A P P E N D I X C:

The artist/decorator of St. Augustine's fresco program's work at The Richard Alsop IV House qualified the site for National Landmark registry in 2009.

11. FORM PREPARED BY

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Date: April 9, 2001 (revised Oct. 2004; Dec. 2007)

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National Park Service
National Historic Landmarks Program
Historic American Buildings Survey
1849 C Street NW (2270)
Washington, DC 20240

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DESIGNATED A NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK
January 16, 2009

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: Richard Alsop IV House

Other Name/Site Number: Davison Art Center

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: 301 High Street Not for publication: N/A

City/Town: Middletown Vicinity

State: Connecticut County: Middlesex Code: 007 Zip Code: 06459

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property		Category of Property	
Private:	X	Building(s):	X
Public-Local:	___	District:	___
Public-State:	___	Site:	___
Public-Federal:	___	Structure:	___
		Object:	___

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	___	buildings
___	___	sites
___	___	structures
___	___	objects
1	___	Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 1

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing: N/A

4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this ____ nomination ____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

Signature of Certifying Official Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting or Other Official Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ Entered in the National Register
___ Determined eligible for the National Register
___ Determined not eligible for the National Register
___ Removed from the National Register
___ Other (explain):

Signature of Keeper Date of Action

6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic:	Domestic	Sub:	single dwelling/secondary structure
Current:	Recreation and Culture	Sub:	museum
	Education	Sub:	educational facility/library

7. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: Early Republic: Early Classical Revival: Regency
Mid-19th Century: Greek Revival, Italian Villa

MATERIALS:
Foundation: sandstone
Walls: stucco over load-bearing brick
Roof: metal
Other:

MONACHESI'S "HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT" PAINTINGS

Summary

Realized in a number of campaigns between 1839 and ca. 1860, the wall paintings of the Richard Alsop IV House in Middletown, Connecticut, are nationally significant examples of nineteenth-century decorative wall painting once common in American domestic settings, but now largely lost as tastes changed or the materials degraded. The wall painting enlivened the new house that Richard Alsop IV built for his mother between 1836 and 1839; although believed to be used on the exterior for reasons of economy in place of marble ornament, the painting was fully in keeping with fashionable decorative trends of the period. The artists, thought to be recent Italian and German immigrants, utilized a variety of stylistic sources—ancient, Renaissance, and nineteenth-century—from which to derive subject matter and approaches for artistic organization and representation in devising the interior painting programs. Ultimately, the house was embellished with colorful wall panels in the neoclassical modes stylistically referred to as "Pompeian" or "Empire," fanciful cage-like frames and realistic native birds and plants, and *grisaille* trompe l'eoil statues and faux stonework. An extremely rare antebellum survivor, the house and its painted decoration remained in the Alsop family for over one hundred years and continue to be the focus of studies and monitoring by present owner and steward Wesleyan University. With regard to the wall paintings, Peter M. Kenny, the Curator of American Decorative Arts at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, recently observed: "these unique and irreplaceable treasures are truly part of our national cultural patrimony."[1]

Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.

The Site and Immediate Landscape

The Richard Alsop IV House is set back from the west side of High Street on a slight rise, overlooking the Connecticut River to the east. Located in a fashionable nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century residential district now part of the Wesleyan University campus, the original house consists of a two-story main block with lower flanking wings and an extended three-story rear ell, for a total of 4,800 square feet on the first floor). The load-bearing brick walls are set on a brownstone foundation and covered in rose-beige stucco that is scored to resemble ashlar stonework. The house is now joined to the once freestanding Alsop carriage house, also brick and stucco, which, along with several modern additions, houses the Davison Art Center library and gallery.

The two-acre site encompasses the original lot on High Street set aside for the house in 1835. It is enclosed on the east by an iron fence that runs the length of the 270-foot High Street frontage. Original openwork iron posts frame the driveway to the parking lot on the north; the gates are missing. This was one of two original entrances for a semi-circular driveway in front of the house. Other nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century houses on this side of the street partially screen the block's interior three acres of which was formerly part of the Alsop property. Most of this acreage is now occupied by the Center for the Arts, the university's large, modern art complex consisting of a series of limestone buildings connected by underground passageways.

Little remains of the landscaped grounds around the house depicted in *Great Georgian Houses of America* (1933, 1937); however, based on style and remaining plant material the landscaping probably dated from the late nineteenth century.[2] The most notable feature, a large parterre garden with a central terrace south of the ell, was replaced in 1982 by a paved stone courtyard of similar size. The three-stage, cast-iron fountain in the courtyard may have been moved from another location on the site. Mature specimen trees still frame the house,

[1] Peter M. Kenny, Curator of American Decorative Arts, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 17 June 2004, letter attached to e-mail message to Alain Munkittrick, 18 June 2004. Copy in Alsop House National Historic Landmark file.

[2] Despite the title, Alsop House and a number of other nineteenth-century dwellings were included in *Great Georgian Houses of America*, originally published in two volumes released in 1933 and 1937, and reprinted by Dover in 1970.

After stabilizing the originals, Cox replicated them on plywood, "covering the originals but held away from the old surface by about an inch." He added: "fortunately, the niches were deep enough so that the new work could be secured with wood moldings and still give the effect of sunk panels."

On the interior, Buck and his team engaged in a comprehensive restoration of the double parlors and morning room. As with the exterior panels, some of the restoration of the decorative finishes in these rooms predated university ownership. Paint analysis by several conservators, most recently in 1997, generally confirmed that the earliest retouching is found on the dancing girls and their surroundings in the parlors and on the morning room murals.[9] The Buck-led, mid-twentieth-century conservation included in-painting and wax adhesion of flaking paint. Except for the ceiling roundels in the parlors and their immediate surrounds, most of their work was subsequently coated with a synthetic varnish. At this time, metal strapping and disks were installed to stabilize the plaster ceilings in the double parlors; these were painted to blend in with the designs. In the stairhall, the restoration and stabilization included the replacement of the single Ionic column underpinning the semi-elliptical stair at its landing with a closet for additional support.

The university hired the architectural firm of Shreve, Lamb & Harmon of New York for the renovations to the service ell and carriage house.[10] The $400,000 project enclosed the rear porch, using it and an addition to connect the ell and the carriage house.[11] The service spaces of the ell were given over to a lecture room and an art library and offices retrofitted into the former carriage house. A new cruciform gallery and art vault was also completed as part of this project. These were added on the south side of the connector and frame the west side of the courtyard. The gallery was detailed to echo the design of the house. Commenting on the new Davison Art Center in a 1954 article, Samuel M. Green, an art professor at Wesleyan, stated:

> in the transformation of the old house into the new Art Center, no important part of the original Alsop property has been changed, except the stable, which was remodeled into studios, though retaining its fine exterior...Classrooms, exhibition space and office areas are mostly in the former utility areas of the old house and in additions.[12]

Notably, with regard to the painted interior decoration, Green stated that "since little of the original painting was badly damaged, the present effect is substantially what it was when the painting was new."[13] At the time, a project such as this—mixing conservation, adaptive reuse, and new construction—was considered an acceptable preservation practice. Upon the dedication of the art center, Henry-Russell Hitchcock is reported to have pronounced that "the adaptation of old houses to suitable new uses, when properly conducted, as here, is in effect the only sound method of preserving distinguished work of the past."[14]

Since the 1950s, Wesleyan University has remained committed to the preservation of the Alsop House wall painting with several later studies focusing on the continued conservation of the house's decorative art.

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[9] See "Restoration of Decorative Finishes," prepared by conservators from Conservation Center at the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, Anne Beha Associates, Inc., 35-50, which builds upon earlier work.

[10] Laura M. Edmiston, "The Davison Art Center and Alsop House," 30 July 1994, p. 1, Davison Art Center Library (hereafter DACL), Wesleyan University, Middletown, Connecticut; Anne Beha Associates, "Alsop House/Davison Art Center: Restoration Master Plan," 14.

[11] In 1960, a print reference library and curator's office was added to the south side of the carriage house.

[12] Samuel M. Green, "Wesleyan's New Art Center," *College Art Journal* 13 (Spring 1954): 221.

[13] Ibid.

[14] As quoted in Green, "Wesleyan's New Art Center," 219.

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:
Nationally: X Statewide: _ Locally:

Applicable National Register Criteria:	A_ B_ C X D
Criteria Considerations (Exceptions):	A_ B_ C_ D_ E_ F_ G
NHL Criteria:	4
NHL Theme(s):	III. Expressing Cultural Values 2. Visual and performing arts
Areas of Significance:	Art: painting, decorative arts
Period(s) of Significance:	1839 - ca. 1860
Significant Dates:	
Significant Person(s):	
Cultural Affiliation:	N/A
Architect/Builder:	Landra Beach Platt and Francis Benne, architects (New Haven, Connecticut) Sage & Baldwin, builders (Middletown, Connecticut) Nicola Monachesi, artist (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania), for work completed in 1839 or shortly after William Borgelt, artist (Middletown, Connecticut), for ca. 1860 work
Historic Contexts:	XXVI. Decorative and Folk Art

ATTRIBUTION TO MONACHESI

documents eventually confirmed that they had indeed produced the original plans, outlined the specifications, and provided requested revisions to the design.[27] Alsop met with Platt in his New Haven office to review the initial plan, but because he lived in Philadelphia, his friend Samuel W. Russell acted as his agent when the project went out to bid and Alsop's nephew, Francis E. Oliver, oversaw construction with Russell.

Alsop put the project on hold in October 1836 after the two bids for the project came in at nearly double the original $15,000 estimate. Various ways to control costs were considered; most notable and relevant to its present national significance was the substitution of trompe l'oeil painting for the desired exterior marble decoration—frieze, niche statues, and urns—called for in the original plan, at a savings of $4,600. During this pause in the project, it appears that Alsop also consulted with renowned nineteenth-century American architect, William Strickland, about the design of the stairhall.[28] Contracts were finally executed in 1838 for a completion date of June 1, 1839, with Middletown builders Barzillai Sage, after his unsuccessful first bid, winning the bid for the masonry at $5,700, and Isaac Baldwin for the carpentry at $7,950. Revisions to the plans that increased the height and width of the main block and the depth of the wings delayed completion and added to the cost, as did the use of brownstone on the veranda. The house was finally completed by December 15, 1839, at a cost $16,826, with an additional $2,518 for the barn/carriage house and privy, large sums for the period, but a trifling expense for Richard Alsop.

