees were not conducting their business.⁴⁰ The policy was used strategically to prevent the election of a President, prevent adjourning, and prevent the appointment of a Minister for Foreign Affairs.⁴¹

The lessons of functional capacity were basic, almost trivial. It was widely agreed that the “obscure village” was “too small for our accommodation.”⁴² James Madison complained of being “put into one bed in a room not more than ten feet square” with another member.⁴³ The President of Congress wrote a terse letter about the “extremely disagreeable” situation his family was in because he was forced to maintain two households, one in Philadelphia and one in Princeton.⁴⁴ When George Washington arrived, there was a scramble to locate a suitable house for his use.⁴⁵ The Secretary of Congress wrote of the difficulties of maintaining records and

³⁷ Ibid, Letter 444.

³⁸ Ibid, Letter 268.

³⁹ Ibid, Letter 42.

⁴⁰ Ibid, Letter 437.

⁴¹ Ibid, Letters 321, 423, 434, 438.

⁴² Ibid, Letters 243, 394, 418, 423.

⁴³ Ibid, Letter 341.

⁴⁴ Ibid, Letter 269.

⁴⁵ Ibid, Letter 311.

papers “in the present confusion” and of the “derangements produced in public offices by our removal to this place.”⁴⁶ A broad agreement was reached concluding “we cannot stay here and indeed that a such a place cannot accommodate us without the necessary buildings.”⁴⁷

Furthermore, “in this village the public business can neither be conveniently done, the members of Congress decently provided for, nor those connected with Congress provided for at all.”⁴⁸

An argument emerged that Princeton was unable accommodate foreign ambassadors.⁴⁹ This became a genuine issue when the Ambassador from the Netherlands arrived. It was immediately apparent that the ambassador would require “proper accommodations for him and his suite while attending on Congress.”⁵⁰ The President of Congress informed the ambassador that he was “greatly mortified, that our present circumstances in a small country village prevent us giving you a reception more agreeable to our wishes.”⁵¹ The ambassador was “rather disgusted”⁵² and “not a little disappointed at his reception”⁵³ which was an “embarrassment to the representatives of a great nation.”⁵⁴

Uncertainty permeated all aspects of the Princeton experience. At the most basic level, it was unclear how long the Congress would remain in Princeton or whether they would return to

⁴⁶ Ibid, Letters 280, 307.

⁴⁷ Ibid, Letter 377.

⁴⁸ Ibid, Letter 363.

⁴⁹ Ibid, Letter 331.

⁵⁰ Ibid, Letter 421.

⁵¹ Ibid, Letter 419.

⁵² Ibid, Letter 426.

⁵³ Ibid, Letter 441.

⁵⁴ Ibid, Letter 435.

Philadelphia.⁵⁵ Members complained of their “erratic residence”⁵⁶ that it was impossible to “guess what Congress will determine about their residence.”⁵⁷ They were concerned and frustrated because Princeton “cannot accommodate [Congress] in the winter season.”⁵⁸

Within this context, the Congress passed the Ordinance of 1784 establishing two temporary residences of Congress at Annapolis and Trenton for equal periods of a half or full year in each place until buildings at the permanent sites were ready for occupation. Two capitals, Gerry and his New England advocates argued, meant greater obstacles to a consolidation of political and economic influence even if they led to delay and difficulty in transacting business. The purpose of the plan was not to make the federal government more accessible but to free the government from the pressures of particular local interests. New Englanders, who traced their political ancestry to the Radical Whigs of Augustine England, believed stationary governments were corrupt and that mobility would prevent the development of systems of patronage. Continuous travel, they argued, would lead to small bureaucracies, staffed by men devoted to the commonweal, not to their private purses. The congressional workload would also, of necessity, be small. Opposed to this ideational interpretation, a regional interpretation emerged that the two-capitals proposal occurred because the New England states were averse to returning to Philadelphia, and that the South “maneuvered in such a manner as to take in the [New Englanders] so completely, as to get them (Mr. Gerry at their head) to conform entirely to their views.”⁵⁹

⁵⁵ Ibid, Letters 267, 299, 243.

⁵⁶ Ibid, Letter 410.

⁵⁷ Ibid, Letters 285, 304.

⁵⁸ Ibid, Letter 390.

⁵⁹ Ibid, Letters 396, 401, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414.

The period ended in as much uncertainty as it began. There was a widespread belief that the states would not provide money to build two capitals.⁶⁰ The resolution, therefore, was understood as a non-binding decision that could be altered at a later date.

Governing in Two Capitals

When Congress functioned as a central government in two capitals, policy interpretations exemplified distinct sectional ideologies.⁶¹ The overarching organizational lesson was that functional capacity required a robust geographic environment. In fact, when Congress reconvened in Trenton it had already been decided that the two-capital solution would not work. Congress passed a \$100,000 appropriation for the erection of federal buildings and, because of opposition to Philadelphia, decided to move to New York as a temporary seat. Members from different regions understood the two-capitals experience differently. The South and Middle Atlantic states were supportive a capable, functionally strong federal government and opposed governing from small villages. New England states, emphasizing the lack of modern amenities, believed small villages were more conducive to a republican form of government. In addition to sharing a Middle Atlantic concern with functional capacity, Southern states were concerned about institutional respect from European nations.

To strengthen the federal government, Virginians such as Thomas Jefferson and James Madison wanted Congress to adjourn and meet as the Committee of the States in Philadelphia. The New England states were absolutely opposed to returning to Philadelphia. The question of geographic location aggravated sectional tensions, and resulting in a weak and ineffective

⁶⁰ Ibid, Letter 414.

⁶¹ The experience is bounded within the 68 letters dated from December 7, 1783 – January 1, 1785.

Committee of the States. Within an environment of widespread hostility toward Philadelphia, a coalition of Southern and Middle Atlantic States supported a temporary relocation to New York.

Letters from New England members reveal opposition to the federal government and a strategic use of the seat of government policy to hinder its effectiveness. The New England states interpreted the Philadelphia Line Mutiny as a positive event that removed Congress from Philadelphia's "systems of intrigue and influence"⁶² and reduced the power of Robert Morris.⁶³ The regional opinion was that "nothing but drawn bayonets ever did drive Congress out of Philadelphia and there [is] no sufficient reason to believe that anything else ever would."⁶⁴ The region supported the two-capital solution believing it had a positive impact by rendering the federal government "less energetic."⁶⁵ Furthermore, their ideological understanding of republicanism led them to believe that "a perambulatory Congress favors republicanism – a permanent one tends to concentrate power, aristocracy and monarchy."⁶⁶ Small villages were "best for transacting public business"⁶⁷ because they were "altogether free from external influences."⁶⁸ This led representatives from the region to support "a plan...to keep [Congress] out of any large city forever."⁶⁹ They believed "that either Boston, New York, Philadelphia, or any other populous city, would be an improper place for Congress to sit in, because, in all such

⁶² Ibid, Letters 453, 529.

⁶³ Ibid, Letter 504.

⁶⁴ Ibid, Letters 465, 504.

⁶⁵ Ibid, Letter 504.

⁶⁶ Ibid, Letter 465.

⁶⁷ Ibid, Letter 569.

⁶⁸ Ibid, Letter 529.

⁶⁹ Ibid, Letter 465.

places, there are plentiful materials for setting in motion a thousand hidden and secret springs, which, carefully arranged and combined, will produce astonishing effects...Cities are not calculated to form the best political dispositions.”⁷⁰ In addition to their ideological opposition to cities, they also opposed a Southern climate believing “the summers there will either destroy or debilitate our best constitution.”⁷¹ When the question of adjournment emerged, the New England states used the seat of government policy strategically.⁷² They supported moving the public records to Trenton “to meet Congress on the day they shall open their session there.”⁷³ They were aware that this would be disruptive to the newly called Committee of the States but, as a region, they were “indifferent” about the Committee’s activities.⁷⁴ The policy of relocating to New York appears uncontroversial.⁷⁵

Of the three regions, the Middle Atlantic States are represented with the fewest letters. In general, they had a positive interpretation of village life, and the regional attitude is best characterized as diligent and businesslike toward existing circumstances.⁷⁶ They made only casual references to the question of adjourning, and the creation of a Committee of the States.⁷⁷ When they arrived in Annapolis the lack of a working quorum led them to relocate to the more

⁷⁰ Ibid, Letter 504.

⁷¹ Ibid, Letters 504, 453.

⁷² Ibid, Letters 569, 582, 586, 603, 619, 630, 655.

⁷³ Ibid, Letter 623.

⁷⁴ Ibid, Letter 627.

⁷⁵ Ibid, Letter 740.

⁷⁶ Ibid, Letters 583, 544, 639.

⁷⁷ Ibid, Letters 544, 565, 583, 594, 595.

cosmopolitan Philadelphia, transforming it into the de facto seat of government.⁷⁸ They believed that “a person must be very blind” if they could not see that the New Englanders, opposed to the Committee, were supporting adjourning the public records to Trenton in order to “render the institution useless.”⁷⁹ The policy of relocating to New York appears as a conscious, and strategic, policy decision. The failure of the Committee combined with hostility toward Philadelphia created a position that led them to conclude they “must either have passed the winter in Trenton or consent to go to New York – the choice of course was not difficult...Our residing northerly will prove advantages by uniting all the states to the Southward of Connecticut together.”⁸⁰

Letters from Southerners, and particularly the Virginians, contain the most evidence of strategic thinking. The Virginians held both a long-term strategic belief that westward expansion would inevitably lead to the seat of government being placed in Georgetown, and a short-term strategic belief that continuously relocating the seat weakened the Southern position.⁸¹ Of all the regions, they expressed the most concern with institutional respect and particularly the opinions of European states.⁸² Jefferson believed the Committee of the States was “obliged to go immediately to Philadelphia, to examine the offices and of course they will set there till the meeting in November.”⁸³ When the New England states opposed relocating to Philadelphia as

⁷⁸ Ibid, Letter 635.

⁷⁹ Ibid, Letter 666.

⁸⁰ Ibid, Letter 745.

⁸¹ Ibid, Letters 598, 452.

⁸² Ibid, Letters 455, 600.

⁸³ Ibid, Letters 519, 690.

the Committee, Jefferson interpreted this as “leaving a government without a head.”⁸⁴ Within this context, the Southerners supported a committee “appointed to view the country around Georgetown.”⁸⁵ Some Virginians suggested they created the committee strategically in order to “turn the view of the Continent to that place as the spot were Congress may perhaps ultimately fix.”⁸⁶ The committee found in favor “of the heights near Georgetown on the Maryland shore, as they possessed, in our opinion, in a greater degree, the advantages of an healthy situation, security from danger in time of war, and a better prospect of the water and country around.”⁸⁷ Southerners treated the question of adjourning to Trenton as a temporary measure of uncertain length.⁸⁸ Trenton was unworkable, they thought, because “the several delegations exclusive of the officers of Congress and the foreign ministers could not obtain tolerable accommodations there.”⁸⁹ Their support for a more capable federal government, combined with their long-term belief in westward expansion, led them to support the decision to temporarily move to New York while the permanent buildings were being constructed.⁹⁰

Letters written by organizational entities such as the Secretary of Congress or the President of Congress reveal an organizational interpretation emphasizing institutional respect and functional capacity. Throughout, the organization was hostile to the idea of operating in a small

⁸⁴ Ibid, Letter 572.

⁸⁵ Ibid, Letter 607.

⁸⁶ Ibid, Letters 608, 611, 617, 624.

⁸⁷ Ibid, Letter 624.

⁸⁸ Ibid, Letters 579, 698, 700, 704, 722.

⁸⁹ Edmund C. Burnett, ed., *Letters of Members of the Continental Congress Volume 8*, (Washington, D.C.: The Carnegie institution of Washington, 1921-36), Letter 2.

⁹⁰ Edmund C. Burnett, ed., *Letters of Members of the Continental Congress Volume 7*, (Washington, D.C.: The Carnegie institution of Washington, 1921-36), Letters 702, 742, 743.

village for the reason that the environment lacked the necessary amenities.⁹¹ The “vagabondizing from one paltry village to another”⁹² was derided as “neither consistent with dignity nor convenience.”⁹³ When the Committee of the States was unable to function, the organizational interpretation was that European nations would have “unfavorable impressions”⁹⁴ and lead them to question the new nation’s “stability, wisdom, or Union.”⁹⁵ In response, the organization supported moving the public records to Philadelphia, defining it as the most secure city and the one most populated by members of Congress.⁹⁶ The organization sought institutional respect through the capture and arrest of the two primary perpetrators of the Philadelphia Line Mutiny.⁹⁷ The organization thought the arrest important enough to suggest “send[ing] a minute detail of this matter to our Ministers in Paris.”⁹⁸

The two-capitals experience was marked by sectionally motivated manipulation of the seat of government policy. All of the regions acted strategically, though the Southerners and the New England states exhibited the most strategic thinking. Through the failure of the Committee of the

⁹¹ Ibid, Letters 993 and Edmund C. Burnett, ed., Letters of Members of the Continental Congress Volume 8, (Washington, D.C.: The Carnegie institution of Washington, 1921-36), Letters 1010, 1015.

⁹² Edmund C. Burnett, ed., Letters of Members of the Continental Congress Volume 7, (Washington, D.C.: The Carnegie institution of Washington, 1921-36), Letter 494.

⁹³ Ibid, Letter 628.

⁹⁴ Ibid, Letter 686.

⁹⁵ Ibid, Letter 684.

⁹⁶ Ibid, Letters 674,676, 683, and Edmund C. Burnett, ed., Letters of Members of the Continental Congress Volume 8, (Washington, D.C.: The Carnegie institution of Washington, 1921-36), Letters 1007, 1008, 1016.

⁹⁷ Ibid, Letters 571, 577.

⁹⁸ Edmund C. Burnett, ed., Letters of Members of the Continental Congress Volume 8, (Washington, D.C.: The Carnegie institution of Washington, 1921-36), Letter 992.

States, the Congress learned that small villages and rotating capitals were not capable of supporting a robust federal legislature.

Functioning in New York

Congress remained in New York City throughout the remainder of the Continental Congress. While in New York they no longer had to wait for quorums. New members and better attendance enhanced Congress. Congress reunited legislative and executive functions in 1785 and ordered all officeholders to appear in New York. In short, the address revitalized the Congress with energy and increased public support.

The letters indicate that the lessons of functional capacity and institutional respect attained consensus in New York. The lesson, broadly understood, was that a functioning and capable federal legislature required a stable geographic location and efficient architectural environment. The most dramatic examples learning emerge from the New England delegates, who offer no opposition to New York's amenities. Within the letters, ideological attachments for and against the concept of a capital city disappeared.

A noticeable attribute of the New England letters is their support for New York's functional capacity. Repeatedly, they support the move to New York as better "than the late disposition of removing from place to place."⁹⁹ The New York residence "quieted the uneasiness which resulted from the want of accommodations in Princeton, Trenton, and Annapolis."¹⁰⁰ Their letters acknowledge that "our situation at Trenton convinced us that a small village was unfit for the residence of Congress."¹⁰¹ While the New England members appear to

⁹⁹ Ibid, Letter 5.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, Letter 274.

¹⁰¹ Ibid, Letter 37.

have altered their ideological opposition to a geographically stable location (they had become “convinced of the inexpediency of erecting several buildings at more than one place at present”¹⁰²) their republican ideology revealed itself in their support for federal buildings designed “with that economy and plainness which is suitable to the state of a young republic, and with decency suited to the residence of a national council.”¹⁰³ The congressional decision to appropriate money for the construction of a new federal town was challenged by the New Englanders as being expensive and unnecessary given the attributes of New York.¹⁰⁴ They were aware, however, that “since the assembling of Congress in this city some of the Southern states have discovered great uneasiness under the ordinances passed at Trenton respecting the residence of Congress.”¹⁰⁵

Letters from the Middle Atlantic States are marked by a regional division between Maryland and Pennsylvania. The dual lessons of functional capacity and institutional respect are apparent, particularly within the letters from Pennsylvanians. “It is very evident,” one wrote, “that Congress have lost that influence at home and respectability abroad which are equally necessary to conduct with advantage the concerns of a great nation and which can never be regained while they are once or twice a year moving from place to place.”¹⁰⁶ While Pennsylvania supported the appointment of commissioners and spending money on constructing a federal town, Maryland “was principally active in delay.”¹⁰⁷ They not only opposed spending

¹⁰² Ibid, Letter 37.

¹⁰³ Ibid, Letter 82ft4.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, Letters 22, 23, 25, 52, 53, 98, 160, 232.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, Letter 33.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, Letter 35.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, Letter 35.

money on the measure, they also questioned congressional authority to do so under the Articles of Confederation.¹⁰⁸

Virginians are the sole representatives from the Southern states. Given this status, the letters are notable for the absence of expressed concern with functional capacity and institutional respect. Instead, they reveal an obsession with strategic behavior. Virginians were absolutely committed to preventing the erection of public buildings on the Delaware River. They blamed the other Southern states for the ordinance and rationalized their support by arguing it was “better to fix somewhere...than to continue wandering.”¹⁰⁹ Thomas Jefferson summarized the political context as follows,

The two ends of the continent had heretofore, upon this subject [where to place the seat of government], been drawing in different directions. The eastern and middle states in favor of the Delaware, and the Southern in favor of the Potomac. The division upon this question, since they left Philadelphia, had induced the unsettled and vagrant system which had taken place, a system so destructive of confidence among the citizens of the Union, and dishonorable to the federal councils throughout the world.¹¹⁰

In a series of letters William Grayson informed James Madison and George Washington that he “shall do everything in my power to frustrate” appropriations for erecting buildings.¹¹¹ The Virginians continued to believe that westward expansion would force a more Southern location and were willing to engage in a strategy of delay and obstruction.

An important event during this period was the arrival of a ship from China containing “teas, silks, and other India produce” and “laden with manufactures of that country.”¹¹² This

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, Letters 34, 36.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, Letters 51, 95, 101.

¹¹⁰ Ibid, Letter 38.

¹¹¹ Ibid, Letters 118, 125, 203.

¹¹² Ibid, Letters 129, 134, 136, 153.

ship appears to have impressed individuals that New York's address provided access to a world incapable of being replicated in a small, or non-seaboard, village. In all, the letters from this temporal period reveal 'normal' politics and the widespread acceptance of a stable, functioning seat of government. The most dramatic shift comes from letters written by New Englanders who appear to have completely abandoned their desires for a seat of government in a small village environment.

Constitutional Convention and Ratification

Though the chapter focuses on the institutional history of the Continental Congress, the delegates to the Constitutional Convention made the ultimate decision.¹¹³ The argument therefore requires a connection between the men who served in the Continental Congress and the delegates to the Constitutional Convention. This is done by identifying 40 of the 55 delegates as having served in the Continental Congress during the prior four years. The fundamental argument is that these individual learned governing lessons in the Continental Congress and transported these lessons to the Constitutional Convention.¹¹⁴

Accepting the conventional narrative of the Convention, Virginia is situated as the agenda-setter and the Connecticut Compromise wins because of the pivotal role of Delaware, New Jersey and South Carolina along two voting dimensions. While the Convention was primarily preoccupied with questions of power sharing along two dimensions of institutional design – among the states and between the branches – there were also many issues that were never in dispute. Many of these uncontroversial provisions were those that empowered the U.S. Congress

¹¹³ The evidence for this section comes from sources outside the LMCC. This seat of government policy narrative is constructed from Kenneth R. Bowling, *The Creation of Washington, D.C.: The Idea and Location of the American Capital*, (Fairfax: George Mason University Press, 1991).

¹¹⁴ John P. Roche, "The Founding Fathers: A Reform Caucus in Action," *The American Political Science Review*, 55 (December 1961): 799-816; Stanley Elkins and Eric McKittrick, "The Founding Fathers: Young Men of the Revolution," *Political Science Quarterly*, 76 (June 1961): 181-216.

with organizational authority not provided the Continental Congress.¹¹⁵ Across the range of opinion in Philadelphia about the relative strength of the federal government and its legislature, no one doubted that the new legislature needed to be in a position to better protect itself organizationally. One essential means for doing so was providing a stable, secure seat of government.

With broad ideological support for the concept of a geographically stable and architecturally efficient seat of government, ideational opposition was limited to two concepts. The first oppositional concept, exclusive jurisdiction, was the idea that a federal government should have power over its own territory. For Federalists, the exclusive legislation clause played an important role in the constitutional revolution. It symbolized the type of government they hoped would sustain and enhance the American empire. They argued that empires were judged by the grandeur of their capitals and openly hoped the central capital would be the focus of the nation's politics, wealth and society. The exclusive legislation clause was most frequently supported with references to the mutiny of 1783. Other arguments emphasized functional capacity. Madison argued that the safety of the national archives and records demanded exclusive jurisdictional control to prevent them from being acquired by any one state.

The second oppositional concept was the size of the new seat of government. The suggestion for an 100-square mile capital was put forward at a time when the largest city, Philadelphia, was thirty-six square miles and the second largest city, New York, was less than two-square miles. These dimensions astonished Anti-Federalist opponents. One wrote, "It has cost me many a sleepless night to find out the most obnoxious part of the proposed plan, and I

¹¹⁵ Calvin C. Jillson and Rick K. Wilson, *Congressional Dynamics: Structure, Coordination, and Choice in the First American Congress, 1774-1789*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994).

have finally fixed upon the exclusive legislation in the Ten Miles Square...What an inexhaustible fountain of corruption are we opening?"¹¹⁶

During the course of ratification Anti-Federalist leaders continually attacked the seat of government clause. When Anti-Federalists were able to successfully modify the constitution in states such as Kentucky, New Hampshire, North Carolina and New York they either excluded or significantly altered Article 1, section 8, clause 17. No state, however, approved a three-square mile capital, or limited jurisdiction only to federal buildings, as Anti-Federalist leaders suggested. By the end of the Constitutional Convention, the ideological issues surrounding the concept of a geographically stable seat government disappeared. The sectional cleavage, however, remained and transformed the issue into one based solely on geographic centrality.

Creating the New Government

When Congress convened at New York in January 1785, the city provided Congress with part of City Hall for its use. New York revitalized the Congress with energy and increased public support. No long wait for a quorum occurred. New York's welcoming address lavished praise on Congress and called for augmenting its powers. The conflicts Congress had experienced with the governments of Philadelphia and Pennsylvania did not arise. New members and better attendance enhanced Congress. When Congress decided to reunite legislative and executive functions in 1785, all officeholders were ordered to appear in New York. Though who argued they could serve better in Philadelphia were asked to resign.¹¹⁷

New England especially benefited from the new location. The short geographic distance and ease of travel meant they able to attend faithfully. The Southern states, on the hand, found it

¹¹⁶ Kenneth R. Bowling, *The Creation of Washington, D.C.: The Idea and Location of the American Capital*, (Fairfax: George Mason University Press, 1991). Quote from p. 81.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 68.

more difficult to attend proceedings in New York and their leaders feared the residence. They blamed the location, and the ease with which it allowed northerners to attend proceedings, on the decision to close the Mississippi River to American trade for 25 years. They also believed the location hurt their constituent's opportunities to purchase western lands, secure appointments and petition grievances. James Madison, for example, wrote a colleague, "The eccentricity of this place as well with regard to the East and West as to North and South has I find been for a considerable time a thorn in the minds of many of the Southern members...The Eastern members will never concur in any substantial provision or movement for a proper permanent seat for the national government whilst they remain so much gratified in its temporary residence."¹¹⁸

The Continental Congress did not reexamine the seat of government policy until 1788 when the status quo was threatened with the ratification of the U.S. Constitution. Ratification meant that the Continental Congress needed to adjourn and vote on a location for the new government. After months of political maneuvering and vote trading, Congress voted to temporarily place the new government in New York until the permanent buildings could be constructed on the Delaware.

Letters written by members from the Middle Atlantic States reveal an overriding concern with sectional strategizing. Their only concern appears to be locating the new government in Philadelphia. For this objective, they found a strategic ally in the Southern States who were "ripe for a removal of Congress to Philadelphia, and it is the first time they have all agreed upon

¹¹⁸ Ibid, p. 71.

this subject since their coming to New York.”¹¹⁹ A Middle Atlantic and Southern coalition attempted to move the new government to Philadelphia but failed repeatedly.¹²⁰

Southern members were concerned with leaving New York and resituating the seat of government in a more central position (i.e. on the Potomac). They supported the Convention meeting in Philadelphia, and suggested the Congress should relocate there.¹²¹ The letters are full of complaints about “the very eccentric position of Congress”¹²² and an overriding belief that New York contributed to an “Eastern preponderancy in the federal system.”¹²³ When the Constitution was ratified by the states, the question of where the new government would meet was seen by Southerners as a “bone of contention,”¹²⁴ “a subject of much discussion,”¹²⁵ one which had “undergone many vicissitudes,”¹²⁶ “excites difficulty,”¹²⁷ “divide[s] the Northern and Southern members,”¹²⁸ and, all in all, was a “disagreeable question,”¹²⁹ that was “the principal cause of delay.”¹³⁰ The Virginia policy entrepreneurs promoted the idea of a more central

¹¹⁹ Edmund C. Burnett, ed., *Letters of Members of the Continental Congress Volume 8*, (Washington, D.C.: The Carnegie institution of Washington, 1921-36), Letters 582, 583, 603.

¹²⁰ *Ibid*, Letters 603, 917, 933, 685, 642, 681, 900, 933.

¹²¹ *Ibid*, Letters 600, 604, 612, 617 639.

¹²² *Ibid*, Letter 636.

¹²³ *Ibid*, Letters 636, 637, 902.

¹²⁴ *Ibid*, Letter 889.

¹²⁵ *Ibid*, Letter 904.

¹²⁶ *Ibid*, Letter 909.

¹²⁷ *Ibid*, Letter 915.

¹²⁸ *Ibid*, Letter 916.

¹²⁹ *Ibid*, Letter 918.

¹³⁰ *Ibid*, Letter 934.

location, one that did not so clearly express “shameful partiality to one extremity of the continent.”¹³¹ They believed “it will be certainly of far more importance under the proposed than the present system that regard should be had to centrality whether we consider the number of members belonging to the government, the diffusive manner in which they will be appointed, or, the increased resort of individuals having business with the Legislative, Executive and Judiciary departments.”¹³² They also made note that Western lands would be sold “where Congress sit” and “to confine it to one place, and that so remote as New York is both from the center of the Union” would hurt Southern interests.¹³³ Furthermore, particularly among the Virginians, members developed the belief that if Congress did not leave New York immediately, it would never be located on the Potomac.¹³⁴ The Southerners, and particularly the Virginians, believed they had “a right to it at Georgetown: and ought in justice to get it.”¹³⁵ In the end, acting contrary to their stated preferences, the Southerners voted to initiate the new government in New York.¹³⁶ They complained of a binary choice “the opponents of New York were reduced of yielding to its advocates or strangling the government in its birth.”¹³⁷

Conclusion

This chapter provided a narrative of the founding period that enables us to assess, and contextualize the significance of, future alterations in the debate over a seat of government. The

¹³¹ Ibid, Letter 916.

¹³² Ibid, Letter 916.

¹³³ Ibid, Letter 645, 646.

¹³⁴ Ibid, Letters 909, 910 (although compare 907).

¹³⁵ Ibid, Letter 661.

¹³⁶ Ibid, Letter 928.

¹³⁷ Ibid, Letter 929.

experiential learning perspective, developed through a systematic analysis of Burnett's Letters, provides four insights. First, location was connected to a broader conception of America's place in the world. Second, an unstable location was connected to the administrative weakness of the federal government. Third, the instability caused problems for state development. Fourth, the opinion of the international community mattered. These four lessons became integrated into the U.S. Constitution through Article I, section 8, clause 17.

It is important to point out that this conceptual shift occurred only because strategic political compromise took place. The nation's three geographic areas had to compromise on the politically difficult question of where the seat of government would be located. Members of the Continental Congress, and particularly the New England states, concluded that a stronger federal government required a geographically stable and architecturally efficient environment. The New England states shifted their preferences away from an ineffective federal government contained within the environment of small villages and toward an effective federal government operating in the medium-sized city of New York. The end result was that political elites grew learned to put aside strategic differences and accepted that a stable seat of government was necessary for a functioning central government, no matter where it was located.

Overall, this period established the benchmark from which future alterations can be understood. Most importantly for the purposes of this study, is the passage of the Ordinance of 1784 which established a rotating seat of government in two small villages. This was reflective of a governing ideology that existed during the period at the end of the Revolutionary War. With the war's end, and new requirements for governance emerging, the members of the Continental Congress acted pragmatically by adjusting their ideology to suit a new environment.

The upcoming chapters continue to bring forward qualitative evidence to describe the ways in which important questions of physical location remained part of political discourse. The next chapter provides insights into how the early U.S. Congress continued to learn and adapt to their physical environment. Even though the question of a single, stable seat of government had been put to rest, elites continued to grapple with other questions the answers to which reveal an evolving understanding of how the legislative branch would fit into the operations of the central government.

CHAPTER 3 ESTABLISHING INSTITUTIONAL STABILITY

The last chapter analyzed Burnett's Letters to show how the manner in which the Continental Congress transitioned from an ideological position on the seat of government question toward a pragmatic one. This chapter begins with the First Congress in 1789 and follows internal debates on the constitutionally mandated seat of government policy question through the end of the 1790s. Throughout the period, the political narrative emphasizes correlations between the seat of government policy debate and broader alterations in the congressional institution. Continuing to rely on the narrative method, the institutional history sheds new light on the early years of congressional development. Unlike the previous chapter, which relied solely on an analysis of primary documents, this chapter builds an analysis based on both secondary scholarship and primary documents. The secondary scholarship is drawn from three distinct schools of historical research - the first set emerges from the specific historical narrative of the founding of Washington, D.C.; the second from broad political histories of the 1790s; and the third from literature emphasizing congressional development. This emphasis on secondary literature is necessary because primary documents do not exist in any significant number until the Fourth Congress (1795-1796).

