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CHAPTER VI

WAR AND REORGANIZATION

1941-1963

March 1, 1941

The Truman Committee

No senator ever gained greater political benefits from chairing a special investigating committee than did Missouri's Harry S. Truman.

In 1940, as World War II tightened its grip on Europe, Congress prepared for eventual U.S. involvement by appropriating $10 billion in defense contracts. Early in 1941, stories of widespread contractor mismanagement reached Senator Truman. In typical fashion, he decided to go take a look. During his 10,000-mile tour of military bases, he discovered that contractors were being paid a fixed profit no matter how inefficient their operations proved to be. He also found that a handful of corporations headquartered in the East were receiving a disproportionately greater share of the contracts.



Senator Harry Truman of Missouri (1935-1945), fourth from left, *with members of the Senate Committee to Investigate the National Defense Program, at the Ford Motor Company in 1942.*

Convinced that waste and corruption were strangling the nation's efforts to mobilize itself for the war in Europe, Truman conceived the idea for a special Senate Committee to Investigate the National Defense Program. Senior military officials opposed the idea, recalling the Civil War-era problems that the congressional Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War created for President Lincoln. Robert E. Lee had once joked that he considered the joint committee's harassment of Union commanders to be worth at least two Confederate divisions. Truman had no intention of allowing that earlier committee to serve as his model.

Congressional leaders advised President Franklin Roosevelt that it would be better for such an inquiry to be in Truman's sympathetic hands than to let it fall to those who might use it as a way of attacking his administration. They also assured the president that the "Truman Committee" would not be able to cause much trouble with a budget of only $15,000 to investigate billions in defense spending.

By unanimous consent on March 1, 1941, the Senate created what proved to be one of the most productive investigating committees in its entire history.

During the three years of Truman's chairmanship, the committee held hundreds of hearings, traveled thousands of miles to conduct field inspections, and saved millions of dollars in cost overruns. Earning nearly universal respect for his thoroughness and determination, Truman erased his earlier public image as an errand-runner for Kansas City politicos. Along the way, he developed working experience with business, labor, agriculture, and executive branch agencies that would serve him well in later years. In 1944, when Democratic Party leaders sought a replacement for controversial Vice President Henry Wallace, they settled on Truman, thereby setting his course directly to the White House.

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December 26, 1941

Churchill Addresses Congress

Outside the U.S. Capitol Building, platoons of soldiers and police stood at high alert. Shortly after noon, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill entered the Senate Chamber to address a joint meeting of Congress. He took his place at a lectern bristling with microphones. Above his head, large, powerful lamps gave the normally dim room the brilliance of a Hollywood movie set. Motion picture cameras began to roll.

The 1941 Christmas holiday had thinned the ranks of senators and representatives still in town, and had dictated moving the joint meeting from the House to the smaller Senate Chamber to avoid the embarrassment of empty seats. Yet, all 96 desks were filled with members, justices of the Supreme Court, and cabinet officers—minus the secretaries of state and war. The overflow gallery audience consisted largely of members' wives, certain that they would never again witness such an event.

Less than three weeks after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, and as that nation's submarines appeared off the coast of California, Churchill had arrived in Washington to begin coordinating military strategy with the president and leaders of Congress.

The eloquent prime minister began his address on a light note. He observed, "If my father had been an American, and my mother British, instead of the other way around, I might have gotten here [as a member] on my own. In that case, this would not have been the first time you would have heard my voice." He then grimly predicted that Allied forces would require at least 18 months to turn the tide of war and warned that "many disappointments and unpleasant surprises await us."

Regarding the Japanese aggressors, he asked, "What kind of a people do they think we are? Is it possible that they do not realize that we shall never cease to persevere against them until they have been taught a lesson which they and the world will never forget?" As for the German forces, "With proper weapons and proper organization, we can beat the life out of the savage Nazi." These "wicked men" who have brought evil forces into play must "know they will be called to terrible account if they cannot beat down by force of arms the peoples they have assailed."