The Artistry of the Alsop House

Completed between 1839 and ca. 1860, the exterior and interior frescoes at the Alsop House have been uniformly celebrated—and their national significance firmly established—because of their extensiveness, superb artistic effect and application, and the extreme rarity of their survival. Because of an idiosyncratic, compositional character blending pared-down Greco-Roman and Regency forms and details, the Alsop House stands architecturally apart from most other contemporary suburban villas and, to a certain extent, defies easy categorization. Perhaps because of this, discussion of the house's architectural character generally focuses as much on the wall paintings as its tectonics. In his benchmark study *Greek Revival Architecture in America* (1944), Talbot Hamlin observed: "the grisaille statues in niches and the decorative painted frieze...enhance...its otherwise severely simple walls," and "its interior color decoration is famous."[29] A decade later, Henry-Russell Hitchcock, noted: "[the Alsop House] is a symmetrical Grecian villa almost worthy of Schinkel's Potsdam, with very fine murals on the exterior as well as inside."[30]

WHY ALSOP FRESCO ARE SIGNIFICANT.

The importance of the Alsop House frescoes was documented early in the academic study of American art, and continues to be admired as among the most important antebellum, domestic interiors surviving in the United

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[27] This assumption was initially lodged by Glenn Guildford in his 1949 honors thesis for Wesleyan. Guilford was the first known researcher to consult the Alsop family papers at Yale University about the house, and his thesis is an otherwise remarkably thorough and accurate summary of the architectural history of the property up to that time. Guildford, who is credited with the discovery of the names of the builders (Sage & Baldwin), rejected Platt & Benne as "a second-rate construction firm," incorrectly concluding that Ithiel Town designed the house with the assistance of Francis E. Oliver. See Glenn Guildford, "The Alsop House," honors thesis (Wesleyan University, 1949), SCAOL.

[28] Robert Russell, "The Alsop House, Middletown, Connecticut," draft section of his book manuscript on William Strickland provided to Wesleyan University; Clare Rogan to James A. Jacobs, e-mail message, 4 January 2008, copy in the Alsop House file, NHL. Russell expands on a suggestion made by William Ross McNabb in his master's thesis entitled "Another Look at William Strickland" (Vanderbilt University, 1971), which focuses on the close affinity between the Alsop House main stair and a known Strickland drawing (elevation and plan). The connection between Alsop and Strickland is a close one as Alsop's Philadelphia office was in Strickland's recently-completed Merchants' Exchange.

[29] Hamlin, *Greek Revival Architecture in America*, 176.

[30] Henry-Russell Hitchcock, *Architecture: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (New York: Penguin Books, 1958), 88.

with maples planted along the sidewalk in front of the fence and maples and elms along the north property line. Inside the fence at the left front is a large copper beech (*Fagus sylvatica var. atropunicea*), a varietal type not imported until after 1850. Another specimen beech of the same age and type was saved when the art complex was constructed.

Exterior

The cubic, three-bay main block has a shallow hipped roof with internal wood gutters and wide, overhanging, eaves detailed with exposed decorative rafter ends and a wood fascia. Four stuccoed brick chimneys with half-cylindrical metal caps extend well above the tin-shingled roof.[3] A painted frieze with a swag and tassel pattern extends around three sides under the eaves. The wraparound veranda, which runs across the entire façade, has a wood deck bordered by a low brownstone perimeter wall, with brownstone steps at the north end of the veranda and at the end of each of the wings. The sections of the veranda enveloping the main block are Regency in character. The bell-cast roof over the center section, presently covered with rolled asphalt, returns to the wing colonnades. Surmounted by a delicate iron balustrade that extends across the tall second-floor casement windows, the roof is supported by decorative pierced flat iron posts with applied ornamental castings and displays narrow openwork spandrels under the eaves.

The fenestration of the main block consists of casement windows and French doors with large panes set within narrow wood frames. The floor-to-ceiling French doors and windows along the veranda have wood jambs, decorative wood caps with flat scrolled brackets, and narrow wood moldings along the vertical edges. Exterior tracks in these jambs may have been used for some type of rolling screens or blinds. Several of these doors were converted to triple-hung windows in the 1870s. The remainder of the casements are set within plain masonry openings; pintels remain in the jambs, but the louvered blinds are missing.

The lower, hipped-roof wings are detailed with a full entablature and carried on Doric-order piers and pilasters. On the first floor, the facade walls feature slightly recessed *grisaille* trompe l'oeil paintings of statues on plinths set in niches, depicting Victory (south wing), Erato (center facade), and Juno (north wing). Second-floor panels contain trompe l'oeil urns. These five painted panels are mid-twentieth-century copies of the originals, which exist behind the panels in a degraded, but now stabilized state. The house's main, east-facing entrance, located at the inside bay of the north wing, contains the original four-panel wood door. A conservatory constructed of wood was added at the rear of the south wing about 1870. Originally enclosed with glazed doors, it now has tall windows on the south and west elevations. The roof parapet of the conservatory is divided by plinths with round-arched caps, detailed with stylized acroteria.

The long rear ell, measuring 28' x 60', once housed the kitchens and servants' quarters. Originally two stories, a third floor appeared about 1870. On the north elevation, bands of windows in groups of two and three are set into the upper-level walls with some single windows on the first floor. A full-length, Doric-order colonnade on the south elevation originally opened directly to the garden area now occupied by the stone courtyard. Enclosed as a corridor during the 1949-52 restoration/renovation campaign, the colonnade now has three-part windows and panels between the piers; interior wall pilasters remain in place. There are single windows at the upper levels of this elevation.

[3] The original specifications called for tin roofing; the present shingles date from about 1900. See Alsop House Files, Special Collections and Archives, Olin Library, Wesleyan University (hereafter SCAOL), Middletown, Connecticut.

In 1997, a report entitled "Alsop House/Davison Art Center Restoration Master Plan" was prepared by Anne Beha Associates, Inc., of Boston. Its primary purpose was "to resolve outstanding issues raised in prior studies of the Alsop House and to prepare recommendations for the implementation of conservation and restoration treatments."[15] Towards this end, the report included a comprehensive program for the conservation of the frescoes based on a detailed analysis by the Conservation Center at the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities. Despite the report and accompanying optimism, very little of the suggested plan-of-action was implemented. In May 2007, the Friends of the Davison Art Center Ad Hoc Committee on the Alsop House conducted a "Building Assessment Survey" of the Alsop House/Davison Art Center, which noted: "For whatever reasons, as a result of who-knows-what priorities a decade ago, this splendid and costly report was and remains ignored…During the intervening ten years, almost to the day, there has been a good deal of both encouraging and discouraging talk, but again, little action."[16] While the tone of the Friends report was pessimistic and the accompanying photographs depict differing levels of degradation—cracks, flaking, and some more serious water damage on the undecorated ceiling around the stairhall skylight—the wall paintings remain in good condition. A recent letter from the new Wesleyan president, Michael S. Roth, underscores the university's commitment to preserving the Alsop wall paintings. He states:

> The conservation of the Alsop House wall paintings has arisen as one of our most compelling priorities as I have surveyed the campus community during my first few months as president. Our faculty and curatorial staff believe strongly in the historic and cultural importance of the frescoes, given their early provenance and their rarity. I share their urgent sense that we must act swiftly to ensure that they remain intact and true in terms of their original expression.[17]

This stated commitment has already translated into physical reality with a project that occurred in June 2008 to restore the paint and plaster finishes of the second floor hallway ceiling and oculus. Clare Rogan, curator of the Davison Art Center, subsequently described the process:

> The work on the plaster took approximately two weeks, including testing for humidity and acidity to determine curing. The paint restoration took approximately one week. At the oculus, efflorescent plaster and loose and peeling paint were removed from the plaster and wood substrate. The decorative painting at the oculus was documented, and paint losses were restored by John Canning Studios personnel. The entire hallway ceiling was repaired with a skim coat of plaster, primer, and paint.[18]

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[15] Anne Beha Associates, "Alsop House/Davison Art Center: Restoration Master Plan," 3.
[16] Friends of the Davison Art Center Ad Hoc Committee on the Alsop House. "Alsop House/Davison Art Center Building Assessment Survey," Wesleyan University, 21 May 2007, 4.
[17] Michael S. Roth to James A. Jacobs, 9 January 2008, letter in the Alsop House file, NHL Program, National Park Service, U. S. Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. (hereafter NHL)
[18] "Restoration of paint and plaster finishes at the second floor hallway ceiling and oculus, June 5 - July 2, 2008," statement forwarded to NHL staff along with digital images by Clare Rogan, Curator, Davison Art Center, Wesleyan University, 17 September 2008.

States. Edward B. Allen was the first art historian to place their significance within the broader historical context of American decorative arts, noting in 1926: "their superior execution, classical inspiration, fine rich color, and excellent drawing and decorative quality."[31] Two decades later, Allyn Cox, a New York artist hired to conserve some of the wall paintings in 1949, commented, "the Alsop House...has always been alone among old New England places for its finished and elegant mural paintings, inside and out."[32] In 1966, art historian Samuel Green drew attention to the significant scope of the painting, calling it "the most elaborate program of decoration in American domestic architecture before the Civil War."[33] In 1980, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York selected the painted stone walls and other painted elements of the Alsop House stairhall for reproduction in a new American Wing gallery. The decision was retrospectively explained in this manner: "[they are] the most remarkable of their type and the perfect complement for the furniture and objects on display."[34] More recently, Peter M. Kenny, the Curator of American Decorative Arts at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, commented on the wall paintings: "these unique and irreplaceable treasures are truly part of our national cultural patrimony."[35] As completed, the Alsop House frescoes comprised a notably extensive, while not entirely cohesive, program of decoration. Even more significantly, their unique survival provides a window onto a once-flourishing decorative approach and design aesthetic that has largely disappeared in the United States.

While there is some evidence that the Alsop House dazzled contemporary Middletown society, neoclassical fresco painting, derived from Roman antiquity as well as the Italian Renaissance, had become a customary mode of interior decoration for the *haute monde* in major urban centers during the first half of the nineteenth century. As Allen recognized early-on, it was essentially a late flowering of the earlier Empire style created by Charles Percier (1764-1838) and Pierre F. L. Fontaine (1762-1853), architects for Napoleon I.[36] Numerous examples once existed in cities such as New York and Philadelphia where immigrant artists were well-established by the early nineteenth century; sometime later, artists even found their way to smaller communities like Middletown. Inherently fragile and subject to the ravages of time, few frescoes have survived from this period. Tastes changed, especially in the late-Victorian period, and many frescoes were painted over or covered with wallpaper, as in the morning and dining rooms of the Alsop House.[37]

The Historical Sources of Antebellum Wall Painting

The painted decoration of the Alsop House was a modern revival of an artistic continuum dating back to antiquity. The "Pompeian" or "Empire" style of the nineteenth century was ultimately derived from Roman fresco painting as it evolved from about 100 BCE through the early-Christian era. Although the largest concentrations of antique wall paintings have been uncovered at Pompeii and Herculaneum, examples also survive in the Roman countryside. The chronological divisions once assigned to Roman painting have been found to actually overlap and are no longer considered absolutely valid, yet they are still useful in expressing some of the significant changes in artistic intention from the early, architectonic decoration to more complex trompe l'oeil illusion developed later.[38] By the time of Pompeii's destruction in 79 CE, the mature genre

[31] All quotations and information about this publication drawn from: Allen, *Early American Wall Paintings*, 101-110.
[32] Cox, "Wall Paintings of the Alsop House," 174.
[33] Green, *American Art*, 193.
[34] Kenny, open letter, 17 June 2004.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Allen, "Alsop House," 101-102.
[37] The Alsop frescoes, properly laid down on glue size, were undamaged. That was not the case in the Austin F. Williams House in Farmington, Connecticut (NHL, 1998), in which two rooms were decorated in a similar manner. The wall panel paintings in the living room were almost destroyed when the wallpaper was removed.
[38] Nancy H. Ramage and Andrew Ramage, *Roman Art: Romulus to Constantine* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1991), 9.

encompassed a full repertory of figurative and decorative subjects and themes, as well as fairly standardized stylistic conventions. The rediscovery and subsequent archeological exploration of Pompeii and Herculaneum in the eighteenth century revealed polychrome decoration that influenced interior design on both sides of the Atlantic for the next century.

