# NOMINATION OF HISTORIC BUILDING, STRUCTURE, SITE, OR OBJECT
# PHILADELPHIA REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
# PHILADELPHIA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

**SUBMIT ALL ATTACHED MATERIALS ON PAPER AND IN ELECTRONIC FORM ON CD (MS WORD FORMAT)**

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**1. ADDRESS OF HISTORIC RESOURCE** (must comply with an Office of Property Assessment address)

Street address: 209-25 N. 18th Street

Postal code: 19103 Councilmanic District: 2nd

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**2. NAME OF HISTORIC RESOURCE**

Historic Name: 1, "Assumption of the Blessed Virgin into Heaven;" and 2, 3, 4, & 5: "The Four Evangelists"

Common Name: None

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**3. TYPE OF HISTORIC RESOURCE**

☐ Building ☐ Structure ☐ Site ☒ Object Five oil paintings in a dome

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**4. PROPERTY INFORMATION**

Condition: ☐ excellent ☒ good ☐ fair ☐ poor ☐ ruins

Occupancy: ☐ occupied ☐ vacant ☐ under construction ☐ unknown

Current use: decorative

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**5. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

Please attach a plot plan and written description of the boundary.

****See pages 5 and 6, Exhibits 1 and 2****

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**6. DESCRIPTION**

Please attach a description of the historic resource and supplement with current photographs.

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**7. SIGNIFICANCE**

Please attach the Statement of Significance.

Period of Significance (from year to year): from 1863 to present

Date(s) of construction and/or alteration: 1863

Architect, engineer, and/or designer: Constantino Brumidi

Builder, contractor, and/or artisan: Constantino Brumidi

Original owner: Same as present/ Archdiocese of Philadelphia

Other significant persons:

**CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION:**

The historic resource satisfies the following criteria for designation (check all that apply):

☐ (a) Has significant character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the City, Commonwealth or Nation or is associated with the life of a person significant in the past; or,

☐ (b) Is associated with an event of importance to the history of the City, Commonwealth or Nation; or,

☐ (c) Reflects the environment in an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style; or,

☐ (d) Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen; or,

☒ (e) Is the work of a designer, architect, landscape architect or designer, or engineer whose work has significantly influenced the historical, architectural, economic, social, or cultural development of the City, Commonwealth or Nation; or,

☐ (f) Contains elements of design, detail, materials or craftsmanship which represent a significant innovation; or,

☐ (g) Is part of or related to a square, park or other distinctive area which should be preserved according to an historic, cultural or architectural motif; or,

☐ (h) Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristic, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community or City; or,

☐ (i) Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in pre-history or history; or

☒ (j) Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historical heritage of the community.

**8. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Please attach a bibliography.

**9. NOMINATOR**

Name with Title Celeste Morello Email --

Organization Independent Historian Date 9 July 2015

Street Address 1234 South Sheridan Street Telephone 215-334-6008

City, State, and Postal Code Philadelphia, PA 19147-4820

Nominator ☐ is ☒ is not the property owner.

**PHC USE ONLY**

Date of Receipt: 9 July 2015

☒ Correct-Complete ☐ Incorrect-Incomplete Date: 22 October 2015

Date of Notice Issuance: 23 October 2015

Property Owner at Time of Notice

Name: Cardinal John J. Krol

Address: Cathedral Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul

1723 Race Street

City: Philadelphia State: PA Postal Code: 19103

Date(s) Reviewed by the Committee on Historic Designation: _____

Date(s) Reviewed by the Historical Commission: _____

Date of Final Action: _____

☐ Designated ☐ Rejected

6. **Description:**

Five(5) circular oil-on-canvas paintings executed by artist/decorator Constantino Brumidi (1805-1880) adorn the interior of the dome, inside of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Philadelphia's Cathedral Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.[1]

A view from the floor of the church is attached as Exhibit 1. to show the location of these instant oils. All images herein are from the Lawrence S. Williams, Inc. Collection, enlarged for review. The farthest oil is at 156 feet in the "eye" of the dome.

The dome of the cathedral is where the nave intersects the transepts, just below the altar at the east end. (See Exhibit 2.) Positive identification of the subjects and artist derive from "The Catholic Herald & Visitor," of August 12, 1863 as "The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin into Heaven" and the Four Evangelists in separate canvases. Each Evangelist is identified by his attribute: Matthew (angel), Mark (lion), Luke (ox) and John (eagle). (Refer to Exhibits 3 to 8 herein). These oils are in the spandrels where the columns uphold the base of the dome.

These polychromed paintings on circle-cut canvas with gold/gilded framing are portable, and were manually attached to the dome's ceiling by August of 1863. They appear to be about four feet in diameter, perhaps larger, and in good condition with no visible signs of deterioration or defect(s).

These are Brumidi's only surviving works in the cathedral and the artist's only paintings in Pennsylvania.

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1 A cathedral is the seat of the bishop for a diocese. It is from here that the bishop serves the faithful. The type of floor plan at this cathedral is **basilican**, with the long nave leading to the area of importance, the altar.

**7. Statement of Significance:**

The five(5) oil paintings inside of the cathedral's dome were executed in 1863 by Constantino Brumidi (1805-1880) who has been called the "Artist of the United States Capitol," and the "Michelangelo of the U.S. Capitol." Brumidi was at work at the Capitol in 1863 when he painted these oils for the Philadelphia cathedral. Brumidi's "Apotheosis of George Washington" fresco in the dome of the Capitol was in the planning stages simultaneously as the instant oils were painted in Washington, D.C. "The Apotheosis" is regarded as Brumidi's masterpiece.

The Cathedral Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul was said to have been in 1863 "the largest cathedral in North America."[2] Four of the instant oils (the Evangelists) are in the same Neoclassical art style used by Brumidi in his Capitol program. Brumidi's "Assumption," however, had a Baroque art treatment, the same as in the works of sixteenth and seventeenth century churches in Rome. While the subject matter of the "Assumption" was timely in the history of the Roman Catholic Church when the Virgin's popularity was most high in the mid-nineteenth century, the Baroque style echoes the doctrinal defenses of the Church in the Counter Reformation and Philadelphia's own Protestant-Catholic conflicts in the 1840s. Brumidi's instant oils represent these times and the strength of the Church as it utilized art not for decorative purposes but to explaining the immaterial, intangible and that based upon belief.

These paintings are **objects**, defined by the Historical Commission's Rules & Regulations 2:16 as:

> A material thing of functional, aesthetic, cultural, historic or scientific value that may be, by nature or design, moveable yet related to a specific setting or environment.

These objects meet historical certification per the Philadelphia Historical Preservation Code §14-2007(5)(e) and (j).

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[2]Wolanin, Barbara A., **Constantino Brumidi: Artist of the Capitol.** Washington, D.C.: Gov't Printing Office, p. 1998, p. 159/ Dr. Wolanin is presently Curator of the Architect of the Capitol's Office in Washington, D.C.

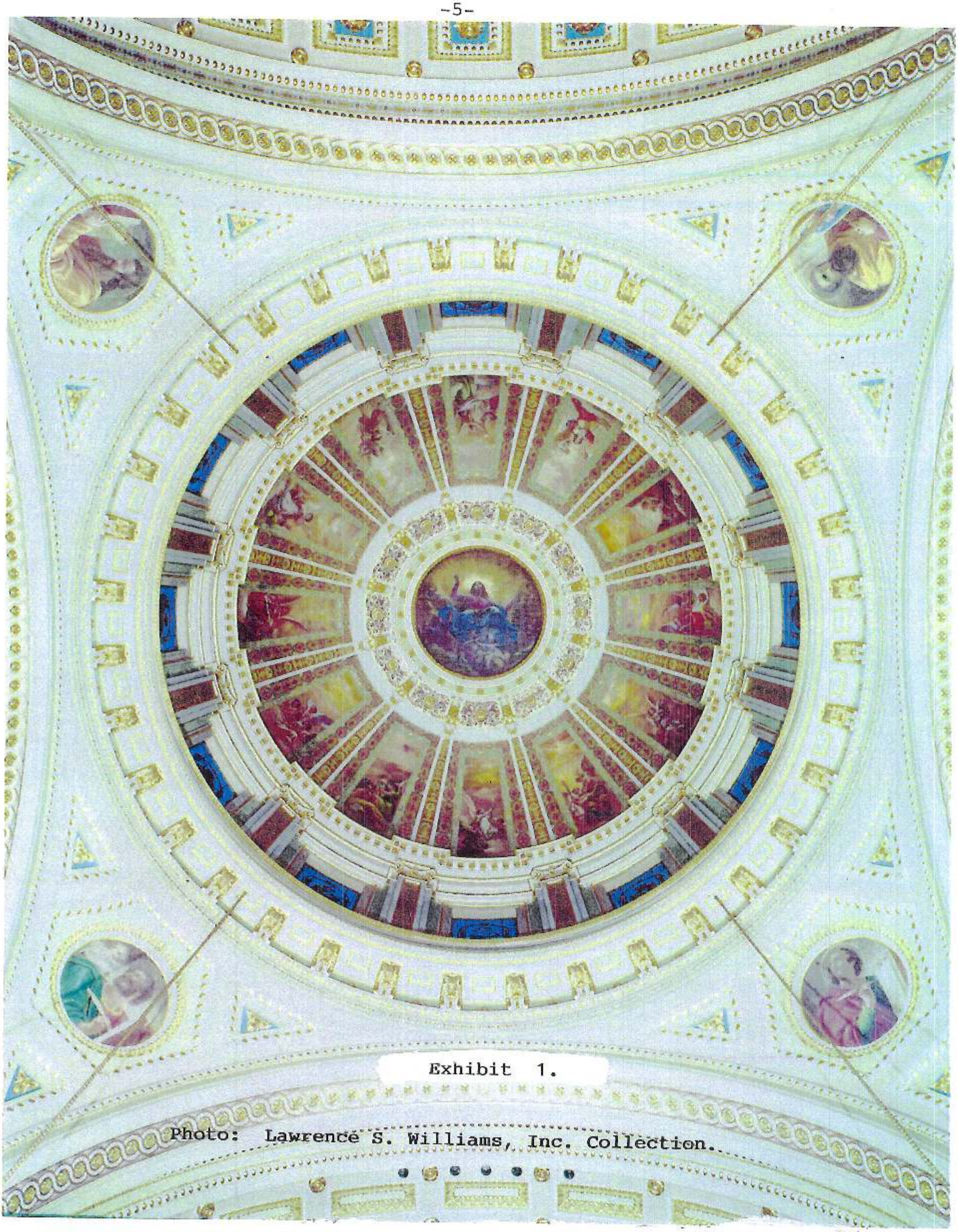


Exhibit 1.