Winston Churchill addressing the U.S. Congress in the Senate Chamber on December 26, 1941.

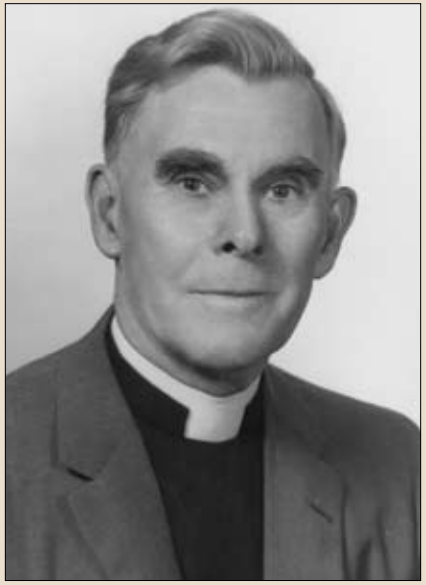
When Churchill concluded his 30-minute address, he flashed a "V" for victory sign and departed to thunderous applause. One journalist described this historic address as "full of bubbling humor, biting denunciation of totalitarian enemies, stern courage—and hard facts."

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October 10, 1942

Senate Elects Rev. Frederick Harris Chaplain



Frederick B. Harris, Senate Chaplain (1942-1947, 1949-1969).

When the Senate of 1789 convened in New York City, members chose as their first chaplain the Episcopal bishop of New York. When the body moved to Philadelphia in 1790, it awarded spiritual duties to the Episcopal bishop of Pennsylvania. And when it reached Washington in 1800, divine guidance was entrusted to the Episcopal bishop of Maryland.

During its first 20 years, the Senate demonstrated a decided preference for Episcopalians. Among the initial 12 chaplains were one Presbyterian, one Baptist, and 10 Episcopalians.

Through the 19th century, Senate chaplains rarely held office for more than several years, as prominent clergymen actively contended for even a brief appointment to this prestigious office. With the 20th century, however, came year-round sessions and the need for greater continuity. The office became less vulnerable to changes in party control. Appointed by a Republican Senate in 1927, Reverend Z. T. Phillips—the Senate's 19th Episcopalian—continued after Democrats gained control in 1933, serving a record 14 years until his death in May 1942.

On October 10, 1942, the Senate elected its 56th chaplain, the Reverend Frederick Brown Harris. The highly regarded pastor of Washington's Foundry Methodist Church, Harris failed to survive the 1947 change in party control that led to the election of the Reverend Peter Marshall. When Marshall died two years later, however, the Senate invited Reverend Harris to resume his Senate ministry. With his retirement in 1969, Harris set the as-yet-unchallenged service record of 24 years.

More than any of his predecessors, Frederick Brown Harris shaped the modern Senate chaplaincy. Members appreciated the poetic quality of his prayers. In November 1963, when word of President John F. Kennedy's assassination reached him, Harris went immediately to the Senate Chamber. He later recalled, "The place was in an uproar. Senate leaders Mike Mansfield and Everett Dirksen asked me to offer a prayer. I called upon the senators to rise for a minute of silence, partly because of the gravity of the tragedy, but partly to give me a minute more time to think of something to say."

Borrowing from the poet Edwin Markham, he said, "This sudden, almost unbelievable, news has stunned our minds and hearts as we gaze at a vacant place against the sky, as the President of the Republic, like a giant cedar green with boughs, goes down with a great shout upon the hills, and leaves a lonesome place against the sky."

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November 14, 1942

Arrests Compel a Senate Quorum

In November 1942, a full-scale civil rights filibuster threatened to keep the Senate in session until Christmas. For five days, southern senators conducted a leisurely examination of legislation to outlaw the poll taxes that their states used to disenfranchise low-income voters, including many African Americans.