Working from published engravings of Pompeian wall painting, as well as examples executed in the Renaissance, early-nineteenth-century artists were free to reproduce and combine elements in various ways to suit individual spaces or the tastes of the client. As evident in the decoration of the Alsop House, painters often employed stylistic conventions from the later Roman period to enhance and delineate architectural intent. Wall compositions included fewer elements, often set-off by neutral grounds. For example, motifs such as the stylized tripods and dancing girls in the Alsop parlors appear to float in space within separate panels. While the tripods were a typical Roman motif, the dancing girls were inspired by the work of Raphael (Raffaello Sanzio; 1483-1520), considered to be one of the most gifted and influential architects and artists of the Italian Renaissance. Allyn Cox, the mural painter hired to restore the exterior frescoes, identified the source of the Alsop dancing girls as *The Hours of Raphael*, "a set of engravings very popular in Victorian homes."[39] Those engravings "in turn come from a Vatican ceiling, since destroyed, but engraved by [Giovanni Battista] Piranesi [1720-1778]."[40] By the time of the painting of the Alsop House, decorative artists possessed myriad sources—ancient, Renaissance, and nineteenth-century—from which to derive subject matter and approaches for artistic organization and representation in devising the interior painting programs.

The Wall Painting Program at the Alsop House

While realized within a generation of the completion of the Alsop House and historically considered as a group, the frescoes resulted from at least two different decorating campaigns. Generally referred to as "frescoes," it should be noted that the Alsop House wall painting is not "true" fresco, a process in which water-based pigments are applied to wet plaster. The Alsop paintings were mostly executed in thinly-bound oil paints, although a water-soluble distemper was used for the Greek key frieze in the south parlor and the ceiling designs. The exterior and the double parlors contain wall paintings dated with confidence to the time of the house's completion in 1839 or shortly thereafter. Although possibly contemporary, the decoration in the entrance vestibule, morning room, and dining room is distinct enough to at least suggest that the work might either postdate the exterior and parlors or be by a different artist. The *grisaille* trompe l'oeil on the west wall of the stairhall is known to date from around 1860. Despite the varying phases, taken as a whole, Edward Allen proposed that the interior decoration of the Alsop House raised American standards to a new level of elegance by the infusion of a distinctly European neoclassicism, a belief that continues to be held by American art scholars.

There is general consensus about the quality and significance of the Alsop frescoes, which has, over time, concentrated debate on their authorship. Executed in what Allen referred to as the "Pompeian" style, he assumed that Aimee Alsop, born in France, had been influenced by the prevalent Empire style of decoration that was in turn based on Pompeian models.[41] In his judgment, the Alsop frescoes were "unrivaled by any in the country at that time except those in the National Capitol, which were executed by Constantino Brumidi."[42] Based upon similarities of style and subject matter, Allen suggested that Brumidi may have been the Alsop

[39] Cox, "The Wall Paintings of the Alsop House," 176.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Allen, "Alsop House," 101.
[42] Ibid.

painter, an attribution that is now known to be incorrect.[43] To account for such elegant work in a perceived cultural backwater, some historians have attributed the frescoes to an unknown itinerant immigrant who either carried his own portfolio of published engravings or had direct knowledge of European designs. Well aware of the rich wall decorations in New York and Washington, D. C., Talbot Hamlin suggested a "wandering French or Italian painter" was responsible for the Alsop paintings.[44] Allyn Cox believed that the treatment of color in the interior frescoes indicated first-hand acquaintance with Pompeii, suggesting to him an artist of Italian extraction.[45] Family tradition holds that the iconography and motifs used in the frescoes were derived from pattern books. Joseph de Koven Alsop claimed that itinerant French artists literally copied designs found in *Antiquities d'Herculaneum, gravees par F. A. David, avec leurs explications, by P. Sylvain Marechal*, the first French publication of the Roman frescoes, a six-volume set passed down in the Alsop family.[46]

BRIEF BIO ON MONACHESI

An 1844 letter, identifying patron Richard Alsop IV as the "rich cousin" of the mayor (Charles Alsop), records that the interior decoration was executed "by eminent artists which he [Richard] sent from Philadelphia where he resided & paid them ten dollars each a day until the work was completed."[47] This observation coupled with the proximity of the Alsops to the work of immigrant painter Nicola Monachesi (1795-1861) backs Hamlin and Cox's opinions about the Italian background of the artist(s).[48] Monachesi, who also worked with his son Francesco, was a portrait and decorative painter from Naples who arrived in Philadelphia in about 1832. His commissions there included many mansions as well as decorative work in most of the Roman Catholic churches, including two in the Alsops' Society Hill neighborhood, St. Mary's and St. Joseph's. Aimee Alsop, a practicing Catholic, was undoubtedly familiar with these church interiors. Her husband would have also had first-hand knowledge of Monachesi's talents because Richard Alsop's office was in William Strickland's Merchants' Exchange (1831-34), which Monachesi had decorated with figurative and allegorical paintings. At the moment, Monachesi is as plausible a candidate as any for the earliest painting at the Alsop House.

The exterior *grisaille* trompe l'oeil panels were contemporary with the building of the house and, although fashionable for the period, are thought to be part of cost-cutting decisions made before construction began that eliminated marble exterior decoration.[49] On the first-floor, tall panels depict Victory (south wing), Erato (center facade), and Juno (north wing); one second-floor panel in each of the wings contains matched trompe l'oeil urns. A painted frieze featuring swags extends around the tall center block just under the wide, bracketed eaves. The source for the figure of Erato is from the Vatican, widely known at the time from engravings.[50]

On the interior, the painting of at least the parlors also dates from the time of the house's construction. A letter of December 15, 1839, described a party Maria Dana held in her new house and took note of the interior decoration, stating: "Mrs[.] Richard Alsop [Dana's daughter-in-law] has been in town for a few days, she was quite delighted with the house, and the paintings far exceeded her expectations...she saw nothing in Europe that

[43] Brumidi did not arrive in the United States until 1852, a decade after the Alsop frescoes were painted. Green, "Wesleyan's New Art Center," 220.
[44] Hamlin, *Greek Revival Architecture in America*, 176.
[45] Cox, "Wall Paintings of the Alsop House," 176.
[46] Joseph Alsop to Samuel M. Green, 31 August 1948, Alsop House files, DACL.
[47] Martha Mortimer Starr to Philip Mortimer, 14 February 1844, Middlesex County Historical Society, Middletown, Connecticut.
[48] The Philadelphia buildings decorated by these artists, their biographies, and possible association with Richard and Aimee Alsop were researched by Alain Munkittrick in "Chronology..."
[49] Allyn Cox observed that this decision had to be made prior to the building of the walls because they were much too thin to accept deep statuary niches. Cox, "Wall Paintings of the Alsop House," 175.
[50] Edmiston, "Davison Art Center and Alsop House," 2.

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20 November 2014

Celeste Morello
1234 Sheridan Street
Philadelphia, PA 19147

Dear Celeste Morello,

As we discussed, I am glad to write in support of the application that the Philadelphia artist Nicola Monachesi (1795?-1851) be honored with an official historical marker under the auspices of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission in Harrisburg.

After his immigration to the United States from Italy, Nicola Monachesi became among the foremost fresco painters of his time in this country, working primarily for churches and domestic patrons in Philadelphia, but also at the Richard Alsop House, created 1836–40 on High Street in Middletown, Connecticut, and since 1952, serving as the Davison Art Center on the campus of Wesleyan University. In 2009 this building was designated a National Historic Landmark by the United States Department of the Interior, primarily because of the nearly complete surviving set of interior mural frescoes painted soon after the house's completion by Nicola Monachesi. These frescoes depict birds, flowers, and ancient mythological subjects on the walls and ceilings of the historic front rooms of this house designed in the then regionally current style of an Italianate villa. The Alsop House is, so far as is known, the only house of its period in the northeastern United States where the original program of frescoes survives essentially in its entirety. Monachesi's murals cover the frontal two main rooms, the adjacent morning room, and the original entrance hall. Conservation specialists who have examined the frescoes have told us that they think they have been minimally altered since they were painted. So there is in this landmark building perhaps the most complete extant example of Nicola Monachesi's art.

I am especially familiar with these rooms because my office was upstairs from them in this building for twenty-seven years, so I had every opportunity to appreciate them on a daily basis. I also was one of the Wesleyan faculty who testified in favor of the building's becoming a National Historical Landmark in a hearing held at the National Trust for Historic Preservation at their then headquarters in Washington, D.C., in October 2008. In his still definitive book, *Early American Wall Paintings 1710–1850* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1926), Edward B. Allen chose the Alsop House as the last, culminating work, writing: "The unique frescoes in this house stand apart from the others. This is due to their superior execution, classical inspiration, fine rich color, and the excellent drawing and decorative quality that mark the end of our historical fresco period....These frescoes were unrivaled by any in the country at that time except those in the National Capitol, which were executed by the Italian artist, Constantino Brumidi, between 1855 and 1880."

Our colleague in Connecticut, architect Alain Munkkittrick, has extensively researched Monachesi's career as a fresco painter in Philadelphia. Based on his work, in preparing the application for the Alsop House's designation, we learned that Nicola Monachesi likely met the house's owner, Richard Alsop, in the Merchants' Exchange Building in Philadelphia, where Alsop had the offices of his import-export business, mainly trading

with Latin America before the Civil War. There is some indication that Alsop knew William Strickland, architect of the Merchants' Exchange and among the foremost neoclassical architects in the United States. In 1834 Strickland employed Monachesi as the artist for the ceiling of the then new Merchants' Exchange. So we have always understood Monachesi's work at the Alsop House as a local example of a style of art that he developed centrally for Philadelphia buildings, many of which are no longer extant.