As before, experiential learning provides the conceptual glue that links these three literatures. What emerges is a narrative of a nascent institution struggling to assert itself and working to find solutions that would enable it to be a powerful actor within the central government. The political narrative makes it clear that congressional actors during this period wanted the institution to succeed and they continually searched for pragmatic solutions that would help lead to success. As in the earlier period, elites initially adopted an ideological position only to later adopt a more pragmatic resolution in order to reach the desired end.

This chapter is divided into the following three sections – institutional context, historical narrative, and conclusion. It begins with a description of the congressional context during the 1790s, a time in which the institution was fluid and underwent significant alterations. Within the sphere of the central government, congressional actors attempted to find their proper position and, throughout the decade, continually sought new governing roles.

The policy narrative then emphasizes the importance of experience and learning as related to developing constitutionally mandated seat of government. Three experiential lessons are identified. The first was institutional and concerned relations between the legislative and executive branches. What is surprising about the seat of government policy during this period is the ebb and flow of power relations between the legislative and executive branches. The period began with congressional actors willing to bring down the new nation over the seat of government question. However, within a period of two years, congressional actors created policies that completely excluded them from the policy process, and placed the executive in absolute control. This acquiescence to executive authority lasted until the 4th Congress when the legislative branch began to reassert control. The second lesson was financial. Initially, the constitutionally mandated seat of government was going to be created only through funds provided by private citizens to the complete exclusion of public financing. A debate in the 4th Congress revealed the extent to which congressional actors continued to hold onto this original view. However, by the 5th Congress a more pragmatic position had prevailed and, because it would not be completed otherwise, congressional actors capitulated and adjusted their beliefs. The third lesson concerned safety. Throughout most of the period Congress was located in Philadelphia and, at the beginning of the decade, several powerful elite coalitions supported a permanent seat of government in that city. By the end of the decade, however, no coalitions in

favor of Philadelphia existed. The reason for the decline had to do with personal safety. At several points throughout the decade, the city experienced severe yellow fever epidemics that decimated roughly 20% of the city's population. Elites who had been in favor of a permanent seat of government in Philadelphia adjusted their position and, by the end of the decade, the city had virtually no backers.

The final section concludes the chapter and points to ways in which these lessons contributed to a foundation that would be continued in future congresses. Most importantly, this period reveals the extent to which Congress increased its pragmatic understanding of the seat of government policy. Across the decade congressional actors came to understand that the issue affected their ability to govern and this understanding led them to become more interested in the developmental process. It is clear that their interest transformed from one of political strategy based on sectional cleavages to one which emphasized organizational capacity.

Congress: Institutional Context of the 1790s

Congress' first decade was one of transition and continual adjustment to new social and political situations.¹ Throughout the 1790s, the U.S. Congress became increasingly partisan,

¹ The interpretation of the historical context contained throughout this chapter comes from the following sources - Ronald Hoffman and Peter J. Albert, eds., *Launching the 'Extended Republic': The Federalist Era*, (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1996); Rudolph M. Bell, *Party and Faction in American politics: The House of Representatives, 1789-1801*, (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1973); Doron Ben-Atar and Barbara B. Oberg, eds., *Federalists Reconsidered*, (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1998); Kenneth R. Bowling and Donald R. Kennon, eds., *Neither Separate Nor Equal: Congress in the 1790s*, eds., (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2000); Kenneth R. Bowling and Don R. Kennon, R., *House & Senate In 1790s: Petitioning, Lobbying, & Institutional Development*, (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2002); Christopher Collier and James Lincoln Collier, *Building a New Nation: The Federalist Era, 1789-1803*, (New York: Benchmark Books, 1999); Noble E. Cunningham, Jr., ed., *The early Republic, 1789-1828*, (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1968); Noble E. Cunningham, Jr., *The Jeffersonian Republicans: The Formation of Party Organization, 1789-1801*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1957); Stanley M. Elkins, *The Age of Federalism*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); Ralph V. Harlow, *The History of Legislative Methods in the Period Before 1825*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1917); John F. Hoadley, *Origins of American political parties, 1789-1803*, (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1986); James Roger Sharp, *American Politics in the Early Republic: The New Nation in Crisis*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993); David J. Siemers, *Ratifying the Republic: Antifederalists and Federalists in Constitutional Time*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002); Rick K. Wilson, "Transitional Governance in the United States: Lessons from the First Federal Congress," *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 24 (November 1999): 543-568.

hierarchical, and capable of operating independently from the executive branch. Over the course of the decade, Congress learned to resolve developmental policies and administrative crises in ways that helped secure its position within the nascent American state. Some of these policies were of constitutional importance, while others dealt with foreign relations. Across the decade, to the extent that consistency existed at all, voting patterns were along sectional lines with clear cleavages distinguishing three sections - New England, Middle Atlantic, and Southern states. These voting blocs worked with, and against, one another to create policies that helped develop the American state.

Because of the amount of transition that occurred during the decade, it is useful to focus on developments in each of the individual Congresses listed in Table 3-1 below.

Table 3-1 Congresses: Year and Party Breakdown 1789-1801

Congress	Year	Party Breakdown
1	1789-1791	37 Pro-Administration 28 Anti-Administration
2	1791-1793	39 Pro-Administration 30 Anti-Administration
3	1793-1795	54 Anti-Administration 51 Pro-Administration
4	1795-1797	59 Jeffersonian Republicans 47 Federalists
5	1797-1799	57 Federalists 49 Jeffersonian Republicans
6	1799-1801	60 Federalists 46 Jeffersonian Republicans

Taken from U.S. House of Representatives Office of the Clerk (http://clerk.house.gov/art_history/house_history/index.html)

The 1st Congress was responsible for a wide range of activities. Congress not only had to organize itself and establish the basic institutions of the new government, but was also responsible for laying the foundations for the American economy. Congress created the War, Treasury, and State Departments. Congress established the judicial courts of the United States, a Land Office, and a government for the Northwest Territory. Congress passed a tariff bill, an invalid pension measure, and a bill for the regulation of the coastal trade. Congress fixed the

compensation of executive and judicial officers and employees. Congress enacted the first annual appropriations acts, passed several relief bills, and submitted the first ten amendments to the Constitution.

Congressional responsibility for state development continued throughout the period.² The 2nd Congress established the First Bank of the United States. Between the 3rd and 4th Congresses, foreign policy and frontier protection accounted for half of all congressional votes. A foreign policy dispute, Jay's Treaty, resulted in the first significant confrontation between the Executive and Legislative branches.

The 4th Congress marked a turning point in the institution's development.³ By the time the 4th Congress met, President Washington had an entirely new cabinet. Jefferson had resigned on the last day of 1793 to go back to Monticello and Hamilton followed him into retirement thirteen months later. Washington was approaching his last year as President, and a number of Federalist leaders left the Senate. In the House, both Ames and Madison were beginning their last term and neither would run for reelection in 1796. Institutional leadership passed to Albert Gallatin. To counter the power of the Treasury Department, Gallatin immediately secured the appointment of a committee on Ways and Means to superintend the general operations of finance. In particular, the committee was expected to report from time to time on the state of the public debt, revenues, and expenditures. Instead of depending on the Secretary of the Treasury for its financial policy, from now on the House would look to one of its own committees.

² Rudolph M. Bell, *Party and Faction in American Politics: The House of Representatives, 1789-1801*, (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1973); John F. Hoadley, *Origins of American political parties, 1789-1803*, (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1986).

³ Ralph V. Harlow, *The History of Legislative Methods in the Period Before 1825*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1917).

By the 5th and 6th Congresses, lines within Congress were drawn and the Congress was clearly understood by contemporaries as divided along partisan lines.⁴ On one side were President John Adams and the Federalists, and on the other Jefferson's Democratic-Republicans.

Throughout the 1790s the congressional institution underwent significant alterations, was forced to create a position within the new central government, and forged a unique identity. When faced with new challenges, Congress adapted and learned to govern in new ways. While grappling with state building and institutional adaptation, they also confronted the constitutionally mandated seat of government policy.

Congress and the Seat of Government Policy Narrative

Congress relocated from New York to Philadelphia almost immediately after the First Congress began and then spent years preparing for a move in 1800.⁵ Throughout the decade, organizational deliberations reveal a shifting governing philosophy. Viewed temporally, the policy narrative moves from New York to Philadelphia and then to the myriad strategic and practical preparations for the move to the new capital. Analytically, the policy narrative has three distinct internal periods that revolve around a power struggle between the legislative and executive branches. In the first, the legislative and executive branches fought for control over the policy's direction. In the second, the legislative branch provided the executive with sole control. In the third, the legislative branch reasserted itself and became a significant participant in the development of policy.

⁴ John F. Hoadley, *Origins of American political parties, 1789-1803*, (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1986).

⁵ Kenneth R. Bowling and Don R. Kennon, R., *House & Senate In 1790s: Petitioning, Lobbying, & Institutional Development*, (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2002). See especially Chapter 1.

New York Provides a New Building

In 1789, New York City provided the geographic context for the 1st Congress.⁶ Congress conducted its business in Federal Hall, a building constructed and paid for by city officials. George Washington took the oath of office on its balcony. The building's architectural details, in the interior as well as on the exterior, were extensive and unique. It was in the vanguard of a new style of architecture in America. Frederick Muhlenberg, who represented Pennsylvania in the House of Representatives and who was not inclined to view New York favorably, wrote that Federal Hall was "really elegant and well designed – for a trap."

The design of Federal Hall reveals nascent organizational needs. It contained three floors. The first floor consisted of the following spaces. One entered into a fairly large room, what one contemporary journalist referred to as the "first hall." From this entryway members and the public could access several small office rooms. Also from this hall one could enter a second very spacious hall in which there was a vestibule with two staircases – one for the private use of members of Congress, and one for the general public. From the north side of the vestibule one entered the Representatives' Chamber, or what the Massachusetts Magazine referred to as the, "real Federal Hall." This room was the largest in the building and around it were overhanging galleries for the public. The one-story wing at the northeast corner was largely used by committees of the House. Since the wing was large – 30 feet by 65 feet – it was probably divided into several rooms. In the Abridgement of the Debates of Congress there is reference to a room 'adjoining' the Representatives' Chamber in which on at least one occasion President Washington was addressed by the Speaker of the House.

⁶ Louis Torres, "Federal Hall Revisited," *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 29 (December 1970): 327-338.

The second floor consisted of the Senate Chamber, saloon, audience chamber, and antechambers. It also referred to stairs that led to these rooms and to two spectators' galleries in the Representatives Chamber. Several other sources also referred to the existence of a saloon, picture room, lobby of the Senate Chamber, anterooms, audience room, committee room, machinery room, and an office for the Secretary of the Senate.

The third floor consisted of a library, lobbies, and committee rooms as being located "above" or on the "uppermost" level. The passageway reached clear to the roof, and the Senate Chamber extended into the third story. There may have been as many as six rooms on this floor.

Seat of Government Policy Revisited 1790

Throughout the 1st Congress, the sectional quest for power on where to permanently situate the seat of the central government, known as 'the residence question,' continued.⁷ The residence question continued to be contentious because of the widely held belief that the location would generate significant revenue for the area surrounding it. Consequently, representatives favored a capital close to their constituency. The residence question quickly became attached to another pressing issue – federal assumption of debt. Half of the recorded votes in the first House dealt with the issues of assumption and residence.⁸ An impasse was reached in June 1790. Divisions were so deep on the two issues that Hamilton considered resigning his post and Madison considered forcing an adjournment.

⁷ William C. Allen, *History of the United States Capitol: A Chronicle of Design, Construction, and Politics*, (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001); Bob Arnebeck, *Through a Fiery Trial: Building Washington, 1790-1800*, (Lanham: Madison Books, 1991); Kenneth R. Bowling, *Creating the Federal City, 1774-1800: Potomac Fever*, (Washington, D.C.: American Institute of Architects Press, 1988); Pamela Scott, *Temple of Liberty: Building the Capitol for a New Nation*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

⁸ Joshua D. Clinton, Adam Meirowitz, "Testing Explanations of Strategic Voting in Legislatures: A Reexamination of the Compromise of 1790," *American Journal of Political Science*, 48 (October 2004): 675-689.

Strategic maneuverings continued until a historic dinner meeting between Thomas Jefferson, James Madison and Alexander Hamilton resulting in what is known as the Compromise of 1790.⁹ Following the failure of Hamilton's Report on Public Debt, which included the assumption of state Revolutionary War debts in April of 1790, Jefferson held a dinner party in which Hamilton, Madison, and he arranged for a compromise between the passage of Hamilton's report and the location of the capital. The political compromise had three components - Madison would weaken his opposition to assumption; Madison would persuade Representatives from Virginia to switch their votes on assumption; and, Madison, or Hamilton, would convince the northern coalition that it was not in their interest to block legislation locating the permanent capital on the Potomac. The Compromise of 1790 resulted in the Southerners accepting federal assumption of state debts, the Middle Atlantic States agreeing to place the capital on the Potomac, and the New Englanders dropped their opposition to the bill. Once the bargain was consummated, a commonly accepted narrative, such as the following by William Loughton Smith, developed.

The assumption could never have been carried without the assistance of some new friends...This acquisition is the result of the Patowmac [sic] scheme – it seems there was an understanding between these gentlemen and some of the New England members that the latter would give no serious opposition to the residence bill if some of the Maryland and Virginia members would vote for the assumption.

The Residence Act included the following provisions. First, the capital would be located in a district of territory not exceeding ten miles square at some point on the Potomac River between the mouths of the Anacostia and Conococheague. Second, until 1800 Congress would meet at Philadelphia. Third, Congress' executive authority over the district would not be initiated until Congress expressly provided otherwise. Fourth, a three-man presidential

⁹ Jacob E. Cooke, "The Compromise of 1790." *William and Mary Quarterly* 27 (1970): 523–545.

commission, under the president's direction, would survey the land and supervise construction. Fifth, the president could accept money for the seat of government but Congress appropriated only the 'sufficient' sum necessary to transfer the capital to the Potomac in 1800.

Three aspects of the seat of government bill that emerged are of significance. First, Congress left the matter completely in the president's hands. The President had authority to select the exact site along the Potomac and to appoint (without confirmation) a three-man commission to act as his personal representative in putting the law into effect. Second, the President had complete discretionary control over the administrative agency responsible for the development of the seat of government. Third, Congress did not appropriate any funds to develop the seat of government. These three attributes strongly suggest that Congress was prepared to wipe its hands of the seat of government policy. All future decisions were placed in the hands of the executive or a commission he controlled.

Congress in Philadelphia

Once the decision was made, Congress quickly established itself in Philadelphia, a city so favorable to their needs that many believed they would never leave.¹⁰ Many congressmen already had some connection with Philadelphia. Including the Pennsylvanians, all of whom had lived in the city while holding state elective office, forty of the ninety-one members had served in Congress before it left in 1783 or had attended the Federal Convention in 1787.

Philadelphia was particularly upsetting to Southerners because of its concentration of anti-slavery Quakers. A state law mandating that any slave who remained in the state six months became free. Organizations emerged, such as The Society for the Abolition of Slavery, but were

¹⁰ Kenneth Bowling, "Philadelphia On the Arrival of the Federal Government and the Republican Court, 1790-1791," in Kenneth R. Bowling and Donald R. Kennon, eds., *Neither Separate nor Equal: Congress in the 1790s*, (Athens, Ohio University Press, 2000).

forbidden to enforce the law among members of congress and federal officials. A legal loophole, however, led to movements that sought to motivate citizenry to educate slaves. Because of this, prominent Southerners (such as George Washington) rotated their slaves out of the state at regular intervals.

Quaker society was more formal than New York, and a republican court founded on social rank evolved. Entertainment included ballet, theater, dinners, and drawing rooms, invoking old opposition to the city. Although city, state, and national officeholders met in separate buildings on the State House square, they were linked in webs of political and social activity that blurred jurisdictional boundaries. They attended the residence of President George Washington, and talked politics in drawing rooms. They lived together in boardinghouses and taverns, and assembled for concerts, theatrical performances, and worship.

The Congress was housed in the recently completed Philadelphia County Courthouse, newly renamed Congress Hall.¹¹ It was remolded and fitted to match New York's Federal Hall as closely as possible. A few yards to the east stood the Pennsylvania State House. Members complained that, unlike Federal Hall, Congress Hall did not architecturally represent the grandeur of the new nation. Most dramatically, the entire building could almost fit within the chamber allocated to the House of Representatives alone in New York. The House met in a large hall on the first floor (with a seating capacity on the main floor and in a gallery for almost five hundred spectators), and the Senate, again the 'upper chamber,' convened in a room on the second floor. The House's two committee rooms and its clerk's office had to be located on the second floor of the west wing of the State House. Most beneficial to federal officials was the

¹¹ United States National Park Service Division of Publications, Congress Hall, Capitol of the United States, 1790-1800, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1990).

Library Company of Philadelphia. At the end of the year it moved into a building capable of holding a collection more than six times as large the eight thousand volumes owned.

In 1791, congressional politics were against a move to a new seat of government outside Philadelphia. Personal letters reveal a prevailing attitude of a positive environment within which to impact on the government. Supporters of relocating to a permanent seat complained of “the whirlpool of Philadelphia” from which the central government would not escape “for half a century to come.” The French attaché wrote that the government would never relocate. Philadelphia politicians attempted to capitalize on these feelings and, in March, 1791, the Pennsylvania legislature took up the question of permanent buildings for Congress and the President.

Washington’s Hobby Horse

Sectional supporters and opponents waited for Washington to announce the seat of government's precise location within the bounds described the Act of 1790. Washington controlled the execution of the new seat of government completely and embraced the grand scale of the great capitals of Europe as the appropriate model.¹² Congress did not prescribe any guidelines for the development of the federal district and were content to indulge George Washington in what critics referred to as his “hobby horse.”

Washington’s ideal derived as much from his fears for the new nation as from his admiration for European models. He believed that the prospects for survival were poor if a

¹² William C. Allen, *History of the United States Capitol: A Chronicle of Design, Construction, and Politics*, (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001); Bob Arnebeck, *Through a Fiery Trial: Building Washington, 1790-1800*, (Lanham: Madison Books, 1991); Kenneth R. Bowling, *Creating the Federal City, 1774-1800: Potomac Fever*, (Washington, D.C.: American Institute of Architects Press, 1988); Pamela Scott, *Temple of Liberty: Building the Capitol for a New Nation*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995). Two narratives emerge from Washington’s control that are outside the scope of this chapter. One is the contest for execution of the Capitol Building. The second is the contentious relationship between Washington and L’Enfant. Both of these are explored elsewhere in detail. I have not included them because they are instances of pure Executive control with no Legislative oversight.

strong centripetal force, figuratively and literally, were not placed at the center of the country. Without a commercial “emporium” on the Potomac, the wealth and commerce of the trans-Allegheny interior would gravitate toward land controlled by Spain and Britain.

Although he had been given wide powers over the new federal district, Washington believed that votes cast for the Residence Act could not be counted on in future causes and that Congress would refuse any appeal for direct appropriations to fund the public works. Because of this, funding for the new seat of government would be built with funds emerging from private investors in America and Europe. This ‘market-oriented’ strategy contained a grand vision and encouraged risk taking. An expansive city, even if only in outline, was necessary to guarantee an ample supply of saleable land to fund the construction of public buildings. And the public works had to be begun on “an extensive and proper scale” to demonstrate the potential of key sites for investment rewards. A grand strategy was also calculated to appeal to northern merchants and capitalists, who had largely opposed the Potomac location. The scheme required highly visible activity and measurable progress. Washington’s ambitions for a grand European scale, and his mechanism for funding the public works, were inseparable from Alexander Hamilton’s policy initiatives. The scale was perfectly suited to the requirements of an energetic central government.

Seat of Government Policy Revisited 1791

Instead of acting quickly and immediately identifying a permanent geographic location, Washington personally surveyed the geography and made detailed observations. He then redrew the boundaries so as to include much land owned by himself and members of his family. After doing so, he sent Congress a letter requesting they pass a supplemental act to enable him to

configure the ten miles square as he saw fit.¹³ In doing so, Washington renewed sectional tensions and instigated a new institutional power struggle between the executive and legislative branches. This behavior caused contemporaries such as Senator Maclay to observe, “I am really surprised at the conduct of the President. To bring it back at any rate before Congress is certainly the most imprudent of all acts.”¹⁴

Shortly thereafter, Alexander Hamilton presented his plan for a national bank and the seat of government policy once again became connected with legislation integral to the existence of the new government.¹⁵ Supporters wanted to locate the Bank within Philadelphia, rekindling fears about banks and increasingly centralized control by the federal government. Opponents voiced concern that the bank would make Philadelphia and the central government so entwined they would never be able to relocate. One described the bank bill “as throwing a monstrous thick anchor in [Philadelphia], which no future Congress will ever be able to weigh.”

A widespread belief among the Southern opposition was that the bank bill threatened placing the seat of government on the Potomac River after 1800. Representative Ames summed the contemporary belief.

The great point of difficulty was the effect of the bank law to make the future removal of the government from this city to the Potomac less probable. This place will become the great center of the revenue and banking operations of the nation. So many interests will be centered here, that it is feared that, ten years hence, Congress will be found unmovable.

¹³ January 24, 1791 letter to Congress (HR 646, 7)

¹⁴ William C. Allen, *History of the United States Capitol: A Chronicle of Design, Construction, and Politics*, (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001); Bob Arnebeck, *Through a Fiery Trial: Building Washington, 1790-1800*, (Lanham: Madison Books, 1991); Kenneth R. Bowling, *Creating the Federal City, 1774-1800: Potomac Fever*, (Washington, D.C.: American Institute of Architects Press, 1988); Pamela Scott, *Temple of Liberty: Building the Capitol for a New Nation*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

¹⁵ Kenneth Bowling, “The Bank Bill, the Capital City and President Washington,” *Capitol Studies*, 1 (1972).

After both houses of Congress passed the bank bill, its opponents sought to persuade the President to inaugurate the veto power. James Monroe argued, “The operations of a great national bank...will I think effectually establish the permanent seat in that place.” Washington asked his for his Cabinet’s opinions. Letters written by Philadelphians and congressmen to friends and constituents in the North carried the message that Madison would not have raised the constitutional issue had not the South seen the bill as dangerous for removal. Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson and Attorney General William Randolph thought it was unconstitutional, while Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton argued that it was. When Washington had received all three opinions, and on the day that he received Hamilton’s, Senator Charles Carroll notified the Senate that, dependent upon the President’s signature, he would sponsor a supplemental seat of government bill.

It was at this time that Congress began to take up supplemental seat of government bill providing Washington with the power to establish a new location for the seat of government. Congress asserted itself in a power struggle with the executive branch and Washington heightened tensions by not acting quickly. He waited more than a week before signing the bill. During that period the Senate continued to debate the supplemental. On February 25, Washington signed the Bank Bill. On the 26th, the Senate passed the supplemental and the House did so on March 1. Importantly, significant supporters of Philadelphia (such as Robert Morris) spearheaded the measure’s success. Congress asserted itself to gain the president’s signature on the Bank Bill and the President had congressional approval for redrawing the precise geographic location of the seat of government.¹⁶

¹⁶ A complete narrative of this policy quid pro quo can be found in Bowling (1972).

Constructing a Capitol for the Ages

With the geographic location decided, Washington began constructing public buildings, thereby nesting a new policy dynamic within the seat of government issue. The question was no longer where to locate the government, but rather the type of building which would house the government. I restrict my analysis to the development of the U.S. Capitol Building, although that was one of several public buildings being constructed. Additionally, to the extent possible, I focus on the development of internal spatial arrangements rather than external aesthetics. I do this because I am more interested in how contemporaries understood the Capitol functionally rather than symbolically.

It has to be emphasized that, at the outset, Congress was not involved in the planning of their future work environment. Instead, in 1792, Jefferson, Washington and the Commissioners devised an advertisement for the Capitol Building and placed it in newspapers.¹⁷ The advertisement called for a brick building with a chamber for the House of Representatives and a conference room, each capable of seating 300 persons. A Senate chamber would cover 1,200 square feet, about the size of a room thirty-five feet square. These three principal rooms (House chamber, conference room, Senate chamber) were to be two stories high, as were the lobbies at the entrances to the legislative chambers. Finally, twelve one-story rooms were needed to accommodate committees and clerks. Each of these was to be 600 square feet, or about twenty-five feet square. In terms of accommodations, the new building was closer to Federal Hall than Congress Hall.

¹⁷ William C. Allen, *History of the United States Capitol: A Chronicle of Design, Construction, and Politics*, (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001); Bob Arnebeck, *Through a Fiery Trial: Building Washington, 1790-1800*, (Lanham: Madison Books, 1991); Kenneth R. Bowling, *Creating the Federal City, 1774-1800: Potomac Fever*, (Washington, D.C.: American Institute of Architects Press, 1988); Pamela Scott, *Temple of Liberty: Building the Capitol for a New Nation*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

The one new feature was the large conference room, where the president would preside over joint sessions of Congress and deliver his annual message on the state of the union.¹⁸ The conference room was an important part of this early design and Jefferson mandated that it be part of the Capitol's program because and others believed that Congress, led by the president, would meet frequently in joint session. Both Washington and Jefferson perceived the conference room as potentially the most politically significant arena in the Capitol.

It was also in 1792 that Thomas Jefferson first conceptualized the arrangement of interior rooms. Jefferson viewed the interior arrangement in a purely symbolic fashion. He wanted Congress housed in a replica of an ancient Roman temple, in a manner similar to the Virginia legislature. Since the capitol in Richmond (also designed by Jefferson) was an example of Roman 'cubic' architecture, he thought the federal Capitol should be modeled after a 'spherical' temple. The plan illustrates Jefferson's adaptation of the Pantheon in Rome for Congress and the 'Courts of Justice.' Similarly Jefferson's insistence on elliptical chambers reflects much more than his preference of an elegant decorative form: in the cosmos, the ellipse defined the orbit of the comet, a powerful, palpable symbol of Newtonian physics. Jefferson envisioned the interior chambers as Newtonian temples that would serve the sovereign functions of legislation where the people's representatives were to be physically aware of the laws of Nature, which would interact with the innate moral sense of each lawmaker. The dramatic setting of the House chamber, in other words, was meant to inspire a higher, republican standard of public service.

By 1793, the interior spaces had become more functional and less symbolic. Both the House and Senate chamber were designed as variations on the House of Commons in the

¹⁸ Authors who emphasize this room's significance are - William C. Allen, *History of the United States Capitol: A Chronicle of Design, Construction, and Politics*, (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001); Pamela Scott, *Temple of Liberty: Building the Capitol for a New Nation*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

Parliament House in Dublin. The Irish building was in fact a milestone in parliamentary design and the most important prototype for the U.S. Capitol as a whole because of its bicameral statehouse with a dome and porticoed core and wings. The Irish building also introduced concentric seating for the members, rather than with the two parallel banks of seats found in the House of Parliament in Westminster.

Unexpected Dynamic: The Power of Pestilence

In 1793, a new and unexpected dynamic entered the political equation when a devastating yellow fever epidemic struck the city.¹⁹ Of all the elected or appointed officials, only Randolph, Pickering and Wolcott were left near Philadelphia. As the date approached for Congress to meet many congressmen could, or would, not come to the plague center of Philadelphia. Adding to Washington's frustration was the fact that very few official papers had made their way to him at Mount Vernon. When the government clerks had panicked and fled Philadelphia, they left papers and records and no one was willing to return.

Washington believed he faced a constitutional crisis and turned toward a number of cabinet members and government officials for advice. Neither the constitution nor the laws empowered the President to change the place where Congress was to meet, Jefferson said. Hamilton responded by arguing that it was a president's prerogative to locate the congress where he please. The seat of government might be taken by an enemy army or damaged in a natural disaster, but the government must continue. Attorney General Edmund Randolph sided with Jefferson. The Residence Act, he argued, said Philadelphia was to be the seat of government until the year 1800, when the permanent seat on the Potomac would be ready. And all the executive officers should now get as close to the permanent seat as possible. As for Congress, where they met was

¹⁹ Bob Arnebeck, *Through a Fiery Trial: Building Washington, 1790-1800*, (Lanham: Madison Books, 1991).

up to the members but these leaders thought they were obligated to meet at the location specified at adjournment (i.e. Philadelphia) “even if it be in the open fields” in order to avoid a vote on moving elsewhere.

Jefferson and his allies believed the matter was of deep philosophical importance. They drew analogies with English kings, who had would bypass representative government through convening Parliament in a remote, unreachable part of the country. Without a proper quorum of members, the king could then decide law as he pleased. With this in mind, they argued, the U.S. Constitution had been constructed with particular attention to the issue of where they would meet in the future.

Fortunately, for Washington, Jefferson and their allies, the epidemic subsided in time to permit Congress to assemble in Philadelphia as planned. Congress assembled in December 1793 to hear President Washington’s fifth Annual Address. Shortly thereafter they passed a bill without debate authorizing the president, by proclamation, to convene Congress at the place he thought proper.