The 1942 filibuster took place just days after mid-term congressional elections had cost Senate Democrats nine seats. Frustrated, Democratic Majority Leader Alben Barkley decided the time had come to cut off the debate. During a Saturday session on November 14, Barkley obtained an order directing Sergeant at Arms Chesley Jurney to round up the five absent southern members needed to provide a quorum.

Jurney sent Deputy Sergeant at Arms Mark Trice to the Mayflower Hotel apartment of Tennessee Senator Kenneth McKellar, the Senate's third most senior member. In his book on Tennessee senators, Senator Bill Frist describes McKellar as an "extraordinarily shrewd man of husky dimensions with a long memory and a short fuse." When Trice called from the lobby, McKellar refused to answer his phone. The deputy then walked up to the apartment and convinced the senator's maid to let him in.

When Trice explained that McKellar was urgently needed back at the Capitol, the 73-year-old legislator agreed to accompany him. As they approached the Senate wing, McKellar suddenly realized what was up. An aide later recalled, "His face grew redder and redder. By the time the car reached the Senate entrance, McKellar shot out and barreled through the corridors to find the source of his summons."

Barkley got his quorum, but McKellar got even. He later convinced President Franklin Roosevelt not to even consider Barkley's desire for a seat on the Supreme Court. Such a nomination, he promised, would never receive Senate approval.

When Senate Democrats convened the following January to elect officers, a party elder routinely nominated Sergeant at Arms Jurney for another term. McKellar countered with the nomination of a recently defeated Mississippi senator. An ally of McKellar strengthened the odds against Jurney's reelection by suggesting that he had been involved in financial irregularities. As the Democratic caucus opened an investigation, Jurney withdrew his candidacy.

While no documentation of "financial irregularities" survives, Jurney had the misfortune of being caught between a frustrated majority leader and an unforgiving filibuster leader. The poll tax issue continued to spark episodes of protracted debate until finally put to rest in 1964 by the 24th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.



Mark Trice, deputy sergeant at arms (1932-1946), secretary of the Senate (1953-1955).

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July 25, 1943

Combat Tour for Senators

On July 25, 1943, shortly after Allied forces invaded Sicily and bombed Rome, five United States senators set out on a unique and controversial mission. They boarded a converted bomber at National Airport to begin a 65-day tour of U.S. military installations around the world. Each senator wore a dog tag and carried one knife, one steel helmet, extra cigarettes, emergency food rations, manuals on jungle survival, and two military uniforms. The senators were to wear the military uniforms while flying over enemy territory and visiting U.S. field operations in the fragile hope that, if captured, they would be treated humanely as prisoners of war.



Senate Military Affairs Committee members inspect the operating room of Helgafel Hospital in Iceland, July 30, 1943.

The idea for this inspection trip originated among members of the Senate Committee on Military Affairs and the Senate Special Committee to Investigate the National Defense Program. The latter panel, chaired by Senator Harry Truman, had spent two years examining waste and corruption at military construction facilities around the United States. Both committees wished to expand their investigations to onsite overseas visits. Majority Leader Alben Barkley at first opposed the idea of senators taking up the time of military commanders. With the encouragement of Senator Truman and President Franklin Roosevelt, however, he reluctantly agreed to create a small committee, chaired by Georgia Democrat Richard Russell, composed of two members from the Truman Committee and two from Military Affairs.

The committee's main task was to observe the quality and effectiveness of war materiel under combat conditions. As laudable as this mission seemed, departing members received a good deal of criticism both from colleagues and constituents. At a time of stringent gasoline rationing, a constituent wrote Russell that it would be wiser to allocate his aircraft's fuel to the needs of "your Georgia people."

The senators' first stop was England, where they bunked with the Eighth Air Force, dined with the king and queen, and interviewed Winston Churchill. They moved on to North Africa, the Persian Gulf, India, China, and Australia, before returning home on September 18.