Monachesi's style of painting was in the tradition of revivals of Raphael that were widely evident in the early nineteenth century when Italianate forms also influenced villa design. Allen writes that the Alsop House "was influenced in its furnishing and decoration by the prevalent Empire style created from the frescoes of Pompeii by Percier and Fontaine." Monachesi was an early and leading representative of a broader tradition of Italian-born painters and sculptors who decorated public buildings not only in Philadelphia, but also the U. S. Capitol from its early construction under architect Benjamin Latrobe, who came from Philadelphia. And it was from that city that other architects of the U.S. Capitol came, including William Strickland and Thomas U. Walter, who designed the Capitol's expansion in the 1850s, including its main rotunda and dome, on which Brumidi worked.

Nicola Monachesi's mural art, though much of it is lost, was one precursor to Brumidi's in the U.S. Capitol. Before he came to American in 1849, Brumidi had painted several frescoes in the Vatican under Gregory XVI. In 1852, after Monachesi had died the year before, Brumidi decorated churches in Philadelphia. In this work, Brumidi was a local successor to Monachesi. Hence an official historical marker honoring Nicola Monachesi at an appropriately meaningful site in Philadelphia would be a fitting recognition of his contributions in the city where his work represented the finest mural painting of its day.

Sincerely,

Joseph M. Siry

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A P P E N D I X D.

Twentieth Century secondary sources on Monachesi

He was employed to illustrate Duyckinck's *Cyclopedia of American Literature* and the *Gallery of American Landscape Artists*. He also traveled in the Midwest and published an illustrated account of the region in 1865. After the Civil War he had a studio at Morrisania (N.Y.) where he was working at least until 1888. ¶ CAB; 7 Census (1850), N.Y., LI, 425; NYBD 1852–59; Peat, *Pioneer Painters of Indiana*.

MONACHAISE, see NICOLA MONACHESI.

MONACHESI, F. Fresco and ornamental painter, Philadelphia, 1832–35. He exhibited at the Pennsylvania Academy and Artists' Fund Society. In 1832 he had the same address as NICOLA MONACHESI. ¶ Rutledge, PA.

MONACHESI, NICOLA (1795–1851). Portrait, historical, and decorative painter. He was born at Tolentino (Italy) in 1795 and came to America before 1832, when he first exhibited at the Pennsylvania Academy. He worked in Philadelphia until 1851. His address in 1832 was the same as that of F. MONACHESI, possibly his son. ¶ Champlin & Perkins; Rutledge, PA; Dunlap, *History*, II, 471, as Monachise; Fielding, as Monachaise; 7 Census (1850), Pa., LII, 869–70.

MONACHISE, see NICOLA MONACHESI.

MONÇEAU, see MONSSEAU.

MONDELLI, ANTOINE. Scene and ornamental painter, New Orleans, 1821–56. From 1824 to 1832 he was chief scene painter at Camp's Theatre in New Orleans. About 1830 he was the first teacher of LEON POMAREDE, later Mondelli's son-in-law. ¶ Kendall, *Golden Age of the New Orleans Theater*, 76 (courtesy J. E. Arrington); Delgado-WPA cites New Orleans CD 1822–56, *La. Courier* (Oct. 29, 1821; April 2, 1829, Oct. 1, 1835), *Gazette* (Oct. 22, 1822, Jan. 3 and Dec. 27, 1823, Jan. 7, 1824), and *Bee* (May 14, 1836); McDermott, "Leon Pomarede"; Arrington, "Leon Pomarede."

MONES, CHARLES. Engraver, NYC, 1856–59. ¶ NYBD 1856–59.

MONMONIER, WILLIAM B. Lithographer who worked in many of the California mining towns about 1856–58. He specialized in letterhead views. ¶ Peters, *California on Stone*.

MONNIER, FRANCE X. (1831–1912). Sculptor. He was born in Belfort (France) and studied in France during the 1850's. Shortly before the Civil War he came to NYC to decorate the home of Commo-

THE NEW-YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S DICTIONARY OF ARTISTS IN AMERICA

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MONACHESI (Nicola), *peintre d'histoire, de portraits et de décorations, né à Tolentino en* 1795, *mort à Philadelphie en* 1851 (Ec. Ital.).
Elève de G. Landi à l'Académie Saint-Luc à Rome. Il se fixa en 1831 à Philadelphie. Il a peint dans cette ville les fresques de la cathédrale, des églises Sainte-Marie, Saint-Joseph, Saint-Augustin et Saint-Philippe et celles qui ornent la Bourse.

MONACHESI (Sante), *peintre, né à Macerata en* 1913 (Ec. Ital.).
La Galerie d'Art Moderne à Rome conserve de ses œuvres.

MONACHI (Georg P.). Voir **Pacham.**

MONACI (Antonio). Voir **Mota.**

MONACI (Domenico). Voir l'article **Imbarciadori (Oramie).**

MONACO (Carlo). Appellation erronée de **Monaldi (Carlo).**

MONACO (Crisanto del), *peintre de genre, né à Naples le 27 mars* 1870 (Ec. Ital.).
Il fit ses premiers essais à l'Instituto di Belle Arti, de Naples ; obtint le premier prix de peinture à l'huile, le premier prix de dessin et expose à partir de 1888. On cite comme les meilleurs de ses travaux : *Celui qui convient* et *Après cinquante ans.*

MONACO (Francesco), *graveur au burin à Belluno de* 1750 *à* 1793 (Ec. Ital.).

MONACO (Lorenzo II). Voir **Lorenzo Monaco.**

MONACO (Pietro et Walter da). Voir **Memich.**

MONACO ou Monego (Pietro), *graveur au burin, né à Belluno en* 1707 *ou* 1710 (Ec. Ital.).
Il travailla à Venise de 1735 à 1775. Il grava de nombreux portraits de princes, d'évêques et d'autres personnages.

MONACO del Isola d'Oro (II), *peintre miniaturiste, poète et historien, né à Gênes vers* 1346, *mort en* 1408 (Ec. Ital.).
Il fut moine au monastère de l'Ile d'Oro et en devint plus tard le bibliothécaire. On rapporte qu'il écrivit plusieurs ouvrages, ornés de miniatures, qui furent offerts à la reine d'Aragon.

MONALDI, *graveur au burin du XIXe siècle* (Ec. Ital.).

MONALDI (Bernardino), *peintre d'histoire à Florence de* 1588 *à* 1607 (Ec. Ital.).
Elève de Santi di Tito. On cite de lui des peintures d'autel au Carmel et à S. Pier Maggiore de Florence.

MONALDI (Carlo), *sculpteur, né à Rome vers* 1690, *mort dans cette ville en septembre* 1760 (Ec. Ital.).
Il fut membre de l'Académie de Saint-Luc. A Rome, il a sculpté un *Saint François d'Assise* et un *Saint Gaëtan* dans l'église Saint-Pierre, *La Magnificence* et *L'Abondance* à Saint-Jean de Latran, ainsi que des statues et des bas-reliefs dans diverses autres églises de cette ville.

MONALDI (Giuseppe), *sculpteur, né à Rome en* 1730, *mort à Varsovie après* 1797 (Ec. Ital.).
Il entra en 1768 au service du roi Stanislas-Auguste de Pologne. Il a sculpté deux bustes de portraits et d'allégories dans le château de Varsovie et des figures tombales dans diverses églises polonaises.

MONALDI (L.), *peintre des XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles* (Ec. Ital.).
Elève de Locatelli.

MONALDI (Paolo), *peintre de genre, florissant vers* 1760 (Ec. Ital.).
Elève d'Andréa Locatelli. Le Musée de Stockholm conserve *Paysans musiciens* et *Paysans près d'une citerne*, qui lui sont attribués.

PRIX. — LONDRES. Vte du 26 juin 1964 : *Groupe de paysans dansant et s'amusant* : Gns. 450.

MONAMI (Pierre), *paysagiste, né à Spa en* 1814, *mort à Rome en* 1857 (Ec. Bel.).
Il travailla à Rome.

MONAMY (Peter), *peintre de marines, né à Jersey en* 1689 *ou* 1670, *mort à Westminster en* 1749 (Ec. Ang.).
Cet intéressant artiste appartenait à la forte race normande établie dans les îles de la Manche. Ses parents étaient pauvres, il alla très jeune chercher fortune à Londres et fut d'abord apprenti d'un peintre en bâtiments dont la boutique était située sur le pont de Londres. Plus tard, il s'adonna à la peinture artistique et fut, croit-on, élève de Willem van de Velde le jeune. Il est certain qu'il s'inspira des merveilleux peintres de marines hollandaises, et certains de ses tableaux leur

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MONACHISE, NICOLA.
Painter. Born 1795 in Italy. Nothing is known of his work except that he painted historical pieces and portraits, and that his studio was at 98 Locust Street, Phila. Died in 1851 in Phila., PA.

MONAGHAN, GERTRUDE.
Painter. Born West Chester, PA. Pupil of Phila. School of Design; PAFA. Member: Fellowship PAFA; Plastic C; Print C. Specialty, mural decorations and lunettes. Address in 1929, 3309 Baring Street, Philadelphia, PA.

MONKS, EDWARD E.
Illustrator. Member: SI; GFLA. Address in 1929, 40 Gramercy Park, New York, NY.

MONKS, JOHN AUSTIN SANDS.
Painter. Born in Cold Spring-on-Hudson, NY, on Nov. 7, 1850. Studied wood engraving and etching in 1869. Pupil in painting of George Inness, 1875. Engaged in art work after 1874. His specialty was painting sheep. Member: Copley Society, Salma. C.; New York Etching, Boston Art. Died March, 1917 in Chicago, IL.

MONRAD, EMILY.
Painter, lecturer, and teacher. Born Sweden, Jan. 30, 1877. Pupil of Viggo Johansen, Copenhagen. Member: New Haven PCC; Plainfield AA; New Educ. F. Address in 1929, Knox School, Cooperstown, NY; h. 166 Putnam Avenue, New Haven, CT.

MONRAD, MARGARET.
Sculptor and teacher. Born New Zealand, June 10, 1879. Pupil of Royal AFA, Copenhagen. Member: NA Women PS; New Haven PCC; Plainfield AA; New Haven PBC. Address in 1929, 166 Putnam Avenue, Whitneyville, New Haven, CT.