Congress Becomes Involved

Throughout the 2nd and 3rd Congresses, the seat of government policy was not debated by Congress. With Washington's second term coming to an end, however, Congress began to assert itself into the policy debate. The moment for congressional action arrived when Washington sought to change the funding mechanism from the market-oriented approach to one of government financing.

The 4th Congress contains the first recorded congressional debates on constructing the public buildings in the permanent seat. On January 8, 1796, President Washington sent Congress a memorial outlining the problems in developing the public buildings and asked to use the public lands as collateral for a loan. Once again, the issue became tied to fundamental concerns of the

day. Supporters of Jay's Treaty with Great Britain made it clear that they would not support the loan guarantee unless opponents relented.²⁰

On the 25th, a select committee (referred to in the record as the Committee on the Federal City) made two recommendations.²¹ First, the President "be authorized to borrow up to \$500,000 but no more than \$200,000 in one year to complete the Public Buildings in the City of Washington." Second, that the Board of Commissioners "render, every six months, to the Secretary of the Treasury an account of the moneys expended, of the progress made, and of the funds remaining in their hands, and an account of their administration – all to be laid before Congress." These two recommendations reflected a profound shift in governing attitudes. The select committee was suggesting an administrative arrangement that strengthened Congress and weakened the President's absolute power over the public buildings.

Throughout the subsequent House debate, the primary point of contention was whether the loan set a precedent and established a new, and radical, means of financing construction. Subsidiary debates included the amount of interest to be charged, the exact sum that would be needed, construction accomplishments to date, and Europe's opinion of the process. The practical issue that provided the House with the most difficulty was a clause within the committee report that placed the loan within the hands of the President and provided him with ultimate responsibility for collecting debts. This did not satisfy members, many of whom presented arguments emphasizing that this would delay transfer to the permanent seat of government.

²⁰ William C. Allen, *History of the United States Capitol: A Chronicle of Design, Construction, and Politics*, (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001); Kenneth R. Bowling, *Creating the Federal City, 1774-1800: Potomac Fever*, (Washington, D.C.: American Institute of Architects Press, 1988).

²¹ *Annals of Congress*, 4th Cong., 1st sess., 266.

The House began to debate the resolutions in the Committee of the Whole on February 3 and 4.²² The idea of a federally guaranteed loan was a novel way of funding construction, and was given the most attention. Smith, the chairman of the select committee, argued that “the committee had proposed a loan on the principle of economy.” Gallatin argued that the language should be more specific and “be amended so as to express the rate of interest at six per cent.” In the face of opposition, Smith acknowledged “that when the permanent seat of government was first agitated, assurances were given that the United States would never be called upon for any pecuniary assistance.” Crabb argued “the refusal of this small parental aid would strongly convey the idea, and enforce belief, that the general government was not serious, not firmly fixed in their purpose of making the present location the permanent seat of Congress.” The House returned the bill to the select committee, “fifty-seven members rising in the affirmative,” with blanks in the amounts for the full loan and yearly interest-rate.

The House revisited the policy on February 22-25.²³ Swanwick argued that it was “degrading to the United States to have it observed in Europe, or elsewhere, that they could not complete the buildings requisite for their own immediate use, without making a loan for the purpose...He was for having the bill recommitted, to be new modified.” Brent “was very desirous that a final decision should be come to on the subject; as whilst it was yet pending, the property in the Federal City was subject to much speculation, the minds persons concerned were kept in an unsettled situation.” Swift argued the bill would place construction costs “in the hands of the United States, leaving it with them to complete the buildings. When once this is determined, he said, the United States might consider the Federal City as a child of their own.”

²² Ibid., 290-296.

²³ Ibid., 356-372.

Giles did not care about expense, he wanted “buildings for Congress erected on a grand scale, and fitted for the representatives of a great and free people.” After a contentious 3 day debate, the bill was recommitted and four unnamed members were added to the select committee. On March 3, Smith reported the committee’s amended bill.²⁴ On the 31st, after another long contentious debate, the House passed the bill by a wide margin.²⁵ The bill that emerged from the House included language emphasizing that the government was committed to relocating and completing the public buildings by 1800. The loan would be guaranteed by the ‘government of the United States’ and not by the President. Additionally, the bill required detailed reports of progress and expenses from the Board of Commissioners.

The Senate received the bill on April 1 and referred it to a three-member select committee on April 4.²⁶ On the 22nd, King reported the committee’s bill.²⁷ On the 25th, a motion was unsuccessfully made to refer the bill to a special committee.²⁸ On May 3 and 4, the Senate continued debate before approving the bill.²⁹ The act signed by President Adams on May 6 included language that not only guaranteed a \$300,000 loan at 6% interest, but also instructed the Commissioners to report on progress to the Secretary of the Treasury so that the Secretary could report to Congress.³⁰

²⁴ Ibid., 785.

²⁵ Ibid., 825-840.

²⁶ Ibid., 64.

²⁷ Ibid., 74.

²⁸ Ibid., 74.

²⁹ Ibid., 78-79.

³⁰ House Report 646, Documentary History of U.S. Capitol Building and Grounds, January 30, 1904, 75 (Statutes at Large I, 461).

By 1797, the interior arrangement of rooms had also progressed. The original plan for the Capitol consisted of wings for the House and Senate connected by a central building with a rotunda, a windowless presidential office, and a conference room. Problems emerged with the construction of this plan, however, and new arrangements were needed.

Pestilence Returns

Philadelphia witnessed more devastating Yellow Fever epidemics during 1797 and 1798. More than 1100 people died in 1797, and in 1798 more than 3,500. In Philadelphia, officials established camps in the countryside for residents to take shelter. It is within the context of the epidemic that President John Adams included the following within his 2nd Annual Address:

While with reverence and resignation we contemplate the dispensations of Divine Providence in the alarming and destructive pestilence with which several of our cities and towns have been visited, there is cause for gratitude and mutual congratulations that the malady has disappeared and that we are again permitted to assemble in safety at the seat of Government for the discharge of our important duties.

The repeated Yellow Fever epidemics effectively defeated any remaining plans to try and persuade the federal government to remain in Philadelphia.

Funding the Accommodation of Government

On February 23, 1798, the House established a six-member select committee to report on a memorial on the Public Buildings sent by the Board of Commissioners.³¹ On March 8, Craik reported the committee's resolution appropriating \$200,000 for "completing the buildings necessary for the accommodation of the government at the city of Washington" provided that not more than one-third be expended in any one year.³² For the first time, a congressional committee requested that the Legislature appropriate funds for the public buildings. The committee also

³¹ *Annals of Congress*, 5th Cong., 1st sess., 1063.

³² *Ibid.*, 1245.

provided an overview of the architectural dimensions of Congress' new workspace, the first time detailed dimensions of the interior arrangement were provided to Congress.

The Capitol, in the city of Washington, if the plan shall be fully executed, will contain a main body and two wings; - the main body is composed of two parts – a grand circular vestibule to the east, of 112 feet diameter and a conference room to the west...The south wing will contain the Representative's chamber, an ellipsis of 88 by 66 full elevation. The north wing is considered as sufficient to accommodate the Legislature during the present state of representation – It contains the following apartments: - In the first story, the Senate room, 56 by 36, semi-circular, and two stories high – lobby, 38 by 22 – four rooms 28 by 35 each – North entrance, 20 by 45 – East ditto, 28 by 22 – grand staircase, 36 by 23, - On the third story – lobby, 28 by 26 – three rooms, 27 by 31 each, - one room, 29 by 23, - one ditto, 20 by 45 – one ditto, 23 by 30 – The building forms a front of 350 feet.³³

On March 14, on motion of Craik, the House debated the resolution in the Committee of the Whole. Williams objected to the appropriation “on the ground that it was never expected that Congress was to be at any expense in erecting the public buildings.”³⁴ The House, however, approved the resolution and appointed a committee to bring in a bill. According to the record “the resolution was advocated by Messrs. Nicholas, Thatcher, Rutledge, S. Smith, Harper, Craik, and T. Claiborne, and opposed by Messrs. Livingston, Varnum, and J. Williams.”³⁵

On the 18th, Craik motioned the House in the Committee of the Whole to debate the bill.³⁶ Gallatin used republican ideology to oppose the grandiose construction of the Capitol Building and moved to amend the language of the bill by striking out the words “for completing the buildings” and replacing these with the words “for providing suitable buildings.” He wanted it clearly understood that he preferred “a more suitable and economical plan.” According to the record “Craik had no objection to this amendment and it was accordingly carried.” The bill

³³ House Report 646, Documentary History of U.S. Capitol Building and Grounds, January 30, 1904, 80.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 1266.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 1266.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 1272.

passed on the 20th without recorded discussion.³⁷ The Senate received it later that day.³⁸ On the 21st, the Senate referred the bill to a five-member select committee.³⁹ Senator Lloyd reported the committee's bill on the 28th.⁴⁰ On April 9th, without recorded debate, the Senate approved an amended version of the bill.⁴¹ The bill was amended so that the \$200,000 appropriation was removed and the President was enabled to borrow another \$100,000. The House received the bill on the 12th and referred it to an unspecified select committee.⁴² Craik presented the committee's report on the 13th.⁴³ According to the official record "the chairman of the select committee (Mr. Craik) said, as he believed this was all that could be got at this time, he hoped the amendment would be agreed to. It was agreed to accordingly." The Senate received and approved the bill later that day.⁴⁴ Finally, on April 18, 1798, President Adams approved legislation enabling the President to borrow \$100,000 for the construction of the Capitol Building.⁴⁵

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 1275.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 525.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 526.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 532.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 537.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 1402.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 1413.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 539.

⁴⁵ Statutes at Large I, 551 (April 18, 1798).

Relocating the Seat of Government

The year 1799 was one of expected transition with only one session remaining before the government would reconvene in the permanent seat.⁴⁶ On September 25th, the Commissioners reported that “the Capitol is so far advanced as to authorize an expectation that it will be ready for the reception of Congress before the expiration of the present year.”⁴⁷ In November, the Commissioners sent a report containing “the number and dimensions of the rooms in the Capitol...to enable Congress to judge of the sums necessary to appropriate for furnishing them.” In December, in his 3rd Annual Address, John Adams reported that “suitable buildings for the accommodation of Congress” were constructed and that “the removal of the seat of government [will] take place at the time required.”⁴⁸

On December 5, the House received a report containing detailed measurements of rooms within the Capitol. In addition to five committee rooms, there were also rooms assigned to the Clerk of the Senate, and Clerk of the House.⁴⁹ On the 9th, the House sent the President a long and detailed message outlining their differences and expectations for the session. They included the following paragraph:

The buildings for the accommodation of Congress...at its permanent seat being in such a state as to admit of a removal to that District by the time prescribed by the act of Congress, no obstacle, it is presumed, will exist to a compliance with the law.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Kenneth R. Bowling and Don R. Kennon, *Establishing Congress: The removal to Washington, D.C. and the Election of 1800*, (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2005).

⁴⁷ House Report 646, *Documentary History of U.S. Capitol Building and Grounds*, January 30, 1904, 86.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 86.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 89.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 89.

In the House, on March 20, 1800, Otis observed that “it appeared to be the general opinion that the seat of government would be removed to the Federal City...and as it would be reposing too much power in the Commissioners” he presented a resolution for a select committee “to consider what measures are expedient for Congress to adopt, preparatory to the removal of the seat of government.”⁵¹ On the 21st, Otis amended his resolution so that it was referred to the Committee of Ways and Means.⁵² On the 26th, Harper reported the committee’s bill.⁵³ On April 2, the House resolved into a Committee of the Whole. Debate stalled when a motion was made to fill in the blank for the accommodation of the President’s household. The bill was reintroduced on the 3rd and debated on the 4th. Harper was opposed to provisions in the bill providing the President with furniture “in consequence of some Constitutional doubts which he had expressed.”⁵⁴ The House disagreed with Harper’s constitutional interpretation and passed the bill on the 6th.⁵⁵ It arrived in the Senate on the same day, was reported on the 7th, and referred to a three-member select committee on the 8th.⁵⁶ On the 12th, Ross presented an amended bill and it was approved by the Senate on the 17th.⁵⁷ The House received the amended bill on the 18th and referred it to an unspecified select committee.⁵⁸ On the 22nd, Dennis reported

⁵¹ *Annals of Congress*, 6th Cong., 1st sess., 636.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 638.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 639.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 656.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 658.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 152.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 158, 162.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 673.

the committee's opinion "that it was expedient for the House to accede" to the Senate's position.⁵⁹ They did so, without record of debate.

The act signed by President Adams on April 24, 1800 provided him with the authority to move the executive offices any time he saw fit after the adjournment of the first session of the Sixth Congress and before December 1800.⁶⁰ The language of the act stipulated that

Suitable furniture [is] to be forthwith provided for the apartments, which are to be occupied in the capitol, at the said city, by the two houses [of Congress], respectively, and for the offices and committee rooms of each; and to cause the said apartments, offices, and committee rooms to be furnished in a suitable manner, so as to be ready for the reception of Congress on the day fixed by law for the removal of the government to the said city.⁶¹

In the Senate, on April 23, a motion was made to appoint a committee to for constructing an act to authorize the meeting of Congress at an earlier period than the time directed by the Constitution.⁶² On May 3, the Senate created a three-member select committee to do so.⁶³ On the 7th, Senator Bloodworth reported the committee's bill.⁶⁴ On the 9th the Senate passed the bill.⁶⁵ The House received the bill that day and "on the question for its third reading, it was carried – yeas 32, nays 32. The Speaker voted in the affirmative, and it was ordered to a third

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 679.

⁶⁰ House Report 646, *Documentary History of U.S. Capitol Building and Grounds*, January 30, 1904, 90 (Statues at Large 2, 55).

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 90

⁶² *Annals of Congress*, 6th Cong., 1st sess., 168

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 172

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 175

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 178

reading.”⁶⁶ On the 10th, the House passed the Senate bill after Bayard failed to recommit the bill to the Committee of the Whole.⁶⁷

The move took nearly a year, from March 31, 1800 through February 2, 1801.⁶⁸ In the summer of 1800, the executive departments and the employees of the Senate and House of Representatives arrived in the permanent seat of government.

As the 2nd Session of the 6th Congress approached, the city and the public buildings were still not complete. The footways were not finished and the city was littered with temporary shacks. Perhaps it was an indication of their thoughts on organizational needs that, less than two weeks before Congress was to convene, the doorkeeper for the House of Representatives, requested the commissioners erect a water closet (i.e. toilet) in the center lobby of the Capitol. The members of the House were “at such a distance from the ground floor that it might be difficult to reach the journey’s end in time.”

Conclusion

This chapter has focused on the development of the seat of government policy throughout the transitional period of the 1790s. The emphasis has been on the process by which the development of the constitutional mandated seat of government was executed and what this process revealed about the relationship between the legislative and executive branches. The synthesis of secondary historical literature and analysis of primary documents has revealed three insights. These concern the demise of sectional cleavages surrounding where the seat of

⁶⁶ Ibid., 711

⁶⁷ Ibid., 712

⁶⁸ Kenneth R. Bowling and Don R. Kennon, *Establishing Congress : the removal to Washington, D.C., and the election of 1800*, (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2005).

government would be placed; the legislative abdication and the later push to assert control over the process; and the ideological concerns surrounding questions of funding.

At the start of the decade, the three geographic regions were willing to destroy the new nation over the question of where the new seat of government would be placed. It was uniformly believed that the location would bring untold benefits and that regionally success required fighting for its placement. Across the course of the decade this belief became significantly less pronounced until, in the final year when the act of moving was at hand, no opposition emerged. There are two reasons for the demise of sectional cleavage. First, the decision by Washington to aggressively build the city created a situation where members saw the country expend resources on its development. With expenditures having taken place, congressional elites accepted the fact that a geographic location had become fixed and the question was no longer on the table. Second, and perhaps more importantly, the coalition supporting a seat of government in Philadelphia eroded with the spread of the Yellow Fever epidemics. Philadelphia was not seen as a hospitable location and even its staunchest supporters no longer advocated remaining there.

Another insight helps explain the manner in which Congress initially placed control solely in the hands of the President only to assert authority at a later date. The acquiescence may be explained as a function of George Washington's presidency but the assertion of authority in the 4th Congress should be seen as a watershed moment in institutional development. It should be no surprise that this was also the Congress that saw the formation of the Committee on Ways and Means. It was at this point that the legislative branch began to emerge as a counterweight to the executive. Congressional actors philosophically and strategically adapted to a changing environment. The manner in which they took control of the seat of government policy was

indicative of larger alterations in this relationship.

The third insight concerns the issue of ideology and the process through which the constitutionally mandated seat of government would be funded. At the outset the funding was going to be completely from private sources and the government was not going to be involved. This made sense from a perspective of republican ideology in that the government should not be the agent financing construction. One could look to kings and their castles to get a sense of this. The construction of the people's house was meant to come from the people, not from the government. However, once it became clear that private funds would not be sufficient for construction congressional elites were willing to alter their ideological position and provide funding. This is another instance in which pragmatism trumped ideology. It also reveals the extent to which functionalism became important to members of Congress during the period. They put aside the ideological issue because they knew that they required the building's completion in order to adequately carry out their legislative responsibilities.

The decade of the 1790s was one of transition and change. The new country experienced a host of growing pains and was continually struggling with questions of identity, authority, and structure. Within this turbulent political context, political elites were also concerned with where and how the new government would be housed. Congressional debates, along with presidential proclamations, provide clear evidence that the geographic and physical work environment mattered. Political elites experimented with different solutions and, through a process of trial and error, learned to find solutions that best satisfied their needs. What is most clear about this period is that the seat of government policy transitioned from questions of narrow political cleavages to those of broader national interest which emphasized issues of functionality and capacity. These broader questions continued in the years that followed. The next chapter,

focuses on how the Congress learned to adapt to its new environment and settled into the process of governing from the new national seat.

CHAPTER 4 PRAGMATICALLY DEVELOPING A PHYSICAL WORK ENVIRONMENT

The last chapter presented a political narrative emphasizing the struggle between the legislative and executive branches for control of the seat of government policy. As discussed, control vacillated between the two branches throughout the 1790s with the legislative branch more forcefully asserting itself at the decade's end. In 1800, the seat of government policy question was brought to a close when the central government physically moved to the newly created constitutionally mandated seat.

Up to this point in the narrative, the analytic concept has been the seat of government policy. With this policy now firmly settled, the analytic concept throughout the remainder of the study becomes the physical structure (i.e. the U.S. Capitol Building) in which the legislative branch would be working. Continuing to use the narrative method and emphasizing experiential learning, this chapter traces the process by which the legislative branch increased its control and pragmatically developed this physical working environment throughout the years 1800-1814. Focusing on congressional debates surrounding the development of the physical work environment, the policy narrative is nested within a broader meta-narrative of institutional development. These debates reveal an emerging understanding of the symbiotic relationship between physical space and legislative capacity.

The rest of this chapter is divided into the following three sections. The first provides an outline of the political context of the period, emphasizing the growth of national party organizations, geographic expansion, and enhanced central state authority. The second offers a political narrative of congressional debates surrounding the development of the U.S. Capitol Building, which reveals a consistent, steady process by which congressional actors enhanced control over physical construction and increased the building's capacity for legislative activity.

Three policy dimensions are identified - administrative control, financing, and spatial arrangements – that enabled Congress to pragmatically develop a physical work environment conducive to geographic expansion and increased central state authority. These reflect conscious choices to construct a physical work environment that would best enable them to govern an expanding nation. The third section concludes the chapter with observations on the political narrative.

Political Context

Before the chapter addresses the pragmatic development of the physical work environment during the period, a political context is offered.¹ The context has two components - the broad narrative of early 19th century politics and the specific context of the early 19th century Congress. The Congresses assessed in this chapter are contained in Table 4-1 below.

Concerning 19th century politics, the emphasis is on three significant aspects of politics – the growth of national party organizations, geographic expansion, and enhanced central state authority. Regarding the congressional institution, the emphasis is on an increased reliance on standing committees, party leaders, routine rules and standardized floor behavior.

Thomas Jefferson’s presidency witnessed an increase in the centralization of party organizations. By 1800, parties had replaced sectionalism as the primary determinant of congressional voting. During Jefferson’s presidency the government functioned through party and the most noteworthy institution in Congress was the extra-constitutional party organization

¹ My understanding of the era’s political context is derived from the following - Noble E. Cunningham, Jr., *The Process of Government Under Jefferson* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978); Ralph Volney Harlow, *The History of Legislative Methods in the Period Before 1825*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1917); Sean M. Theriault, “Party politics during the Louisiana Purchase,” *Social Science History*, 30 (Summer 2006): 293-324; J. Hoadley, “The Emergence of Political Parties in Congress, 1789-1803,” *American Political Science Review*, 74 (3, 1980): 757-779; J.R. Blau and C. Elman, “The institutionalization of US Political Parties: Patronage Newspapers,” *Sociological Inquiry*, 72 (Fall, 2002): 576-599; Sarah A. Binder, “Partisanship and Procedural Choice: Institutional Change in the Early Congress, 1789-1823,” *Journal of Politics*, 57 (November, 1995): 1093-1118; Noble E. Cunningham, Jr., *The Presidency of James Monroe*, (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1996).

called the caucus. From the Seventh Congress on, the Republicans made regular use of the caucus and Republicans in Congress.

Table 4-1 Congresses: Year and Party Breakdown 1801-1813

Congress	Year	Party Breakdown
7	1801-1803	68 Jeffersonian Republicans 38 Federalists
8	1803-1805	103 Jeffersonian Republicans 39 Federalists
9	1805-1807	114 Jeffersonian Republicans 28 Federalists
10	1807-1809	116 Jeffersonian Republicans 26 Federalists
11	1809-1811	92 Jeffersonian Republicans 50 Federalists
12	1811-1813	107 Jeffersonian Republicans 36 Federalists

Taken from U.S. House of Representatives Office of the Clerk (http://clerk.house.gov/art_history/house_history/index.html)

Throughout the period, the country continued to expand geographically. By 1808, the end of Jefferson's presidency, the nation's population was approaching seven million, the area of the country had been nearly doubled by the purchase of Louisiana, and the membership in Congress had increased to 176 representatives and senators. The size of the country and its continuing growth required increased central administration.

While the broader political landscape was undergoing significant alterations, the legislative branch was also changing and its internal structure was becoming noticeably more routinized. This institutional development was noticeable through an increased reliance on standing committees, party leaders, routine rules and standardized floor behavior.

Standing committees became increasingly important, as can be understood through the development of the Ways and Means Committee. When the Committee of Ways and Means was revised in 1802 the committee's functions were expanded and it was made an oversight committee charged with watching all executive departments. The broad responsibilities of the Committee of Ways and Means resulted in a large proportion of major legislation passing

through that committee and necessitated extensive committee work. When at the beginning of each session the Secretary of the Treasury furnished Congress with detailed estimates of revenues and expenditures, the Committee did not simply report legislation to implement the executive requests but guarded its power through regular reviews of executive action. By the end of Jefferson's second term, standing committees regularly asserted their independence and guarded their final legislative power by calling upon department heads for information and recommendations. Cabinet members were responsive to congressional requests, appeared before congressional committees, and informally conferred with and advised individual legislators. They regularly assisted in the drafting of legislation and reviewed matters before congressional committees.

Even with the increased power of congressional committees, Jefferson's power over Congress was very strong. In addition to appointing floor leaders, he also guided policy development and prevented bills from being heard. His Treasury Secretary, Albert Gallatin, had previous experience in the House that was used to coordinate policy. In his successful attempt to overcome friction within Republican ranks, Jefferson had constructed a highly centralized system. During all of his first term and for a greater part of his second Jefferson succeeded in dominating the party which he had helped to create, and caucus and congressional floor leaders continually looked to him for advice and direction.

As these internal aspects of Congress became more routine, the presidency shifted from Jefferson's strong grip to Madison's. Madison's presidency was a transitional period during which a readjustment of executive-legislative relations occurred. Strong presidential leadership, Cabinet effectiveness, party viability, and successful working relationships between the executive and legislative branches do not describe Madison's presidency. Madison's troubles

began before his inauguration. Early in January 1809, the House broke away from executive control by appropriating money for the Navy and repealing Jefferson's embargo and, in the Senate, a small group known as 'War Hawks' eviscerated Madison's control.

Congress Develops a Physical Work Environment 1800-1814

This was the broad political and institutional context within which Congress grappled with developing its newly constructed, though still incomplete, physical space (i.e. the U.S. Capitol Building). Throughout the decade and a half period assessed in this chapter three policy dimensions in the construction process - administrative control, financing, and spatial arrangements – can be discerned.² Assessed analytically, the period reveals an experiential process in which Congress pragmatically adjusted any remaining ideological beliefs that rejected a functionally capable seat of government and emphasized the development of a physical work environment conducive to geographic expansion and increased central state authority. Viewed as a political narrative the chapter reveals the manner in which congressional actors confronted the dilemma of governing a nation within a work environment continually under construction and made conscious choices that enabled them to better take control of the process.

Congress Arrives in Washington, D.C.

In January 1801, almost immediately after the legislative branch had arrived in the new building, the architect informed them that that “no house has been provided for the Judiciary of the United States.”³ This was a significant slighting of the third branch of government since,

² Contextual information about the politics surrounding the construction of the Capitol Building comes from the following - William C. Allen, *History of the United States Capitol: A Chronicle of Design, Construction, and Politics*, (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001); Bob Arnebeck, *Through a Fiery Trial: Building Washington, 1790-1800*, (Lanham: Madison Books, 1991); Kenneth R. Bowling, *Creating the Federal City, 1774-1800: Potomac Fever*, (Washington, D.C.: American Institute of Architects Press, 1988); Pamela Scott, *Temple of Liberty: Building the Capitol for a New Nation*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

³ House Report 646, *Documentary History of U.S. Capitol Building and Grounds*, January 30, 1904, 51.

after all, the executive and legislative were provided identifiable spaces. The architect suggested that “the Supreme Court could be accommodated with a room in the Capitol.” Within two days, the Senate “consent[ed] to the accommodation of the Supreme Court in one of the committee rooms.”⁴ It is plausible to interpret this sequence of events as an indication that the Supreme Court was not provided a room immediately because, as a weak institution, it was an afterthought. As will be seen later in the narrative, as the judicial branch grew in institutional strength it was also provided additional space within the Capitol Building.

Jefferson’s Arrival

Throughout the administrations of Washington and Adams, the legislative branch had struggled with exercising control over the administrative agencies responsible for construction of their physical work environment. By the end of Adams' presidency the legislative branch had firmly positioned itself within the administrative hierarchy and had taken responsibility for future development.

With Jefferson's presidency, however, Congress constructed a new form of administrative agency that shifted power back to the executive thereby weakening their institutional position and strengthening that of the executive's. The policy of administrative control was adjusted at the start of Jefferson’s presidency when Congress abolished the three-member Board of Commissioners in the City of Washington and replaced it with a single administrator known as the Superintendent of the City.⁵

The legislative process by which this transformation was accomplished took place in the following manner. On January 11, 1802, the House created a five member select committee on

⁴ Senate Journal, 6-2, 116.

⁵ Stats. at Large, v. 2, 175.

the memorials and documents of the Commissioners of the City of Washington.⁶ On February 12th, Representative Nicholson issued the select committee report, which recommended that “the offices of two of the Commissioners of the City of Washington ought to be abolished, and all the duties of the commission be thereafter vested in one commissioner.”⁷ On April 8th, Representative Nicholson presented the bill and it was committed to a Committee of the Whole.⁸ On the 16th, it passed without record of debate.⁹ It was received in the Senate later that day, and referred to a three member select committee.¹⁰ On the 17th, Representative Nicholas reported the committee’s amended bill.¹¹ On the 26th, the Senate passed the amended bill.¹² Later that day it arrived in the House and they “took up the amendments of the Senate” before committing the bill.¹³ On the 28th, the House formed in a Committee of the Whole and, “after some time therein, the Committee rose and reported to the House their agreement to the [Senate bill], with several amendments.”¹⁴ On the 29th, the House passed the amended bill.¹⁵ The Senate received, and passed, the bill that day.¹⁶

⁶ *Annals of Congress*, 7th Cong., 1st sess., 416.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 498.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 1157.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 1194.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 264.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 266.

¹² *Ibid.*, 292.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 1248.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 1250.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 1252.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 300.

This congressional action was responsible for two outcomes. First, the new office of Superintendent of the City was under the exclusive control of the President. Thus, at the outset of President Jefferson's term, congressional actors returned to the executive branch the authority and power they had acquired. Congress abdicated future responsibility for the construction of their physical work environment by placing authority of the Superintendent unilaterally within the office of the executive.

Second, the legislation adjusted the financing of the Capitol Building by instituting a policy of congressional appropriation. The appropriation of 1802 represented the third funding mechanism for construction of the U.S. Capitol Building. At first, the sale of physical lots was going to provide the necessary funding for development. When that failed to materialize, Congress guaranteed a loan that would be repaid with 6% interest. When that failed to cover the costs of construction, Congress appropriated funds on its own.¹⁷ This appropriation (unlike the loan guarantees of 1796 and 1798) did not raise congressional debate. Part of the explanation may lie in the fact that the commissioners were not successfully selling city lots.¹⁸ If Congress wanted their working conditions to improve, in other words, they had to adapt their ideologies and appropriate funds to develop the Congressional Work Environment.