Photo: Lawrence S. Williams, Inc. Collection.

The Brumidi paintings for this nomination are situated close to the altar where the priest performs Mass and other services.

The subjects of the paintings are integral parts of the services and important in Roman Catholic doctrine.

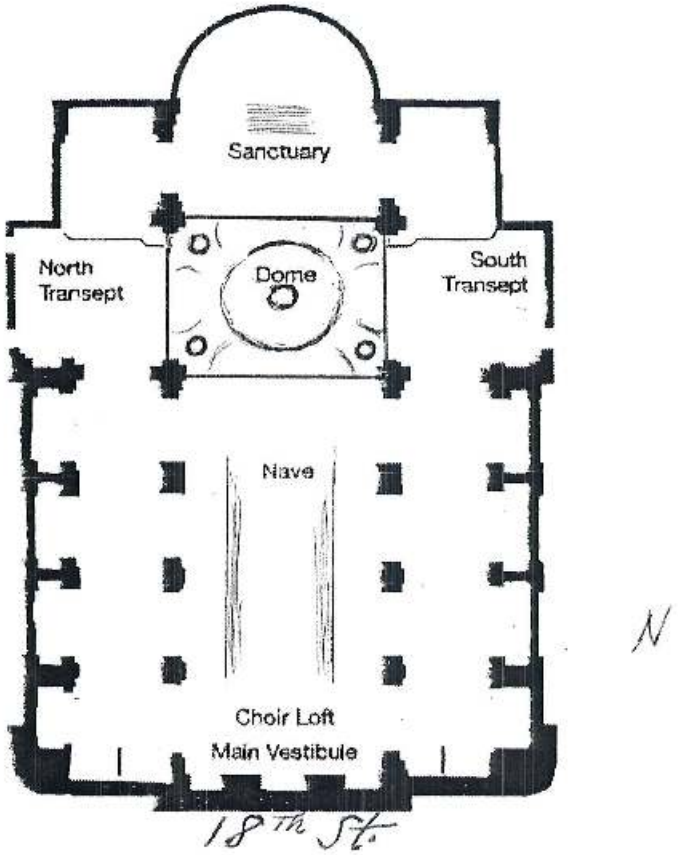



Exhibit 2.

**The Cathedral Basilica Plan showing location** of the instant paintings in the dome.

# CATHOLIC HERALD AND VISITOR

P. F. CUNNINGHAM, Publisher,
216 South Third St., Philadelphia.

Wednesday, August 12, 1863.


## OFFICIAL.

Having adopted the CATHOLIC HERALD & VISITOR as the medium of our official communications with the Clergy and Faithful of our Diocese, we recommend it to their patronage, and shall feel personally obliged by any effort on their part to promote its interests and to increase its circulation.

†JAMES F. WOOD,
Bishop of Philadelphia.


☞ Persons desiring to send for their friends in Ireland, can secure passage at the lowest rates in first class Packets, sailing from Liverpool on the 1st, 8th, 16th, and 24th of each month, or in steamers from Queenstown or Liverpool, by applying at this office.

Drafts on the Royal Bank of Ireland, for £1 or upwards, also for sale at lowest rates.


### WEEKLY CALENDAR

AUGUST.

†16 Sunday—Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost.
†17 Monday—Octave of St. Lawrence, M.
†18 Tuesday—St. Hyacinth, C.
†19 Wednesday—Fifth day within Octave.
†20 Thursday—St. Bernard, Abb. and D.
†21 Friday—St. Jane Frances de Chantal, Wid.
†22 Saturday—Octave of Assumption.

mortal monitor,—the eye. [illegible] these, and in the semi-circular space formed by the vaulted roof of the nave, is the usual

is the inscription: "*Tu es Petrus et super hanc Petram ædificabo Ecclesiam meam.*"

In the lunette of the dome is a painting of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin into Heaven. Although it is 156 feet from the floor, the figures are brilliant and distinct, and even the features of each—so sharply are they defined—are clearly visible. At the four corners of the dome, at its intersection with the cross-vaults, are paintings of the four Evangelists. The panels at the end of the trancepts are, yet unoccupied, but proper subjects have already been chosen, and will soon be executed.

The Corinthian pillars on the piers supporting the clerestory are veined in imitation of marble, as also are the piers themselves. The vaults of both the nave and transept are of the color of Caen stone, a gentle, pleasaht color that relieves the tired eye, when it with pleasure lingers on it.

The whole interior is lighted by the lunettes in the dome, those in the side chapels, and the clerestory window, groined in the vaults of the nave and trancepts.

Taking the Cathedral as a whole, it is without doubt the most finished piece of church architecture in the country.

The people of Philadelphia have just reason to be proud of it, even as it stands. Who can imagine what grandeur it will possess when completed. Let us all hasten on the work. It will be a boast to us to-day; and a glorious monument of our taste and liberality in the dim hereafter.

## THE OPENING OF THE CATHEDRAL.

A Fair Attendance—Addresses by the Right [illegible]

it in the mortar, by ausorbing [illegible] painter into the wall, so that it forms part of th wall itself,—so that if the Cathedral lasts like you [illegible]

fresco paintings.

The painting above is a representation of t Eternal Father, and of the Holy Ghost. Here y may have before your eyes the Incarnation, Pa sion and Death of our Saviour, Jesus Christ; y may have before your eyes the principal myste of religion—the Holy Trinity, the Father, the S Crucified, and the Holy Ghost. We have then t glorious Apostles, Peter and Paul: then the tw Apostles beloved by our Lord, St. John and S James. Then those, most beautiful and dear to t Christian heart, the four Evangelists, on the co nice,—SS. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Alo in the very summit of that beautiful dome, is t picture of the Blessed Virgin, making her triu phant ascent to Heaven. We have, you will all ag with me, succeeded well, in the designs. They w instruct and edify those who may visit and pray this Cathedral: I must not here forget to say it they are all by the distinguished artist and Rom cavalier, Constantine Brumidi, who is now engag in the decoration of the Capitol at Washington.

The worst part of the story is yet to be told. is that all these fine paintings are not paid f [Laughter]. I did tell you the plain truth wher said they were paid for, but the money we g was *borrowed* money. [Renewed laughter.] I the easiest thing of all to pay for them; $2. will be required, and th t you are well able to p Why you would think nothing at all of paying times that sum. [Applause, mingled with laugh But when we have paid for those, we will not yet satisfied. We not only want the decorations alre made, but some additional ones. See those vo in the transept! They look very bare: t should be enlivened by the pencil of the pain I will explain to you the design or designs w which we intend to decorate, and put the finis touches to the transepts. Now in one of them will place the picture of the Adoration of Shepherds, to whom the nativity of our Lord first announced by the angels, in whose pres Christ was made manifest to the people of Ga the Jews. Then in the smaller niches we will p statues of four of the Apostles. In the other t sept we propose to have represented the Adora of the three kings, the Magi—the mystery the feast of the Epiphany. These were the m whom Christ manifested himself, who were gu by the miraculous star, who were moved intern by the grace of God to make a long journey t the Child in the manger, and to acknowledge

Exhibit 3.

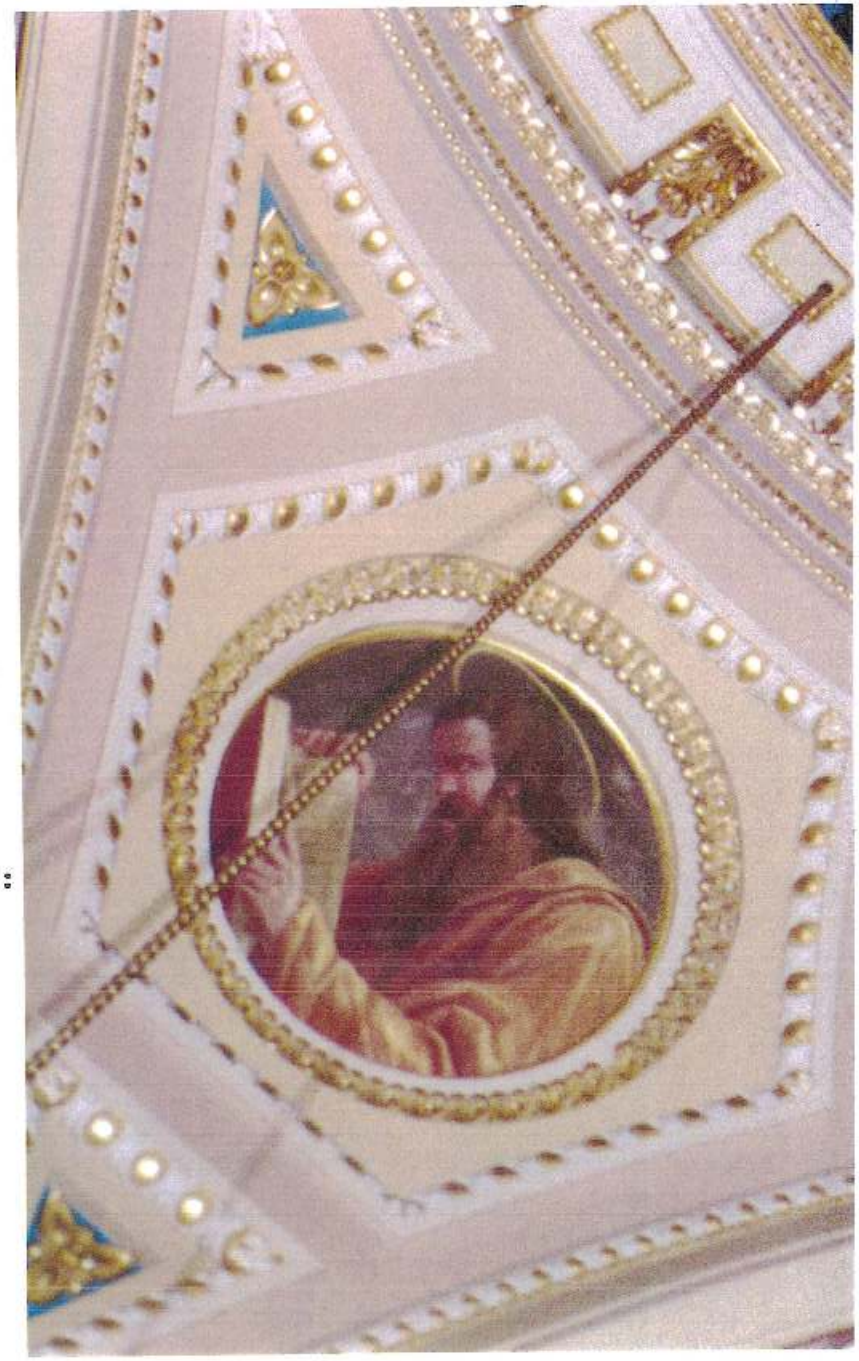
-7-

**Exhibit 4.**

"Assumption of the Blessed Virgin into Heaven"

Exhibit 5 (left):
St. Luke;

Exhibit 6 (right):
St. John.