MONTAGUE, HARRIOTTE LEE TALIAFERRO.
Painter. Pupil of George de Forest Brush and Twachtman in NY; Angelo Yank, Fehr, Hummel and Knurr in Munich; Simon in Paris. Member: Richmond Art Club. Work: "Portrait of Capt. Sallie Tompkins," Richmond Art Club; portrait in D.A.R. Hall, Washington, DC. Represented in

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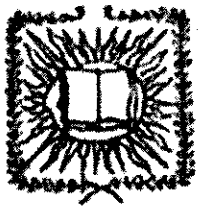

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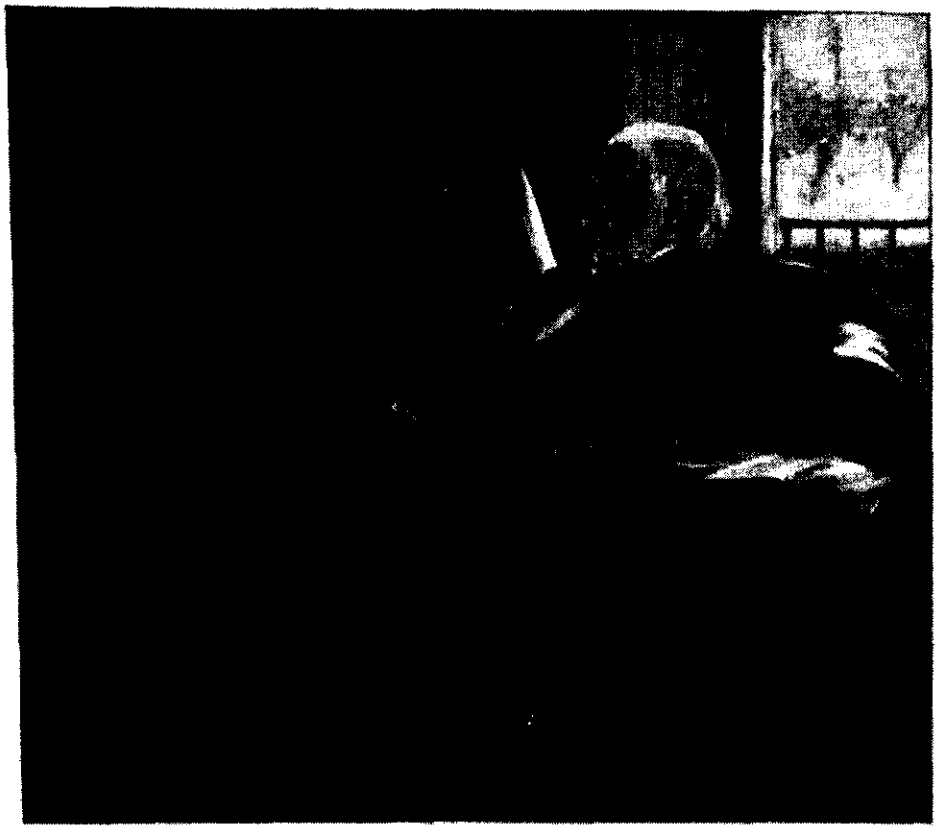

From the painting by John McLure Hamilton. Half-tone plate engraved by J. H. Wellington

"MR. GLADSTONE IN DOWNING STREET"

dition to one of his houses, purposely for the artist, an exhibition and painting room"; and beside this hospitable hearth, "surrounded by his numerous family," Sully was prosperous and famous for many years of his long career.

The Quaker town at this tranquil day was busy enough with art. Trott, who painted miniatures only a step below Malbone, was Sully's cotenant; and John Neagle married Sully's stepdaughter, while Jane, his daughter, herself well remembered in native art, married the father of F. O. C. Darley, whom every American knows as our talented early illustrator.

Here, too, were James Peale, only less excellent than his brother Charles Wilson; the Birches—William Russell, whose enamels are unique, and Thomas; Jacob Eichholtz and Bass Otis, portrait-painters of an imitative quality, perhaps, but deserving of distinct mention; John Lewis Krimmell, a sort of American Wilkie; Nicola Monachesi, who came from Italy in 1831 and was the first to paint fresco in wet mortar; Alexander Wilson, the ornithologist; Thomas Doughty, "at one time the best landscape-painter in the country"; Joshua Shaw, who brought over West's "Christ Healing the Sick," and was an accomplished inventor besides a talented interpreter of Pennsylvania landscape; Robert Fulton, the better-known inventor of the steamboat, if a lesser-known painter of portraits; Henry Inman, a portraiturist of distinct individuality; George H. Comegys, a genre artist who delighted his contemporaries with humor or pathos; and T. Buchanan Read, known as well for his painting as for his poetic vision of "Sheridan's Ride."

I have rambled on so freely about Sully and his lesser contemporaries that there is danger of doing scant justice to Rem-

The Philadelphia Exchange: William Strickland, Architect
Author(s): Agnes Addison Gilchrist
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THE PHILADELPHIA EXCHANGE: WILLIAM STRICKLAND, ARCHITECT

AGNES ADDISON GILCHRIST *

By 1831, when it was decided to build an Exchange building in Philadelphia, the pattern of American civilization, as we know it today, was already being established. The colonial period was over, not only politically, as it had been for fifty years, but also spiritually. A new generation had grown up which recognized the potential power of the United States. Andrew Jackson was President; the spoils system was initiated; the west was being opened up as fast as roads, canals and, by the end of the decade, railroads could be built. Emigrants were coming in ever larger numbers. New industries were being started. Boom years were coming with extension of credit and an over-supply of paper money only to be briefly stopped by the depression of 1837.

Philadelphia participated in the national growth and prosperity. A newspaper article which appeared on May 14, 1831, stated that it was estimated that 1,600 new buildings would be erected in the city during the summer and it continued:

> Philadelphia is truly the Athens of America: in its public institutions, in its benevolent and charitable societies, in its literary reputation—in its site, the beautiful regularity of its streets—its buildings both public and private—in every particular, except in the dust and dirt, the noise and bustle, which attends an extensive shipping, we are superior, without a doubt to every other City in the Union.[1]

There were Philadelphians then as now who regretted the demolition of historic landmarks. *The Philadelphia Album* on July 16, 1831 lamented the destroying of the old building at 43 Market Street where Benjamin Franklin had his post office and bookstore. Then as now, the newspapers recorded the growth of Russian power and applauded her enemies, at that time the Poles, for whom, owing to Kosciuszko, the Philadelphians felt a special sympathy.[2]

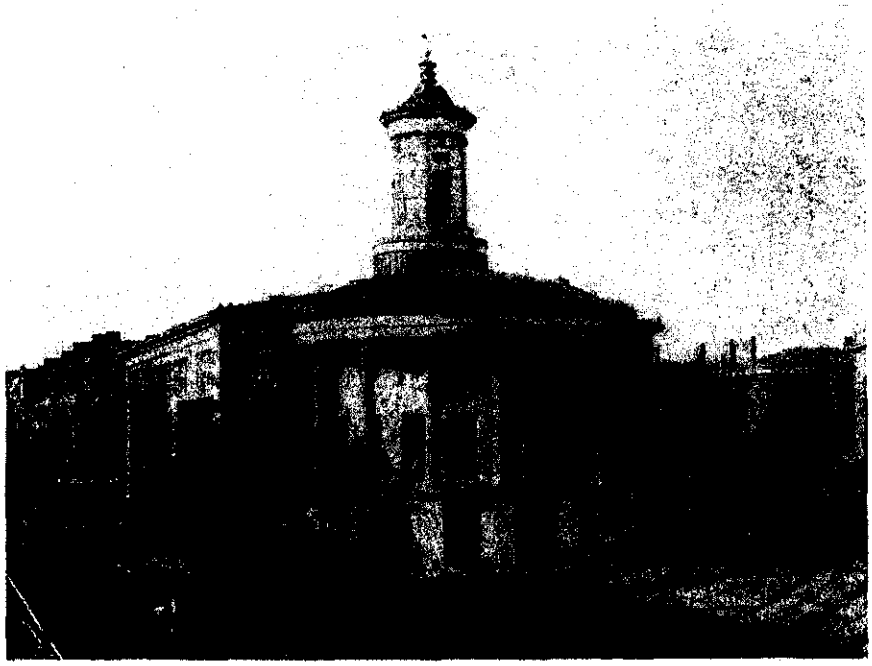

FIG. 1. Early photograph of the Philadelphia Exchange. Historical Society of Pennsylvania. From A. A. Gilchrist, *William Strickland,* Phila., Univ. of Penna. Press, 1950.

THE NEED FOR AN EXCHANGE

Since Philadelphia was a busy port and there was great local pride, it is not surprising that a group of financiers and merchants organized themselves into a society for the building of an Exchange. In the middle of the eighteenth century there had been a bequest for the building of an Exchange but it had never been car-

* Fiske Kimball, Director of the Philadelphia Museum of Art; Edward Riley, Chief Historian and Charles E. Peterson, Resident Architect of the Independence National Historical Park Project, have permitted me to use their notes, which help I wish to acknowledge with thanks and have indicated in the footnotes.

[1] *The Philadelphia Album,* 156, Sat., May 14, 1831.

[2] *Ibid.,* May 21, 1831, "The Poles Have Gained a Complete and Signal Victory over Their Russian Adversaries." Kosciuszko was in Philadelphia during the Revolution and again from December 1796 through 1798.

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Wealth, Liberty, etc. beautifully executed, appearing to have as striking a relief as sculptured work. On one side is a book containing a list of daily arrivals and clearances of vessels. On the right is an extensive reading-room, to which admission is gained by subscription and the payment of an annual tax. The rooms upon the right side of the hall of this floor are appropriated for the meetings of stockholders, brokers, etc. The attic story is of the same height as the basement, containing six large rooms, occupied by library associations, artists, etc.[85, 86]

[85] *The Family Magazine*, 290, New York, Jan. 17, 1835.

[86] The following description of the interior in 1848 is to be found in the insurance survey of the Philadelphia Contributionship No. 7442 printed in Gilchrist, Strickland, 86.