Thus, the Act of 1802 was an instance in which the legislative branch weakened its position by placing administrative control within the hands of the executive, and also placed the burden of development at the feet of the federal government. The interaction between these policy dimensions, and the manner in which they worked to strengthen the executive, is highlighted by the executive's further creation of a new office, the Surveyor of the Public

¹⁷ Stats. at Large, v. 2, 236.

¹⁸ American State Papers, Class X, Misc., v. I, 337. No. 159. 7th Congress, 2d Session. City of Washington. Communicated to Congress, January 25, 1803.

Buildings, which existed outside of congressional jurisdiction. According to Jefferson, the Surveyor would direct expenditures but the Superintendent would keep accounts and provide administration. Thus, administrative control had been shifted by Congress from the Board to the Superintendent, and then Jefferson integrated control into the executive branch by creating the Surveyor. This creative use of administrative jurisdiction enabled Jefferson to direct spending and control the overall development of the Capitol Building.

Discovering Organizational Needs

A year later, when the next appropriation was requested, Representative Mitchell moved the appointment of a joint committee of both Houses to “inquire into the state of the public buildings.”¹⁹ This joint committee represented the first effort by the legislative branch to re-assert itself and indicates an attempt to establish a new administrative environment.

In response to the joint committee's request, the Surveyor submitted an assessment, the first of four assessments within the decade and a half contained in this chapter, of the Capitol's interior that illuminated contemporary congressional needs.²⁰ The building was marred by “a poverty of design” that prevented the smooth operation of House business. The interior arrangement did not provide any committee rooms, nor were there offices for the Speaker, the clerk, the engrossing clerks, or the doorkeeper. There were no fireproof storage rooms for records or “closets of convenience” (a euphemism for toilets). In addition, the lobbies and galleries were inadequate for the current membership and would not be able to support any increase.

¹⁹ *Annals of Congress*, 7th Cong., 2nd sess., 492.

²⁰ Mss.: Letters of the Commissioners of Public Buildings and Grounds of the City of Washington and District of Columbia, v. 5, 412; and Mss.: Letters of the Commissioners of Public Buildings and Grounds of the City of Washington and District of Columbia, v. 5, 443.

To ameliorate these problems, the Surveyor proposed a new interior arrangement that would hold up to 360 members, with sufficient committee rooms, offices, storage space, and toilets. Congressional concerns included repairs into the conditions under which Congress met. Plastering and stucco work needed repairing because, “after every rain, fresh leaks are observed.” One immediate problem was the House chamber. The wing in which it was to meet was not finished and a solution had to be reached. Jefferson himself determined that the House would meet in an elliptically shaped edifice that came to be known as ‘the oven’ because the temperature inside became unbearably hot.²¹

In 1804, the Surveyor of Public Buildings sent the committee a detailed list of physical problems that continued to highlight organizational needs.²² The list noted the absence of committee rooms, a chamber for the Speaker, an office for the Clerk of the House, offices for engrossing clerks, an apartment for the doorkeeper, an apartment for subordinate officers of the House, ‘closets of convenience,’ fire-proof repositories of records, a lobby sufficient for the retirement of the members, and a commodious gallery.²³ The Surveyor proposed they “raise up the floor of the legislative hall to the level of the present library, and to use the whole lower story as the situation for committee rooms and offices. The Speaker and the Clerk of the House would have offices level with the floor of the House.”

Debating Removal and Relocation

On February 22, 1804, the House created a five member select committee to inquire into the message from the President communicating a report of the Surveyor of the Public Buildings

²¹ Mss.: Letters of the Presidents of the United States, p. 121: Office of Public Buildings and Grounds, War Department.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

of Washington.²⁴ The select committee was appointed to review and assess the building's construction history and ask the Surveyor for more detail on the original plans. In his response, the Surveyor informed Congress of the myriad problems with the original design, including the absence of committee rooms or offices. All of these problems had heretofore been provided to the President, but now Congress learned of them as well. This was perhaps the first instance in which congressional actors were learning of the dilemma created by having the executive more in control of the construction process than themselves.

The Surveyor's response led Congress to move through the following legislative process. On March 6, Representative Thompson presented a report with the opinion that "two annual appropriations of fifty thousand dollars ought to be made."²⁵ On the 13th, the House agreed to the bill.²⁶ On the 16th, it arrived in the Senate.²⁷ Also on the 16th, with the appropriations bill now before the chamber, Senator Wright announced that he was going to reopen the seat of government debate by introducing a bill calling for a temporary removal of the seat of government to the city of Baltimore.²⁸ On the 17th, Senator Wright introduced his bill, and the Senate assigned the House bill to a three member select committee.²⁹ On the 19th, Senator Jackson reported the committee's bill without debate.³⁰ This left the Senate with the question of

²⁴ *Annals of Congress*, 8th Cong., 1st sess., 1044.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 1093.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 1183.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 278 .

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 279.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 280.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 282.

Wright's seat of government bill, which was presented and debated on the 19th.³¹ Throughout the debate, congressional actors made reference to the lessons learned from the two-capitals solution that had proved so cumbersome and unwieldy at the end of the Continental Congress.

The debate on Senator Wright's bill was a lengthy one "which had progressed to some length before the reporter entered the House." Senator Wright argued that "it was not his intention in presenting the bill, that it should pass; but that it had been offered with the view of acting as a spur to the inhabitants of Washington to effect a more complete accommodation of Congress....[He wanted to] hang the bill over their heads." Senator Jackson argued that removal "would destroy all confidence in the Government, from one end of the continent to the other." Senator Anderson "believed, from an experience of the inconveniences attending the existing seat, it was their duty to change it." Senator Adams "strenuously contended against the right of Congress to remove the seat of Government. To do so, would be to prostrate the national faith, and to shake the confidence of the nation in the government."

Senator Dayton rose to say that if the bill moved forward he was instructed by the New Jersey legislature to offer the public buildings in Trenton. He did not want to do this, though. He praised the Constitution and the concept of a permanent seat.

The provision of the Constitution had arisen from an experience of the necessity of establishing a permanent seat for the government. To avert the evils arising from a perpetual state of mutation, and from the agitation of the public mind whenever it is discussed, the Constitution had wisely provided for the establishment of a permanent seat...[He went on to say there] some rightful grounds of removal...[such as] if the place should be found a grave-yard for those who resided in it or if the inconveniences of conducting the machine of Government should be so great as to prevent the due transaction of conducting the machine of government should be so great as to prevent the due transaction of the public business.

³¹ Ibid., 282-288.

Senator Maclay discussed “the existing inconveniences of this place, and the want of accommodation to which Congress was exposed...He believed that this place would not long remain the seat. The members of the government will become tired of remaining here, when they are convinced that the inconveniences which they experience will not promote the advantage even of their posterity.” Senator Jackson then rose to say “nothing short of an act of God, in the shape of an earthquake, a plague, or some other fatal scourge, would justify a removal.” Senator Anderson believed “that such would be the experience of the inconveniences of the place, that Congress would certainly remove within five years...The ill accommodation of the place was manifest to every man...The great loss of time which arose from the inconvenient arrangements of the place.” Senator Jackson argued against relocating, arguing that the framers of the Constitution wanted a permanent seat. “It was not then imagined that the government ought to be traveling about from post to pillar, according to the prevalence of this or that party or faction. All the ideas of that day were hostile to this wheelbarrow kind of government.” Senator Adams then presented a legalistic argument, emphasizing the word ‘seat’ rather than ‘seats.’

The reason of this provision in the Constitution is obvious...The government had been driven from post to pillar. The question, what place should be the seat of government, had never presented itself without enkindling violent feelings; and it was supposed that the question would continue to distract our public councils until some permanent seat of government was fixed.

The bill’s supporters attempted a variety of legislative delay tactics before the bill was soundly defeated. However, the position of the bill's opponents was stronger. Their reliance upon the institutional lesson of the two-capitals solution of the 1780s established a very strong position and, from the record, it is clear that that the majority of Senators did not want to reopen the seat of government policy.

Once the Senate defeated Senator Wright’s seat of government bill, an interesting sequence of events occurred which provides some insight into bicameral differences on the future

development of the physical working environment. The legislative process unfolded in the following manner. On March 24th, the Senate passed an amended version of the House bill.³² The amendment would have the Congress physically relocate away from the unfinished U.S. Capitol Building to the finished President's House. The House received the bill that day and Representatives "Randolph and Sloan supported; and Messrs. Lewis, Smilie, Dawson, Claiborne, and Elmer opposed."³³ The Senate amendment was defeated by a wide margin. That same day "a message from the House of Representatives informed the Senate that the House do not concur in the amendment of the Senate."³⁴ The Senate voted on a motion to adhere to their amendment, with a resulting 12-12 vote.³⁵ They then voted to postpone consideration to the next session, with a 14-9 majority opposed to postponement. The Senate then passed a resolution, without debate or recorded vote, insisting on their amendment. Two members were appointed managers for a bicameral conference and, on the 26th, the House appointed three members.³⁶ On the 27th, Senator Anderson reported to the Senate that the conference committee "could come to no agreement" and the Senate managers recommended postponing the bill to the next session.³⁷ The Senate disagreed 19-5, and then voted 17-7 to rescind their amendment. The legislative process outlined here indicates that the House, in 1804, was in a stronger position than the Senate on the issue of appropriations for the physical work environment.

³² Ibid., 299.

³³ Ibid., 1237.

³⁴ Ibid., 300.

³⁵ Ibid., 301.

³⁶ Ibid., 1237.

³⁷ Ibid., 306.

House and Senate Cope with Construction Difficulties

At the end of four full years in the new building, construction remained undone when the second session of the 8th Congress began on November 5, 1804. In December the Surveyor reported that progress had been made but no final cost could be estimated. He then requested that Congress double the amount appropriated. Congressional actors saw the report as an outline of cost overruns and excuses for a lack of progress.³⁸ On December 17, the House created a seven member select committee charged with responsibility for commenting on the Surveyor's report.³⁹ Without record of debate, a new appropriation of \$130,000 was granted.⁴⁰ This time, there was no bicameral disagreement.

A year later, at the start of the next Congress in December 1805, Congress received another report of cost overruns and a lack of progress.⁴¹ He placed the blame on the amount of construction taking place Washington and Baltimore arguing that it had limited the amount of supplies available. In short, the Capitol would not be completed within the current session. On December 27, 1805, the House created a five member select committee on the Surveyor's report.⁴² Representative Nelson presented the committee's report, and bill, on March 24, 1806, when it was committed to a Committee of the Whole.⁴³

³⁸ Message from the President of the United States, communicating a report of the Surveyor of the Public Buildings at the City of Washington, Dec. 6, 1804.

³⁹ *Annals of Congress*, 8th Cong., 2nd sess., 836.

⁴⁰ Stats. at Large, v. 2, 311.

⁴¹ Message from the President of the United States, communicating a report of the Surveyor of the Public Buildings at the City of Washington, on the subject of the said buildings and the application of the monies appropriated for them, Dec. 27, 1805.

⁴² *Annals of Congress*, 9th Cong., 1st sess., 321.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 839.

The House report of 1806 relied on two primary observations made by the Surveyor. First, the Surveyor lamented the inability to complete improvements that would have “rendered the Senate chamber more commodious and warm, and...procured for that branch of the legislature the offices and committee rooms which are so much wanted.” Second, he criticized the building’s structure because “there can be no communication between the House and the offices.” After the report was received, the House passed the appropriation bill on April 12 and the Senate followed on the 17th.⁴⁴ In both Houses there is no record of debate. Four days later, the President signed a \$40,000 appropriation.⁴⁵

House Asserts Control

Throughout this six year period, the House had been holding its sessions within a squat, oval uncomfortable building referred to as 'the oven.' Members had continually been told that the oven's end was near and that the debate room planned for the House would soon be finished. In 1806, they had enough. On the same day as they passed the appropriations bill, Representative Ely introduced a resolution that the President “be requested to take effectual measures to cause the south wing of the Capitol to be prepared for the accommodation of the House of Representatives, by the commencement of the next session.”⁴⁶ The House appointed Representatives Ely and Dawson to present the resolution to the President and instruct him that their chambers must be ready by the 9th Congress, 2nd session. The Senate also complained about cramped conditions, particularly since only one room was available for committee meetings.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 1016, 236.

⁴⁵ *Stats at Large*, v. 2, 399.

⁴⁶ *Annals of Congress*, 8th Cong., 1st sess., 1063.

By this time, many members were working in the Capitol on Saturdays even if they had no committee business or floor debates. The Capitol Building had also become a place to interact with colleagues and travelers. By 1806, the “grand Senatorial Hall” was blamed for the lack of public attention to debates. Both listeners in the galleries and stenographers in the hall were kept away by a room “so spacious and fire-places so inconveniently placed that it is almost as bad as a barn.”⁴⁷

On December 15, 1806, the House received a letter from President Jefferson stating he “took every measure within my power” to complete the south wing, but it was not yet complete.⁴⁸ The Surveyor’s report of 1806 explained “that the numerous committee rooms and offices, together with the increased size and altered form of the House, will require a special appropriation for furnishing the same.”⁴⁹ In other words, he would need an additional appropriation in order to furnish the building’s interior.

The report also strongly suggests that the relative power of the judicial branch had increased by this time. Instead of being an afterthought relegated to an empty committee room, the Court was now provided with a court room, a grand jury room, two jury rooms, an office for the clerk of the Supreme Court, and an office for the clerk of the Circuit court. Additionally, three new committee rooms, a new lobby, and an office for the Secretary of the House would be provided. To accomplish this, the Surveyor requested an appropriation of \$100,000.

Later that day, Representative Randolph introduced a resolution calling on the President to present the House with “an account, stating the several sums which have been expended on the

⁴⁷ Cunningham, *Process of Government*, 270.

⁴⁸ *Annals of Congress*, 9th Cong., 2nd sess., 151.

⁴⁹ Message from the President of the United States, communicating a report of the Surveyor of the Public Buildings at the City of Washington, communicated Dec. 15, 1806.

Capitol.”⁵⁰ In response, Representatives Alston and Olin argued that such an account “might be embarrassing to the public officers.” Representative Randolph replied that this was his object. “He possessed no standard of comparison whereby to determine its propriety. He wished to know the aggregate amount which this sink of expense, of increasing expense, has cost the nation.” The record notes “the resolution was then agreed to without a division,” and the House appointed a two member select committee to present it to the President.

Furnishing the Work Environment

On January 2, 1807 the House referred the President’s message on the public buildings to a three member select committee.⁵¹ On February 5, Representative Lewis presented the committee’s bill for “making appropriations for finishing the south wing of the Capitol” and it was committed to a Committee of the Whole.⁵² On February 13, Representative Lewis presented the bill and it was debated.⁵³ A request for an additional \$25,000 to finish the building was accepted without question, but this was followed by two debates.

The first concerned a \$20,000 request for furnishing the chamber. Representative Gregg pointed out that “the legislature had been there seven years, and there seemed little or no likelihood that the Capitol would be finished and ready for their use in seven years more.” Representative Lewis justified the select committee’s decision making process. “The select committee had agreed to the sums which had been moved, because they were stated to be necessary by the Superintendent of the public works.” The House then rejected the \$20,000 figure. This was followed by a vote on an \$18,000 appropriation which the House also rejected.

⁵⁰ *Annals of Congress*, 9th Cong., 2nd sess., 159-160.

⁵¹ *Annals of Congress*, 9th Cong., 2nd sess., 245.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 456.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 495.

Speaker Macon rose to say “he hoped they would not spoil the room for want of one or two thousand dollars.” Representative Lewis made a conciliatory speech and offered the sum of \$17,000 based on the fact that “the present furniture would not suit the new chamber in the south wing [and] there were also several committee rooms to be furnished.” The House ultimately agreed to the \$17,000 figure.

The second debate concerned language which proposed “to alter and repair the east side of the north wing.” Representative D.R. Williams moved to strike out the word ‘alter.’ In an attempt to create more space, a plan was offered to rearrange the building so that the Senate would be in an upper floor. This offended Representative Williams. “When a bill is sent down from the Senate to the House of Representatives, it will, if the alteration takes place, really descend, as this House will be about fifteen feet lower than the Senate.” The House agreed to strike the word ‘alter’ from the bill.

The Senate received the bill on February 17, and assigned it to a three member select committee on the 18th.⁵⁴ On the 20th, Bayard reported the committee’s amended bill.⁵⁵ On the 27th, the Senate passed the amended bill.⁵⁶ The House received it later that day.⁵⁷ On March 2, the House agreed to the Senate amendments.⁵⁸ Congress approved an appropriations bill allocating \$25,000 for the Capitol; \$17,000 for furnishings; and \$25,000 for a new roof. The whole ground floor was reserved for the Supreme Court. The Senate would move upstairs, having use of the second and third floors.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 69-70.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 74.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 94.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 636.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 673.

Intrusions Upon the Business of the House

On March 25, 1808, toward the end of the first session of the 10th Congress, the House received that session's report from the Surveyor and immediately assigned it to a five member select committee.⁵⁹ The report of 1808, unlike any of the earlier reports, reveals the extent to which contemporaries viewed the complex interaction of spatial arrangement, administrative problems, and legislative work. In his report, the Surveyor explained how all of these were addressed through the latest alterations in the arrangements of various rooms and spaces in the Capitol Building.⁶⁰

In order to prevent “intrusion upon the business of the House, and of its committees” public entrance was limited to an eastern entrance. An entire floor was provided for committees and the Clerk of the House.

The committee rooms ranged on the east and west fronts have an ante-chamber or waiting-room, to each range, for the use of those citizens who have to attend the committees, and who, heretofore, had no accommodation but such as the lobby or the gallery of the house afforded.

A great deal of attention was paid to alterations that would limit the number of visitors on the House floor. The doorkeeper was strategically stationed in order to have “an immediate view of every one who enters.” The redesign of the gallery was meant to end loitering in the lobbies. Upon the House floor,

there is no room for any persons, not members of the House, excepting on the seats under the northern part of the wall. Those seats were erected on the presumption that the House might appropriate the same to the use of Senators of the United States, when attending the House, and of such other persons, distinguished by their official characters, as the House might judge proper to admit them.

⁵⁹ *Annals of Congress*, 10th Cong., 1st sess., 1870.

⁶⁰ House Report 646, *Documentary History of U.S. Capitol Building and Grounds*, January 30, 1904, 129-131.

While it was considered proper that “the lower gallery lobbies will become the stations of those who usually sell refreshments in such place” new alterations were in place to stop the persistent problem of unlimited access to committee rooms and the Clerk’s office.

The report paints an interesting picture of the chaotic physical environment in which early 19th century congressional actors worked, and the way in which physical redesigns were attempted to reduce the chaos.

It was, indeed, impossible to distinguish those who ought from those who ought not to have entered. The consequence was, that every part was crowded by those who had, and by more who had no business in the house. There were annually from four to five hundred persons whom their affairs bring to the seat of Government during the sitting of the National Legislature; for these citizens the interior of the house afforded the only shelter during the severity of the winter. The lobby of the house was, therefore, usually filled with a part of them, to the great inconvenience of the members, and sometimes to the interruption of legislative business. Besides these, idle and dissolute persons ranged the whole building; the walls were defaced by obscenity and by libels; the public furniture and utensils of the House were considered as fair objects of depredation.

The report concluded by explaining that any interior arrangements were limited by the exterior design and that “the size and arrangement of the committee rooms,” could have been better.

It is my ardent wish, and all my ambition is centered in the desire, that the personal accommodation of the members, and the convenience of the committees of the House, upon which so much depend the dispatch and ease of legislative business, as well as the best practicable disposition and arrangement of the legislative hall itself, may have been attained.

Administrative Oversight

President Jefferson sent the Congress an additional report that itemized expenditures, and included an extended discussion of the “two objections to the Hall of Congress, which were discovered immediately on the opening of the session – the difficulty of hearing and speaking in it, and the unpleasant effect of the mode adopted to warm the house upon the air of the room.”⁶¹

⁶¹ Ibid., 131-137.

The report mentions many speeches “and the appointment of committees for the purpose of inquiry into their causes and remedy.”

On April 5, Representative Stanford presented the select committee’s response to the report.⁶² The committee recommended “making an appropriation to cover an unauthorized expenditure of fifty-one thousand dollars upon the south wing of the Capitol.” Representative Randolph opposed the appropriation arguing “when the revenue of the United States was suspended, when credit was extended on customhouse bonds, it was no time for a wanton waste of the public money.” He was especially opposed to repaying money that had not been authorized to begin with. “This expense has been incurred, not by the Executive, not by the Head of a Department, but by somebody whom we do not know...If this bill was agreed to, Mr. Randolph said, he must consider all control over the expenditure of public money as absolutely abandoned.” Representative Stanford “lamented that so much business had lately been thrown into the hands of the public printers that the report of the Superintendent of Public Buildings, which would present a proper view of this subject, had not been yet printed for the use of the House.” Representative Lewis explained that the money had been spent because “Congress was convened at an early period, and they wanted a room to meet in.” Representative Eppes pointed blame at the Superintendent whom he claimed “had grossly abused his trust.” He moved to recommit the bill to the committee, with instruction to inquire into the expediency of abolishing the office of Surveyor of the Public Buildings. Representative D.R. Williams gave “a speech of some length” condemning the Surveyor. The House agreed to Eppes’s motion to recommit. Regarding the office of the Surveyor the committee concluded that the office is “at this time, under the general control and direction of the President” and the office “appears not to be an

⁶² *Annals of Congress*, 10th Cong., 1st sess., 1973.

officer recognized by the law, but has been employed by the President alone,” and that “it is an office, indeed, which must cease with the appropriations that sustain it.”⁶³

The select committee reported the recommitted bill on April 21.⁶⁴ On the 23rd, the House passed a bill paying for arrears while “refusing to make an appropriation for the ensuing year.”⁶⁵ On the last day of the session, April 25, the Senate received the bill, and amended it so that money would be appropriated to complete “the work deficient in the interior of the south wing.”⁶⁶ The House refused to accept the amended bill and returned it to the Senate.⁶⁷ Later that day, without recorded debate, the Senate receded from their amendment.⁶⁸ The final Act appropriated \$51,500 for the deficit of 1807, \$25,000 for the Senate Chamber, and \$11,500 for the south wing.

Complete and Finish

On December 1, the Senate received the Surveyor’s report.⁶⁹ The House received it on December 2.⁷⁰ His progress included alterations to the library, “now much too small for the books already purchased,” that included, “a private reading room for the members of the legislature, [and] the great library.” In total, the alterations added 19 rooms for the Senate, 13 for the Judiciary, and 11 for the library.

⁶³ House Report 646, *Documentary History of U.S. Capitol Building and Grounds*, January 30, 1904, 140-143.

⁶⁴ *Annals of Congress*, 10th Cong., 1st sess., 2251.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 2272.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 380.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 2279.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 380.

⁶⁹ *Annals of Congress*, 10th Cong., 2nd sess., 194.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 633.

On the 6th, the House referred it to the Committee for the District of Columbia.⁷¹ This marked the first time that the House sent the Surveyor's report to a standing, rather than a select, committee. On the 8th, the Senate referred it to a three member select committee.⁷² The next day, Senator Bradley presented the Senate bill.⁷³ On the 13th, the Senate created a separate three member select committee to assess the amount spent on the public buildings thus far and the amount “required to complete and finish” the two wings of the Capitol.⁷⁴ Senator Bradley presented that select committee’s report on the 21st.⁷⁵ The Surveyor was directed to make the library available for the Senate “with as little expense as may consist with the reasonable comfort of the members and the convenience of spectators.”⁷⁶ The Surveyor replied “it is utterly impossible to prepare the Senate chamber on the east side of the north wing, by the time of the next meeting of the Senate.”⁷⁷

On the 29th, the Senate passed the bill and sent it to the House.⁷⁸ The record, however, reports that on the 30th, Senator Tiffin reported the bill “correctly engrossed” and, on motion of Senator Lloyd, it was recommitted to a new three member select committee for further consideration.⁷⁹ On January 5, 1809, Senator Gregg reported the committee’s bill and it was

⁷¹Ibid., 702.

⁷²Ibid., 231.

⁷³Ibid., 236.

⁷⁴Ibid., 239.

⁷⁵Ibid., 256.

⁷⁶House Report 646, Documentary History of U.S. Capitol Building and Grounds, January 30, 1904, 153.

⁷⁷Ibid., 1904, 153-154.

⁷⁸*Annals of Congress*, 10th Cong., 2nd sess., 301.

⁷⁹Ibid., 302.

passed and sent to the House.⁸⁰ On the 7th, the House received the Senate's bill.⁸¹ On the 10th, it was read and committed to a Committee of the Whole.⁸² On March 1, the House debated the bill.⁸³ Representative Alston "said that he wished to withhold any appropriation but for the accommodation of the Senate...As long as the present Superintendent remained in office, he would not vote a cent further." The record notes that Representatives "Alston, Sloan, Smilie and Stanford" advocated withholding funds while Representatives "Macon, Nelson, J.G. Jackson and Lyon opposed it on the ground that the buildings, having been commenced, ought to be finished." The House opposed striking the appropriation or any other part of the bill. Representative Culpepper unsuccessfully attempted to a motion to recommit before the House passed the bill. The session concluded with approval of a \$31,000 appropriation.⁸⁴

More Committee Rooms, Please

During the 11th Congress the Surveyor reported that "no provision whatsoever has been made for furnishing the Senate chamber, its committee rooms, lo^bbies, and offices."⁸⁵ There is no record of a House discussion or vote, but a \$16,600 appropriation was subsequently made for the purpose of finishing and furnishing the said rooms.⁸⁶ On December 21, 1809 the House

⁸⁰ Ibid., 306.

⁸¹ Ibid., 1025.

⁸² Ibid., 1040.

⁸³ Ibid., 1546.

⁸⁴ House Report 646, Documentary History of U.S. Capitol Building and Grounds, January 30, 1904, 155.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 1904, 155-156.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 156.

received the Surveyor's report.⁸⁷ On the 22nd it was referred to a five member select committee.⁸⁸ The report emphasized the need for additional committee rooms.⁸⁹

To the perfect accommodation of the House of Representatives, nothing is so much wanted as a sufficient number of committee rooms. The standing committees of the House are eight, and it has been moved to increase their number to nine. When the House first occupied the south wing, the number of committees and committee rooms was only seven. The Committee of the District of Columbia has been since then created, and great inconvenience has been experienced for want of a room sufficiently spacious for their increasing business.

On January 10, 1810, Representative Lewis presented the select committee's bill and it was committed to a Committee of the Whole.⁹⁰ On May 1, the last day of 11th Congress, 2nd session, the House debated the bill.⁹¹ The record notes that "considerable debate took place on the proposed appropriations: Messrs. Randolph and W. Alston opposing them; and Messrs. Lewis, Macon, Lyon, Key, and Love, supporting them." They passed the bill the same day. The Senate received, and passed, the bill that day.⁹²

The 11th Congress ended with the Senate resolving to move into their new chamber and the House requesting a detailed accounting of costs from President Madison.⁹³ On December 28, 1810, on motion of Representative Alston, the House resolved that the President provide the

⁸⁷ *Annals of Congress*, 11th Cong., 1st sess., 828.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 844.

⁸⁹ House Report 646, *Documentary History of U.S. Capitol Building and Grounds*, January 30, 1904, 157-160.

⁹⁰ *Annals of Congress*, 11th Cong., 1st sess., 1196.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 2051.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 680.

⁹³ House Report 646, *Documentary History of U.S. Capitol Building and Grounds*, January 30, 1904, 162-166.

House an account of money expended for completing the Capitol and he and Representative Richards were appointed to present the resolution to the President.⁹⁴

End to the Building Process

On January 14, 1811 Representative Macon submitted a resolution that the President provide the House and estimate of the amount required to complete the Capitol with the intent of appropriating one final lump sum.⁹⁵ He provided a pragmatic reason for the report arguing “he had no idea [how] Congress would now appropriate a large sum of money to this object; every body knew the Treasury was not in a situation to afford it.” Representative Rhea ridiculed the resolution arguing “the idea that the making a large appropriation at once would preclude the necessity of other appropriations was as reasonable as that, because a man made a hearty dinner one day, he should eat none for a week afterwards.” He moved to restrict the resolution to the north and south wings. The House rejected his amendment. The House did approve an amendment offered by Representative Tallmadge that included the amount owed individuals for work done on the Capitol. The resolution was agreed to and an unspecified committee was appointed to present it to the President. On February 6, Representative Lewis presented a committee bill and it was committed to a Committee of the Whole.⁹⁶ No further action was recorded.

By the 12th Congress, the House demanded an end to the building process.⁹⁷ On March 24, 1812 Representative Bacon introduced a resolution calling on the President to provide the House

⁹⁴ *Annals of Congress*, 11th Cong., 3rd sess., 473.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 517-518.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 906 – The record refers to a committee created on January 19 but the record contains no mention of a committee created on that day.

⁹⁷ House Report 646, *Documentary History of U.S. Capitol Building and Grounds*, January 30, 1904, 168-170.