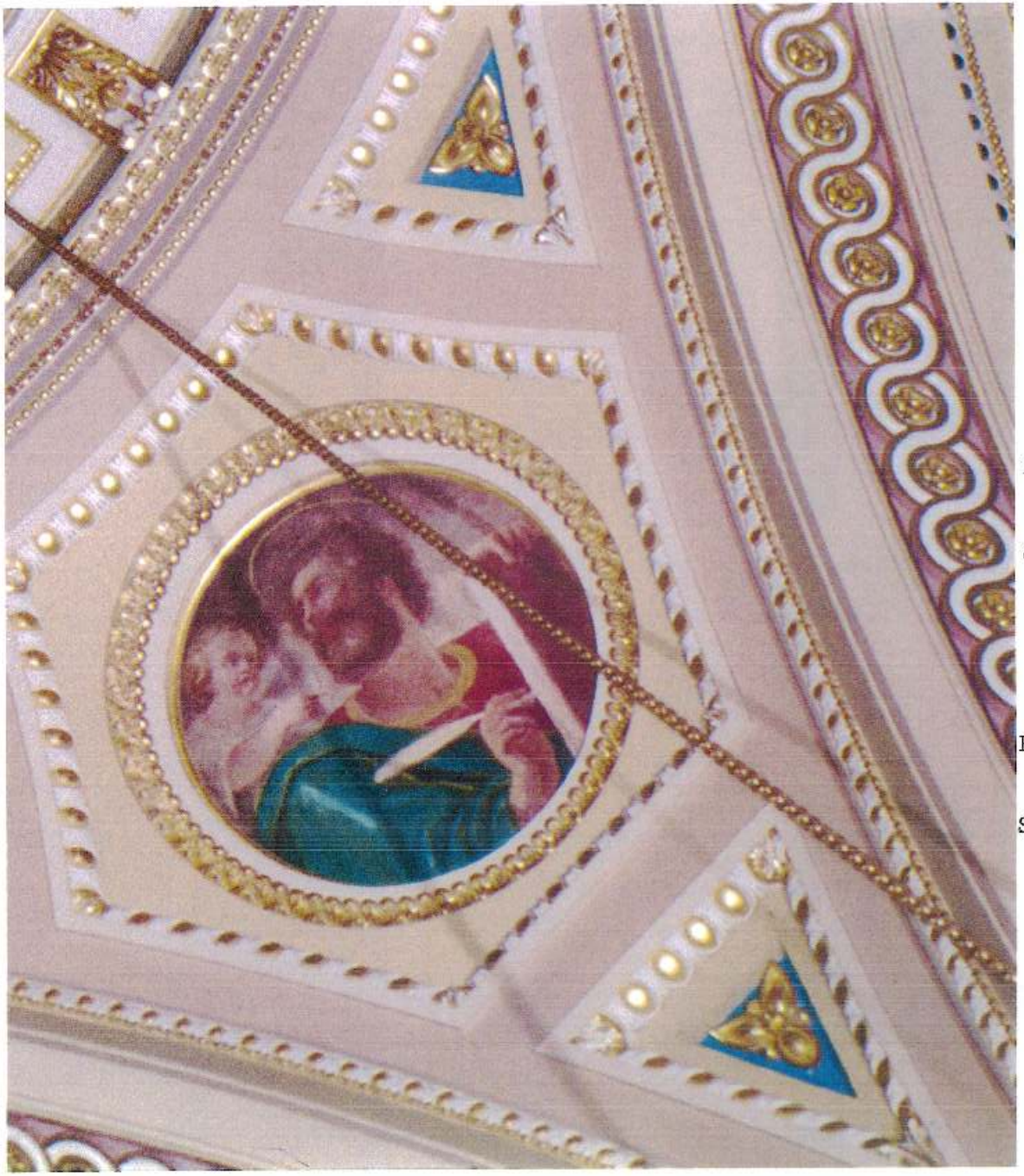


Exhibit 7
(left):

St. Matthew

Exhibit 8
(right):

St. Mark

The cathedral's five paintings which are herein nominated...

(e) are the work of a designer, architect, landscape architect or designer, or engineer whose work has significantly influenced the historical, architectural, economic, social or cultural development of the City, Commonwealth or Nation.

**Constantino Brumidi** (1805-1880) was selected to design and to paint all of the interior spaces at the United States Capitol, including its halls and some rooms. He was compensated by Congress from 1855 to 1879 for working in the Capitol project, however Brumidi also had time during these years to produce works of art for Roman Catholic churches, paint portraits for private citizens and other miscellaneous paintings reserved for himself.[3]

Brumidi's biographies were written initially by government staff associated with his Capitol fresco program, but new information on his training in art was compiled by the present Curator Barbara A. Wolanin.[4] Sources in Rome, Italy found that Brumidi's ability to draw became evident for his enrollment at age 13 to the famed Accademia di San Luca in Rome. There, Brumidi learned to paint in the Neoclassicism of the Renaissance artist Raphael in oil and in fresco. Dr. Pellegrino Nazzaro, who provided this and other information on Brumidi's pre-Capitol professional life, found that Brumidi's painting teachers were Vincenzo Camuccini (1771-1844) and Filippo Agricola (1795-1857), both highly acclaimed Neoclassicists throughout Italy and with the popes. They also decorated churches in fresco. Brumidi's other instructors at L'Accademia were the internationally-known Antonio Canova (1757-1822) and Bertel Thorwaldsen (1768-1844), sculptors who advanced Neoclassicism in sculpture to last the century. Their influence was profound in the history of American art.

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[3] In Wolanin's **Constantino Brumidi**, she mentioned Brumidi's estate having works sold at an art gallery from his private collection. page 224.

[4] Ibid., Chapter 2 was written by Dr. Pellegrino Nazzaro, with other chapters contributed by Wm. Allen, Francis V. O'Connor, Ph.D., Bernard Rabin and Constance Silver, and Christiana C. Adams with George W. Adams.

But for his talent in art, Brumidi would have stayed in Rome during turbulent times of violence and his imprisonment. In fact, Roman Catholic clergy who knew Brumidi by his art work were the impetus for his arrival to the United States.[5]

**A demand for Neoclassicism in the United States:**

Brumidi came to the United States just after the death of Nicola Monachesi (1795-1851) a graduate from the same Accademia di San Luca in Rome who was trained to paint and to fresco as in the Neoclassical Style of Raphael. Monachesi was said to have introduced "true fresco" to this country at St. John the Evangelist Roman Catholic Church in Philadelphia, painting on the walls as Raphael did at the Vatican.[6] Monachesi left no heir to this skill; Juliani wrote that Joseph Uberti had done frescoes at St. John's in 1853, continuing a program begun by Monachesi in 1832.[7] Yet, Uberti did not achieve the fame as Monachesi in the newspapers and in other publications. Publicly, Uberti may have been unknown, and only another artesan in the small artist community here because he evaded notice by the U.S. Capitol's Superintendant of Construction, Montgomery C. Meigs when he made a nationwide search for a fresco painter who could decorate the interiors as at the Vatican. Meigs was in Philadelphia in April of 1854 and complained to have not found such an artist, and the only frescoes he saw were Monachesi's sepia-toned paintings at the Merchants' Exchange.[8] Uberti was nowhere; he later appeared as a witness for Brumidi's naturalization and as one of his most reliable assistants at Thomas Ustick Walter's home (1863) and at the Capitol.[9]

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[5] Fairman, Charles E., **Art & Artists of the Capitol of the U.S.A.** Washington, D.C.: Gov't Printing Office, 1927, p.160.

[6] "The Philadelphia Inquirer," November 26, 1832.

[7] Juliani, Richard, **Building Little Italy.** University Park: Penn State University Press, 1998, p. 80.

[8] Letter from Meigs to Gouveneur Kemble, April 24, 1854. Architect of the Capitol's Office, Washington, D.C.

[9] Wolanin, op. cit., p. 223.

Neoclassicism frequently came to Washington, D.C. through architects and artists working in Philadelphia. Thomas U. Walter was one such Neoclassicist from a long line of designers in Philadelphia who was hired to plan the nation's capitol dome atop of the existing architecture. Neoclassicism was what Superintendent Meigs envisioned "...to make the Capitol into the major example of American public art of the time."[10] The Capitol's artist/decorator of its interiors, Brumidi, would paint the Philadelphia cathedral in frescoes and with these instant oil paintings similarly as his work in Washington.

**The Paintings for the Cathedral:**

The year 1863 is when Brumidi executed the nominated oils. He performed this work in Washington, D.C. and the paintings were transported to Philadelphia for installment onto the cathedral's ceiling. A partial record of Brumidi's activities in 1863 is found in the Thomas U. Walter Papers at The Athenaeum of Philadelphia. Exhibit 9 herein of the cathedral's interior is photographic proof that coordinates with Brumidi's absence and the paintings, even if finished, not in place until the August, 1863 newspaper report. Brumidi's activities in Washington, however, are recorded from about May when Walter wrote: "...The Secretary (of the Interior) has stopped Brumidi's pictures for the eye of the Dome." By "July 8, 1863," Walter wrote that "...the Secretary of the Interior... gave me cause the work to be resumed on the pictures for the canopy of the Dome."[11] It may have been those two months--from May to July--when Brumidi painted the cathedral's oils, waiting to continue his work at the Capitol.

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10 James M. Goode, in Kennon, Donald (Ed.) **The United States Capitol.** Athens: Ohio State University Press, 2000. Page 97.