"I have Surveyed the Exchange Building belonging to 'The Philada. Exchange Company' situate on Third, Walnut, & Dock Streets. Being 90 feet on Third Street. by 150 feet to Dock Street including the semicircular basement or first story & Portico, thick brick walls faced with marble. Fronting on Third Street from the second story is a portico with four large marble columns fluted & two anties all with richly carved marble capitals. On the Dock Street front is a semicircular portico with Eight columns & two Anties all with capitals &c. as those on Third Street. The first story is divided into Eleven rooms & two halls, one room large, & occupied as the Post office, the other rooms as Public & private offices, seven marble mantles, of neat patan [?], moulded base round, windows cased, & inside shutters to all these. Cornices, fire proof closets with iron doors in seven rooms, the floors of 5/4'' yellow pine, laid on mortar, the whole of the basement floor is arched under. In the halls is marble wash board, stucco cornice & floored with Italian marble flags. In the large hall are two flights of marble stairs, right & left with large continued hand rail of mahogany & large turn'd ballusters & an opening though the 2nd floor about 12 by 14 feet surrounded by rail & ballusters of the same kind. All the door ways on Walnut Street, Third & part of Dock Street have each two plain marble columns with carved caps. Those on the other part of Dock Street are plain marble folding sash doors, Glass 6½ & 8½ by 15''; a vestibule with each also with folding sash doors. Glass in the windows 12 by 18''. Brick partition walls dividing all the rooms.—The 2nd Story is divided into six rooms, large Hall & Exchange room, one a reading room, two marble mantles, moulded base, windows cased with double architraves, Glass 13 by 18 & 14 by 20'' with panneld inside shutters, the other 5 rooms are occupied as Offices, with marble mantles & neat wash boards, inside Shutters & Stucco cornice. In the Hall is a continuation of the Stairs from the first Story—with mohogany rail & turn'd ballusters to the 3rd Story. In the Exchange room are two marble mantles, moulded base, windows cased, & inside shutters. four large columns of marble with carved caps, similar to those of the Porticos, supporting the roof & ceiling a part of which is a semicircular dome & part flat with a stucco cornice round. The walls & ceiling of this room are ornamented with Fresco painting, outside doors large & folding. The columns in this room also support a circular Lantern of wood, 40 feet high, neatly finish'd outside with Eight columns of wood & with carved capitals, carved roof, covered with copper, ornamented with carved work vane &c. sashes round. The entrance to this room from the Hall has an arch'd head, side lights, venetian door way, & close folding doors. 4 large fluted columns with carved capitals, brick partitions, between the reading room & the North west room, is a flight of open newal stairs such as before described leading to the 3rd Story. The 3rd Story is divided into Seven rooms, & passage, the floor of 5/4'' yellow pine, moulded base, windows cased & pannel'd inside shutters. Those rooms are occupied for public & private purposes, in one is the Magnetic telegraph, operating machine. In this Story is one flight of winding Stairs leading to the Garret, & connecting with a circular Stairs in the Lantern leading to the top of the Same with painted rail, close String & square ballusters. Garret formed in the centre running East & west & plastered stud partitions, floor rough white pine boards, *groved*, two flat sky lights in the roof, the whole of which is boarded & covered with copper.

"In the cellar are two Furnaces, safely built in brick work, one for the use of the Post office, & the other for warming the Exchange room, the heat from which passes up through a hollow cast iron column in the hall of the first story into the room, covered by a marble curb with a brass revolving ventilator. A smaller one in the Post office of iron. Marble cornice round the whole building, copper gutterd & pipes.

7 Mo. 3rd 1848. John C. Evans
Surveyor

"Liberty of Magnetic Telegraphs in Insured Building. It is expressly understood that this Insurance is not to apply to, nor is the Company to be in any wise responsible for any injury, that may be done to the Fresco or Ornamental painting in the premises hereby Insured.

"Policy No. 7442. Drs. 10.000. at 3 per Cent Drs. 300.—

Agreed to be correct.
John C. Martin
For Phila Exchange Co.

"A Furnace in the Cellar (South West Corner) for warming the room above which appears safely constructed.

November 11th 1851 D. R. Knight
Surveyor"

ITALIAN ARTISTS EMBELLISHED THE EXCHANGE

Although the ceiling decoration of the Exchange Room is described, the artist is not named in this account. He was in *The Guide to the Lions of Philadelphia*, 1837 (p. 41) fortunately. He was Nicola Monachesi, born in Italy at Tolentino in 1795. He went to Rome to study at the Accademia di S. Luca under Gasparo Landi where he gained the first prize for painting. In 1831 Monachesi came to Philadelphia, became an American citizen, and remained until his death in 1851. He early obtained commissions from Stephen Girard, Mrs. Rush, and Joseph Bonaparte. In 1832 he decorated St. John's Roman Catholic Church, then the Cathedral, with frescoes which are said to be the first real frescoes, that is painted on wet plaster, in this country. In 1834 he painted frescoes in Matthew Newkirk's house, which later became St. George's Hall. He did frescoes and altarpieces for the Roman Catholic churches of St. Mary, St. Joseph, St. Augustine, and St. Philip. In 1841–42, he exhibited a large painting of the Murder of Jane McCrae.[87] In the Philadelphia Directories, his address is given as 156 Pine Street and he is listed as a Portrait painter.

Two Italian sculptors worked on the Exchange. William Strickland proposed a toast to them at the dinner celebrating the cap stone.[88] They carved the capitals and their skill was so admired that they were permitted to sign their work. It is still possible to read on the narrow band between the top of the fluting of the

[87] *Cyclopedia of painters and paintings*, ed. by John Denison Champlin, Jr., 3 (2) : 283, N. Y., Scribners, 1887.

[88] Thieme and Becker, *Lexikon* 2 : 489, 1908.

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lot, whose statue of Apollo, god of music and poetry, was placed in the pediment of the Arch Street Theatre in 1830. It was Gevelot who carved the angels for St. John's Roman Catholic Church on Thirteenth Street, and who was commissioned to do the life-size marble statue of Girard at Girard College. His bronze busts of Edward Burd and William Strickland delighted Philadelphians who found them on exhibit at the Louvre in 1836.[112]

To provide Gevelot with some competition, E. Luigi Persico came to Philadelphia in 1831. Over a period of years Persico immortalized a number of Philadelphians in marble.[113] Much excellent sculpturing was done by artists whose names are lost. However, it is known that the brothers Peter and Philip Bardi did the elaborate capitals for the columns at the Merchants' Exchange, and that the pair of lions that guard its front were carved by Signor Fiorelli of 31 Dock Street.[114] At Struthers's marble yard highly skilled workers provided the city with its most elaborate mantelpieces, ornamented with delicately worked friezes of grapevines and Egyptian caryatids. Some of these men, such as Hugh Cannon, later set up their own studios. John Hill was presumably Struthers's best man, for it was he who lavishly executed Struthers's masterpiece according to designs provided by Strickland, the Washington sarcophagus.[115] True proportions were the ideal of the day. A sculptor exhibiting his statue of Cleopatra in Philadelphia displayed a certificate testifying to its anatomical exactness, signed by several of New York's most eminent physicians.[116]

Nicolo Monachesi, who made Philadelphia his home from 1831 until his death twenty years later, was a master of painting in fresco. In this medium he decorated the ceilings of the great room at the Exchange, St. John's sanctuary, and other Catholic churches. Some of the city's most costly residences bore testimony to his skill: "This tasteful manner of decorating the walls of noble mansions is becoming fashionable and seems to offer some encouragement to the fine arts." For Matthew Newkirk's house he provided a brilliant ceiling of Cornelia, the mother of the Gracchi, showing her jewels to Capuano. Sidney George Fisher thought that George Cadwalader's parlors were the handsomest in town; their walls and ceilings were "beautifully painted in fresco by Monachesi."[117]

One of the city's most active art patrons was the engraver Col. Cephas G. Childs. It was he who procured for the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts Benjamin West's masterpiece *Death on a Pale Horse*. Between 1827 and 1830 Childs published in parts his *Views in Philadelphia and Its Environs*, and in 1829 he became interested in lithography, the city's first lithographic firm having been established the year before. His major contribution to this art of inexpensive reproduction was bringing to Philadelphia an expert French lithographer, Peter S. Duval. Duval, and his competitor J. T. Bowen, turned out some of the most important lithographic artwork of the times, notably Thomas L. McKenny's and James Hall's three-volume *History of the Indian Tribes of North America*, John James Audubon's octavo *Birds of America*, and also the naturalist's *Quadrupeds of North America*.[118]

SOURCES: "UNITED STATES GAZETTE" OF APRIL 23, 1832; FEB. 3, 1837.

Philadelphia

A 300-YEAR HISTORY

A Barra Foundation Book

W · W · NORTON & COMPANY

NEW YORK · LONDON

Russell F. Weigley, (ed.)

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A DECORATIVE ANALYSIS OF PHIL-ELLENA, A GREEK REVIVAL, PHILADELPHIA MANSION

Sheryl Farber Mikelberg

A THESIS

in

The Graduate Program in Historic Preservation

Presented to the Faculties of the University of Pennsylvania in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

1992

Gail Caskey Winkler

Gail Caskey Winkler, Lecturer, Historic Preservation, Advisor

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David G. De Long, Professor of Architecture
Graduate Group Chairman

FINE ARTS /NA/ 22/ 1992 / M 674

Table Greek Revival Buildings, continued

DATE	NAME	LOCATION	ARCHITECT
1825-1844	Powelton--Country house of Col. John Hare Powel	West bank of the Schuylkill	Strickland
1831-1833	Girard Row	326-334 Spruce	Struthers
1831-1833	Portico Row	926 Spruce St.	Walter
1832-1835	City house of John H. Powel	SW corner of 13th and Locust	Strickland
1833	Wills Eye Hospital	19th and Race	Haviland
1833	US Naval Home	Gray's Ferry Rd	Strickland
1833-1847	Girard College	N. Phila	Walter
1835	*Merchants' Exchange	143 S. 3rd St.	Strickland
1841	Wetherill addition to Pawling House	Audubon, PA near Valley Forge	Unknown
1835 remodeled	Hatfield House	Girard & 33rd	Unknown
1835 remodeled	Andalusia	13 miles NE on Del. River Banks	Walter and N. Biddle
1835 designed, 1836 built	*Matthew Newkirk House	13th and Arch, SW corner	Walter
1828-1842	Powelton, John H. Powel's Country house	West Phila., on the banks of the Schuylkill	Strickland
1839-1840	St. Luke & Epiphany Church	330 S. 13th St.	Thomas Stewart
1841-1945	*Phil-Ellena	5510 G'town Ave.	GW Carpenter
1845 rebuilt	Fatlands	Audubon, PA near Valley Forge	Unknown

*These structures were cited to have had Nicola Monachesi paint the interior with elaborate frescoes.

Most of these buildings were finished in the 1820s and 1830s. The first residential house to maximize the impact of this grandeur was the Thomas Ustick Walter addition to the Nicholas Biddle homestead, Andalusia. Remodeled in 1835, Andalusia provided a model image of success for other entrepreneurs to imitate. Biddle, the president of the Second Bank of United States in Philadelphia, (an earlier

nineteenth century because of the examples of their work which survive."[32]

copied from Gilchrist (1953)

NICHOLA MONACHESI (1795-1851)

Monachesi was a history and portrait fresco painter born in Tolentino, Italy. He was a pupil of Gaspara Landi at the Academia de S. Luca, Rome, where he won the first prize for painting. In 1831 he emigrated to America and settled in Philadelphia where he lived the rest of his life.

Among his earliest patrons were Stephen Girard, Madame Rush, and Joseph Bonaparte. In 1832 he did a series of frescoes in St. John's Roman Catholic Church (then the Cathedral) in Philadelphia. This project brought him into prominence. These paintings were said to have been the first true frescoes executed in United States. Monachesi also produced work for the Roman Catholic Churches of St. Mary, St. Joseph, St Augustine and St. Philip, all located in Philadelphia.