“all sums now due, and to whom, for labor, materials, and other services of every nature and kind whatsoever, which have heretofore been furnished and performed towards erecting and repairing the Capitol.”⁹⁸ On April 7, the House received the Surveyor’s report and referred it to the Committee of Ways and Means.⁹⁹ On the 24th, Bacon reported a bill discharging all unsettled claims for work done on the public buildings, and the bill was committed to a Committee of the Whole.¹⁰⁰ On May 18, “after much debate, the Committee rose and reported the bill, with an amendment, added on motion of Mr. Williams, appropriating \$4,000 towards” the south wing.¹⁰¹ On the 21st, the House passed an appropriations bill “for the purpose of discharging all the outstanding claims for construction and repair of the Capitol.”¹⁰² The Senate received the bill later that day.¹⁰³ On the 22nd it was referred to a three member select committee.¹⁰⁴ Senator Taylor reported the committee’s amended bill the next day.¹⁰⁵ The Senate accepted the amendments on the 27th.¹⁰⁶ On the 30th, the Senate passed the amended bill.¹⁰⁷ The House received the bill on the same day, and disagreed to one amendment and concurred to another.¹⁰⁸

⁹⁸ *Annals of Congress*, 12th Cong., 1st sess., 1234.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 1263.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 1329.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 1431.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 1434.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 243.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 245.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 302.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 308.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 311.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 1567.

On July 1, the Senate received the House bill and receded from their first amendment.¹⁰⁹ Money was appropriated not only to finish the building but to send craftsmen back to Europe. The appropriation was also to be used for alterations, “necessary for their accommodation in their future sessions, having in view as well the increased number of the members, as the better lighting, ventilating, and warming of the chamber.”¹¹⁰

Conclusion

The decade and a half period assessed in this chapter was one of significant transformation in the American nation. While this transformation was occurring, the legislative branch struggled with the process of governing within an unfinished and uncomfortable physical environment. Throughout, congressional actors learned three lessons. First, it was extremely important for them to have complete control over the construction process. The experiments with providing the executive control did not work because the executive did not share the urgency with completing the project that they did. The second lesson concerned the importance of regular reporting from the administrative agency responsible for construction and connecting these reports to yearly appropriations. Here, the legislative branch learned that through a regularized process they would be in a better position to monitor and control the process. Finally, congressional actors learned that the physical layout of their physical working environment required a degree of rationality that took into account the myriad actors associated with the legislative process. That is, governing was not limited to the day-to-day conduct of their work for, as they performed these actions, citizens sought to influence the process and their presence required that the work environment be structured to accommodate them.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 312.

¹¹⁰ House Report 646, *Documentary History of U.S. Capitol Building and Grounds*, January 30, 1904, 170.

CHAPTER 5 PHYSICALLY CONSTRUCTING INSTITUTIONAL AUTONOMY

The last chapter chronicled the manner in which the legislative branch consciously constructed and took control over the administration of a functional physical working environment. As the political narrative revealed, this conscious process was neither linear nor without opposition. However, as a whole, members of the legislative branch came to learn that their work required a functionally capable physical work environment and the evidence strongly suggests that by the 12th Congress they believed the business of properly constructing the physical work environment had come to end. Any remaining thoughts in this direction, though, were removed in August of 1814 when the British burned the Capitol Building and forced members of Congress to confront the question of a physical work environment anew.

This chapter focuses on the decade and a half of reconstruction that took place after the Capitol's burning; a period during which the physical work environment underwent radical alterations. The specific Congresses discussed are contained in Table 5-1 below. As in the previous chapter, the emphasis is on the process of learning and the manner in which congressional decisions were reached. As will be shown, few decisions finalized issues. Most carried over so that problems 'solved' at one time were dilemmas in another. Thus, the Congress of this period can be understood as continually grappling with the question of how to best construct a physical work environment that would suit their needs.

The remainder of this chapter is organized as follows. The first section provides an overview of political context, emphasizing the degree to which it was defined by nationalism, expansionism, and increased central authority. The next section turns toward an overview of the congressional institution during the period, emphasizing the ways in which it underwent a process of maturation and internal coherence. The specific political narrative of the physical

work environment's conscious development is then provided. The chapter concludes with an analysis of this conscious construction and the way in which it fits into the broader political and institutional contexts.

Table 5-1 Congresses: Year and Party Breakdown 1813-1829

Congress	Year	Party Breakdown
13	1813-1815	114 Jeffersonian Republicans 68 Federalists
14	1815-1817	119 Jeffersonian Republicans 64 Federalists
15	1817-1819	146 Jeffersonian Republicans 39 Federalists
16	1819-1821	160 Jeffersonian Republicans 26 Federalists
17	1821-1823	155 Jeffersonian Republicans 32 Federalists
18	1823-1825	72 Adams-Clay Republicans 64 Jackson Republicans 53 Crawford Republicans 15 Adams-Clay Federalists 7 Jackson Federalists 2 Crawford Federalists
19	1825-1827	109 Adams 104 Jacksons
20	1827-1829	113 Jacksons 100 Adams

Taken from U.S. House of Representatives Office of the Clerk (http://clerk.house.gov/art_history/house_history/index.html)

Political Context

Viewed broadly, the decade and a half assessed within this chapter was one of dramatic geographic expansion, economic development, and intense nationalism.¹ The American nation was clearly coming into being and an emerging national identity, as opposed to multiple distinct

¹ Contextual information about the period emerges from the following - Daniel Walker Howe, *What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815-1848*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Maurice G. Baxter, *Henry Clay and the American System*, (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1995); Robert V. Remini, *Henry Clay: Statesman for the Union*, (New York: W.W. Norton, 1991); Harry L. Watson, *Andrew Jackson vs. Henry Clay: Democracy and Development in Antebellum America*, (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1998); Paul F. Paskoff, *Troubled Waters: Steamboat Disasters, River Improvements, and American Public Policy, 1821-1860*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2007); Skeen, Carl Edward, *1816: America Rising*, (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2003).

state identities, was becoming more visible. Through westward movement, construction of roads and canals, and other internal improvements, this period witnessed the central government firmly cementing the nation's commercial interests. This cementation was enhanced through Supreme Court decisions that established the central government's supremacy and expanded congressional powers.

American nationalism's evolution was the most important phenomenon of the postwar decade. The war had heightened nationalism and laid the groundwork for a more energetic federal agenda. Leaders such as Henry Clay and John Calhoun pushed for a strong domestic economy, referred to as the American System, which would unite manufacturing and agriculture interests. The American System represented an effort at planned development of the economy and its implementation required federally-funded internal improvements and protection for America's nascent manufacturing interests. Toward this end, Congress pursued a number of economic policies that extended federal authority: the charter of the second bank of the United States, the passage of a higher protective tariff, as well as several attempts to secure a federal transportation program.

Americans also purchased Western land at an extravagant rate. In 1815, Americans purchased roughly one million acres of land from the federal government. In 1819, the amount of land had skyrocketed to 3.5 million acres. This expansion led to the first decisive sectional vote since the end of the war, and further enhanced the role of the central government through passage of the Missouri Compromise. Likewise, passage of the tariff and survey bills in 1824, both of which further committed the nation to Clay's American System, extended the central government's authority.

John Quincy Adams' presidency marked the end of an era in American development. Adams continued to support policies that promoted the nation's progress and expansion. His first inaugural address called for an energetic domestic policy that included a national university, a scientific observatory, and a network of roads and canals to facilitate the development of the nation's interior. In his first message to Congress, he even spoke favorably about a national road from Washington to New Orleans. By the end of his term, Congress had funded the construction of two canals and authorized the survey of 109 projects, including the reconnaissance of two national roads – both beginning in the nation's capital, with one extending to Buffalo and the other following the southern seaboard states to New Orleans.

Congressional Context

Viewed through the prism outlined above, the decade and a half under review was one in which the American state continuously expanded, became increasingly nationalistic, and witnessed an increase in the central government's role and power. Within this broad context the legislative branch also underwent significant changes and a sustained period of maturation.² This maturation was visibly apparent through alterations in floor rules, standing committees, party behavior and leadership, and bill introduction.

Just as Clay's American System significantly impacted the development of the American state, so too did his Speakership impact congressional development. Though congressional scholarship differs on the exact timing and weight his leadership had in transforming the

² Contextual information about the development of Congress in this period emerges from the following - Jeffrey A. Jenkins, "Property rights and the emergence of standing committee dominance in the nineteenth-century house," *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 23 (November 1998): 493-519.; Strahan R, Moscardelli VG, Haspel M, et al., "The Clay speakership revisited," *Polity*, 32 (Summer 2000): 561-593; A. G. Bogue and M.P. Marlaire, "Mess and Men: Boardinghouse and Congressional Voting, 1821-1842," *American Journal of Political Science*, 19 (2, 1975): 207-230; Gerald Gamm and Kenneth Shepsle, "Emergence of Legislative Institutions: Standing Committees in the House and Senate, 1810-1825," *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 14 (February, 1989): 39-66; T.W. Skladony, "The House Goes to Work: Select and Standing Committees in the United State House of Representatives, 1789-1828," *Congress and the Presidency*, 12 (Fall, 1985): 165-187.

institution's internal structure there is widespread agreement that he was extremely influential. Also of importance was the profound change in the nature of partisanship and the end to interparty differences, and growth of intraparty ones.

Assessed individually, each Congress of the period witnessed alterations that impacted its institutional coherence. By the 13th Congress (1813-1815), the House had firmly established a daily of business for its deliberation. Starting with the 14th Congress (1815-1817) committees 'on the president's message' were authorized to sit for both sessions of congress. Standing committees had gained an upper hand over the Committee-of-the-Whole and were clearly dominant by the 15th Congress (1817-1819). By 1821, the House had from 187 members and three delegates to 242 members and two delegates. By the 17th Congress (1821-1823), the standing rules were reformulated in a variety of significant ways that were linked to a new system of legislating and, according to most scholars, represents a turning point of significant importance in congressional history.

Thus, Congress can be viewed as a maturing institution during this period that, by its end, contained an internal process familiar to 21st century congressional scholars. In the next section, the focus turns to the way in which members of the legislative branch grappled with the process of constructing a physical work environment that was conducive to implementing the American System and that symbiotically worked to strengthen the congressional institution.

Congressional Work Environment 1814-1829

Within the broad political and institutional contexts provided, the Congress continued to consciously develop a physical work environment.³ In tracing the process by which this

³ Contextual information about the politics surrounding the construction of the Capitol Building comes from the following - William C. Allen, *History of the United States Capitol: A Chronicle of Design, Construction, and Politics*, (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001); Bob Arnebeck, *Through a Fiery Trial: Building Washington, 1790-1800*, (Lanham: Madison Books, 1991); Kenneth R. Bowling, *Creating the Federal City, 1774-*

conscious process took place, distinct stages become visible. In the immediate aftermath of the building's destruction solutions were put forward, debated and, ultimately, accepted. Once accepted, congressional actors focused on issues revolving around the central government accommodations, and decisions emphasized physical form, function and administrative control. When the building was operational, and the physical work environment regained stability, policy questions revolved around finishing, furnishing, and enlarging the physical structure.

Situating the Destruction and its Aftermath

In the final year of the war of 1812 British troops entered Washington, DC and set fire to the U.S. Capitol Building. While the interior was destroyed, a rainstorm preserved the bulk of the exterior building.⁴ When the war ended and the peace treaty of Ghent was signed, Congress officially reconvened in Washington and sent word to President Madison that “chambers have been fitted up, under the direction of the Superintendent of the City, in the public buildings heretofore allotted for the Post and other public offices.”⁵

In his sixth Annual Address, Madison made a direct reference to the Capitol Building and the functional output of Congress by noting that the destruction “interrupted for a moment only the ordinary public business at the seat of government.”⁶ With its physical work environment destroyed, Congress was forced to meet in a temporary structure and, once again, grappled with the seat of government question.

1800: Potomac Fever, (Washington, D.C.: American Institute of Architects Press, 1988); Pamela Scott, Temple of Liberty: Building the Capitol for a New Nation, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

⁴ House Report 646, Documentary History of U.S. Capitol Building and Grounds, January 30, 1904, 171

⁵ Madison to Congress, September 17, 1814

⁶ House Report 646, Documentary History of U.S. Capitol Building and Grounds, January 30, 1904, 172

The policy debate was structured around the question of remaining in Washington, DC or temporarily relocating to a new seat of government. Representative Fisk submitted a resolution calling for a select committee “to be appointed to inquire into the expediency of removing the Seat of Government, during the present session of Congress, to a place of greater security and less inconvenience than the City of Washington.”⁷ In support of his position Fisk referred to the perpetual building process and emphasized “the inconveniences under which Congress legislated in this place.”⁸

Arguments against Representative Fisk’s bill revolved around four core ideas. First, removal would be permanent rather than temporary. Second, a move would negatively impact the nation’s morale coming so soon after the war. Third, in all likelihood it was unconstitutional. Fourth, the city’s inhabitants relied upon the government and to move would deprive them of their livelihoods. Though a debate took place across the next few weeks, it was perfunctory and the intense emotion and contentiousness had been removed. By October 15, Representative Fisk’s bill was rejected and the location of the permanent seat was, once again, firmly established in Washington, DC.⁹

With this policy question resolved a new one emerged. Representative Lewis introduced a resolution calling for a “provision for the better accommodation of the different departments of the government.” A minor controversy ensued when his resolution placed authority within the hands of the Committee of the District of Columbia to advise on “the expediency of rebuilding or

⁷ *Annals of Congress*, 13th Cong., 3rd sess., 312

⁸ *Ibid.*, 313

⁹ *Ibid.*, 396

repairing” the public buildings.¹⁰ Representative Grosvenor questioned whether the resolution should be sent to the standing committee given that it was a subject “interesting to the whole United States and the importance of which was not limited to the District only...It was the duty of this Congress, he conceived, to proceed in preparing for the better accommodation of the Government here.”¹¹ The House agreed and appointed a seven member select committee.¹²

Within a few weeks, Representative Lewis was prepared to present the select committee’s report.¹³ He reported that the select committee had met at the Capitol, examined the building, and brought an architect with whom they made inquiries “on the spot.” The select committee concluded that “it would be inexpedient” to change from the current location and that rebuilding would be more cost-effective. The select committee also announced that “several banks within the District of Columbia” had committed “to advance on loan to the Government, upon reasonable terms, the sum of \$500,000.” He then reported a bill that would “authorize the President of the United States” to borrow money for rebuilding the public buildings on their present sites.

The select committee’s policy proposal, rebuild through a government backed loan, was not without controversy. Representative Stanford protested and presented a resolution calling for a new select committee that would confer with the Senate on “whether the present chambers of the two Houses can be so altered, or otherwise improved, as to be rendered more convenient for their deliberations, or better rooms provided during the present session, within a convenient

¹⁰ House Report 646, Documentary History of U.S. Capitol Building and Grounds, January 30, 1904, 174

¹¹ Ibid., 174

¹² Lewis, Kent (MD), Hanson, Bowen, Grosvenor, Sharp, Condiot

¹³ House Report 646, Documentary History of U.S. Capitol Building and Grounds, January 30, 1904, 174-176

distance of the public offices.”¹⁴ Seven procedural votes followed Representative Stanford’s resolution, including calls for postponement, before the House agreed to appoint a five member select committee to assess the proper mode of reconstruction.

In response to the House actions, the Senate created a five member select committee.¹⁵ The select committee assessed the building’s condition before they began debating whether or not the \$500,000 at six percent interest from District banks should be borrowed to reconstruct the public buildings.¹⁶ Senator Fromentin called for the creation of a select committee that would search for better facilities than the U.S. Capitol Building. He delivered an indictment against the entire building process to date noting that “it is more than twenty-three years...since the public edifices, proposed now to be rebuilt, were begun to be erected. None of them, at the time of their destruction by the enemy, were completely finished.”

In perhaps his most important comments, reminiscent of the republican arguments of the 1780s, Senator Fromentin argued in favor of a simple working environment. “It becomes us to be modest. Our laws to be wholesome, need not be enacted in a palace. A large, convenient, unadorned house, which will receive its luster from Congress, instead of Congress borrowing it from the house [is preferred.]”¹⁷ He advocated an “immediate concentration of the public buildings on a modest, economical and commodious plan.”

The Senate, however, rejected Senator Fromentin’s arguments and then passed a bill seeking the \$500,000 loan. With the Senate bill in hand, the House began debate. The official record makes two observations about the House proceedings. The first concerned the length of

¹⁴ *Annals of Congress*, 13th Cong., 3rd sess., 625

¹⁵ *Annals of Congress*, 13th Cong., 3rd sess., 20

¹⁶ House Report 646, *Documentary History of U.S. Capitol Building and Grounds*, January 30, 1904, 176

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 178

time spent with the record noting that “a debate arose on this bill which occupied the remainder of the day’s sitting.” The second observation emphasized that Senator Fromentin’s desire for a simple building also had advocates in the House with the record noting that “the debate was not so much on the expediency of rebuilding or repairing the public buildings as on the mode of doing it.”¹⁸

In the midst of the debate, a new policy issue developed. Representative Grosvenor introduced an amendment that would move the public offices to the grounds around the Capitol Building. The House passed the amendment without the appearance of controversy. The next day, however, Representative Lewis sought to convince the House that the amendment was against the interests of the nation. He made four primary arguments - the current layout conformed to Washington’s vision, financial markets in Europe would react unfavorably, the institutional operations of the legislature did not require proximity to the public offices, and that it was economical inefficient to do so.

In support of his position, Representative Lewis presented a letter from one of the original Board of Commissioners in which it was written that George Washington had been

decidedly of opinion, that the offices of the different departments should be as convenient to the President as possible, and that it was unnecessary, for any public convenience, that they should be contiguous to the Legislative Hall; indeed that the officers had complained to him when in Philadelphia, that it was impossible to attend to their public duties by the constant call of the members.”¹⁹

Thus, his basic argument rested primarily, and consciously, on Washington’s god-like status. “What that man has done, let no mortal attempt to undo. His ways are not to be mended by man. This House is not competent to do it.”

¹⁸ Ibid., 181

¹⁹ Ibid., 181

His second argument offered a shorthand analysis of geographic location and institutional operations.

[W]hy are gentlemen desirous of removing the offices from their present sites near the President's House, to the Capitol square? It had been shown, he hoped satisfactorily, that their appropriate place was near the President's House, and not the Capitol. The President must necessarily have considerable intercourse with the offices; but he was unable to see the necessity of any personal intercourse between the members of the Legislature and the offices.²⁰

When Representative Lewis finished his rhetorical arguments, the House reconsidered and defeated Representative Grosvener's amendment.

With this defeat the policy debate turned to an amendment introduced by Representative Webster that would alter the amount to be borrowed.²¹ The official record notes that "the debate was long and warmly contested" before the Representative Webster's amendment was rejected by the House. Representative Taylor then moved, unsuccessfully, to recommit the bill to the Committee for the District of Columbia. The record notes that "after much zealous debate" the House approved the Senate's bill. Once President Madison signed the bill, the President of the U.S. was able to borrow, at an interest not higher than six percent, up to \$500,000 from banks within the District of Columbia for the express purpose of reconstructing the public buildings.²²

To carry out the law, Madison appointed a three-man commission to administer the funds.²³ This presidential action was taken without consultation with Congress and signaled a return to the executive-legislative relations that had existed throughout the Washington and Jefferson presidencies. Madison's commissioners hired an architect and produced reports that

²⁰ Ibid., 182

²¹ Ibid., 184

²² Ibid., 185 (Stats at Large v. 3, 205)

²³ William C. Allen, *History of the United States Capitol: A Chronicle of Design, Construction, and Politics*, (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001). See Chapter 3.

argued that past difficulties with acoustics, lighting and ventilation could be eradicated through a new architectural arrangement.

Debating the Proper Building in which to Hold Debates

Once the decisions had been made to continue working within the physical environment of the Capitol Building congressional actors sought to ensure that reconstruction would proceed quickly and diligently. In doing so, they came to realize the executive had gained the upper hand in the construction process. Drawing on their prior lessons they sought to reassert themselves.

Immediately upon beginning the first session of the 14th Congress, the House exercised its power of oversight over the Madison's commission. Representative Lewis successfully introduced a motion instructing the Committee for the District of Columbia to "inquire into the expediency of completing" the center building in the Capitol.²⁴ This was followed by committee reports that recommended making an appropriation for the completion of the center building.²⁵ Following this, Representative Jewett submitted, and the House approved, a resolution calling on the President to present a statement "of all expenses which have been incurred in the City of Washington, under the authority of the United States, for erecting edifices of any kind."²⁶ Representatives Jewett and Thomas were instructed to present the resolution to the President.²⁷ In response to this resolution, Madison made the documents available to congressional perusal thereby acquiescing to the power of legislative oversight.²⁸

²⁴ House Report 646, Documentary History of U.S. Capitol Building and Grounds, January 30, 1904, 186

²⁵ *Annals of Congress*, 14th Cong., 1st sess., 1228

²⁶ House Report 646, Documentary History of U.S. Capitol Building and Grounds, January 30, 1904, 186

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 186

²⁸ *Ibid.*, Detailed charts 187-189

While the House was demanding records from the President, the architect was assessing the Capitol Building and the needs of the Senate. He found, not surprisingly, that the primary problem was a lack of space to accommodate Senators from the new states.²⁹ The Senate formed a select committee to meet with the architect. They gave him ideas about the needs of the Senate, its members, officers and the evolving committee system. In response, the architect sent Senator Rufus King a plan to relocate the Library of Congress so that the Senate could capture its space and gain eight committee rooms.³⁰

While the Senate and the architect were struggling to reconfigure the Capitol Building, the House was working through an appropriations bill.³¹ Representative Tucker sought to codify congressional oversight through a section of the appropriations bill that would have two statutory effects. First, it would establish a new administrative officer known as Commissioner of the Public Buildings. Second, it would repeal the three member commission controlled by the executive. The Commissioner of the Public Buildings was to be a congressional officer that would be responsible for “the application of the present appropriation, the superintendence of the improvements of the square, etc.” and was to be provided a salary of \$2,000. The record states that “after considerable debate” the House approved Representative Tucker’s amendment and passed the bill.³²

²⁹ Chapter 3 – politics design

³⁰ House Report 646, Documentary History of U.S. Capitol Building and Grounds, January 30, 1904, 189

³¹ *Annals of Congress*, 14th Cong., 1st sess., 1360

³² *Ibid.*, 1407

Once President Madison signed the bill into law, funds were appropriated to enclose the Capitol grounds with a fence and the three-member commission was abolished.³³ President Madison's first choice for Commissioner of the Public Grounds was rejected by the Senate, and he was informed that his second choice would likewise be rejected. His third choice, however, was approved. In the executive-legislative power struggle the abolition of the three-member board and the creation of the Commissioner represented a clear victory for the legislative branch and its ability to control the process of reconstruction.

The final arrangements funneled everything through the Commissioner who was responsible directly to Congress. Throughout the next few months, personal letters reveal an administrative state controlled by congressional committees. Benjamin Henry Latrobe, the architect in charge, wrote that the Commissioner, Colonel Samuel Lane, exercised total control, even firing his assistant. Colonel Lane was answerable to committees in both the House and Senate and reported directly to the President. In May, the Senate unilaterally changed its architectural requirements and voted that the new Senate chamber be greatly enlarged over the old dimensions. This was despite the fact that the old room still stood and its structural walls were undamaged. In the House, the committees became more demanding and more distressed by what seemed to be unnecessary delays.

At the beginning of 1817, Representative Sharp introduced a resolution calling for a joint committee of two from each House be appointed to allot standing and select committees "rooms for the discharge of the public business. The reason stated by the mover for this resolution was the impossibility, from the present arrangement and occupation of the committee rooms, of some

³³ House Report 646, Documentary History of U.S. Capitol Building and Grounds, January 30, 1904, 189, Stats at Large 3, 325

committees acting on the business referred to them.”³⁴ This was accepted with unanimous consent and the Senate supported the resolution. Senators Hardin and Macon were appointed to represent the Senate and Representatives Sharp and Yancey were designated to represent the House.³⁵

In February, Representative Condict sent a report from the House Committee on the Public Buildings that contained detailed progress reports submitted by the Surveyor of the Capitol and the Commissioner of Public Buildings.³⁶ In response, but without recorded debate, Congress appropriated \$100,000.³⁷

With the close of the 14th Congress, James Madison’s presidency ended and that of James Monroe began. Monroe was no stranger to Washington, having served the previous administration as Secretary of State and, after the city’s capture, as Secretary of War. He did not think the repairs to the Capitol were proceeding as quickly as they might and he became determined to expedite matters. In his first presidential address, he lamented that the Capitol was not in a state to receive Congress.³⁸ He noted that it was important that the middle section be completed “to the convenient accommodation of Congress, of the committees, and various offices belonging to it.”³⁹ He also connected the city’s “improvement and ornament” to that of ancient republics.

³⁴ *Annals of Congress*, 14th Cong., 2nd sess., 611

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 639

³⁶ House Report 646, *Documentary History of U.S. Capitol Building and Grounds*, January 30, 1904, 190

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 198, *Stats at Large* 3, 389

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 199

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 199

Quest for Committee Rooms Continued

At the start of the 15th Congress, the House appointed a seven member select committee to address the President's message on the public buildings.⁴⁰ Representative Parris reported an appropriations bill, committed to a Committee of the Whole, novel in two ways.⁴¹ First, it was a "partial appropriation, which was to cover arrearages;" secondly, it was a "partial appropriation for going on with the works." The bill's novelty is that, for the first time, the House consciously recognized both past and future construction payments. With this recognition, Representative Parris' bill was an open admission that congressional actors were unable to envision an amount that would fully conclude rebuilding. Without explaining how the committee arrived at the figure, Representative Parris asked for an appropriation of \$200,000 and, without record of debate, "the proposed sum was agreed to" and the House passed the bill.⁴²

The bill was then sent to the Senate where, on motion of Senator Lacock, the Senate resolved to send the President's message on public buildings to the Committee for the District of Columbia.⁴³ Senator Goldsborough reported the committee's bill without amendment and the Senate passed the bill without amendment.⁴⁴ Monroe signed the bill into law and a new appropriation of \$200,000 was made to continue the Capitol's construction.⁴⁵

Once the appropriation was made, Senator Goldsborough submitted a resolution calling on the President to annually submit a "statement of expenditures upon the public buildings, and an

⁴⁰ *Annals of Congress*, 15th Cong., 1st sess., 405 – Parris, Bassett, Bellinger, Taylor, Forsyth, Folger, Crafts

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 566

⁴² *Ibid.*, 592

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 32

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 120

⁴⁵ House Report 646, *Documentary History of U.S. Capitol Building and Grounds*, January 30, 1904, 200

account of their progress.”⁴⁶ The Senate agreed to the resolution,⁴⁷ and received a statement of expenditures from President Monroe for the year 1818.⁴⁸ Once again, the legislative branch was exercising its oversight authority and forcing the executive to provide documentation of expenditures.

As congressional actors assessed the pace of construction, and particularly that of the center building, they were primarily concerned with one thought – how the rotunda space could provide as many committee rooms as possible. Congressional select committees were established that concluded that there were not enough rooms for all the standing, joint, special, and select committees. The absence of committee was felt particularly by the House, which was operating with only 9 functioning committee rooms.

In response to these congressional demands the architect sent a report stating,

This committee commenced with a declaration that enough of the building had been devoted to show and parade, to passages and vestibules, and that unless they could be convinced that all the conveniences of the committee rooms and offices could be obtained, they would not sanction an appropriation for the centre; and more-over that if these rooms will not be had in any other way, the rotunda should be cut up for this purpose.⁴⁹

The architect developed a unique solution to the spatial problem that took advantage of the sloping hill on which the Capitol was constructed. A new ground floor could provide 12 committee rooms and offices and, by reducing the size of light wells, corridors, and the rooms themselves, the number of rooms in the entire center building was increased from an original number of 24 to 40.

⁴⁶ *Annals of Congress*, 15th Cong., 1st sess., 132

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 138

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 201

⁴⁹ Kennon, 60

In response to these recommendations, Representative Bassett presented a select committee bill for “making appropriations for the public buildings, and for furnishing the Capitol.”⁵⁰ Similarly, the Committee of Public Buildings responded by issuing a report that outlined the problem of finding space for committees in the Capitol and identified space for nine rooms in the south wing while noting that the north would be unable to provide space for two to three years.⁵¹ In the interim, they suggested constructing a temporary building that would house 12 rooms. They also identified the rooms that would be available when the center building was finished. According to the report, the legislative branch was provided with a library and two reading rooms, and 26 committee rooms on four floors. The architect let members know that if the rooms assigned to the judicial branch were removed, the legislative branch could gain an additional 10 rooms.

Representative Bassett’s bill was received in the Senate and assigned to the Committee of the District of Columbia.⁵² Senator Goldsborough reported the committee’s bill and, after some back and forth, the bill was passed and signed into law by President Monroe.⁵³ The law appropriated funds for reconstructing the Capitol, erecting a temporary building, and separate funds for furnishing both the House and Senate chambers. The law stipulated that the President was responsible for the Capitol’s construction; the Speaker of the House for the money to furnish the House chamber; and the Vice-President for furnishing the Senate. Furthermore, the law

⁵⁰ *Annals of Congress*, 15th Cong., 1st sess., 1180

⁵¹ House Report 646, *Documentary History of U.S. Capitol Building and Grounds*, January 30, 1904, 204-205

⁵² *Annals of Congress*, 15th Cong., 1st sess., 349

⁵³ House Report 646, *Documentary History of U.S. Capitol Building and Grounds*, January 30, 1904, 206 (Stats at Large 3, 458)

reassigned the rooms originally provided the judicial branch and assigned them to the legislative branch thereby granting an additional 10 rooms.