11 Walter to Fowler, May 8, 1863; and Walter to Brumidi, July 8, 1863. The Thomas U. Walter Papers. The Athenaeum.

Wolanin wrote that Brumidi had painted the Philadelphia cathedral's paintings while in Washington, D.C., in tracing the artist/decorator's biographical and professional information where Brumidi, himself left no record.[12] The Curator at the Architect of the Capitol's Office would have known this information as Brumidi's works for the cathedral here had coincided with his planned masterpiece for the Washington Capitol's dome, "The Apotheosis of George Washington." Walter's letters verify this, as Brumidi was painting "The Apotheosis" inside of the dome that Walter had designed." [13]

But there are coincidental similarities between Brumidi's "Apotheosis of George Washington" and his "Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary" less in style than in the intent of the portrayals of the main figures. (See Exhibits 1 and 13 for comparisons.) Both figures are set in the skies or heavens (depending on how religious the viewer sees George Washington.) For Roman Catholics, the Blessed Virgin is among the celestial host because she was "assumed body and soul into heaven" upon her death. But with Washington, the art style is more Neoclassical than the cathedral's Baroque and higher drama. Although Washington may appear to be deified, he is still grounded by the absence of angels and with man-made mythical figures and objects. Wolanin wrote that Brumidi "singlehandedly painted" "the culmination of the homage Brumidi paid to Wasington" with "The Apotheosis." [14] There is no doubt as to which figure--the Blessed Virgin or Washington--is more divinely depicted. But it is to Brumidi's skill to be able to distinguish both figures, done at the same time but in intentionally different art stylistic treatments that would prove his excellence as more than a mere decorator.

Bishop Wood knew that Brumidi fulfilled Church doctrine by the instant oils "to instruct and edify those who may visit and pray in this Cathedral." Art in church interiors was vital and others later would add more sacred art in various media as altar

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[12] Wolanin, op. cit., p. 159.

[13] Walter's letters of May 8, and July 8, 1863, op. cit.

[14] Wood's "address" of August, 1863 at the cathedral's opening.

pieces, some by Brumidi's successor at the Capitol, Filippo Costaggini, and later, more artists to fill the spaces.[15]

**Brumidi's national significance**

While in the U.S. Government's employ, Brumidi was also executing paintings for Roman Catholic churches in the major East Coast cities, from 1855 to 1879. His first work in this hemisphere however, was "La Asuncion de la Virgen" (The Assumption), on a large (72" X 100") canvas for the cathedral in Mexico City, Mexico. Brumidi had steady work in the slow conversion of Roman Catholic churches with an interior decorating tradition from the British Isles and Ireland that had a restrained tendency not to overdo color, design and had hung religious paintings. This appearance was the opposite from churches in Germany and countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea.

Brumidi's fame, however, began when he was hired by Meigs to decorate the Capitol building's interiors, to achieve a look "...after the great edifices of the old world," The artist's experience in true fresco, a medium believed to have durability, was what Meigs wanted for the nation's main and most visited site. Among those favoring Brumidi's (and Meigs') proposed plans on how the Capitol's interiors would look with these "Vatican-like" frescoes, were President Franklin Pierce and Jefferson Davis, then a senator, later the President of the Confederacy during the Civil War. All seemed to understand that Brumidi would be producing art that would be criticized and politicized.[16] The Capitol's dome, halls and other public areas were intended for the visitor's enjoyment and pride in how this country's ideals were formed--that was the subject of Brumidi's overall theme: the American "history" to that date, about two hundred years. Brumidi's art keyed on events that every American was to know as well as to portray historic figures to emulate. From his work, the railings on stairs, furniture, doors and other architectural features were made to complement.

15 "Brief History & Description..." pp. 16 to 27.

16 Wolanin, B.,"The Artist of the Capitol," p. 188, and Goode, J., "Thomas U. Walter and the Search for Propriety," p. 97 in Kennon, D. (Ed.) **The United States Capitol**. Athens, Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 2000.

The unfinished cathedral in 1862: no interior decorations yet; the Brumidi paintings may have been commissioned by Archbishop Wood, but were not ready to be installed.

ca- 1862

Exhibit 9

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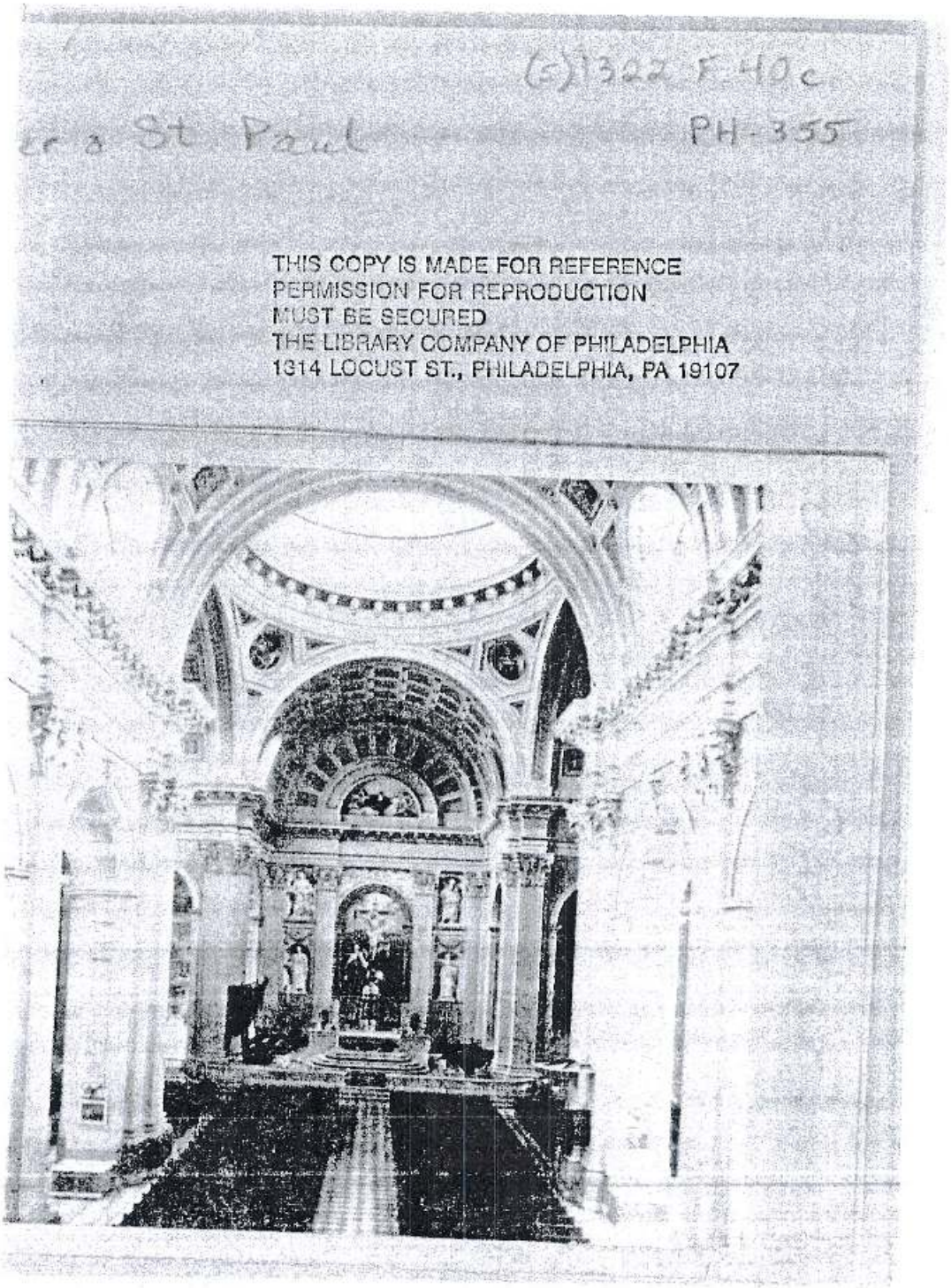


One of the first photographs of the finished cathedral in 1865, just after the dedication in 1864.

Two of Brumidi's oils in this nomination are visible.

This is taken from the same vantage as the 1862 photograph.

Exhibit 10

Ca 1865

It is important to remember that Brumidi, though born in Rome, is regarded in the art world as an American artist. While Groce and Wallace's **Dictionary of Artists in America** (1957) has a full listing (based on Fairman's work) on Brumidi, later biographical sketches on him are less generous. Benezit listed Brumidi tersely as "peintre, decorateur americain, ne a Rome en 1805, mort a Washington en 1880," (p. 355) while Chastel's **Italian Art**, which lists the most obscure artists from the early Middle Ages, totally omitted Brumidi in its 1963 printing, despite Fairman's published account.

Brumidi's death in 1880 was a consequence of a fall while painting inside of the Capitol's dome. Art was indeed his life for over twenty-five years in the United States. And the effects of his work still impress those who see his oil paintings in the Philadelphia cathedral as more than decorative.

These reasons support why the instant five Brumidi oils in the Cathedral Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul merit historical certification.

Brumidi's five oil paintings in the cathedral...

(j) Exemplify the cultural, political, economic, social or historical heritage of the community. (i.e., Philadelphia's Catholic community.)

**The Catholic cultural heritage from the paintings:**

On August 6, 1863, Philadelphia's bishop, James Wood told a crowd of fourteen hundred in the unfinished cathedral that Brumidi's instant oil paintings "...will instruct and edify those who may visit and pray in this Cathedral..."[17] Brumidi had been advised on what subjects to put on his canvases for certain, key sites on the cathedral's ceiling, inside of the dome. Wood had cited the Catholic Church's long-held practice of decorating churches' interiors. This custom was addressed in 1563 by decree from the Catholic hierarchy in the Council of Trent,[18] as part of its work in religious reform: that people should be "instructed" by art and "'excited by art to adore and love God and to cultivate piety.'"[18]

Decorating the interiors of Roman Catholic churches has been part of the culture from the Church's beginnings in the Holy Land, and especially in Rome where many early churches still bear art intended to honor and praise as well as to decorate for a more pleasing experience. The custom of interior church decorating arrived in the United States in 1832 here in Philadelphia when Nicola Monachesi (1795-1851) painted frescoes inside of the former cathedral, St. John the Evangelist Church in Center City. Besides frescoes, St. John's marvelled worshippers with stained glass.[19] Thus, from that time, Philadelphia's Catholics were able to experience services inside of a church truly in conformity with Church policy.