In 1833-34 he frescoed the Philadelphia Merchant's Exchange by William Strickland. He also frescoed the

[32]Talbott, "Philadelphia Furniture," 173. The family name was spelled *Lejambre* in the nineteenth century, but is now spelled *Le Jambre* (also this way in 1846 Directory). Lejambre's descendents still have objects that Bonaparte gave to Alphonse. Today Lucien Alphonse Le Jambre, Mirabah Le Jambre Combs, and James A. Le Jambre own the *Le Jambre Family Papers* [Strickland, "The LeJambre Family," 600].

interior of Matthew Newkirk's residence by Thomas U. Walter, the decorations of which were carefully preserved when it was made into St. George's Hall. In 1841-42, his large historical picture, *The Murder of Jane McCrea*, was exhibited in Philadelphia.[33]

Carpenter praised Monachesi as "a distinguished artist...of Italy....[The] ceilings...on the first and second floor are drawn true to nature and art by the talented and far-famed Monachesi."[34] The subjects of these frescoes were taken from Raphael's paintings in the Vatican, as well as illustrations of animals and fruit.

CRAWFORD RIDDELL [RIDDLE]

Crawford Riddell supervised the wareroom for the Society of Journeyman Cabinetmakers located at 48 S. 5th Street in 1834. The wareroom was set up to defend the members against "a system of tyranny, exaction and injustice--to submit to which would be to lose sight altogether of the dignity of

---

[33]All of the information about Monachesi was found in John Denison Champlin Jr., and Charles C. Perkins, editors, *The Cyclopedia of Painters and Paintings* Vol. III. (New York: Charles Scribners Sons, 1885): 283. The Philadelphia Contribution Insurance Survey No. 7442 noted that Monachesi painted the ceilings and the walls of the Merchant's Exchange.

[34]Carpenter, *A Brief Description of Phil-Ellena*, 9.

c. 2010

THE MURAL IN AMERICA

Francis V. O'Connor, Ph.D.

Wall Painting In The United States From Prehistory To The Present

Part One - The Mural as an Art Form

Part Two - Native American Murals

Part Three - Colonial And Early American Murals

Part Four - The Murals of the United States Capitol

Part Five - The Academic Mural Movement - 1870-1920

Part Six - Modernist Re-Directions - 1900 to 1935

Part Seven - The 1930s Mural Movement

Part Eight - The Mural as Private Act and Public Art: 1940 to 1980

Part Nine - Community and Postmodernist Murals - 1965 to 2000

Appendices

About the Author : Francis V. O'Connor, Ph.D.

I first got the idea to publish this book electronically when a Fellow at the National Humanities Center (NHC), in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina — where I was researching and writing the central part of this book. This was the academic year 1994-95, only about a decade since PCs became popular in the early 1980s, when I bought my first Apple 512K computer. I brought my Apple 6100 with me to the NHC and found my fellow Fellows intrigued by a computer to which I could give verbal commands and play music and video on -- as well as write. A few had laptops, but most of the older scholars there still used electric typewriters. But there was also great interest in exploring the use of computers in the humanities — like the "Dante Project," at Princeton University — as well as the use of CD-ROMs for conveying information. A company called Voyager was pioneering at that time in various uses for CDs. And the NHC and the local corporations and universities were holding conferences and symposia on the potential of the electronic media for the humanities. As a result I began to ponder how an art historian could use the new technology, and developed a proposal for publishing my history of the American mural on a CD-ROM.

Later, I sent that proposal around to various publishers, and discovered that some simply saw it as a threat to their business, and others — pointing to Voyager's sudden failure — as not economically feasible. As a result, I kept at the book and tried to get a publisher without a CD as the book. This went on for years, and the last interested publisher finally agreed to print the book, with a CD component for the illustrations, if I would pay for both — which I refused to do. Later, as it became clear that so comprehensive a book did not have a market. I decided the only answer was to put it on a Website — and here it is.

I have been working at this mural book since 1980. I want it available to scholars, students, muralists, artists and the public sooner than the present granting and publishing system will allow. I know there are some who might look askance at such an enterprise, who cannot escape that old notion "to publish or perish," who want to cradle the paper and boards in their arms, and who feel a deep pessimism about anything electronic. They ought to be more adventurous and, however reluctantly, ponder a) the inescapable truth that paper and boards are the papyrus, vellum, parchments and spindles of the 21st century, and b) that nearly two generations of young persons know no other means of learning and communicating than electronically.

So I am proud to have taken this step, and presented my research in the American mural electronically, so it can reach the widest audience — and open up a sorely neglected are of American art to examination and further research. Indeed, looking back at my career, mostly as an independent scholar, I have always had a tendency to do what needed doing.

When I was offered, as a graduate student at Johns Hopkins University, a Fulbright if only I would not write about that "fellow who drips," Jackson Pollock — and was told that my career would be ruined if I did — I went ahead and ultimately proved only one of my professors' arguments correct: That I would never escape my dissertation topic! Obligations to Pollock have recently delayed this book for over two years. But even when writing my dissertation on Pollock, and noting his interest in murals, there was no literature about the art form.

When told it was unwise to get involved with all that "bad art for poor people" at the start of my New Deal studies, I went ahead and published three books that opened up the field to historians of American art — creating the while a vast body of documentation now readily available through the Archives of American Art. I also noticed that the art form of choice during the 1930s was discussed in the absence of any literature about it per se.

When I found psychological explanations of creativity and image making the most germane and useful back in the days when Freud and Jung were dirty words among art historians (but not among scholars in literature and history, who were my first teachers), I went ahead with psychodynamic interpretations. Almost every muralist discussed in this book deserves a monograph on his or her art, with a good psychobiographical component that explains why the murals look as they do. I have not gone into this here — except to mention occasionally the relation of an artist's subjects and style to life experience.

SO: When I noticed that many of my colleagues, faced with an outline of my mural book that ranged from Native America to the present, would put it down thinking I was writing another book on "WPA" murals, I just noted how innocent ignorance can blind the eye and mind, and went and did what I thought to be right and needed. Here it is.

Hopefully, this publication, aside from making my mural book available, will serve two other goals. The first: to call attention to preservation problems concerning murals. The second: to stand as a model and incentive for perceptive and adventurous scholars to use our marvelous new technology to present their research and ideas to the widest possible audience in the most efficient manner.

Further, I want to take full responsibility for the text and organization of this book, and any editorial omissions and infelicities (which can be changed in a tweak), acknowledge its self-evident incompleteness (which the reader can help augment), and urge the younger members of my profession to ignore any thought that this book is "definitive" — and to get into murals.

Finally, those wishing to consult my complete career narrative and bibliography — covering Jackson Pollock and Abstract Expressionism, the New Deal Art Projects and Government Patronage, the Psychodynamics of Creativity, and the American Mural — as well as an Index to O'Connor's Page (1998-2007) — and stuff about my poetry — can go to:

http://www.fvoconnorsbooks.com/index.htm

< Prev Next >

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F. V. O'Connor

D - Techniques Employed at the U.S. Capitol

Capt. Montgomery Cunningham Meigs, the commandant of the U. S. Capitol extension, knew that the oldest and most permanent mural technique, used by masters such as Michelangelo, was true fresco, but in 1854 he had to admit to his ignorance of it:

I have never seen a fresco except a monochromatic painting on the ceiling of the Philadelphia Exchange, and from this no idea of fresco proper can be obtained. I have read much at various times on the processes, and upon the results produced by the great masters of fresco, and... it has always seemed to me that the superiority of execution necessary upon wet plaster, and the very fact that the work must be completed piece meal, each day's work being separate and finished, and being incapable of being retouched, precluded all effects except the more striking and coarse ones such as we see in scene painting. [Meigs to Gouverneur Kemble, April 24, 1854. This and subsequent quotes from correspondence are from the Letter Books in the Archive of the Architect of the U. S. Capitol. See Part Four.]

Capt. Meigs was actively seeking an artist capable of painting in true fresco in the building's new wings and rotunda. What he had seen in Philadelphia was the work of yet another Italian artist, Nicola Monachesi (1795-1851). That city's Family Magazine of January 1835 described his ceiling panels as "ornamented with splendid fresco paintings, representing Commerce, Wealth, Liberty etc. beautifully executed, appearing to have as striking a relief as sculptured work." [Gilchrist 1953, pp. 86-95 in Part Three. See also Part Four.]

Meigs, who had studied drawing at West Point, understood true fresco, probably by reading books such as Taylor's. As a practical officer in the Army Corps of Engineers, he was concerned as to its efficiency. Given the deficiency of American artists in the field, he consulted a knowledgeable connoisseur and collector. Kemble had already wisely told him in a letter of February 3, 1854, commenting on the possible employment of Leutze, that "For your frescoes and arabesques, you must get an artist who has studied more in Rome than in Germany...".

Indeed, early in 1855, just such an artist, Constantino Brumidi, applied for the fresco job. It is unclear how he learned of the position; it soon became apparent, however, that he was eminently qualified. His "sample" mural in the new Agriculture Committee room proved his skill — and he charmed Congress (painting a few of the members' children into his ceiling as putti helped) into supporting his efforts for the next quarter century. [See Part Four for Wolanin 1998 and its Appendix A for Meigs account of this mural's creation in true fresco.] Brumidi executed a number of marvelous rooms, as well as the monumental dome and frieze in the Capitol's rotunda, and designed the decorations for the corridors of the Senate wing. Over the years he came to lead a large atelier of artists and artisans. While not every wall painting to be seen in the Capitol is his, the best of his work proves him to be the greatest American muralist of the 19th Century — and the only major master of true fresco until the Mexican muralists painted here in the 1930s [see Part Six]

M - Institutional and Government Murals

By the 1830s, when Rufus Porter and his band of limner muralists were flourishing painting residential murals along the east coast, and an anonymous royalist in Kentucky was commemorating the earlier visit there of the now reigning King of the French, the Federal government had already acquired about four historical murals for the rotunda of the United States Capitol building in Washington, D. C. — and with these huge oil paintings the history of monumental mural painting begins in America.

As we shall see in Part Four, when it came to enlarging the United States Capitol, it was decided to paint the extensions in true fresco but finding muralists capable of employing this technique was proved difficult.

There is, as mentioned in Part One, ample circumstantial evidence that murals in true fresco were of interest, and were probably painted here. A bookseller's ad in the Broadway Journal of March 8, 1845, announced the importation of W. B. S. Taylor's A Manual of Fresco and Encaustic Painting Containing Ample Instructions for Executing Works of These Descriptions with an Historical Memoir of these Arts from the Earliest Periods (London: Chapman & Hall, 1843), which described the methods of true fresco in meticulous detail. Further, in the first half of the 19th Century it would seem that virtually all such murals were painted by Italian artists — just as most of the monumental sculpture in America during the same period was executed by their compatriots [see Fryd, 1989]. Most of these were probably done for Roman Catholic churches, which would have been most hospitable to elaborate pictorial embellishment, the Protestant congregations being opposed to the very idea of such papist frumperies, while the Episcopalians, as noted above, while not exactly hostile to art in church, were sparing in their use of it. Murals for public and quasi-public buildings were rare, and limited to limners' efforts in taverns and Masonic halls. Occasionally, however, a commercial building proved an apt site.