Four years after the Capitol Building was burned, President Monroe laid the cornerstone for the center building. It was at this time that Representative Taylor introduced a resolution to create a select committee that would assess the process of construction on the public buildings noting that the subject “was one which had excited some interest and some inquiry.” The House agreed and appointed a seven member select committee.⁵⁴ Representative Bellinger reported the select committee’s bill which recommended a \$136,644 appropriation for the centre building and the House passed the bill.⁵⁵ The Senate received the House bill and sent it to the Committee on the District of Columbia where Senator Goldsborough reported the bill to the Senate.⁵⁶ The Senate passed the bill.⁵⁷ President Monroe signed a law appropriating funds for completing the north and south wings, and an additional appropriation for the building’s center.⁵⁸

Acoustic Problems and Searching for Committee Space

At the start of the 16th Congress, the House created a seven member select committee on the President’s message on the Public Buildings.⁵⁹ In addition, the Committee on the Public

⁵⁴ Bassett, Bellinger, Adams, Clagett, Folger, Bayley, Rice

⁵⁵ *Annals of Congress*, 15th Cong., 2nd sess., 1418

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 276

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 283

⁵⁸ House Report 646, Documentary History of U.S. Capitol Building and Grounds, January 30, 1904, 213 (Stats at Large, v. 3, 516)

⁵⁹ *Annals of Congress*, 16th Cong., 1st sess., 708

Buildings, and the Committee on the Expenditures upon the Public Buildings, issued their own progress reports with an overview of expenditures.⁶⁰

The Senate appointed a five member select committee to find “whether convenient accommodations can be had in the north wing of the Capitol for the Committees and Secretary’s office of the Senate.”⁶¹ The select committee’s report found that the basement rooms allotted to the Supreme Court be taken by the Senate.⁶² Finding that “it would be highly inconvenient that court should sit in the Capitol while the Senate are in session; or, indeed, that it should in future be held there” the report identified 8 specific rooms suggesting they be assigned to specific committees.⁶³ The select committee noted that “there are thirteen standing committees that must frequently meet for deliberation, and select committees must often be raised. The committee believe some arrangement for the occupation of the rooms by committees is desirable.”⁶⁴ Specific rooms were divided as follows - room 7 for the Contingent Fund (to be shared with select committees); room 10 for the District of Columbia, and Post-Office and Post-Roads; room 11 for Public Lands; room 13 for Military and Naval Affairs; room 27 for Foreign Relations and Finance; room 30 for Commerce and Manufactures and Militia Affairs; room 32 for Claims; and room 34 for Judiciary and Pensions.

⁶⁰ House Report 646, Documentary History of U.S. Capitol Building and Grounds, January 30, 1904, 229, 230-233

⁶¹ *Annals of Congress*, 16th Cong., 1st sess., 26 – Roberts, Gaillard, Mellen, Burrill, Lanman

⁶² *Ibid.*, 33

⁶³ House Report 646, Documentary History of U.S. Capitol Building and Grounds, January 30, 1904, 213

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 214

In response to these reports, a further appropriation was approved for the north and south wings.⁶⁵ Additionally, a second appropriation was made for the center building; for painting the inside of the north and south wings; and for making alterations to the Senate chamber.⁶⁶

At the start of the 2nd session of the 16th Congress, the House created a seven member select committee on the subject of the public buildings.⁶⁷ Simultaneously, the Senate created a select committee to examine how money had been spent on reconstruction and “to provide better accommodations for the Senate in the north wing of the Capitol.”⁶⁸

After sitting in the new Hall a few months, the House of Representatives became painfully aware of the room’s dreadful acoustics. On motion of Representative Mercer, the House resolved that the Committee on Public Buildings issue a report on transforming the Hall “as will better adapt it to the purposes of a deliberative assembly; and, if no such alteration can be effected, to ascertain whether it be practicable to provide a suitable Hall in the centre building of the Capitol.”⁶⁹ Representative Mercer argued it was “utterly impossible, as every gentleman’s experience must have taught him, to hear more than one half of the members who addressed the House, without changing one’s seat for the purpose.” He suggested “the room intended for the Library... would answer for the purposes of a Representative Chamber. It would be a room larger than that which often accommodates five hundred members in the British House of Commons.” The record notes that the resolution passed “but not without opposing voices.”

⁶⁵ Ibid., 230 (Stats at Large, v. 3, 541)

⁶⁶ Ibid., 233 (Stats at Large, v. 3, 563)

⁶⁷ *Annals of Congress*, 16th Cong., 2nd sess., 441 – Wood, Kendall, Alexander, Hall (NY), Murray, Crafts, Buffum

⁶⁸ Ibid., 29 – Senators Roberts, Mills, Burwell, Otis, Lloyd

⁶⁹ *Annals of Congress*, 16th Cong., 2nd sess., p.680

The select committee requested information from the architect who provided a history of the hall's design noting that the architectural form combined with the dynamics of presentation contributed to the hearing difficulties. He wrote, "This form has also been adopted, of late, in the legislative halls at Paris; but it is not found altogether convenient for a deliberative assembly, where the speakers are seated indiscriminately, and frequently with a large portion of the members in the rear."⁷⁰ The architect recommended placing, "a level glass ceiling, at the foot of the dome." This would, "in a great measure, prevent the evils that are now experience from the expansion of the voice and the reverberation of the sound."⁷¹ In making this recommendation, the architect identified three aspects of the Hall that would not be altered – the proportions of the hall, the use of the gallery, and the beauty of its appearance.

The select committee rejected the architect's solution believing that it would end up causing new problems such as poorly circulated air and an obstruction of the view of the dome. The committee noted that "members speak with more ease, and hear more readily, at the present session, than they did during the past" putting forth the hypothesis that this was due to the drying of the walls. The select committee found that "the centre building of the capitol does not furnish a suitable hall for the members of the House of Representatives. The only room that would admit them is the one destined for the library of Congress, and that, in the opinion of the committee, is not calculated for their convenient accommodation, or the admission of spectators." The select committee recommended carpeting the gallery "to prevent the noise which arises from moving from one place to another" and exercising "strict order in the House."

⁷⁰ House Report 646, Documentary History of U.S. Capitol Building and Grounds, January 30, 1904, 236

⁷¹ Ibid., 235

Toward the end of the session, Representative Wood “made a detailed report” detailing the costs of finishing the north and south wings, and the centre building.⁷² In response, the House went into a Committee of the Whole “and, though not without considerable objections to some of the items, the report of the Committee of the Whole was concurred in.”⁷³ The House passed the bill the next day.⁷⁴ The Senate received it later that day and sent it to the Committee on the Public Buildings.⁷⁵ Senator Roberts reported the committee’s amended bill.⁷⁶ Without recorded debate, the Senate passed the committee’s amended bill on March 2.⁷⁷ The House received the bill the next day and, without recorded debate, agreed to the amendments.⁷⁸ President Monroe signed the law making an appropriation for the center building; for improving the grounds around the Capitol; and for improvements in the Senate chamber, Hall of the House of Representatives, and the library. In addition, the law specified that “the unexpended balances of appropriations to other public buildings, are hereby appropriated to the centre building.”⁷⁹

Continuing to Search for Committee Rooms

At the start of the 17th Congress, the House established a three member standing committee on the expenditures on the public buildings.⁸⁰ Representative Blackledge reported a committee

⁷² *Annals of Congress*, 16th Cong., 2nd sess., 985

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 1032

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 1034

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 288

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 343

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 396

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 1271

⁷⁹ House Report 646, *Documentary History of U.S. Capitol Building and Grounds*, January 30, 1904, 241 (Stats at Large, v. 3, 635)

⁸⁰ *Annals of Congress*, 17th Cong., 1st sess., 519 - Nelson (MA), Pierson, Leftwich

bill and issued a report noting that “work upon the Centre Building has progressed, but has not been brought to that state of perfection which was calculated by the estimates of the last year.”⁸¹

The committee gave a new estimate, one “calculated with a view to finish all the committee rooms, and to complete the large dome over the Centre Building.” The committee recommended a further appropriation to complete the center building and the House passed the committee bill without recorded vote.⁸²

The Senate received the bill and sent it to the Committee on Finance where an amended bill was reported.⁸³ The Senate passed the amended bill, sending it back to the House.⁸⁴ The House tinkered with the amount appropriated and sent the bill back to the Senate where, without recorded debate, it was agreed accepted.⁸⁵ The final law appropriated money for the center building and for improving the grounds around the Capitol.⁸⁶

At the start of the 2nd session of the 17th Congress, the House appointed a seven member select committee on the subject of the public buildings and the public lands in the city of Washington.⁸⁷ The committee was “instructed to consider and report what alterations will be necessary to be made in the Hall of the Representatives, so as to accommodate the increased

⁸¹ House Report 646, Documentary History of U.S. Capitol Building and Grounds, January 30, 1904, 242

⁸² *Annals of Congress*, 17th Cong., 1st sess., 1530

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 395

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 413

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 425

⁸⁶ House Report 646, Documentary History of U.S. Capitol Building and Grounds, January 30, 1904, 250 (Stats at Large, v. 3, 673)

⁸⁷ *Annals of Congress*, 17th Cong., 2nd sess., 354 - Blackledge, Cushman, Van Wyck, Cassedy, Brown, Hobart, Leftwich

number of members of which the Eighteenth Congress will consist.”⁸⁸ To fulfill its obligation, the committee requested a report from the architect on the problem of sitting 216 members in a space currently housing 192.⁸⁹ In a separate report, the committee assessed the expenditures of the Commissioner of Public Buildings noting that “the committee rooms, in the attic story of the Centre Building have not been finished.”⁹⁰ Nonetheless, the committee supported the request for another appropriation. An additional report, by the Committee on Expenditures on the Public Buildings, also requested an appropriation.⁹¹

Representative Blackledge reported the House committee’s bill and it passed the House without debate.⁹² The bill arrived in the Senate and it was directed to the Committee on Finance.⁹³ The committee reported an amended bill and sent it to the House.⁹⁴ The House received and passed the amended bill.⁹⁵ Then, in two separate Acts, President Monroe appropriated funds for the center building and for altering the House wing for the accommodation of the Eighteenth Congress.⁹⁶

⁸⁸ House Report 646, Documentary History of U.S. Capitol Building and Grounds, January 30, 1904, 251

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 252

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 253

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 254-255

⁹² *Annals of Congress*, 17th Cong., 2nd sess., 1121

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 289

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 318

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 1169

⁹⁶ House Report 646, Documentary History of U.S. Capitol Building and Grounds, January 30, 1904, 256 (Stats at Large, v. 3, 762; Stats at Large, v. 3, 784)

Distributing the Center Building's Rooms

At the start of the 18th Congress, Senator Dickerson submitted a resolution calling for a three-person select committee be appointed from each House to determine “distribution of the rooms of the centre building of the Capitol.”⁹⁷ The Senate appointed its own three member committee⁹⁸ and the House agreed and appointed three members.⁹⁹ Representative Cushman reported the House committee’s bill and it was committed to a Committee of the Whole.¹⁰⁰

A House debate focused on the relationship between the Capitol’s architecture and republican ideology. On one side were members like Representative Cushman who felt “the want of a smooth and attractive exterior...alienates public opinion and loses somewhat of its authority to promote the public good. Hence, the wisdom of giving to our Republic, and all appurtenant, those graceful decorations, which, by the law of our nature, conciliate attachment and engage esteem.”¹⁰¹ On the other hand, members such as Representative McArther felt that money would be better spent on restructuring the Hall which “as a place for speaking, was nearly useless...[and] government would yet have to abandon it, and build a plain square room, where members could hear what each other said.”¹⁰² A third group was represented by Representative Kremer who argued that the Capitol “was a monument of pride and extravagance, and not of old

⁹⁷ *Annals of Congress*, 18th Cong., 1st sess., 29

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 32

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 828 – Taylor, Cuthbert, Condict

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 1486

¹⁰¹ House Report 646, *Documentary History of U.S. Capitol Building and Grounds*, January 30, 1904, 260

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 260

Republican principles.”¹⁰³ Without record of additional debate, an additional appropriation was made for the center building.¹⁰⁴

Later in the session, the joint committee authorized to distribute the center building’s rooms issued their reports. Both versions specified a total of 37 available rooms in four stories and stipulated that the rooms north of the center belonged to the Senate, while the House was given the entire fourth floor and the rooms south of the centre. They also specified that three rooms would be reading rooms connected to the Library and two for the use of the Judges of the Supreme Court of the United States.¹⁰⁵

In the House, Representative Taylor presented the Joint Committee report.¹⁰⁶ He then introduced a resolution calling for a committee to “make distribution of the rooms in the Capitol, appropriated to the use of the House of Representatives.” The House appointed a seven member select committee to do so.¹⁰⁷ The committee assigned individual rooms to the Speaker of the House, 19 specific committees, three to the Clerk of the House, and the Sergeant at Arms.¹⁰⁸ The report also stipulated that “the unappropriated rooms shall be subject to the order and disposal of the Speaker until the further order of the House.”

At the start of the 2nd session of the 18th Congress, the Commissioner of Public Buildings notified Congress that “the whole interior of this national edifice is now complete...[T]he committee rooms and passages of the basement have been finished...The Library and contiguous

¹⁰³ Ibid., 260-261

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 260 (Stats at Large, v. 4, 16)

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 262-263

¹⁰⁶ *Annals of Congress*, 18th Cong., 1st sess., 2764

¹⁰⁷ Taylor, Hamilton, Kent, Tod, Hemphill, Condict, Eddy

¹⁰⁸ House Report 646, Documentary History of U.S. Capitol Building and Grounds, January 30, 1904, 265

rooms are complete and are furnished and occupied for use.”¹⁰⁹ Even with this optimistic report, an additional appropriation for further construction was passed and signed into law.¹¹⁰

Finishing, Furnishing, and Expanding

In the 19th Congress, the House established a select committee “for the purpose of inquiring into the practicability of improving the Hall.”¹¹¹ An additional House select committee was established “to inquire what measures it may be proper for Congress to adopt, at this time, to cause the Public Buildings to be finished and furnished.”¹¹²

The select committees relied on evidence from the Commissioner of the Public Buildings and the architect and were most interested in finishing the Capitol’s “small interior courts... [and finding] a proper place for the deposit of wood...[,] for the privies, for a guard room and engine house, and other necessary offices.” Space was required, “for the large quantities of fuel annually consumed, amounting to about 400 cords...fires of the public halls, of the court room, of the library, and of the numerous committee rooms.”¹¹³ To accomplish this the committees supported “the erection of a broad area wall...This plan will have the great advantage of masking the basement story of the western front, which was rendered necessary by the declivity of the ground, and was required for committee rooms.” The committees also opposed suggested enhancements of the Capitol Square rejecting provisions for a, “stable room and stalls for the horses and carriages, employed in the service of Congress by the messengers and officers of the

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 266 – From this point on, the official record changed to the Register of Debates. The index for this source does not include the search term “public buildings” or “Capitol.”

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 268 (Stats at Large, v. 4, 90)

¹¹¹ Ibid., 268

¹¹² Ibid., 271

¹¹³ Ibid., 273

two Houses.” Instead of taking care of these immediately, they preferred waiting for the establishment of “a permanent superintendent, and a bill for that purpose has already been reported in the Senate.”

In the Senate, Senator Randolph complained of “splendor without comfort, without neatness, without accommodation” and introduced a resolution to create a select committee charged with “the accommodation of this body generally.”¹¹⁴ The Senate supported the resolution and created a three-member select committee. Sixteen days later the select committee submitted its report.¹¹⁵ They recommended that the Vice-President, or President of the Senate, be empowered with the resources to construct “suitable and convenient accommodations for the use of the Senate, and that a proper officer be appointed to attend and take charge of the same.” They also supported restricting access to “floor of the Senate, except members of the House of Representatives, ex-members of both Houses, the President, Heads of Departments, and Judges of the Supreme and inferior Courts of the United States, unless introduced by the Vice President, who shall issue his written order thereof.” Additionally, the Senate committee wanted the officers of the House to be subject to the authority of the Vice-President, or President of the Senate, and that a room be created for the Vice-President “so as to enable him to keep order more effectually in the lobby and in the gallery.”

The House debate on creating, “a convenient repository for the great quantity of wood” continued.¹¹⁶ Some members tried to inject questions of aesthetics into the debate, and some

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 276

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 276-277

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 277-278

discounted the idea that a new area needed to be constructed. In the end, the House approved an appropriation for this specific purpose.¹¹⁷ Without record of debate, the Senate concurred.¹¹⁸

At the start of the 2nd session of the 19th congress, President Adams transmitted a report from the Commissioner of Public Buildings which explained why construction had “not fully equaled our expectations. The principal part of it [new construction] consisted of offices and appendages, not embraced by the original design, in relation to which, no provision could be made until sanctioned by an appropriation.”¹¹⁹

In the House, Representative Miner introduced a resolution instructing the Committee on Public Buildings to look into completing the Capitol and presenting the entire House with detail on how money had been spent as “it seemed selfish to lay out so much for our own accommodation and little to other objects” and it was time “to attract the attention of the House to the subject, in the hope that its moral power might be brought to bear upon it.”¹²⁰ After being challenged by Representatives Bartlett and Everett, Representative Miner tabled his resolution.

Shortly thereafter, the Committee on the Public Buildings presented a report arguing that “the time has now arrived when it is necessary to make a provision of some kind for [stabling horses and]...some provision, it is supposed, must also be made for the accommodation of Members of Congress, and others, having business at the Capitol, who come thither on horseback, or in their own carriages. It is also necessary to erect a permanent engine house.”¹²¹

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 277-279

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 279 (Stats at Large, v. 4, 194)

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 279

¹²⁰ Ibid., 280-281

¹²¹ Ibid., 282-283

While this was transpiring, members of the House continued to be concerned with the acoustics problem. In an attempt to find a solution, Secretary of State Henry Clay transmitted to the Speaker of the House a collection of correspondence from the Board of Inspection and architectural experts on “devising a plan for improving the Hall, so far as to render it better suited to the purposes of a deliberative assembly.”¹²² The experts debated whether a ceiling placed over the dome, or repositioning the galleries or Speaker’s chair, or even hanging clothes would work. In the end, no decision was reached with the Board of Inspection complaining that Congress had not adjourned long enough for them to make a decision.

A debate occurred in the House concerning appropriating money specifically for “the Capitol, the Capitol Square, and its enclosures, and for buildings for keepers, engine house, and stabling.”¹²³ Representative Everett explained the process the Committee on Public Buildings went through. “He proposed that the entrance on this side should be into a spacious vestibule. He reminded the Committee that he was not the advocate of the wall which is now in the process of erection. He had desired a different plan, which was rejected by the House. The Architect then presented the present plan, which the Committee thought the best.” Explaining the appropriation for stoves he explained “they are intended for the passages more than the rotundo; and he put it to the gentlemen, if there was not a danger in passing abruptly from this warm room to those long, cold passages. There is an air of discomfort about this building, which reminded him more of that Bastile than any other building he was ever in.” He justified the appropriation for stabling. “As to the number of messengers, the gentlemen could speak to this fact as well as himself. There are four employed to each House to fold. There is a vehicle employed in

¹²² Ibid., 284-288

¹²³ Ibid., 288-294

carrying the mail. He believed that the messengers were diligently employed, and the stabling is no more than is necessary for the four horses, and for the horses which may belong to those have business with Congress.”

Representative Wickliffe objected to any appropriation for new buildings.

We now have a mass of buildings covering more than an acre of ground, and before we have finished them we are called upon to appropriate money to commence new apartments. The root of the whole evil, the cause of the immense expenditure and waste of public money, upon this Colossal Labyrinth, may be traced to the fact that we have some four or five gentlemen who are drawing an annual salary from the public treasury, whose interest it is, and whose ingenuity is tasked, between the end and commencement of Congress, to project some new scheme or fancied improvement upon which to expend the public money. These salaries will continue until you finish this building; they will never finish it, as long you will furnish them money to waste upon it. Unless Congress will check the appropriations, the finishing of the Capitol, like the payment of the public debt, will always be ‘anticipated.’ ...At what point will we stop?

The stoves earned his reprobation as well. “We are called upon to appropriate money to procure stoves, etc. to heat the immense rotunda for the purpose of making it a more comfortable resort for loungers and idlers; I presume it cannot be necessary for the better conducting the business of this House.”

Representative Forsyth approved of the appropriation for continuing construction. “He would vote, also, for the erection of stoves to warm the rotunda and the passages – places through which members must go to reach their Committee Rooms, when the House is not in session, and which were now damp, uncomfortable, and unhealthy.” He agreed with Representative Wickliffe that the salaries of current administrators required more building. “Our agents are salaried officers, whose emoluments cease when the buildings are finished. We bribe them, therefore, to make the work interminable.” He described control of “this Hall is under the care of the Speaker, and the officers of the House; the Senate Chamber of the Vice President and officers of the Senate; but the residue, excepting the Library and Committee Rooms, is considered the common property of every person who chooses to occupy it, with very little

regard to the purposes for which it is used.” He brought up instances of “the strange uses to which the rotunda had been applied. It became first a great show-shop, for the exhibition of Panoramas...[and] the room was next converted into a great exhibition hall for domestic manufactures.” He supported placing the whole building “under the care of some one who would be responsible to the public and to Congress, if any part of it should be devoted to unworthy or unsuitable purposes.”

Even with this rancorous debate, the House ultimately passed, and the Senate approved, an additional appropriation for “completing the work remaining to be done on and about the Capitol, the Capitol square, and its enclosures, and for engine house.”¹²⁴

Final Arrangements

When the Commissioner of Public Buildings submitted his report at the start of the 20th Congress he wrote,

A house has been built to accommodate the fire engine and apparatus, furnished by order of Congress... Two warm air-stoves, of the most powerful and improved construction, have been placed below, with apertures in the floor, for the admission of warm air, to correct the dampness of the Rotundo... The floor of the Representatives Hall has been taken up and relaid, after the space was filled solidly with bricks; this was done with a design to prevent the noise arising from walking, and to lessen the reverberation of sounds: the effect is found to be very advantageous. The alterations in the Senate Chamber have been effected, and a private stair, for the convenience of the members, has been contrived and executed in a temporary manner.¹²⁵

Regarding future construction he wrote “a gallery is also wanted in the Senate Chamber, to prevent the necessity of admitting strangers on the floor: A design for this purpose, will be offered to the Senate. A general attention to the regulation and improvement of the grounds, will

¹²⁴ Ibid., 294 (Stats at Large, v. 4, 218)

¹²⁵ Ibid., 294-296

be required, and some accommodation for necessary stabling, and the convenience of such police officers as may be appointed for the guard and security of the Capitol.”

In the Senate, Senator Smith “went into a detailed statement of the inconveniences of the present situation of the seats, and the impossibility of hearing the remarks of Senators.”¹²⁶ Senator Johnson “opposed the change, remarking that his position under the present arrangement was far better than that which he had formerly occupied. If he voted for the proposition, he should give up his own convenience to oblige others. He thought it would be admitted that it was better for the President not to sit opposite the centre door, at which strangers were continually entering; and that he must have been inconvenienced by the talking of Senators in the lobby, behind his former seat, which could not but have interrupted business.” Senator Smith argued that “in the present position, neither the Chair nor the Secretary could be heard by more than half the members. Senators had also now got a habit of turning round from the Chair to address those behind them, and if they did not do it, they could not be heard by those so situated.” Senator Smith thought “the arrangement was inconvenient, and it would be very desirable to change it.” The President of the Senate argued “as the seats were formerly arranged, the Chair had great difficulty in hearing the Senators whose seats were at the two extremities of the chamber; and that the talking in the passage, behind the Chair, caused some disturbance and interruption of the business.”

In the House, they debated an appropriation brought forward by the Committee on the Public Buildings. Representative Everett argued in favor of a change that would “enlarge and enlighten” the lobby outside the Hall so that “persons having business with the Members would

¹²⁶ Ibid., 298

have a convenient space in which to wait for them in the Hall, etc.”¹²⁷ In response to these debates a further appropriation measure was passed. Likewise, in the second session, with no recorded debate, a further appropriations was made for “repairs and other work necessary to be done on or about the capitol and its enclosures.”¹²⁸

Conclusion

The period of reconstruction discussed in this chapter chronicled congressional actors taking firm control of their work environment. While the nation was expanding geographically and more responsibility was being placed in the federal government, congressional actors consciously developed a physical work environment that would meet their growing needs. As these needs grew, members demanded more of their environment and continually sought to enhance the capabilities of their physical space. Additionally, responsibility for development of the space was increasingly placed within the purview of standing committees signaling that the issue had become firmly entrenched within congressional business. Viewed broadly, the decade and a half period of reconstruction was one in which the legislative branch not only accepted the development of their physical work environment but embraced it and consciously sought its expansion.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 300-301 (Stats at Large, v. 4, 265-266)

¹²⁸ Ibid., 304 (Stats at Large, v. 4, 362)

CHAPTER 6 CONGRESSIONAL WORK ENVIRONMENT OF JOHN QUINCY ADAMS

The previous chapter presented a detailed policy narrative of the U.S. Capitol Building's construction after its destruction by the British in the War of 1812. While this reconstruction occurred the central government became a more powerful force in directing state development and the legislative branch increased its internal coherence. By the end of the period, around 1829, the legislative branch had acquired many of the characteristics generally associated with institutionalization. This chapter continues the political narrative through 1851. Throughout this period the U.S. Capitol Building was an address at which the American public knew they could take their grievances and find a working legislative body. The physical work space included internal locations such as lobbies, galleries, locations reserved for reporters, and internal passageways; all identified as 'the Capitol grounds.' Collectively, these internal and external spaces enabled congressmen to interact with individuals outside the organization and remain visible. They served a republican function allowing members to retain physical contact with their constituency. Individuals would arrive at the Capitol knowing it was a location where they could be found and their behavior witnessed thereby enabling citizens to witness proceedings and engage in close physical interaction with congressmen.

According to a 20th century political historian, accommodations were “inadequate and uncomfortable.”¹ Members worked, “where they could find space,” primarily at their desks. Members “frequently complained” about the heat, inadequate lighting, drafts of foul air, and, particularly the noise of the many conversations that were always under way. In the hallways, “vendors sold food and drink.” Liquor was consumed on and off the floor. Socially, it was a

¹ Joel Silbey, “Congress in a Partisan Era,” from Julian Zelizer, ed. *The American Congress: The Building of Democracy*, (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2004), 140-141.

“chaotic institution.” Visitors often complained about the “rudeness, insolence, and vulgarity” of members on the floor who were often engaged into heated exchanges that occasionally erupted into fist fights or duels.

However, by contemporary 19th century standards, the Congress operated in a professional, though inadequate, physical environment and the physical building in which the legislative branch operated was among the most sophisticated in the world. By the end of the period, it was clear to all that the physical space no longer suited the legislative needs of the U.S. Congress and a major transformation was required. The period ended with the passage of the Capitol Extension Act which appropriated funds to double the size of the U.S. Capitol Building. In seeking to explain successful passage of the Act, this chapter provides a general analysis of primary documents and provides both an organizational and an individual perspective of the Congressional Work Environment from 1830-1851. The specific Congresses discussed are contained in Table 6-1 below.

As in prior chapters, the organizational perspective is developed through analysis of primary resources such as floor speeches, committee reports, and other government documents. Collectively, they provide insights into how the physical work environment was understood by broad members of the legislative branch and the policy proposals they put forward to solve these problems. This organizational perspective is supplemented by an individual perspective unique to this chapter that is constructed through a close reading of *The Memoirs of John Quincy Adams*.² Focusing exclusively on the volumes covering the 21st through the 29th Congresses, these memoirs provide an almost day-to-day chronicle of legislative life during the period. Combining the organizational and individual perspectives provides insights into the complexities

² Charles Francis Adams, ed., *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams: Comprising Portions of His Diary from 1795 to 1848*, Volumes 9-12 (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1874-77).

Table 6-1 Congresses: Year and Party Breakdown 1829-1851

Congress	Year	Party Breakdown
21	1829-1831	136 Jacksons 72 Anti-Jacksons 5 Anit-Masonics
22	1831-1833	126 Jacksons 66 Anti-Jacksons 17 Anti-Masonics 4 Nullifiers
23	1833-1835	143 Jacksons 63 Anti-Jacksons 25 Anti-Masonics 9 Nullifiers
24	1835-1837	143 Jacksons 75 Anti-Jacksons 16 Anti-Masonics 8 Nullifiers
25	1837-1839	128 Democrats 100 Whigs 7 Anti-Masonics 6 Nullifiers 1 Independent
26	1839-1841	125 Democrats 109 Whigs 6 Anti-Masonics 2 Conservatives
27	1841-1843	142 Whigs 98 Democrats 1 Independent 1 Independent Democrat
28	1843-1845	147 Democrats 72 Whigs 2 Law and Order 1 Independent Democrat 1 Independent Whig
29	1845-1847	142 Democrats 79 Whigs 6 American
30	1847-1849	116 Whigs 110 Democrats 2 Independent Democrats 1 American 1 Independent
31	1849-1851	113 Democrats 108 Whigs 9 Free Soilers 1 American 1 Independent

Taken from U.S. House of Representatives Office of the Clerk (http://clerk.house.gov/art_history/house_history/index.html)

and capabilities of the physical work environment in which congressional actors operated throughout this period.

The rest of the chapter proceeds as follows. It begins with a description of the broad political and congressional context of the period. Then, an analysis of the physical work environment is provided before moving to a discussion of the political decision to enlarge the building through passage of the Capitol Extension Act of 1851. It concludes with a discussion of the period's implications within the broader context of the study.