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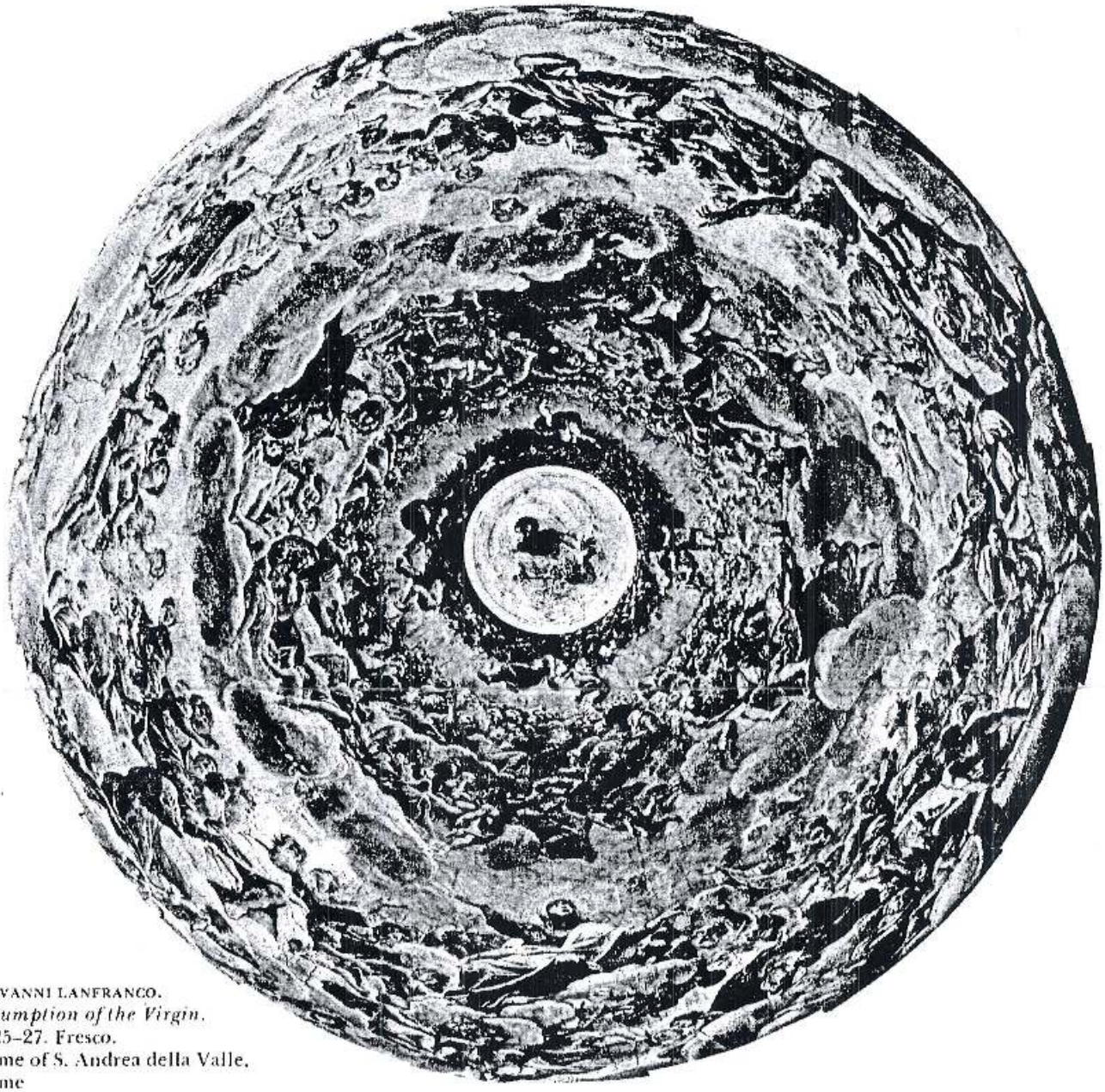
[17] "The Catholic Herald & Visitor," August 12, 1863.

[18] Cited in Posner, **17th & 18th Century Art: Baroque**, NY: Abrams, 1979, page 70.

[19] "A Century and a Quarter...St. John the Evangelist Church." Phila.: 1955, pp. 16-17.



104. GIOVANNI LANFRANCO.
*Assumption of the Virgin.*
1625–27. Fresco.
Dome of S. Andrea della Valle,
Rome

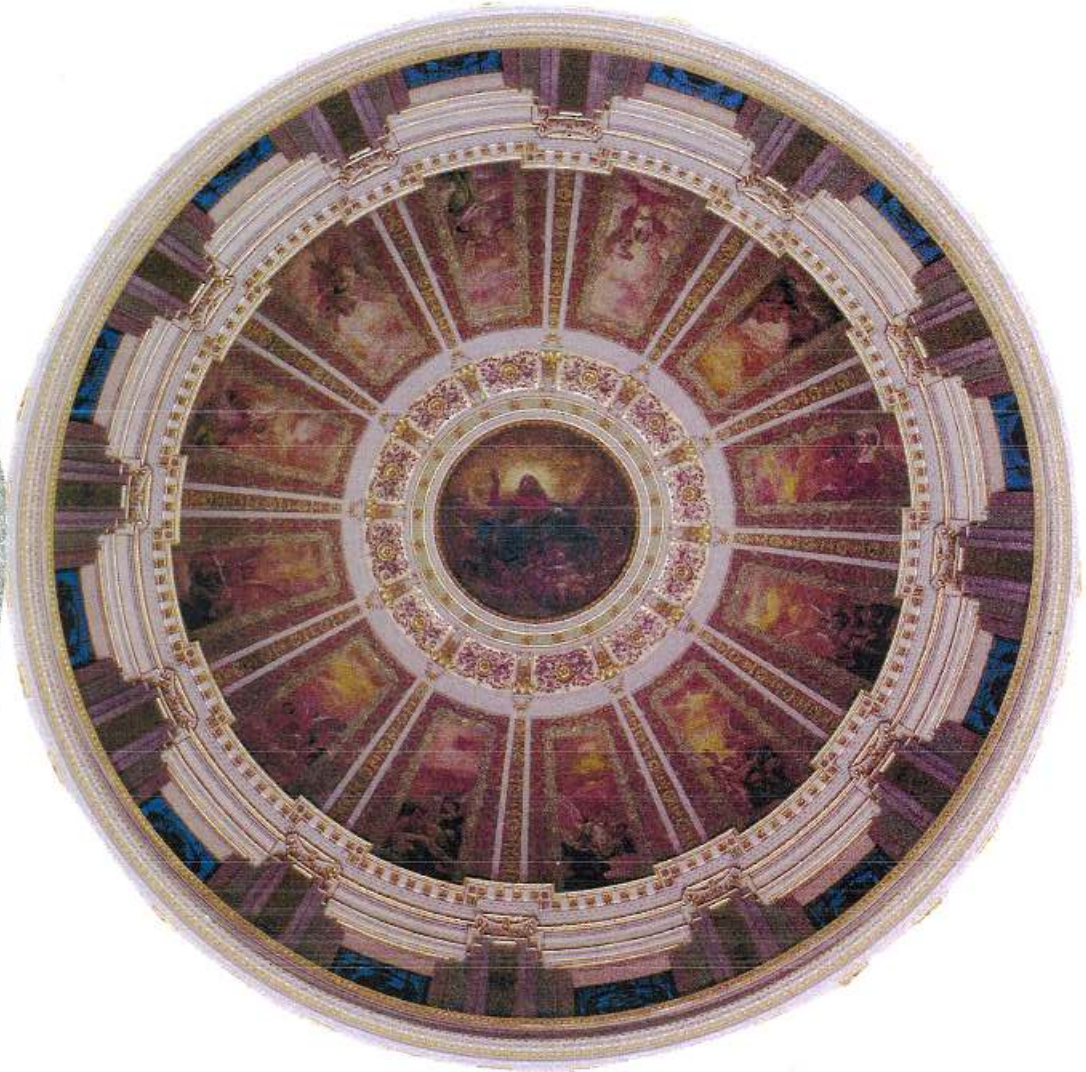
Exhibit 11.

This "Assumption of the Virgin," an early depiction of the sacred event, is influenced by the Baroque Style, which unlike the Neoclassical Style used during the Renaissance, capably renders the surreal, fantastical image of heaven's opening for the body and soul of the Blessed Virgin Mary upon her (earthly) passing.

Brumidi may have seen this fresco in Rome--it is in the apex of this church's dome--just as Brumidi put his "Assumption" painting in the cathedral in Philadelphia.

"Immaculate Conception of Mary"

Church of Madonna dell'Archetto
Rome, Italy
c. 1852
Photo: Dr. Pellegrino Nazzaro



"Assumption of the Virgin"

Cathedral Basilica Ss. Peter & Paul, Philadelphia
1862-1863
Photo: Lawrence S. Williams

Exhibit 12 : Brumidi paintings in domes

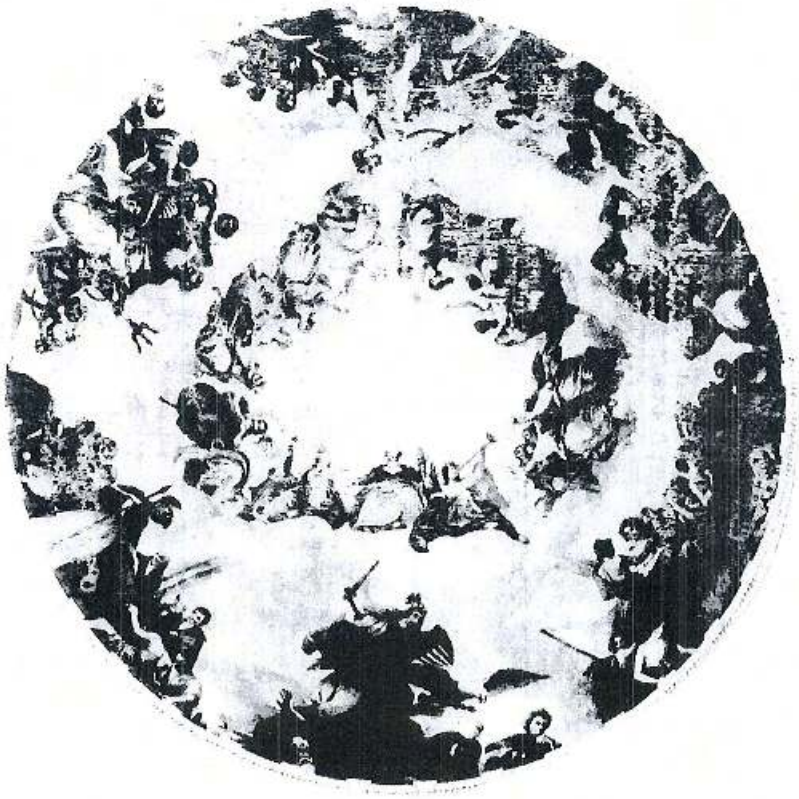


Exhibit 13a.