The earliest public example I have been able to identify was to be found in the dome of the Philadelphia Exchange. Designed by the architect William Strickland, and completed in 1834, it contained a large exchange room on its second floor. A description in the Family Magazine of January 1835 states that "The ceiling extending to the roof, is of the form of a dome, and supported by several marble columns. Its panels are ornamented with splendid fresco paintings, representing Commerce, Wealth, Liberty etc. beautifully executed, appearing to have as striking a relief as sculptured work." An insurance survey of 1848 describes the room more specifically: "In the Exchange room are two marble mantles. . . four large columns of marble with carved caps... supporting the roof & ceiling a part of which is a semicircular dome & part flat with a stucco cornice round. The walls and ceiling of this room are ornamented with Fresco painting...." [both quotes from Gilchrist 1953, p. 90-1]. In 1854, when Col. Montgomery Meigs, the director of the extension of the United States Capitol, was actively seeking an artist capable of painting in true fresco, he told a friend that "I have never seen a fresco except a monochromatic painting on the ceiling of the Philadelphia Exchange, and from this no idea of fresco proper can be obtained."[See Part Four below.] From these first-hand descriptions we can conclude that the murals at the Exchange were typical allegories painted in grisaille to harmonize with the architecture and were most probably in true fresco, since Meigs was knowledgeable about the technique and would have made his inquiries.

GILCHRIST SOURCE

Reinforcing this is the identity of the artist, a certain Nicola Monachesi (1795-1851), who with a relative, Filippo, were prominent muralists in the Philadelphia region after the former's arrival here in 1831. He was born at Tolentino, Italy and studied at the Academy of St. Luke in Rome. He was active painting frescoes in Philadelphia's Roman Catholic churches, his murals in St. John's Cathedral were "said to be the first real frescoes. . . in this country" [Gilchrist 1953, p. 91]. So it is likely that the true fresco technique was also employed in a church about this time or earlier — although as we shall see as we now turn to the U. S. Capitol, some of the most knowledgeable men in the country were hard put finding an artist capable of a large-scale commission in true fresco as late as the mid-1850s.

A - The Problem of Frescoes and Arabesques

The eternal conflict between patron and artist is rooted in what Aristotle long ago described as the difference between the active and the contemplative life. It is this dialectic that has dominated, somewhat distorted, and ultimately determined the visual arts in general, and the mural in particular, in our country. It is at the root of the tension between the pragmatic activist's art form of choice: the portable easel painting, and the value-oriented contemplative's commitment to the permanency of the mural. And it is, of course, very much at the root of the tension between legislator and artist. The lawmaking process is one of consensus born of compromise, and the lawmaker tends to view the creative process no differently. Lawyers dedicated to "getting things done" know the formative value of expended time; artists only the tragedy of wasted life. It took Trumbull decades to realize his vision of a cycle of Revolutionary history, and then Congress gave him only half the loaf. Decades more passed before the rotunda's historical murals were completed. As we shall see, Leutze's and Brumidi's waits upon the whims of Congress were also frustrating. But for practical men, the whimsies of artists can appear of little consequence before other issues of moment. It is therefore fortunate that the extension of the Capitol was supervised by a sensitive pragmatist, whose sense of history went beyond his moment.

Capt. Montgomery C. Meigs was first of all a diligent military engineer noted for his honesty and efficiency. Amazingly, he was also in charge of building the Washington Aquaduct and the Post Office building at the same time he was entrusted with the Capitol. A man of culture as capable painting a watercolor as he was drafting a plan [Skramstad 1969, p. 267 & n. 3], he was cognizant of the creative process. Indeed, he says this of himself: "Although an engineer and "nothing more" I have some feeling for art, some little acquaintance with its principles and its precepts and a very strong desire to use the opportunities & the influence which my position, as directing head of this great work, gives me for the advancement of art in this country. [Meigs to John Durand, editor of The Crayon, October 11, 1856.]

This is important, for what this consummate pragmatist knew from experience he could recognize in others and, concerning the arts, this distinguished him from his Congressional masters.

Meigs well understood from the beginning of his tenure the need for art in the extended Capitol, and while his greatest energies were expended on architectural sculpture (which had to be integrated into the construction process), he was probably the first American to consider the possibility of painting true frescoes there. Nor was he daunted by the fact that artists of requisite skill were not to be found among

beginning, in which he managed to make the self-serving but fatuous point that anyone can paint in fresco who can do so in oil, he proceeded to give a elaborate lesson concerning the role of the cartoon, the difference between true fresco, fresco secco, and tempera, ending with a vehement endorsement of the permanence of encaustic. Kemble sent the letter on to Meigs immediately with the news that Chapman was having a show in New York. Meigs was busy with his aqueduct at the time and could not go to see it, but his reply to Kemble of April 24th shows him already to have had a surprisingly thorough book knowledge of fresco painting, and a practical man's doubts as to its efficiency:

Mr. Chapman's letter is a delightful one and is full of the true feeling of an artist and of information valuable to me at this time; he writes too like a man of common sense. The observations that he makes about fresco I do not doubt are just. I have never seen a fresco except a monochromatic painting on the ceiling of the Philadelphia Exchange, and from this no idea of fresco proper can be obtained. [This ceiling was by Nicola Monachesi — See Chapter 10] I have read much at various times on the processes, and upon the results produced by the great masters of fresco, and while I found much upon freedom and boldness, etc., and upon the scope given in fresco for the genius of the master, it has always seemed to me that the superiority of execution necessary upon the wet plaster, and the very fact that the work must be completed piece meal, each day's work being separate and finished, and being incapable of being retouched, precluded all effects except the more striking and coarse ones such as we see in scene painting. The work cannot be completed as a whole as in oil painting where the accidental effects produced by the drying and sinking of the colors requires the toning down of other parts, and makes it impossible that the finished picture should represent the sketch. The changes must be much greater in fresco, and yet the artist is confined to making each day as exact a copy as possible of the portion of the cartoon for which his plaster is prepared.

Meigs' learning process continued through 1854. In November Kemble apparently conveyed to Meigs another letter from Chapman, which has been lost [••• Is this the first letter being recirculated?] Writing to Kemble on December 7, however, he indicates that his basic policy concerning the arts had been formulated:

I am glad [Chapman] takes the same view as myself that the places being provided, the works of art will follow. By quietly pursuing this course, I do not doubt that art and artists will receive much more benefit than by striving now to engage Congress in any large appropriation for decoration. We have full authority and shall have ample funds for all purely architectural decorations, and will I trust make a building so beautiful in itself as to inspire a desire for something beyond mere architectural beauty. I hope to leave spaces in the wall which will be so arranged as to need no inscription by them crying out for a picture as plainly as the niches will call for inhabitants.

It is clear from this statement that Meigs is distinguishing between pictorial and decorative wall embellishments — or as Kemble phrased the difference in February, between "frescoes and arabesques." At this period, a fresco was understood, aside from the permanent technique involved, as a picture painted on a wall; an arabesque was a purely decorative element such as a panel or border of floriate patterns which might or not contain subsidiary pictorial elements. Leutze had wanted to fill the Capitol with an impossibly complex combination of both. But what the sensible Meigs finally decided

1995

The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Cordially invite you to the

Unveiling and Dedication of an Official State Historical Marker of

Olde St. Augustine R.C. Church, 243 N. Lawrence St., Philadelphia, PA., 19106

"St. Augustine's Roman Catholic Church

First U.S. Foundation of the Augustinian Order , 1796.

In 1844 the Original Church here was burned during Nativist riots.

This and other violence led to a State law requiring Police forces, 1845,

and to consolidation of the City and County, 1854."

Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1995

So....the City of Philadelphia grew....and Police Departments in the State and in Philadelphia came into being....!

Saturday, October 28, 1995 - 4:00 P.M. - 4th St. & the Ben Franklin Bridge

PROGRAM

4:00 P.M..... Unveiling of marker by the Pastor, Rev. Walter J. Quinn, O.S.A., and representatives of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission.

Remarks by:....Mrs. G. Davis (Ann)Greene - member of the PHMC, Harrisburg, PA.

Mr. George Craig and Mr. William Bergman - Deputy Commissioners, Philadelphia Police Department

Captain Joseph O'Donnell, Captain, 6th Phila. Police District.

Ms. Celeste Morello - chief promoter and petitioner for our Marker.

The Honorable Ed Rendell, Mayor of Philadelphia.

Rev. Walter J. Quinn, O.S.A., Pastor

OUR THANKS.....

For all the assistance and help rendered in making this project possible, we thank Ms. Celeste Morello - the main promoter and petitioner for our marker. Mr. Robert Weible and Mr. George Byer of the PHMC, Mr. Richard Tyler of the Philadelphia Historical & Museum Commission and all those who wrote letters in support of this petition. The Philadelphia Police Academy for their support and their Color Guard, Bagpiper & Bugler for this ceremony and all members of the Philadelphia Police Department, their families and friends for helping to honor the "birthplace" of the Philadelphia Police Department and ALL Police Departments in the State of Pennsylvania. Therefor, we do believe this is extremely important matter for All POLICE FORCES IN OUR STATE to know about, so that they may also see this new State Marker now recoginzing this fact & so rendering proper recognition that is due to one's origin and "birthplace".

After the Ceremony all are invited to our Parish Social Hall (next to the Church) for Wine & Cheese - donated by Mr. Juan Gomez, Food Director of the Sheraton Inn of Society Hill.

The 5:15 P.M. Saturday Vigil Mass will follow as usual in the Church.

PHPC

PHILADELPHIA HISTORIC PRESERVATION CORPORATION

1616 WALNUT STREET, PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19103 (215) 546-1146 FAX (215) 546-1380

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March 19, 1996

Rev. Walter J. Quinn
St. Augustine's Church
243 N. Lawrence Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106

Dear Father Quinn:

On behalf of the awards committee, I am delighted to be able to inform you that the restoration of St. Augustine's Church has been selected for a 1996 Preservation Achievement Award.

The Awards ceremony and Preservation Week celebration take place on Wednesday, May 15 from 11:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. in City Hall.

I would like to have any mailing list of people you want us to invite to the event. We plan to mail the Preservation Week flyer in early April.

Congratulations on your award. I look forward to seeing you on May 15th.

Sincerely,

Jean M. Farnsworth

Jean M. Farnsworth, Director
Historic Religious Properties Program

cc: Randy Baron, Philadelphia Historical Commission
Michael Hauptman /David Brawer, Brawer & Hauptman, Architects