Russell had planned to brief the Senate at a secret session set for October 7. Before that briefing, however, committee member Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr., upstaged the chairman by giving his own account in public session. Although this, and leaks by other members, infuriated Russell, his committee's report framed the key issues of postwar reconstruction and set a firm precedent for future overseas travel by inquiring senators.

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October 19, 1943

A Woman Presides over the Senate

It occurred without ceremony. On October 19, 1943, for the first time, a woman formally took up the gavel as the Senate's acting president pro tempore. In the absence of the vice president and the president pro tempore, the secretary of the Senate read a letter assigning the duties of the chair to Arkansas Democrat Hattie Caraway.

By 1943, Senator Caraway had become accustomed to breaking the Senate's gender barriers. Twelve years earlier, on January 12, 1932, she became the first woman elected to the Senate. In 1933, she became the first woman to chair a Senate committee.

Hattie Caraway entered the Senate in November 1931, by gubernatorial appointment, following the death of her husband, Senator Thaddeus Caraway. She then ran successfully for election to the remaining months of her husband's term, assuring state party leaders that she had no interest in running for the subsequent full term.

Senator Caraway rarely spoke on the Senate floor and soon became known as "Silent Hattie." Tourists in the Senate galleries always noticed the woman senator in the dark Victorian-style dress, sitting quietly at her desk knitting or completing crossword puzzles. When asked why she avoided speeches, she quipped, "The men have left nothing unsaid."

In May 1932, she changed her mind and declared her candidacy for a full term. Several of her five male competitors joked that she would be lucky to attract 1 percent of the vote. What they failed to consider was the budding interest of her Senate seatmate, Louisiana's Huey Long. Long detested Caraway's Arkansas colleague, Senate Democratic Leader Joseph T. Robinson, and deeply appreciated her inclination to vote with him rather than with Robinson.

Senator Long expressed his gratitude by joining Caraway for an extraordinary one-week, 2,000-mile, 40-speech campaign tour through 37 Arkansas communities. Their seven-vehicle caravan included two sound trucks allowing him to proclaim, "We're here to pull a lot of pot-bellied politicians off a little woman's neck." Caraway won the election with double the vote of her nearest rival. Her diligent Senate service and effective advocacy of New Deal legislative initiatives won her another term in 1938. That path-breaking career concluded in 1945, following a primary defeat by Representative J. William Fulbright. On her final day in office, the Senate tendered Hattie Caraway the high honor of a standing ovation.



Hattie Caraway, senator from Arkansas (1931-1945).

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February 24, 1944

Senate Majority Leader Resigns

Never before had a Senate majority leader resigned his office in disgust at the actions of a president of his own party. In his first seven years as Democratic majority leader, Kentucky's Alben Barkley had earned a reputation among his colleagues for his loyalty to President Franklin Roosevelt. It was Roosevelt, after all, who had twisted enough Democratic senatorial arms in 1937 to ensure Barkley's election to that post—by a margin of just one vote.



Senator Alben Barkley of Kentucky (1927-1949, 1955-1956), right, *welcomes President Franklin D. Roosevelt upon his return from Tehran on December 17, 1943. Barkley served as Democratic leader of the Senate from 1937 to 1949.*

In January 1944, Roosevelt sent to Congress draft legislation for a $10 billion increase in taxes to help pay the cost of American involvement in World War II. When the bill emerged from the Senate Finance Committee, however, it included only 20 percent of what the president had requested. Concluding that the scaled-back authorization was about all that the Senate was likely to pass, Majority Leader Barkley met twice with the president to plead that he approve the measure. Ignoring his party's Senate leader, Roosevelt vetoed the bill, blasting its inadequate funding and its language, "which not even a dictionary or thesaurus can make clear."