Brumidi's "The Apotheosis of George Washington" attempts to create a deification of our nation's war hero, politician and first president in a manner suggestive of Lanfranco's "Assumption of the Virgin" in Exhibit 11.

The detail of "The Apotheosis" below shows Washington seated, not floating; nor is he surrounded by celestial beings--the females are"man-made." But it is clear that the concept was still derived from Roman Catholic sacred art.

All of these depictions were intended to be instructive and to inspire, not necessarily to emote. Art used in this manner was meant to change the lives of individuals.

Exhibit 13b.

In 1863, the local Roman Catholic leaders would have also wanted Brumidi to paint the timely issue of "The Assumption" for the highest point at the cathedral, in the eye of the dome. The Blessed Virgin's Assumption had been in the news for decades, beginning in 1830 with the sightings of the "Blessed Virgin Mary" (shortened to "BVM," Her official title in the Church), at Paris, France. There, the BVM spoke to a nun whose revelation caused "tens of thousands" of "Miraculous Medals" to be struck with the BVM's image and the words,"O Mary, conceived without sin..." The market was saturated by requests for these medals by 1832.[20] In LaSalette,another site in France later verified by the Church, the BVM's appearances enforced the earlier visions focussed on Her Immaculate Conception, "to which,"wrote Father John Hardon, SJ, "the Assumption became a theological conclusion."[21] By 1854, just nine years before Brumidi painted "The Assumption" for the Philadelphia cathedral, Pope Pius IX put the visions of 1830 and 1846 into credible context with his **Ineffabilis Deus** that proclaimed the BVM's Immaculate Conception was doctrine.

The pope's move was long awaited because here in Philadelphia in 1848, Bishop Francis P. Kenrick had already dedicated a stately imposing church on the 1200 block of Spring Garden Street to "The Assumption, BVM," then another church to "The Assumption, BVM" in Manayunk. Both churches were then in separate districts in the County not yet consolidated with the city. Archdiocesan history also cited "the 1850s" as a time when "...an increase of devotion to the Blessed Virgin"began with "(N)ew Marian hymns and prayers."[22] The BVM and all of the incidents of Her life were indelible parts of Roman Catholic life in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia before Brumidi's paintings were seen that hot August day in 1863.

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20 Englebert, Omer, **Catherine Laboure and the Modern Apparitions of Our Lady**, New York: P. Kennedy, 1858.

21 Hardon, John, **The Catholic Catechism.** NY: Doubleday, 1975,p. 155.

22 Archdiocesan Staff, **Our Faith-Filled Heritage**, Strasbourg,France: Editions duSigne, page 55.

Yet, Brumidi's depiction of "The Assumption" did not end at the top of the cathedral's dome. "Assumptions" in oil and in mosaic were placed at the lower level, with more direct view at the cathedral by the time the Most Reverend Edmund F. Prendergast, DD was Bishop of Philadelphia in 1917.[23] By the beginning of the 20th century then, "The Assumption" in works of art, and in the names of churches throughout the Archdiocese of Philadelphia would be the most repeated title to honor the Blessed Virgin, more than any other acclamation. This is the proof of how the subject of "The Assumption" had and continues to have influence in the lives of the region's Roman Catholics.

**Brumidi's paintings in Catholic history:**

The Philadelphia cathedral's oil paintings of "The Assumption" and single portraits of the Four Evangelists carry a rather doctrinal commitment to how church interiors were to appear after the sixteenth century Counter Reformation responded to Protestant destruction of Catholic churches. Columbia University art historian Julius Held wrote that "in the struggle that the rejuvenated church conducted against its foes (i.e., the various Protestants) art had been given a special function...as (the Church's) opponents had denied it a place in the houses of worship."[24] Not only was decorating the interiors of churches with art rejected by Protestants, but the depiction of the subjects also was addressed during the Reformation, then formalized with the three sessions in the Councils held at Trent. "The Baroque Style," wrote Held, "was essentially connected with the Counter Reformation."[25] New

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[23] "Brief History & Description of the Cathedral..." p. 17.

[24] Held, **17th & 18th Century Baroque**, op.cit., pp. 21-2.

[25] Ibid., p. 21

York University art historian Donald Posner added that the Baroque(which Brumidi used to treat his interpretation of the Assumption) "is the very spirit of the Counter Reformaion. For the faithful there is no barrier between the natural and supernatural spheres. The divine is in our midst."[26] This grandly summarizes how Brumidi's "Assumption" was executed for that appropriate spot in the cathedral's dome. Posner's words also explain why Brumidi did not use the Baroque treatment for his Four Evangelists.

For Roman Catholics, the sight of the Blessed Virgin glorified, intentionally placed in the cathedral's highest point, nearest to the heavens, weightless and ethereal, is the effect of Church doctrine. Held the art historian described the Baroque as the style used to create the "artistic ideal" where "pictures...asserted the godly function of art." It was how the Roman Catholic Church was divided--through sacred art--from Protestants' newly formed doctrines that opposed the Church's teachings. Held went further in suggesting that the Baroque's use in the sixteenth and seventeenth century Roman Catholic churches was a means to propagandize[27]--which may be true. But, the timeliness of Brumidi using a 16th century art style to depict a 19th century popular subject (as "The Assumption"), had no detractors nor critics, only devotees to the awesome painting.

Moreover, Brumidi's use of the Baroque correlated to the cathedral's architectural style, which was "Roman Baroque," again in tandem with the Counter Reformation, the papacy and Rome as the seat of the pope. The 1917 "Brief History and Description..." called the cathedral's design "Roman Corinthian," denoting an order of columns; Wolanin correctly stated the "Roman Baroque," which describes the cathedral's model, San Carlo al Corso in Rome which was built for the Society of Jesus in 1612-1672.[28] This

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[26] Ibid., p. 70.

[27] Ibid., pp. 22; 24.

[28] "Brief History," p. 13; Wolanin, op. cit., p. 159; Held, op.cit., 31.

church, like the Philadelphia cathedral succeeding it, had "vast areas" in the interior for decorative art to be placed, yielding to what the Council of Trent's decreed: use sacred art to enhance Church doctrine, and to distinguish Protestantism that claimed the "denial that the Virgin played any significant part in God's plan for man's salvation."[29]

For his interpretative portraits of the Four Evangelists, Brumidi used the same Neoclassicism as in his Washington, D.C. works at the Capitol. The Four Evangelists are not much different stylistically than in Raphael's "School of Athens" fresco at the Vatican, a "classroom" for the young Brumidi while an art student at L'Accademia di San Luca in Rome. The Four Evangelists are well formed as men, stressing their humanness and with subdued emotion. They are depicted naturally, but understood not to be in the same category as the Blessed Virgin nearby--which is theologically correct. But Roman Catholics nevertheless know of the Four Evangelists' importance as the authors of the synoptic Gospels which are the precedents of the sacraments, liturgy of the Mass and other religious celebrations that often extend outside of the cathedral's walls. Brumidi gave these Four Evangelists the visual asset for the full scope of worship, near the altar, hence their appropriateness in style and in placement within the building.

Brumidi's oils in the Cathedral Basilica connect the visitor to the Roman Baroque churches in Rome, utilizing art "to assert specific doctrines and beliefs," noted a secular source and art historian.[30] Even if one was not a Roman Catholic, the consistency of the artist's works within the architecture are powerful links to the overseas source of inspiration. Thus, the Counter Reformation's "art style" had been invoked for religious purposes.

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29 Held, op. cit., p. 31.

30 Ibid., p. 22.

**Philadelphia's political "shadow" on Brumidi's paintings:**

Comparing the former cathedral, St. John the Evangelist Church to the present one, the Cathedral Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul, the political history of Philadelphia can be noted in the two churches' architecture and interior art.

St. John's was said to have been the first decorated church in the United States, with frescoes done by Monachesi in 1832.[31] The frescoes presumably correlated with St. John's Gothic exterior design, with their placement between the Gothic arches inside. But, architecturally, St. John's had an appearance much like the Protestant churches, conforming more to yielding to local and national ecclesiastical design. St. John's location also was not near many Roman Catholic residences, having been built intentionally away from those involved in the scandals at the former cathedral, Old St. Mary's.

However, after the internal struggles with trusteeism at Old St. Mary's, the city's Roman Catholics met with Protestant opposition over economic and political reasons underlying Bishop Francis Kenrick's public denouncement of the King James Bible's use by Catholic children in the public schools. "The Nativist Riots" of 1844 are well known and their lingering influence on the planning of the Logan Square cathedral may have been imparted on why the Baroque Style was recommended by two theological professors and priests over the designs submitted by the lay architects.[32]The Baroque was not in vogue in 1846 in the United States where there were several western European architectural styles in use. The Baroque connotated "Roman Catholicism" and was distinguishable from other styles used in Protestant churches.

The Baroque also invited interior decorating, which here is

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32 "The Philadelphia Inquirer" of November 26, 1832.
"Brief History & Description...," p. 13.

appropriate for the Brumidi oil paintings in the dome and atop the columns. Brumidi's oils were among the first of many sacred art objects installed at the cathedral to further the Baroque, as well as the Roman Catholic cultural tradition of decorating church interiors.

The religious-political implications are significant for the "1863" time of the paintings' installation. Employing such a well known artist as Brumidi during the height of the Civil War was a strong message to Protestants of the prestige among the local Roman Catholic population in the city. Philadelphia was a leading industrial center in providing materiel, transportation and medical supplies towards the Union cause. Brumidi had already been employed by the U.S. Congress and several Presidents when Bishop Wood hired him for the paintings. Thus, Brumidi was approved to paint the U.S. Capitol's interiors as the Vatican and for a mainly Protestant group of politicians and staff--that was his background before. Even if the city's Catholics had no appreciation of art and these oil paintings by Brumidi, the average Catholic could understand the **politics** of Brumidi working simultaneously for the President and Congress AND Bishop Wood for the cathedral during the Civil War. In effect, Brumidi's art works had equalized any Protestant-Catholic differences that had lingered from the 1840s.

For all of these reasons, Brumidi's oil paintings at the Cathedral Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul merit certification.