Increasingly Developed American State

Throughout his *Memoirs* Adams continually made observations on the country's growth and the alteration of its political institutions. He noted,

One-half century has passed over the heads of this people with scarcely enough internal dissension to create a convulsion; without secession of one State from the Union; with only two light insurrections within the first ten years, rather reasoned down than subdued by force; with a short war with Great Britain and a quasi war with France. In that time the number of the States has doubled; the population more than quadrupled; the extent of territory more than doubled; the wealth more than tenfold.³

By Adams' observations, the national issues of the day were "slavery, the Indians, the public lands, the collection and disbursement of public moneys, the tariff, and foreign affairs."⁴ This enormous expansion of the American state was accompanied by fundamental changes in technology and internal development. By 1850, the United States had become a nation comparable to the European powers with railroad tracks linking the Atlantic seaboard to the Midwest. There were twenty-six states with an aggregate area of more than 1.5 million miles, and territories were continuing to be settled. More than twenty million people identified themselves as American citizens. Transportation outlets, such as the Erie Canal, led to an

³ Adams, Volume 9, 355

⁴ Adams, Volume 10, 342

enormous growth of foreign trade and of foreign investment contributing to nation-wide movement and leading to calls for better and faster transportation. Multiple railroads began operating passenger service and spread rapidly throughout the eastern and southern states.

Adams noticed the impact of these changes observing,

This Cumberland Road, from Vandalia, in the State of Illinois, to the Mississippi, and from the Mississippi to the city of Jefferson, in the State of Missouri - how it sounds! What a demonstration of the gigantic growth of the country, in population and in power, is contained in these few words!⁵

As the nation expanded geographically, the number of eligible voters expanded as well. Suffrage laws became increasingly more democratic as states eliminated property qualifications and eased office-holding requirement. The expansion of suffrage was complimented with a rise in political party organizations, notably the Jacksonian-Democratic Party and the Whig Party. Unlike earlier American party organizations, these parties actively engaged in grassroots organization and sought to create national messages. They established national political nominating conventions, grew the spoils system, and helped to conquer millions of acres of Indian lands to continue settlement. The parties mobilized the citizenry through direct appeals to self-interest with open offers of public office, government contracts, and the promise of specific legislation.

As the nation expanded geographically, the number of eligible voters expanded as well. Suffrage laws became increasingly more democratic as states eliminated property qualifications and eased office-holding requirement. The expansion of suffrage was complimented with a rise in political party organizations, notably the Jacksonian-Democratic Party and the Whig Party. Unlike earlier American party organizations, these parties actively engaged in grassroots organization and sought to create national messages. They established national political

⁵ Adams, Volume 9, 113

nominating conventions, grew the spoils system, and helped to conquer millions of acres of Indian lands to continue settlement. The parties mobilized the citizenry through direct appeals to self-interest with open offers of public office, government contracts, and the promise of specific legislation.

And the parties brought increased cacophony to the legislative environment. In the House, the rise of organized parties, and splits within Democratic and Whig leadership, meant that neither party could organize the chamber, giving rise to perpetual cycling and contested elections. In order to manage the chaos, more power was entrusted within the office of the Speaker of the House who increasingly exercised organizational control through committee assignments and the power to arbitrate on parliamentary procedure. Frequent turnover, however, meant that Speakers were like their colleagues and often relatively new to the House as were committee chairman. All of this added, and encouraged, a work environment of disarray and confusion.

Individual congressman, however, continued to work and develop the nation. John Quincy Adams exemplified the best of these. As one historian noted “John Quincy Adams towered in ability and prestige and in independence of mind over his colleagues in the House of Representatives. He was its hardest-working member, punctual and conscientious in duty whether on the floor or in committee.”⁶ Adams was involved in every significant debate during his tenure and at different points, he was the Chairman of the Committee on Manufactures, Indian Affairs, and Foreign Affairs; he was also the focal point for all anti-slavery initiatives. His stature was such that he was often thought of as the ‘Congressman of the Nation.’⁷ The point

⁶ Samuel Flagg Bemis, *John Quincy Adams and the Union*, (New York, Knopf, 1956). Quote from page 326.

⁷ Lynn Hudson Parsons, The "Splendid Pageant": Observations on the Death of John Quincy Adams, *The New England Quarterly*, 53 (December 1980), pp. 464-482.

that deserves to be emphasized is that historians have noted he worked much harder than his peers. Therefore, in assessing his experiences with the physical environment in which congressional work it is important to place him at the far end of a continuum. An analysis of how he used the physical work space presents a picture of its maximum capability and whose experience should be thought of as outlying behavior within the institution.

For Adams, the fruits of a productive legislative life resulted in an enormous amount of paperwork. The *Memoirs* are replete with complaints such as the following,

I finished the day in drudgery to assort and file my papers. I have hundreds of letters unanswered, and not even duly filed...At least forty-nine-fiftieths of my unanswered letters are from total strangers, and utterly worthless – multitudes of applications to attend public meetings, and to deliver orations, addresses, lectures to lyceums, literary society, and political gatherings of the people.⁸

The constant, “drudgery of assorting, filing, and endorsing letters,”⁹ was “perfectly appalling.”¹⁰ He offered a poignant description of his dilemma and an insightful wish while describing his,

miscellaneous files of newspapers containing articles of special interest, to which I wish occasionally to refer...all together they form a mass of archives for which I have not chests and boxes and bureaus and drawers sufficient in numbers and capacity to contain them. A separate building for a library of book-cases and receptacles for the safe-keeping of manuscripts has become almost a necessary of life to me; but I have not the means of erecting it.¹¹

⁸ Adams, Volume 10, 341

⁹ Adams, Volume 10, 449

¹⁰ Adams, Volume 10, 453

¹¹ Adams, Volume 11, 276

Experiencing the Physical Work Environment, 1829-1851

One of the first detailed guides of the U.S. Capitol Building was published in the late 1840's and provided the following description of entering the Hall of the House of Representatives through,

the outer lobby of the House; on the right and left this lobby continues all round the circle of the Hall of Congress, having doors of communication with the same at several points; at the entrance of the left-hand lobby a stair-way leads to the clerk's library; further on, on the same side, a passage door opens to the Speaker's room. The sergeant-at-arms and door-keeper's room comes next, opposite to which is one of the main entrances to the Hall, and lastly, a door leads into the private lobby for members; at the end of this lobby a passage conducts to the staircases communicating with the public, as also those for ladies.¹²

The Hall was “a great business room, a place [for members] to write letters to their constituents, to draw bills of exchange, to settle accounts, and to do business.”¹³ When the debates were of popular importance the Hall was full of excitement with “full seats, crowded galleries, fiery opposition and antagonizing bustle.”¹⁴ On most business days, however,

There was not half a quorum present, and of them about one-half were slumbering in their seats and the other half yawning over newspapers; here and there a strolling wanderer behind the bar was pacing to and fro to keep up the circulation of the blood; two or three settees, each with a member stretched out his whole length, occupying it all, sound asleep; and groups of two or three seated before each open window, gasping, in idle conversation, for fresh air.¹⁵

As a deliberative assembly the Hall received numerous criticisms, generally revolving around three themes - poor acoustics, lack of space, and physical discomfort. The Hall's acoustics had been a source of congressional concern since the 16th Congress raised a committee to inquire into making the hall better suited for a deliberative assembly. Consistently, the House

¹² Robert Mills, Guide to the Capitol and national executive offices of the United States, (Washington: Wm. Greer, 1847-1848). Quote come from page 31.

¹³ “Congressional Oratory” 1848, 362

¹⁴ Adams, Volume 10, 248

¹⁵ Adams, Volume 9, 551

found that “the Hall is manifestly defective as a hearing and speaking room for forensic or popular debate.”¹⁶ The issue was resurrected in the 21st Congress, when the Committee on Public Buildings considered a memorial presented by Robert Mills.¹⁷ Mills presented a cogent history and three part critique of the Hall observing,

The plan of the Hall of Representatives was adopted as the best form of room to answer the demands of a deliberative assembly. This form was selected by the French government for its Chamber of Deputies on the recommendation of the most eminent architects of France...In the execution of the plan of the Hall of Representatives some radical errors were committed, which have almost defeated the object its design. The first error was the breaking of the circular line of wall...The second error consisted in sinking the floor or raising the dome beyond their relative position to each other...The third error lies in the location of the Speaker’s chair, and consequently the seats of the members.¹⁸

The Hall was widely known as a terrible place for public speaking. It was “a perfect Babel of sounds.”¹⁹ Members could hear “the sound of a voice as from one close by, and been astonished when they looked for the speaker, to find him at the opposite end of the room.”²⁰ A congressional report issued in the 1840’s provided a succinct summation of the problem noting,

A person speaking in this hall, from some positions, even in a low voice, can be heard with perfect distinctness in a few other positions, although distant; whilst in many others, although the speaker should raise his voice to a high pitch, he would not be distinctly heard. Again, in other positions in the hall, a speaker will exhaust himself in vain efforts to make himself heard, and his auditors find themselves also exhausted in efforts to hear him.²¹

In addition to the acoustics problems, space in Hall was a continual problem for two reasons. First, the growth of the country meant that there was a constant increase in the number

¹⁶ House Report 646, Documentary History of U.S. Capitol Building and Grounds, January 30, 1904, 320

¹⁷ Ibid.,304

¹⁸ Ibid.,321

¹⁹ Ibid.,429

²⁰ Ibid.,324

²¹ Ibid.,410

of Representatives. The issue became particularly acute as the House prepared for post-apportionment increase in membership in the 22nd Congress when membership would increase from 213 to 240. An architect provided a plan “for any increase of members, even to the number of 300, and retaining all the desks with the seats.”²² A report issued after the next decennial increase noted that “by a different arrangement of the desks, there will be room for 418 members.”²³ They went through several public lessons to accommodate the new members, such as repositioning and purchasing new, slightly smaller, desks and chairs. Regardless, the Hall remained a cramped work environment. Members could not even find spatial reprieve in the lobbies just off the Hall of the House with a House committee noting,

These lobbies were originally designed, and until recently were used, for the accommodation of members and persons with whom they were called from the Hall to transact business with them...They have been converted into mere passages or thoroughfares from the street to the galleries, to the great detriment of the public business and the personal annoyance and inconvenience of the members of the House.²⁴

Second, space was a problem because of an increase in congressional support staff. By the early 1840s, more than 70 workers were employed to keep the organization functional. A committee report issued in the 25th Congress provides insights into the expansion of organizational support staff,

the number of messengers has been augmented, from time to time, by the Doorkeeper, as the constantly increasing business of the House required, (at all times it is, however, believed, with the assent of the Committee of Accounts,) until they have amounted to nineteen in number...With respect to the boys or pages...the construction of the Hall, the seats and tables of the members and the manner of transacting business, render the service of such attendants indispensably necessary. The number was many years small, and up to 1827 did not, it is believed, exceed three; at the session of 1829-30, four; at the session of

²² Ibid.,324

²³ Ibid.,411

²⁴ U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, “Duties of Officers of House of Representatives,” Report number 750, 25th Congress, 2nd session. Quote comes from page 9.

1831-32, six; at the session of 1833-34, nine; at the session of 1834-35, ten; at the session of 1835-36, fourteen; and at this time [1838], eighteen.²⁵

The dramatic increase in organizational staff required to support the workings of the House was explained in the following manner,

[House] business has doubled several times within the last twenty years; and it has now become absolutely necessary that a page should be appropriated, exclusively, to the Speaker, another to the Clerk, and two to run (one on each side) between the table and the members offering business to the House. Two are also necessary on each wing of the Hall, for the convenience of members wanting to send communications to the offices or other parts of the building.²⁶

Perhaps the organizational employee who best exemplified the growing nature of the congressional work environment was the Doorkeeper who, by 1840, had 12 messengers and 12 pages under his employ. The same committee report describes the position as follows,

As regards the Doorkeeper and his assistants...the name imports the nature of the duties required of such officers; yet, by usage a vast amount of business transacted without the doors of the Hall and of the Capitol is done through the agency of the Doorkeeper. The Hall, its furniture, and fixments are under his care. He daily superintends its cleaning, as also, of all that part of the Capitol the use of which has been exclusively assigned to the House of Representatives. He superintends the folding business - a business, of itself, of great labor and magnitude; also, the daily business of laying the printed documents on the tables of members; the making up and keeping the printed files of documents; the transportation of the mails to and from the Capitol to the city post office and to the boarding-houses, at all hours of the day; and to the dispatch of communications for members to all parts of the city. It is also his duty to attend to the closing of the inner and outer doors of the building at night, and to attend early in the morning to see that the fires and furnaces are in order, and that all things are prepared for the regular business of the day.²⁷

Not only did the Hall suffer from poor acoustics and a lack of space, it was also an uncomfortable place in which to work, with it being too hot in the summer and too cold in the

²⁵ Ibid., p. 2.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 4.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 8.

winters. The water closets were “intolerably offensive,”²⁸ the building lacked “an adequate supply of pure spring water;”²⁹ and a “general system of warming...[was] much required.”³⁰ A committee report from the 30th Congress provides a revealing glimpse into the organizational dilemma and the search for solutions. The general conclusion was that the Hall was “very defective, and its general condition...very bad.”³¹ Modern means of heating and ventilating the room were explored. Looking abroad, a House committee discovered a Dr. Reid of Edinburgh, England who had made great advances in improving the English Parliament and who “testifie[d] strongly to the efficacy of the heated current of of air in ventilating.”³² Intent on making “the improvements required in the mode of heating and ventilating, for the health and comfort of the members of Congress,” the committee suggested hiring “an experienced and enlightened architect, to make a complete and thorough examination of the same.”³³

By the later 1840s, several architectural alterations had been made in order to rectify this discomfort. Mills observed that,

level with the floor of the main aisle are three apertures, covered with brass ventilators, through which a constant current of warm air issues, that disseminates a uniform temperature throughout the room...hence, the whol surface of the floor is kept warm, much to the comfort of the members, who, previous to the rising of the floor, suffered from the damp and cold of the sunken floor.³⁴

²⁸ House Report 646, Documentary History of U.S. Capitol Building and Grounds, January 30, 1904, 327

²⁹ Ibid.,311

³⁰ Ibid.,336

³¹ Ibid.,425

³² House Report 646, Documentary History of U.S. Capitol Building and Grounds, January 30, 1904. Quote comes from page 415.

³³ Ibid., 425.

³⁴ Robert Mills, Guide to the Capitol and national executive offices of the United States, (Washington: Wm. Greer, 1847-1848). Quote come from page 37.

Throughout the period, the Hall remained the primary work environment for the vast majority of Representatives and their primary station in the Hall was their individual desk. A guide to the 1840s Capitol Building noted that “every member has a desk allotted to him, and these are disposed in circular lines, described from the Speaker’s chair as a centre, the aisles forming radii from this centre.”³⁵

Within the *Memoirs* the phrase “came to my seat” (or its variation) occurs with regularity and it is clear that Adams had a stable location, that this location was known by others, and that its stability was useful for his organizational performance.

The desk served both *legislative* and *representative* functions. The desk was an address at which the multiplicity of functions associated with initiating, producing, and finalizing legislative documents occurred.³⁶ Members often came to his seat and asked how he would vote on bills or to explain why he voted the way he did.³⁷ From this address, he monitored the voting behavior of, and sought input from, his neighbors. Pages and messengers delivered notices to other members about upcoming committee meetings. He had clerks deliver documents there. After debates, reporters approached him at his desk and requested copies of his speeches. While working on legislation, the space was an address for strategy meetings. The desk stored documents that could be produced during debates.

The desk was also an address for Adams to perform his representative function and fulfill republican ideas of constituent interaction.³⁸ Individuals representing themselves, as well as

³⁵ Ibid., 36.

³⁶ Examples - Adams, Volume 9, 469, 474; Volume 12, 7, 55

³⁷ For example Adams, Volume 9, 469; Volume 10, 223, 308, 317, 326, 399, 410, 436, 474, 491, 503; Volume 11, 35, 192, 232

³⁸ Examples - Adams, Volume 9, 372; Volume 10, 406, 513, 404

representatives of organized groups, knew they could find him at his desk and request assistance. It was an address at which he received invitations to meetings taking place throughout the city. The desk was also useful for a surface on which to complete documents that could be sent to constituents.

Because the Hall of the House suffered from such poor acoustics, the location of one's desk mattered. How members would choose between locations was a collective dilemma that was not solved until the House adopted Rule 32 in the first session of the 29th Congress. The development of House Rule 32 reveals a process of institutional learning and individual power struggles.

The issue of desk selection arose in the 25th Congress because the nation's expansive growth required a renovation of the Hall of House. With the renovation complete, and the space adapted to accommodate almost 100 more desks, members debated how to select new seats. A debate immediately developed over whether members should be given desks in the "same relative positions to the [Speaker's] Chair" or whether they should be numbered and chosen by lot.³⁹

As reforms were considered speakers provided two distinct reasons why seat selection rules mattered. First, any policy that rewarded the first to arrive meant those representatives states nearby were unfairly advantaged. Likewise, policies that allowed members to select desks immediately after adjournment meant those who lived nearby could return and claim a seat.

Official records make no mention of selection rules but, by the 26th Congress, it was clear that an established procedure had emerged. According to a contemporary document, "A

³⁹ Congressional Globe, 2nd Session, 25th Congress, 489

Congressional Manual: Or Outline of the Order of Business in the House of Representatives of the United States,” seats were selected as follows:

Those who arrive first at the opening of any first session of Congress, are entitled to select their seats in any part of the house, which is done by the member’s key and writing his name on the desk.⁴⁰

This ‘first-come first-served’ method of selection was a source of tension in the 27th Congress. When the session opened, Representative Pickens gave a floor speech in which he “set forth the evils of the present mode of taking seats. He deemed it, to say the least, very unfair, inasmuch as those members who happened to reside near the seat of Government could immediately take advantage of those more distant.”⁴¹ At the end of the session, Adams observed that John Campbell (SC) offered a similar resolution and provided an insight unknown to readers of the official record.

The real cause of all this heart-burning about the seats was that, by the good will of Rice Garland, he gave me, when he left the House at the close of the first session of the last Congress, the right to his seat, one of the best – instead of one of the worst, which I had occupied during that session.⁴²

At the start of the second session, during the Caruthers-Dawson debate about desk selection, Adams seemed to side with Dawson who denied the right of one member to transfer his seat to another noting “there is no steady rule respecting the right to seats, and no usage sufficiently established and uniform to confer a right.”⁴³

At the start of the second session, the House was confronted with a dilemma. An informal norm had allowed members to ‘transfer’ their desks upon retirement to friends. This was

⁴⁰ Joel B. A. Sutherland, *A Congressional Manual: Or Outline of the Order of Business in the House of Representatives of the United States*, (Philadelphia: Peter Hay & Co., 1839). Quote come from pages 9-10.

⁴¹ *Congressional Globe*, 27th Congress, 1st Session, p. 9 and 10

⁴² Adams, Volume 10, 543

⁴³ Adams, Volume 11, 35

challenged, apparently for the first time, in the second session of the 27th Congress when Representatives Dawson and Caruthers both laid claim to the same desk.⁴⁴ They asked the House to decide the issue. A resolution finding in favor of Dawson (the beneficiary of the transfer) passed. In other words, the House upheld the informal norm but did so without creating a formal rule.

By the 29th Congress, however, the question of desk selection had reached a point where, without recorded discussion, a winning coalition of members desired a formal rule. Members had learned that informal norms were no longer sufficient. During the first session, the House passed a resolution (the same which had failed in the 19th, 25th, and 27th Congresses) to draw desks by lot and then “about three hours were consumed in the operation.”⁴⁵

Some members who were committee chairman were assigned specific rooms in which their committees could work and were thus able to escape the Hall and the limited space afforded by their individual desk. As a chairman, Adams utilized his committee rooms for *formal*, *informal*, and *personal* functions. Adams utilized committee rooms for *formal*, *informal*, and *personal* functions. The chambers served a formal function when used as a location for meetings of standing, select, joint, or conference committees. In these instances, the House formally authorized the use of the chamber and the activity that occurred therein was officially sanctioned. In this capacity it was an address in which members of Congress debated, wrote, and sought legislative compromise. It was also an address at which interested parties knew they would have an opportunity to influence the legislative process. In this formal function, the meetings took

⁴⁴ 27th Congress, 2nd Session, Globe, 9-10

⁴⁵ 29th Congress, 1st Session, Globe, 22-23

place according to a schedule. Even so, Adams continually complained of poor and tardy attendance.

The same chamber served an informal function when members of Congress met there without the sanction of the House. Meetings of the Massachusetts state delegation, abolitionists, pro-slavery, or anti-Masonic members took place in the chambers, informally without official consent of the House. It is important to recognize that there were other places where these meetings could take place. Adams made repeated references to meetings in taverns, boarding-houses, hotels, or restaurants. A meeting held within a committee chamber in the Capitol Building, however, would appear, a priori, to imply greater importance. Adams never offered any reflections on the informal use of the rooms, and never suggested that the consent of House leaders was needed.

The self-same chamber served a personal function when it was used as a private office in which Adams could write letters, organize his thoughts, prepare for a speech, read newspapers, or work on legislation. When bored, or tired of debate, Adams would duck into committee chambers and take advantage of the solitude. They were also used as opportune locations in which private conversations and legislative strategizing could occur.

Because space was limited, access to the rooms indicated power. Adams provides a telling anecdote of a struggle between him and another chairman in which both wanted to use a specific room,

The select committee on the resolves of the Legislature of Massachusetts had adjourned to meet this morning at ten, in the room of the Committee of Commerce. They gathered one by one till about half-past ten, when they formed a quorum, and waited another half-hour for Joseph R. Ingersoll, who keeps the minutes, and whom I found in session with the Committee of Ways and Means. The members of our committee were all present, but we found on the mantel-piece a scrap of paper, which the door-keeper of the room desired me to look at. There was written on it, 'Resolved, that this room is wanted for the Committee of Commerce every day, except those days when it is occupied by the Naval Committee.'

This was a mere effusion of paltry spite from Holmes, now Chairman of the Committee of Commerce, and the manner of notifying us was as ingenious as the resolution itself was courteous. But it put upon me the responsibility of finding a room for our committee to meet in.⁴⁶

Additional work environments were occupied by administrative officers such as the Clerk of the House. For Adams, these addresses served *archival*, *production*, and *administrative* functions. The address served its archival function when Adams needed copies of government documents. He went to the Clerk's room to "obtain a bill," "enquire for the journal," "enquire for the journals and documents," "look over documents transmitted," and "procure copies of the yeas and nays."⁴⁷ Though he continually found flaws in the written records of the House Journal, he never complained that the Clerk's office failed to have documents. Sometimes they were not ready on time, but there was never an indication that a document had vanished or was unable to be located. From all appearances, it would appear that his archival needs were met. The Clerk's office served a productive function when Adams needed to produce copies of speeches, committee reports, or pieces of legislation. There was never any hesitation in sending documents to the Clerk's office and requesting thousands of copies. At the end of the session, Adams would instruct the Clerk to send yet-to-be finished documents to his home in Quincy, Massachusetts. Finally, the address served an administrative function. Whenever an issue concerned the operations of the House, Adams initiated a meeting with the Office of the Clerk.

Finally, members could seek repose or an environment in which to work in the congressional libraries. Adams used the resources of the Library of Congress, Senate Library, and Supreme Court to research floor speeches, legislative histories, arguments before the Court,

⁴⁶ Adams, Volume 11, 480.

⁴⁷ These quotes, and others, can be found at Adams, Volume 9, 218, 220, 234; Volume 10, 45, 148, 408, 412, 415, 416, 417, 419, 424, 430, 432, 440, 441, 442; Volume 11, 354, 524

and to enhance his personal knowledge. The libraries served the functions of a physical location which Adams knew contained legislative and legal precedents. The libraries served a type of representative function when Adams introduced constituents to the librarian allowing them to use facilities. Likewise, they were addresses at which he could meet other members of Congress and quietly reflect on legislative issues.

Seeking a Legislative Solution for More Space

The picture of the physical work environment that emerges is one in which, by the end, the institution was bursting at the seams unable to support member's growing demands and responsibilities. This was reflected in a report as early as 1838 which noted,

Originally the committee-rooms were on one floor, and, for upwards of twenty-five years, the standing committees did not exceed seven, and one man attended them all; now, the committee-rooms are on four different floors, and the committees number thirty-two, and it requires the attendance of four messengers. For many years there was no person stationed in the galleries of the House to keep order; but, for the last eight or ten years, it has been found indispensably necessary to station two attendants in the galleries during the sessions of the House.⁴⁸

By the mid-1840s, the spatial problem had only increased and a report noted,

Though this building covers a great extent of ground - over 60,000 square feet - it does not furnish that accommodation for the public business which so large an area would warrant us to expect. It will be a matter of surprise to many, that the committee-rooms in this building do not exceed 40 in number, both on the Senate and House sides of the rotundo; while there are in both houses 57 standing committees, besides select committees. This deficiency is a great drawback to the convenient transaction of the public business, as members attending committee have often experienced. Projects for enlarging the Capitol have engaged the attention of the House for several years, connected with the objects of constructing a new legislative hall, providing a larger room for the library, more accommodation for the officers of the House, a better position for the Supreme Court, and additional committee rooms.⁴⁹

The same report stated the matter in blunt terms observing,

⁴⁸ U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, "Duties of Officers of House of Representatives," Report number 750, 25th Congress, 2nd session. Quote comes from page 3.

⁴⁹ U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, "National Edifices at Washington," House Report number 185, 28th Congress, 2nd session. Quote comes from pages 1-2.

The increase of the public business necessarily demands more room to be provided in this building. Upwards of twenty years have gone by since the completion of the Capitol; and if, at that period, the present accommodations were necessary, we may infer that they must be very inadequate now.⁵⁰

By 1850, there was broad political agreement that a major building effort was needed that would develop new legislative chambers, expand the Library of Congress, and create new committee and office rooms.⁵¹ The Senate acted first with the presentation of a memorial to enlarge the Capitol Building. When Senator Pearce introduced the memorial he said,

In moving the reference of this memorial, it is scarcely necessary for me here to suggest that, in the Senate chamber, we shall soon want more room, that the House of Representatives is not sufficiently large for the accommodation of all the members, while it is well known that the library is so cramped that many of the books cannot be arranged, and that they have to be put away in boxes. It is manifest that the Capitol requires enlargement.⁵²

Later in the same session, the Senate Committee on Public Buildings issued a report that included the following,

There is a necessity for the enlargement of the present building. A larger Senate chamber has become almost indispensable for the convenient transaction of further business. It is already too small for the present number of senators, and that number is increasing. Nor does it afford sufficient accommodation for spectators and citizens who desire to witness the proceedings of the Senate. The same may be said of the Hall of Representative, which, besides being too small, has been proved by experience to be unfit for purposes of deliberation. The Supreme Court, too, requires a larger and more comfortable apartment in which to hold its sessions. The library room is insufficient for the books which have been accumulated already, and without additional space it will be impossible to make a proper disposition of the future additions which will be annually made to the Congressional library. Nor have we rooms enough to afford even the various standing committees one apiece, it often happening that there is but one room to accommodate two committees.⁵³

⁵⁰ Ibid., 1-2.

⁵¹ Contextual information in this section comes from Allen (2001) chapter 6

⁵² House Report 646, Documentary History of U.S. Capitol Building and Grounds, January 30, 1904, 430

⁵³ House Report 646, Documentary History of U.S. Capitol Building and Grounds, January 30, 1904, 430-431

The Senate acted by asked for the creation of a joint committee of the two houses that would look into the issue of enlarging the Capitol. When that suggestion came to the House floor it received the approval of Representative Woodward who said,

He was willing to do anything which would promote the project of a new Hall for the accommodation of this body...It was impossible for members to debate – it was impossible for them even to practice good manners here, because a member was not going to sit silent whilst another member was speaking, when he could not hear. He said, therefore, that this was an unmannerly Hall, and that order never could be maintained in it...It was not a Hall – it was a cavern – a mammoth cave, in which men might speak in all parts and be understood in none...[H]e insisted that speaking here without the possibility of being heard, tended strongly to demoralize the House...Men could not even keep their tempers here. They were obliged to get into a passion, in order to speak loud enough to be heard at all.⁵⁴

As the debate continued Representative Stanton rose and argued,

It was necessary – absolutely and indispensably necessary – that a Hall should be constructed in which the public business could be conducted properly, and with facility...[H]e was ignorant of much that was going on the Hall...He had a right to know all that was going on in the Hall. It was his constitutional privilege to hear, just as much as it was to speak; and it was the duty of this House to provide the means of hearing for all.⁵⁵

While the House continued to debate, the Senate acted by passing an appropriation that would enlarge the Capitol by constructing a north and south wing. Senator Davis defended the appropriation by arguing,

And if this Union continues together, and this continues to be the seat of Government, I have no idea that any plan which may now be suggested will finally answer all the wants of the country. A very good architect, speaking of it a short time ago, said that we would have yet to cover the whole square with buildings, and I think it is likely. We see at least that this magnificent building, certainly very magnificent at the time it was constructed, has now become too small.⁵⁶

Shortly thereafter an advertisement was placed in Washington newspapers that read, in part, “It is required that these plans and estimates shall provide for the extension of the Capitol,

⁵⁴ House Report 646, Documentary History of U.S. Capitol Building and Grounds, January 30, 1904, 438-439

⁵⁵ House Report 646, Documentary History of U.S. Capitol Building and Grounds, January 30, 1904, 440

⁵⁶ House Report 646, Documentary History of U.S. Capitol Building and Grounds, January 30, 1904, 443

north and south of the present building, or by the erection of a separate and distinct building within the enclosure to the east of the building.” By including two architecturally distinct requirements (north and south extensions versus a distinct building) Congress laid the groundwork for a bicameral struggle. After the designs had been reviewed by the House and Senate Committees on Public Buildings, it became clear that there would be no agreement on how the building should be enlarged. The Senate preferred wings and the House an eastward expansion. Unable to reach a decision, they abdicated responsibility and enabled the President to make the final selection. President Fillmore solved the bicameral dilemma through compromise by selecting the architect favored by the House to design the Capitol in the manner approved by the Senate.