Celeste A. Morello

CELESTE A. MORELLO, MS, MA

September, 2015

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MORELLO, CELESTE ANNE, historian, criminologist, b. Norristown, Pa., July 22, 1958; d. Ann M. Morello. Student, Loyola U., Rome, 1978; BA in Classics cum laude, BA in Art History magna cum laude, Chestnut Hill Coll., Phila., 1980; cert. in Paralegal Studies, Villanova U., Pa., 1986; MS in Criminology, St. Joseph's U., Phila., 1994; MA in History, Villanova U., Pa., 2000; grad., Civilian Police Acad., Phila., 2000. ~~Cert. paralegal Villanova U., 1986.~~ Tchr. history, social studies, sci. Archdiocese of Phila., 1977-84; lectr. on ancient history of Sicily, 1982–; cons. criminologist in Mafia and LCN history Phila. Police and U.S. Atty.'s Office, 1993–. Pioneer in criminal and Mafia history; petitioner, originator over 25 Phila. hist. marker sites Pa. Hist. and Mus. Commn. Hist. Marker Program, 1993–; lectr. in field. Author: Beyond History: The Times and Peoples of St. Paul's R.C. Church, 1843-1993, 1992; writer, dir. History of the Mafia and LCN in Philadelphia 1880-1959 for Dept. of Justice, FBI, Phila., 1997, History of South Philadelphia, Introduction, Institute for Service Learning, 1996, Survey of Illicit Narcotics Use in Philadelphia 1900-45 for Dept. of Justice, High Intensity Drug Traffic


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Selections of some sources

# Brief History and Description

OF THE

# CATHEDRAL

OF

# SS. PETER AND PAUL

Compiled under the direction
of the
MOST REVEREND E. F. PRENDERGAST, D. D.

Eighteenth and Race Streets
Philadelphia, Pa.
1917

SOURCE: "Brief History" Compiled under direction of the Most Re



is shown holding in his right hand a manuscript on which are inscribed the opening words of his Epistle to the Romans, "Paul a servant of Jesus Christ to all who are at Rome."

The heroic figures in bronze on the Cathedral front were gifts of Mr. James Givens, since deceased, in memory of his father, mother, sister and self.

The transept windows illustrate the Resurrection of our Lord (north transept) and the Holy Family at Nazareth (south transept). They are divided into three sections; in the centre portion of each is shown the figure panel and on either side an ornamental panel is used with appropriate emblems. The window of the "Resurrection" contains a finely executed figure of our Lord "rising from the dead, to die now no more." Upon the truth here depicted rests our entire faith, "for if Christ be not risen then is our preaching vain, and your faith also is vain." (1 Corin. xv., 12.) The face and form of the risen Saviour are full of calm dignity and grace. The soldiers who had been set as a guard present a picture of abject helplessness. Two have fallen down with fear, while a third is already in the act of taking flight.

"The Holy Family" window represents the scene in the humble home at Nazareth about which Christians in thought and affection love to linger. Mother and Foster-father are lovingly contemplating the wonderful Providence of God that has constituted them caretakers of the Word made flesh. A profound air of peace and silence appears to reign over the simple scene, and the beholder feels himself or herself powerfully impelled to desire "that peace which the world cannot give," when, passing from the turbulent field of worldly activities, the eye rests upon the peaceful home of Nazareth. Above an angelic visitor with scroll sings always the refrain of the Nativity, "Gloria in excelsis Deo."

These windows were presented to the Cathedral by Hon. Joseph McLaughlin in memory of his deceased parents, Mr. and Mrs. Patrick McLaughlin.

The twelve windows in the dome bear life-size figures of the faithful Apostles and the Blessed Virgin. The last mentioned very faithfully reproduces Raphael's Sistine Madonna (Madonna di San Sisto).

## OTHER PAINTINGS

At the very top of the lofty dome is a painting by Constantino Brumidi representing the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin. This is an original conception of the noted artist, whose work on both continents half a century ago won for him such unstinted praise.

The medallions on the spandrels at the base of the dome are also Brumidi's work and represent the four Evangelists, St. Matthew, St. Mark, St. Luke and St. John.

The twelve panels (over the windows) in the dome were painted by Signor Ilario Panzironi, New York, and are entitled "Angels

# THE HISTORY OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA

*Edited by James F. Connelly, S.T.L., Hist. E.D.*

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*Philadelphia*

*THE ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA*

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Connelly, History of Archdiocese of Phila.



had substantial cause for concern for the position of the Church in Philadelphia should it become involved in raising money for the South so close to the war's end. Further, this reaction shows Wood's cautious approach to political matters. He was convinced that for the most part the clergy should remain outside political controversies. Indeed, some claim the Spalding-Wood correspondence is unique in that it finds two American prelates discussing ideas on the Civil War. Generally, the American hierarchy had little comment on public issues, since their interests fell on both sides of the conflict due to rapid geographical Church expansion through the mid-nineteenth century.

In addition to supplying chaplains and nurses to the government during the Civil War, the diocese had to suspend operations on the construction of its cathedral early in the conflict. Shortly after Wood assumed the role of coadjutor to Neumann in 1857, he became responsible for the cathedral building but immediately saw that its completion was doubtful, and felt compelled to construct a temporary chapel on Summer Street to serve the needs of the congregation. Surprisingly, Wood, with the outbreak of hostilities, took a rather pessimistic position with regard to the cathedral construction. Feeling the war would have a negative effect on business as well as individuals in the diocese, he ordered the suspension of the annual collection for the building fund. At the same time, he voiced the hope that business and the laity would be in a better position after the war to contribute, and perhaps make up for the lack of gifts during the war. Still, he gave an encouraging analysis of work completed by 1861. He had commissioned Constantine Brumidi, who decorated the Capitol in Washington, D.C., to paint several of the magnificent frescoes still in the cathedral. The exterior dome was finished, and all interior ceilings would be completed before work stopped. Once construction was resumed, carpenters were to move inside.

dedicated 1864

As events proved, Wood had been incorrect in his evaluation of the war's impact on city businesses and population. Generally, the economy was stimulated, and although the city spent $367,000 on defense and $657,000 for relief of military dependents, generous Catholics and Protestants continued to support the building fund. As a result, with no apparent shortage of materials, construction proceeded again. In September, 1864 Wood informed Archbishop Spalding that he planned to dedicate the Cathedral of Sts. Peter and Paul on November 20, 1864. And he did succeed. He was on the scene nearly every working day, joining the men on the highest scaffolds, listening to their complaints, problems, suggestions and, in general, winning their confidence. Thus, when he saw a defect or a problem, the builders were anxious to please this man who, they were convinced, was learned in more than merely church matters. Because of the enthusiasm generated among the workers, the building was ready to be dedicated on the appointed day. A temporary wood altar was installed. Bishop Wood presided at a solemn blessing service, followed by a Solemn Pontifical Mass during which Archbishop Spalding preached. The

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ton. He exhibited at the Washington Art Association in 1859. ¶ Read and Gaines, *Gold Rush: The Journals, Drawings, and Other Papers of J. Goldsborough Bruff . . .*, Introduction; Washington Art Assoc. Cat., 1859; repros. in Jackson, *Gold Rush Album*, pp. 27, 30, 44, 57–59, 186–87, and in Davidson.

BRUFF, W. Silhouettist of Baltimore. ¶ Jackson, *Silhouette*, 87; Carrick, *Shades*, 121.

BRUHL, see DE BRUHL.

BRULS, see DE BRULS.

BRUM (or Bruon), CHARLES. Engraver; born in Pennsylvania *c.* 1815; living in Philadelphia in 1850. ¶ 7 Census (1850), Pa., LII, 580.

BRUMIDI, CONSTANTINO (1805–1880). Fresco, mural, and portrait painter; born in Rome, July 26, 1805; died in Washington (D.C.), February 19, 1880. Brumidi came to America in 1852 after a successful career in Italy, which had been interrupted by his participation in the revolutionary troubles of 1848–49. He spent a short time in Mexico City, but settled about 1855 in Washington, where for the next twenty-five years he was almost constantly employed in decorating the U. S. Capitol. ¶ DAB; Fairman, *Art and Artists of the Capitol;* Thieme-Becker; *Am. Art Review*, I (1880), 227, obit.

BRUNDAGE, EBENEZER F. Portrait painter, NYC, 1843–67. He was listed as portrait painter, painter, or artist from 1843 to 1847; as coffee [seller], 1848–54; with no occupation, 1854–56; thereafter as painter or artist. He exhibited a bust of Silas Wright at the American Institute in 1847. ¶ NYCD 1843–67; NYBD 1846; Am. Inst. Cat., 1847.

BRUNDIGE, WILLIAM. Artist from Connecticut, aged 24, at NYC in 1850. ¶ 7 Census (1850), N.Y., L, 706.

BRUNS, THOMAS. Engraver; born in New York State about 1830; active in NYC from 1851 to 1860. ¶ 8 Census (1860), N.Y., LVII, 911; NYBD 1851–58.

BRUNSWICK, HYMAN. Artist in wax, manufacturer of composition figures and artificial noses, NYC, 1844–68. Brunswick exhibited at the American Institute in 1844, 1845, 1848–1851. Probably the father of THOMAS M. BRUNSWICK. ¶ NYCD 1844–68; Am. Inst. Cats., 1844–45, 1848–51.

BRUNSWICK, THOMAS M. Artist in wax, exhibited a crucifixion and six wax dolls at the American Institute in 1849 and 1851. He was probably the son of HYMAN BRUNSWICK and his successor in 1869 in the manufacture of composition figures. ¶ Am. Inst. Cats., 1849, 1851; NYCD 1868–69.

BRUNTON, RICHARD (?–1832). Engraver. Brunton's earliest known engraving is a bust portrait of Washington, published in 1781. He is thought to have been a deserter from the British army during the Revolution. During the 1790's he worked in various towns of Connecticut, served several jail terms for counterfeiting, and worked as engraver on silver, bookplate engraver, designer of woodcuts for textile printing, etc. By 1815 he was a public charge in Groton, and he died in the Groton Poor House on September 8, 1832. ¶ Warren, "Richard Brunton"; Bates, *An Early Connecticut Engraver;* Terry, *Allen Hyde of Ellington;* repro. in Davidson.

BRUSH, CHARLOTTE T. Amateur artist, exhibited jointly with SOPHIA E. BRUSH at the American Institute in 1845. They were probably sisters of JOHN Y. BRUSH, with whom they lived in NYC. ¶ Am. Inst. Cat., 1845.

BRUSH, JOHN Y. Portrait painter; born in New York State about 1826; active in NYC from 1844 to 1857. He exhibited at the National Academy and the American Institute. He was probably a brother of CHARLOTTE, RODMAN, and SOPHIA BRUSH. ¶ 7 Census (1850), N.Y., XLV, 485; Am. Inst. Cat., 1844–45; NYCD 1846–47, 1851–57; NYBD 1854–57; Cowdrey, NAD.

BRUSH, RODMAN. Amateur painter, exhibited an oil painting at the American Institute in 1851. He was probably a brother of JOHN Y. BRUSH, portrait painter at the same NYC address. In 1857 he was listed as a dentist. ¶ Am. Inst. Cat., 1851; NYCD 1857.

BRUSH, SOPHIA E. Amateur painter, exhibited an oil painting and pencil drawing jointly with CHARLOTTE T. BRUSH at the American Institute in 1845. The address given was the same as that of JOHN Y. BRUSH, probably their brother. ¶ Am. Inst. Cat., 1845.

BRUSH, WILLIAM. Engraver, 36, a native of New York State, at NYC in 1860. He was married and had seven children, ages 1 month to 11 years, all born in New York State. ¶ 8 Census (1860), N.Y., LVI, 975.

BRUSHMAN, CHARLES. Lithographer; born in Pennsylvania *c.* 1825; living in Phil-

# *Constantino Brumidi:*
# Artist of the Capitol

Prepared under the Direction of

The Architect of the Capitol

by Barbara A. Wolanin, Curator

U.S. Government Printing Office
Washington: 1998

more complex, and he included contemporary portraits to represent historical figures.[6]

Archbishop Hughes also spoke at the dedication of the Roman Baroque-style Cathedral of SS. Peter and Paul in Philadelphia, the largest cathedral in North America at the time. Brumidi painted the *Crucifixion* in fresco see (fig. 1-19); above it was a lunette with God the Father and the dove of the Holy Spirit, and on either side were illusionistic statues of saints. These frescoes were in place by August 1863, as were the *Assumption of the Virgin* in the dome and the tondos of the four evangelists in the pendentives, which Brumidi had painted in oil on canvas in Washington; by this time Brumidi had been paid $2,000.[7] By the time the cathedral was dedicated in 1864, he had added two large frescoes showing the Adoration of the Shepherds and the Adoration of the Magi, flanked by illusionistic statues in niches of the twelve apostles. A contemporary writer admiringly described the effect Brumidi had achieved: "They seem like niches, but they are not; and in each seems to stand a statue, but it does not. The observer is almost sure that before him stands a niche, enclosing a statue. The perspective is wonderful."[8] Although in 1863 the ability of Brumidi's frescoes to last 500 years had been touted, unfortunately, little remains visible of Brumidi's work. The central frescoes were destroyed when the apse was enlarged in 1956-1957, and the nativity scenes have been covered over and repainted several times.[9]

Brumidi's work at the Church of St. Stephen on 28th Street in New York City, like the that in Capitol Rotunda, was a crowning achievement of his late years. He was selected by Archbishop John Hughes for work at St. Stephen's before he left Rome, as he mentioned in his trial testimony in 1851.[10] Designed by James Renwick in 1850 in a modified Romanesque/Gothic style, the church was dedicated in 1854. By 1855, Brumidi showed the color sketch for the *Martyrdom of St. Stephen* to Meigs, who commented: "This cartoon is about ½ size of life and is a striking and vigorous work."[11] The fifteen-foot high *Martyrdom*, showing the saint surrounded by contorted men stoning him, completed in 1856, served for many years as the central altarpiece for the church, now renamed Our Lady of the Scapular and St. Stephen. Brumidi may have painted the murals at the entrance of the church in this period; they include figures of King David and Saint Cecilia and a Madonna and Child with John the Baptist in illusionistic niches. After the church was enlarged, between 1861 and 1865, the *Martyrdom* was moved to one side, and Brumidi painted the monumental 70-foot-high *Crucifixion* on the altar wall; he signed and dated the work "C. Brumidi 1868" (fig. 11-3).[12] Brumidi is known to have been in New York in 1870, and he wrote that he was working at St. Stephen's in 1871.[13] Brumidi probably designed the church's interior decorative program, filled with illusionistic patterns and moldings. He balanced the *Martyrdom* with an oil-on-canvas *Assumption of the Virgin*. He filled the apse walls and transept balconies with illusionistic statues of saints in niches, tondos and lunettes, and trompe l'oeil architectural elements (see Appendix C). The illusionistic scalloped rounded niches echo the frames of the paintings and the tracery of the stained glass windows. Attention is now being turned to restoring the badly damaged murals and the decorative whole.[14]

Brumidi's last known religious commissions are the *Crucifixion* he painted for the Academy of Mount Saint Vincent in Riverdale, New York, in 1873 and *The Apparition of Our Lord to St. Margaret Mary* for the Visitation Convent in Washington, D.C., in 1878. Thus it is clear that his career as a painter for churches was concurrent with that as the artist of the Capitol.

## Completing the Senate Designs

Over the years, because he was working primarily on the Senate side of the Capitol, Brumidi earned the friendship and respect of many senators and Senate officials. Representative and then Senator Justin Morrill, first elected in 1855 and later chairman of the Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds, was a personal friend. Brumidi painted Morrill's portrait and also executed four oval portraits of famous authors for the drawing room ceiling of Morrill's house on Thomas Circle (see fig. 11-1); fortunately, they were saved when the house, built by Edward Clark, was demolished. The senator obtained books for the artist and visited him when he was hospitalized on Thanksgiving Day in 1874.[15] Senator Arthur P. Gorman owned one of Brumidi's sketches for the Senate Reception Room. Brumidi's friendship with Moses Titcomb, who was the superintendent of the Senate Document Room from 1844 to 1877, is shown by the portraits he painted of Titcomb and his father and his gift of his own copy of Guido Reni's *Aurora* (see fig. 1-11). Titcomb also owned Brumidi's copy of Rembrandt Peale's *George Washington*, which is possibly the study made for the President's Room (S-216). In return, Titcomb lent him money and expressed concern for Brumidi's poor health.[16] Brumidi gave Amzi Smith of the Senate Document Room his oil sketch of the *Crucifixion* for St. Stephen's Church, and he used Smith's hand as the model for Thomas Jefferson's in the Senate Reception Room.[17] Isaac Basset, a doorkeeper of the Senate, wrote: "I was very fond of the old gentleman and he of *Me* — often I went into the *rooms* when he was at work and Spent many a pleasen [*sic*] Moment in Seeing him Frescoe. . . ."[18]

*District of Columbia*

**St. Aloysius Catholic Church**

Altarpiece: *St. Charles Borromeo Giving Holy Communion to St. Aloysius Gonzaga,* 1859 (Fig. 5–5)
Oil on canvas, 181 x 109 in.

Tondos on west wall, apparently replaced with copies:
*St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi at the Death of St. Aloysius*
*Young St. Aloysius Taking the Vow of Virginity Before the Blessed Mother and Child*

East wall over doorway: *Madonna*
Oil on canvas, oval

Preliminary Sketch:
*Aloysius Gonzaga Receiving Holy Communion from St. Charles Borromeo,* c. 1858
Oil on canvas
Private collection

**Visitation Convent Chapel**

see: *The Apparition of Our Lord to St. Margaret Mary,* below

*Mexico City, Mexico*

**Cathedral of La Asuncion de Maria**

see: *La Santísima Trinidad (The Holy Trinity)* below

*New York, New York*

**Our Lady of the Scapular and St. Stephen**
(formerly St. Stephen's Catholic Church)

*Crucifixion,* (Fig. 11–3)
Oil on plaster
Signed and dated: "C Brumidi 1868"

Apse: Illusionistic sculpture in niches *S Petrus, S Paulus, S Gabriel, S Michael*

Tondos with figures, lunettes with illustionistic arches
Side altar: *The Martyrdom of St. Stephen,* 1856
Oil on canvas mounted on board
Signed and dated: "C. Brumidi 1856"

Side altar: *Assumption of the Virgin*
Oil on canvas
Signed and dated: "C. Brumidi 1868"

Side chapel: *Sacred Heart*
Oil on canvas

Transept balconies: *Ascension* (not in Brumidi's style), *Christ in the Temple* (overpainted)
Niches with female saints: S. *Agnes, S. Monica, S. Brigita, S.Teresea, S. Rosa Limaus*
Niches with male saints: *S. Vincenzio a Paulo, S. Franciscus Salesius, S. Francescus Assissus, S. Patritus, S. Augustinus*

South entrance wall: *S. Cecilia, David, Madonna and Child with John the Baptist*

Attributed to Burmidi: Fourteen stations of the cross
Oil on canvas

*Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*

**Cathedral Basilica of SS. Peter and Paul**

East wall, behind main altar (destroyed 1956–1957)
*Crucifixion,* 1863 (Fig. 1–19)
*God the Father and Dove of the Holy Spirit,* 1863
Fresco

Cathedral Basilica of SS. Peter and Paul–Continued

Dome: *Assumption of the Virgin*
Oil on canvas

Pendentives: *Four Evangelists*
Oil on canvas

North transept: *The Nativity (Adoration of the Shepherds)*, 1864
Fresco, 16 x 25 ft.; covered by oil-on-canvas copy by Louis Costaggini, 1909, and again repainted

South transept: *Adoration of Magi*, 1864
Fresco, 16 x 25 ft.; covered by oil-on-canvas copy by Louis Costaggini, 1909, and again repainted

Transept walls (destroyed 1956–1957)
*The Twelve Apostles*, 1864
Fresco?

*Riverdale, New York*

**College of Mount Saint Vincent**
*Crucifixion*, 1873
Oil on canvas
Signed and dated: "C. Brumidi 1873"

*Rome, Italy*

**Palazzo Torlonia,** Piazza Venezia (demolished 1900–1901)
Torlonia family chapel, 1840–1842 (Fig. 2–7)
*Holy Trinity with Alexander Torlonia and Saints*
Apostles and Old Testament prophets
Fresco

**Sanctuary of the Madonna dell'Archetto**
Dome: *Immaculate Conception* (Fig. 2–1)
Fresco

Pendentives: *Wisdom, Prudence, Strength, Innocence* (Fig. 2–13)
Fresco

Paintings

*Adoration of the Magi*
Oil on canvas, 25 ½ x 15 in.
Estate sale, no. 581

*The Apparition of Our Lord to St. Margaret Mary*, 1878
Painted for Visitation Convent Chapel, Washington, D.C.
Moved to Holy Trinity Church, Washington, D.C. in 1919
Removed from the wall
Oil on canvas, 10 x 6 ft. (originally 17 ft. in height)
Collection of Drs. Harry and John Fournier

*La Asunción de la Virgen (The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary)*
Oil on canvas, 100 x 72 in.
Exhibited in Mexico City, 7th Annual Exposition of the Academia Nacional de S. Carlos de Mexico, January, 1855, #73

*Crucifixion*, c. 1854
Oil on canvas, 23 x 25 in.
Formerly collection of Mildred Thompson