Conclusion

This chapter has sought to correct a tension between two competing historical narratives of the American state from 1829-1851. The first narrative is national in scope and emphasizes a period of geographic expansion and institutional strength. According to this narrative, the American nation became an increasingly important participant in world affairs, and aggressively took on European powers and Native American tribes. Political discourse revolved around questions of tariffs, internal improvements, and a national bank. And, of course, slavery was always dominant and split the country along regional lines. Additionally, a rapid expansion in suffrage led to the emergence of political parties. These parties, operating primarily in single-member, winner-take-all congressional districts, elected members who brought projects, and federal dollars, to their constituents.

The second historical narrative is specific to the American Congress and emphasizes a period of institutional chaos. According to this narrative, the U.S. Congress was ill-equipped for state expansion. Ignoring the broader national context, and focusing instead on specific

developments within the congressional institution, this narrative collectively examines the emergence of standing committees, changes in congressional rules, routine cycling of floor votes and leadership contests, and the expansion of congressional patronage. Regardless of the topic examined, the conclusion is of a chaotic internal environment that survived through the luck of the gods or a mystical belief in mathematical equilibrium.

Missing is a way of squaring the congressional with the national narrative. That is, how did a poorly organized and chaotic institution manage a nation during a time of visible expansion, conquest, and growth? To answer this, the chapter emphasized a narrative constructed around the organizational variables of congressional architecture. Members of congress were concerned about their physical work environment and actively sought to make it as efficient and effective as they could.

This new narrative culminated in the 31st Congress with the congressional decision to expand the U.S. Capitol Building. This expansion, occurring within the context of the Compromise of 1850, raises a tension within the national narrative and exposes an entirely new puzzle. That is, why did a country that was being pulled apart by sectional conflict choose to embark on an expensive architectural renovation of the national legislature? A narrative focused on congressional interaction with the physical work environment therefore reveals an entirely new dynamic, heretofore hidden, that accompanied the expansion of the American state.

CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSION

The study presented a narrative of American political development covering the years 1783-1851 and told a story of constant territorial expansion, ever-increasing stability of the central government, and a cementing of ties between the central government and its citizens. This early period of America's history was examined through the lenses of learning and the construction of a Congressional Work Environment and reached three conclusions that significantly contribute to the literature on congressional development. First, it established the utility of viewing congressional history through the conceptual lens of the Congressional Work Environment. Second, it revealed the extent to which the antebellum Congress was an active and continually developing institution that became professionalized in iterative steps. Third, it emphasized a process of learning.

Research Question

How is it that a nation founded around 18th century republican ideals of limited central state authority, citizen legislators, and weak institutional structures shifted toward a complex central state authority overseen by a highly professionalized legislature? According to most historical accounts of congressional development, both the Speakership of Henry Clay after the War of 1812, and the context surrounding the end of the Civil War had 'big bang' causal impacts on this empirical transformation. These arguments are consistent with a punctuated equilibrium perspective on political development.

One of the limitations of the punctuated equilibrium perspective is that it has led scholars to ignore gradual transformations. How was it that a highly complex Congress overseeing an expansive American state could suddenly blossom forth after the war, if in fact the Congress and the state structure were as undeveloped, weak, and lacking in basic resources and organizational

capacities as the prevailing view suggests? How did the central state authority dramatically expand its governing reach while also creating a foundation for organizational capacities? Was Congress overwhelmed by the need to create a modern structure for itself while also creating an expansive governing role for government? If not, why not? Finally, how is that a careerist professional legislative body began to emerge so rapidly?

In place of this punctuated account of historical change, the study employed an institutional learning perspective emphasizing gradual and continual development with the central contention being that members of Congress continually learned and adapted to new contextual needs throughout the entire eighty year period between the founding and the Civil War. Focusing on a gradual process of development led to an organization that was much more complex and robust on the eve of the Civil War than scholars fully appreciate.

The central contention was that the U.S. Congress evolved throughout the entire eighty year period between the founding and the Civil War in a gradual process that led to a complex organization that was much more professionalized than fully appreciated by congressional scholars. Throughout the evolution, Congress increasingly grew to actualize its responsibility to organize itself in an efficient manner that would allow it to do the business of the people in a responsive and attentive manner. In doing so, the Congress began to become more physically institutionalized. Congress took advantage of the 10-mile square area granted by the constitution and created a U.S. Capitol Building that would support an evolving conception of the Congress. This physical apparatus created a literal architectural structure that symbolized the importance of Congress and institutionalized a professional structuring of roles through physical committee rooms, lobby areas, Senate and House chambers, etc. As argued in the study, these physical areas were probably at least as critical in generating and sustaining new kinds of congressional

politics as were rules changes and procedural changes. In point of fact, the study suggests the physical creation of a capital city containing a stand alone Congress building, and then the design and continual expansion of that Capitol building throughout the first half of the 19th century, laid the foundations for the rapid expansion of the American state during and after the Civil War.

Congressional Work Environment

The crux of the study was the idea that the physical creation of a capital city containing a stand alone building for Congress helped sustain and enhance the nascent American state. The design and continual expansion of the Capitol Building throughout the first half of the 19th century helped the rapid expansion of the American state prior to the Civil War. Without a stable physical environment in which to work, the Congress would not have been capable of sustaining the output required to develop the American state. Thus, American political development itself is intricately bound together with the establishment of a physical working environment referred to as the “Congressional Work Environment.”

Throughout all of the chapters, the actions summarized in Table 7-1 were presented.

Table 7-1 Development of Congressional Work Environment: Five Time Periods

Time Period	Congressional Development of Physical Work Environment
1783-1789	Creating a perambulatory Congress and then shifting to a conception of Congress within a defined geographic space of 10-mile square
1789-1800	Questions concerning architectural design and role of government in funding development
1801-1813	Defining and seeking architectural solutions to functional needs and taking control of development away from executive branch
1814-1829	Rebuilding after destruction and seeking to enhance internal functional capabilities
1830-1851	Working within a functionally capable, though inadequate, physical structure

Beginning with the end of the Revolutionary War a governing ideology emerged that espoused a specific belief in the role a seat of government occupied in governing a nation. The ideological belief was constructed around the idea that a seat had to be small and mobile so that it would not become entrenched would thereby satisfy 18th century notions of republicanism. Within a fairly short period of time, the policy implications of this ideology were proven impractical and political leaders adjusted their ideological beliefs. This adjustment led to the construction of a permanent and expansive seat of government, which was consciously designed to better enable the legislative branch to govern an expanding nation. Once the question of the seat of government's stability was settled, the political questions turned to control over the construction of the physical environment in which the legislative branch would work. At the outset, the legislative branch ceded control of construction to the executive, but they soon found that this left them out of significant decisions. They thus actively and successfully took control of the construction process. Once they were in control, they consciously sought to construct a physical work environment that would best enable them to be an active, and powerful, actor in the central government. By 1829 the dominant belief was that they had largely accomplished this task. From 1829 through 1851 the U.S. Capitol Building was an address at which the American public knew they could take their grievances and find a working legislative body. The physical work space included internal locations such as lobbies, galleries, locations reserved for reporters, and internal passageways; all identified as 'the Capitol grounds.' Collectively, these internal and external spaces enabled congressmen to interact with individuals outside the organization and remain visible. They served a republican function allowing members to retain physical contact with their constituency. Individuals would arrive at the Capitol knowing it was

a location where they could be found and their behavior witnessed thereby enabling citizens to witness proceedings and engage in close physical interaction with congressmen.

Each alteration in the Congressional Work Environment resulted in the U.S. Congress becoming more entrenched and strengthened in its position within the central state authority and each gradual, iterative solution to the physical workspace problem resulted in an environment increasingly more conducive to the needs and demands of full-time legislators. By successfully developing this architecturally bounded space, members of Congress enhanced the institution's position within a central state authority, and connected American political development with the construction of a physical working environment. Simply put, legislating itself – the acts of meeting, deliberating and deciding - required an architecturally bounded space. Without successfully recognizing the need for this space, and controlling its development, American legislators would not have been in a position to develop the American state.

Antebellum Congress

The idea that the activities taking place in Washington, DC prior to the Civil War goes against the grain of much contemporary scholarship. Even historically minded scholars ignore developments before the 1860s by emphasizing an insubstantial, essentially frail antebellum American state incapable of enacting and implementing national social policies and programs.¹ A leading scholar goes so far as to claim it was only with the Union's victory that the American state gained the "fundamental attributes of territorial and governmental sovereignty."²

¹ Bensel, Richard Franklin, *Yankee leviathan: the origins of central state authority in America, 1859-1877* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Theda Skocpol, *Protecting soldiers and mothers : the political origins of social policy in the United States* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1992).

² Quote from Bensel 1990, page 1.

Revisionist historians attribute this misconception to historiographic traditions that view the role of state institutions in the early republic through an anachronistic understanding of the central state.³ Such judgments render the state building and governance that took place before the 1860s prehistoric, effectively cosigning them to an interesting but irrelevant past. However by shifting attention toward what the American state was actually doing during this time period, a picture emerges revealing that the core institution of the period was not the executive, but the national legislature. Thus, historically accurate studies of American political development need to emphasize that throughout the period leading to the Civil War, the U.S. Congress was the key institutional player in establishing political stability, prosperity, and security that worked to expand the American nation and forge a national community.

This statement should be provocative to congressional scholars because the vast bulk of the literature paints a picture of 19th century congressmen as part-time employees who did not need many formal institutional structures, experts, or specialized committees to guide them. They operated within a party system that guided their behavior and action and did not have, or require, high levels of membership experience, committee structures, or experienced Speakers. Committee operations became more complex as time went on, but the committee structure remained underdeveloped and patterns of floor leadership were similarly unpredictable.

What this dominant account misses, however, is that simply because the procedural structures were embryonic does not mean they were ineffectual. A great deal of was accomplished by the early Congress concerning matters like the tariff, Indian removal and control, the disposal of public lands, the easing of credit restrictions, the subsidizing of roads, canals, and railroads. All of these were exercises of national power and such congressional

³ The points in this section are made forcefully by Jensen, *American Patriots, Settlers, and the Origins of American Social Policy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

legislation created linkages between citizens and the central state that was instrumental for the nation's rapid and sustained economic growth. The central state made resources available and, in doing so made it possible for a national economy to develop and to do so fairly rapidly.

Building on the theoretical premises of organizational and learning theory this study has revealed an antebellum institution far more professionalized than generally recognized. As generations of congressional actors attempted to manage the central state, their actual governing experiences within a bounded physical structure gradually led them to reformulate their understandings and revise their conceptions of the U.S. Congress and led them to create a physical apparatus capable of meeting their governing needs.

Emphasizing architectural adaptations provides a new way of segmenting congressional history.⁴ Instead of beginning with a focus on the electoral environment, time is divided through visible alterations in congressional geography and architecture. This form of temporal division does not require an entirely new perspective on congressional history. After decades of concerted research, the accumulated knowledge of the congressional institution is not called into question. However, by including the Congressional Work Environment concept existing puzzles are brought into clearer relief.

New Directions

The central question is does a focus on architectural change provide a better, simpler framework for understanding the congressional institution across time than a focus on electoral politics? The argument presented throughout this work has answered in the affirmative. One reason for this position is that architectural measurements have clear beginning and end points.

⁴ See literature built around the essay by Karen Orren and Stephen Skowronek "Beyond the Iconography of Order: Notes for a 'New Institutionalism,'" in Lawrence C. Dodd, and Calvin C. Jillson, eds. *The Dynamics of American politics: approaches and interpretations* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994).

Unless one adopts a ‘big-bang’ perspective on electoral change, a perspective that has been routinely discredited, it is extraordinarily difficult to pin down a precise starting point for electoral change. Changes in congressional geography and architecture, on the other hand, can be measured with precision. The starting point for every change begins when members of Congress first occupy the new environment. There is a clear and unambiguous date at which each new temporal moment begins and ends. This is not say that gradual change doesn’t occur within each of the temporal periods, because it definitely does, but that each period is clearly bounded and demarcated. If nothing else, this would seem to make the architectural periods more scientifically useful than the electoral ones.

Second, an emphasis on geography and architecture ensures that the focus is on the institution itself and the manner in which members respond and adapt to this environment. This would seem to be the most crucial point of differentiation. In the end, electoral schemes remain intimately tied to the outside environment and do not truly provide an institutional perspective. The Congressional Work Environment, on the other hand, is wedded to the institution’s development. The architectural model focuses on the environmental characteristics in which members of Congress operate and begins a new temporal period only when there is a shift in this environment. Focusing on the geography and architecture keeps attention on the institution itself and the manner in which members used the institution to strategize, make policy and seek power. As shown throughout the study, members continually learned, and relearned, to take advantage of their architecturally bounded arrangements to maximize their position within the central government.

Conclusion

Since its inception, the U.S. Congress has grappled with the dilemma of providing a physical work environment in which members could conduct the nation’s business. In working

to solve the physical workspace problem, Congress continually re-established itself within the framework of the American political system. Each alteration resulted in Congress becoming more entrenched within the political system and each iterative solution to the physical workspace problem resulted in an environment increasingly more conducive to the needs and demands of full-time legislators. As generations of congressional actors attempted to manage the central state, their actual governing experiences within a bounded physical structure gradually led them to reformulate their understandings and revise their conceptions of the U.S. Congress and enabled them to enhance their position within the American state.

REFERENCES

- Adams, John Quincy, and Charles Francis Adams. 1874. *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams, comprising portions of his diary from 1795 to 1848*. Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott & Co.
- Albert, Peter J., and Ronald Hoffman. 1996. *Launching the "Extended Republic": the Federalist Era*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia.
- Aldrich, John H., and Ruth W. Grant. 1993. "The Antifederalists, the First Congress, and the First Parties." *The Journal of Politics* 55 (2): 295-326.
- Allen, William C., and United States Architect of the Capitol. 2001. *History of the United States Capitol: a chronicle of design, construction, and politics*. Washington: U.S. G.P.O; Supt. of Docs., U.S. G.P.O.
- Argyris, Chris. 1976. "Single-Loop and Double-Loop Models in Research on Decision Making." *Administrative Science Quarterly* 21 (3): 363-75.
- Argyris, Chris, and Donald A. Schön. 1980. *Organizational learning: a theory of action perspective*. Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley Pub. Co.
- Arnebeck, Bob. 1991. *Through a fiery trial: building Washington, 1790-1800*. Lanham: Madison Books ; Distributed by National Book Network.
- Baxter, Maurice G. 1995. *Henry Clay and the American system*. Lexington, Ky.: University Press of Kentucky.
- Bell, Rudolph M. 1973. *Party and faction in American politics; the House of Representatives, 1789-1801*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press.
- Bellot, H. Hale. 1938. "Review: Letters of members of the Continental congress." *The English Historical Review* 53 (209): 144-7.
- Ben Atar, Doron S., and Barbara Oberg. 1998. *Federalists reconsidered*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia.
- Bensel, Richard Franklin. 1990. *Yankee leviathan : the origins of central state authority in America, 1859-1877*. Cambridge England ; New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Berkman, Michael B. 2001. "Legislative Professionalism and the Demand for Groups: The Institutional Context of Interest Population Density." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 26 (4): 661-79.
- Berry, William D., Michael B. Berkman, and Stuart Schneiderman. 2000. "Legislative Professionalism and Incumbent Reelection: The Development of Institutional Boundaries." *The American Political Science Review* 94 (4): 859-74.

- Binder, Sarah A. 1995. "Partisanship and Procedural Choice: Institutional Change in the Early Congress, 1789-1823." *The Journal of Politics* 57 (4): 1093-118.
- Binder, Sarah A. 1996. "The Partisan Basis of Procedural Choice: Allocating Parliamentary Rights in the House, 1789-1990." *The American Political Science Review* 90 (1): 8-20.
- Blau, J. R., and C. Elman. 2002. "The Institutionalization of US Political Parties: Patronage Newspapers." *Sociological Inquiry* 72 (Fall): 576-99.
- Bogue, Allan G., and Mark Paul Marlaire. 1975. "Of Mess and Men: The Boardinghouse and Congressional Voting, 1821-1842." *American Journal of Political Science* 19 (2): 207-30.
- Bowling, Kenneth R. 1972. "The Bank Bill, the Capital City and President Washington." *Capitol Studies* 1 (Spring): 59-72.
- Bowling, Kenneth R. 1988. *Creating the federal city, 1774-1800: Potomac fever*. Washington, D.C.: American Institute of Architects Press.
- Bowling, Kenneth R. 1991. *The creation of Washington, D.C.: the idea and location of the American capital*. Fairfax, Va.; Lanham, MD: George Mason University Press; Distributed by arrangement with University Pub. Associates.
- Bowling, Kenneth R., and Donald R. Kennon. 2002. *The House and Senate in the 1790s: petitioning, lobbying, and institutional development*. Athens: Published for the United States Capitol Historical Society by Ohio University Press
- Bowling, Kenneth R., and Donald R. Kennon. 2005. *Establishing Congress: the removal to Washington, D.C., and the election of 1800*. Athens: Published for the United States Capitol Historical Society by Ohio University Press.
- Bowling, Kenneth R., Donald R. Kennon, and United States Capitol Historical Society. 2000. *Neither separate nor equal: Congress in the 1790s*. Athens: Published for the United States Capitol Historical Society by Ohio University Press.
- Burnett, Edmund Cody. 1921. *Letters of members of the Continental congress*. Washington, D.C: The Carnegie institution of Washington.
- Büthe, Tim. 2002. "Taking Temporality Seriously: Modeling History and the use of Narratives as Evidence." *The American Political Science Review* 96 (3): 481-93.
- Carson, Jamie L., and Erik J. Engstrom. 2005. "Assessing the Electoral Connection: Evidence from the Early United States." *American Journal of Political Science* 49 (4): 746-57.
- Clinton, Joshua D., and Adam Meirowitz. 2004. "Testing Explanations of Strategic Voting in Legislatures: A Reexamination of the Compromise of 1790." *American Journal of Political Science* 48 (4): 675-89.

- Collier, Christopher, and James Lincoln Collier. 1999. *Building a new nation: the Federalist era, 1789-1803*. New York: Benchmark Books.
- Cooke, Jacob E. 1970. "The Compromise of 1790." *The William and Mary Quarterly* 27 (4): 524-45.
- Cress, Lawrence Delbert. 1975. "Whither Columbia? Congressional Residence and the Politics of the New Nation, 1776 to 1787." *The William and Mary Quarterly* 32 (4): 581-600.
- Cunningham, Noble E. 1963. *The Jeffersonian Republicans in power; party operations, 1801-1809*. Chapel Hill, Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture at Williamsburg, Va., by the University of North Carolina Press.
- Cunningham, Noble E. 1978. *The process of government under Jefferson*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
- Cunningham, Noble E. 1988. *The United States in 1800: Henry Adams revisited*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia.
- Cunningham, Noble E. 1996. *The presidency of James Monroe*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas.
- Cunningham, Noble E., and Noble E. Cunningham. 1968. *The early Republic, 1789-1828*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press.
- Cunningham, Noble E., and Institute of Early American History and Culture. 1957. *The Jeffersonian Republicans; the formation of party organization, 1789-1801*. Chapel Hill: published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture at Williamsburg by the University of North Carolina Press.
- Cunningham, Noble E., and Institute of Early American History and Culture. 1963. *The Jeffersonian Republicans in power; party operations, 1801-1809*. Chapel Hill, Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture at Williamsburg, Va.: by the University of North Carolina Press.
- Davis, Joseph L. 1977. *Sectionalism in American politics, 1774-1787*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Dodd, Lawrence C., Lawrence C. Dodd, Indiana University Conference on Congress and Policy Change, Leroy N. Rieselbach, and Gerald C. Wright. 1986. *Congress and policy change*. New York: Agathon Press.
- Dodd, Lawrence C., and Calvin C. Jillson. 1994. *The Dynamics of American politics: approaches and interpretations*. Boulder: Westview Press.
- Dodd, Lawrence C., and Bruce Ian Oppenheimer. 2005. *Congress reconsidered*. 8th ed. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press.

- Elkins, Stanley, and Eric McKittrick. 1961. "The Founding Fathers: Young Men of the Revolution." *Political Science Quarterly* 76 (2): 181-216.
- Fiorina, Morris P. 1999. "Further Evidence of the Partisan Consequences of Legislative Professionalism." *American Journal of Political Science* 43 (3): 974-7.
- Greene, Evarts B. 1937. "Review: Letters of members of the Continental congress." *The American Historical Review* 42 (4): 789-92.
- Harlow, Ralph Volney. 1917. *The history of legislative methods in the period before 1825* [microform]. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Heclo, Hugh. 1974. *Modern social politics in Britain and Sweden; from relief to income maintenance*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Henderson, H. James. 1974. *Party politics in the Continental Congress*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Hoadley, John F. 1980. "The Emergence of Political Parties in Congress, 1789-1803." *The American Political Science Review* 74 (3): 757-79.
- Hoadley, John F. 1986. *Origins of American political parties, 1789-1803*. Lexington, Ky.: University Press of Kentucky.
- Howe, Daniel Walker. 2007. *What hath God wrought: the transformation of America, 1815-1848*. Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press.
- Jenkins, J. A., and M. Weidenmier. 1999. "Ideology, Economic Interests, and Congressional Roll-Call Voting: Partisan Instability and Bank of the United States Legislation, 1811-1816." *Public Choice* 100 (September): 225-43.
- Jenkins, Jeffery A. 1998. "Property Rights and the Emergence of Standing Committee Dominance in the Nineteenth-Century House." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 23 (4): 493-519.
- Jenkins, Jeffery A., and Brian R. Sala. 1998. "The Spatial Theory of Voting and the Presidential Election of 1824." *American Journal of Political Science* 42 (4): 1157-79.
- Jensen, Laura. 2003. *Patriots, settlers, and the origins of American social policy*. Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Jillson, Calvin C., and Rick K. Wilson. 1994. *Congressional dynamics: structure, coordination, and choice in the first American Congress, 1774-1789*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Klubes, Benjamin B. 1990. "The First Federal Congress and the First National Bank: A Case Study in Constitutional Interpretation." *Journal of the Early Republic* 10 (1): 19-41.

- Lebovic, James H. 1995. "How Organizations Learn: U.S. Government Estimates of Foreign Military Spending." *American Journal of Political Science* 39 (4): 835-63.
- Levitt, Barbara, and James G. March. 1988. "Organizational Learning." *Annual Review of Sociology* 14: 319-40.
- Levy, Jack S. 1994. "Learning and Foreign Policy: Sweeping a Conceptual Minefield." *International Organization* 48 (2): 279-312.
- March, James G., and Johan P. Olsen. 1976. *Ambiguity and choice in organizations*. Bergen: Universitetsforlaget.
- Moncrief, Gary F., Joel A. Thompson, and Karl T. Kurtz. 1996. "The Old Statehouse, it Ain't what it used to be." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 21 (1): 57-72.
- Mooney, Christopher Z. 1995. "Citizens, Structures, and Sister States: Influences on State Legislative Professionalism." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 20 (1): 47-67.
- Morison, Samuel E. 1939. "Review: Letters of members of the Continental congress." *The New England Quarterly* 12 (1): 139-42.
- Nardulli, Peter F., ed., *The Constitution and American Political Development: an institutional perspective*. (Urbana : University of Illinois Press), 1992.
- Nystrom, Paul C., and William H. Starbuck. 1981. *Handbook of organizational design*. Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press.
- Polsby, Nelson W. 1968. "The Institutionalization of the U.S. House of Representatives." *The American Political Science Review* 62 (1): 144-68.
- Paskoff, Paul F. 2007. *Troubled waters: steamboat disasters, river improvements, and American public policy, 1821-1860*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press.
- Quirk, Paul J. and Sarah A. Binder, eds. 2001. *The Legislative Branch*. Oxford University Press.
- Rakove, Jack N. 1979. *The beginnings of national politics: an interpretive history of the Continental Congress*. 1st ed. New York: Knopf; distributed by Random House.
- Remini, Robert Vincent. 1991. *Henry Clay: statesman for the Union*. 1st ed. New York: W.W. Norton.
- Roche, John P. 1961. "The Founding Fathers: A Reform Caucus in Action." *The American Political Science Review* 55 (4): 799-816.
- Rosenthal, Alan. 1996. "State Legislative Development: Observations from Three Perspectives." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 21 (2): 169-98.
- Scott, Pamela, and Library of Congress. 1995. *Temple of Liberty: building the Capitol for a new nation*. New York: Oxford University Press.

- Shalhope, Robert E. 1982. "Republicanism and Early American Historiography." *The William and Mary Quarterly* 39 (2): 334-56.
- Sharp, James Roger. 1993. *American politics in the early republic: the new nation in crisis*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Sharp, James Roger. 1993. *American politics in the early republic: the new nation in crisis*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Siemers, David J. 2002. *Ratifying the republic: Antifederalists and Federalists in constitutional time*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press..
- Sitkin, Sam B. 1992. "Learning through Failure: The Strategy of Small Losses." *Research in Organizational Behavior* 14: 231-66.
- Skeen, Carl Edward. 2003. *1816: America rising*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky.
- Skladony, T. W. 1985. "The House Goes to Work: Select and Standing Committees in the United State House of Representatives, 1789-1828." *Congress and the Presidency* 12 (Fall): 165-87.
- Skocpol, Theda. 1992. *Protecting soldiers and mothers : the political origins of social policy in the United States*. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- Squire, Peverill. 1992. "Legislative Professionalization and Membership Diversity in State Legislatures." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 17 (1): 69-79.
- Squire, Peverill. 1998. "Membership Turnover and the Efficient Processing of Legislation." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 23 (1): 23-32.
- Strahan, Randall, M. Gunning, and R. L. Vining. 2006. "From Moderator to Leader: Floor Participation by US. House Speakers, 1789-1841." *Social Science History* 30 (Spring): 51-74.
- Strahan, Randall, Vincent G. Moscardelli, Moshe Haspel, and Richard S. Wike. 2000. "The Clay Speakership Revisited." *Polity* 32 (4): 561-93.
- Tetlock, Philip T., ed. 1993. *Behavior, Society, and International Conflict*. Oxford University Press.
- Theriault, Sean M. 2006. "Party Politics during the Louisiana Purchase." *Social Science History* 30 (Summer): 293-324.
- Thompson, Joel A. 1986. "State Legislative Reform: Another Look, One More Time, again." *Polity* 19 (1): 27-41.
- Torres, Louis. 1970. "Federal Hall Revisited." *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 29 (4): 327-38.

- United States Congress. 1990. *The United States Capitol*. Washington: U.S. G.P.O.
- United States Congress, and Joseph Gales. 1834-1856. The debates and proceedings in the Congress of the United States: with an appendix containing important state papers and public documents, and all the laws of a public nature; with a copious index; compiled from authentic materials. Permanent ed. Washington: Gales and Seaton.
- United States Congress, and House of Representatives. 1904. *Documentary History of the Construction and Development of the Capitol Building and Grounds*. Washington: Government Printing Office.
- United States National Park Service Division of Publications. 1990. *Congress Hall, Capitol of the United States, 1790-1800: Independence National Historical Park, Pennsylvania*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Dept. of the Interior.
- Watson, Harry L. 1998. Andrew Jackson vs. Henry Clay: democracy and development in antebellum America. Boston; Bedford/St. Martin's.
- Weisberg, Herbert F. 1986. Political science: the science of politics. New York: Agathon Press.
- Wilson, Rick K. 1999. "Transitional Governance in the United States: Lessons from the First Federal Congress." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 24 (4): 543-68.
- Wilson, Woodrow. 1981. *Congressional government: a study in American politics*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Woods, N. D., and M. Baranowski. 2006. "Legislative Professionalism and Influence on State Agencies: The Effects of Resources and Careerism." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 31 (November): 585-609.
- Zagarri, Rosemarie. 1988. "Representation and the Removal of State Capitals, 1776-1812." *The Journal of American History* 74 (4): 1239-56.
- Zelizer, Julian E. 2004. *The American Congress: the building of democracy*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Jason Kassel was born in Fort Rucker, Alabama to Elizabeth and Stephen Kassel. The middle of three children (coming after Ethan and before Samantha) he was raised in Fresno, California. Upon graduating from Bullard High School in 1987, he attended the University of California, Santa Cruz where he majored in politics and worked as a research assistant for Dan Wirls. After graduating in 1991, he moved to Washington, D.C. where he gained practical experience in American politics working on Capitol Hill and for a variety of political campaigns. In 2003, he reentered the academic environment joining the University of Florida political science department as a graduate student. In pursuit of his PhD he was honored with a Dirksen Congressional Grant (2004), two Best Graduate Student Paper Awards (2005 and 2006), and an American Political Science Association Congressional Fellowship (2007). In 2008, he completed his dissertation and was hired as an Assistant Professor at Valdosta State University.