In a "cold fury," Barkley announced that he planned to make a speech "without regard for the political consequences." In that speech, delivered the following day before a packed chamber with most senators at their desks, he denounced the president for his "deliberate and unjustified misstatements," which placed on Congress "the blame for universal dissatisfaction with tax complexities." Barkley branded the president's statement that the bill provided "relief not for the needy, but for the greedy" a "calculated and deliberate assault upon the legislative integrity of every Member of Congress."

On the following morning, Barkley convened the Democratic caucus in its Russell Building meeting room. Tears streaming down his face, he resigned as party leader and left the conference. Moments later, Texas Senator Tom Connally burst from the room, booming, "Make way for liberty! Make way for liberty!" With that, he led a jovial delegation of senators down the hall to Barkley's office to inform him of his unanimous reelection. As one Democratic senator commented, "Previously, he spoke to us for the president; now he speaks for us to the president."

Two days later, the Senate joined the House in overriding the president's veto. When the Democratic Convention met that summer, Barkley's break with the president probably cost him the vice-presidential nomination and, with Roosevelt's death the following spring, the presidency.

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September 2, 1944

Death of a "Gentle Knight"

In 1955, the Senate established a special committee to select five outstanding former senators who were no longer living for the special honor of having their portraits permanently displayed in the Capitol's Senate Reception Room. The committee chairman, Senator John F. Kennedy, asked 160 nationally prominent scholars with special knowledge of Senate operations and American political history to nominate five candidates. When committee staff tallied the experts' recommendations, the senator at the top of their list was Nebraska progressive Republican George Norris—best remembered as the father of the Tennessee Valley Authority and author of the Constitution's 20th Amendment, which changed the starting date of congressional and presidential terms from March to January.

Born in 1861, Norris grew up in Ohio and Indiana, but moved to Nebraska in his early 20s to establish a law practice. In 1902, he won a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives and quickly gained a reputation for his independence. He instigated a revolt in 1910 of insurgent Republicans and Democrats against the powerful House Speaker Joseph Cannon. These reformers won a vote to deny the Speaker membership on the House Rules Committee and thereby democratized the process of committee appointments.

Norris began his 30-year Senate career in 1913. Although he supported many of Woodrow Wilson's progressive domestic policies, he was a vocal opponent of that president's foreign policies before and after the First World War, and joined other "irreconcilables" in opposing the Treaty of Versailles. During the Republican administrations of the 1920s, Norris pressed for a progressive agenda that included farm relief, improved labor conditions, conservation of natural resources, and rural electrification. He persistently advocated a federal program to build dams on the Tennessee River in order to provide affordable electricity and economic planning along the river valley, a goal that he finally achieved in 1933. During the Great Depression, Norris worked closely with President Franklin D. Roosevelt, who referred to him as "the very perfect gentle knight of American progressive ideals." Defeated for a sixth term in 1942, he retired to Nebraska, where he died on September 2, 1944.



George Norris, senator from Nebraska (1913-1943).

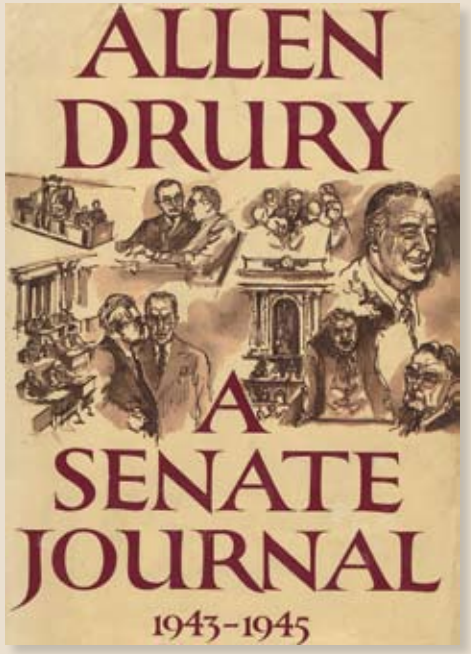
Today, no portrait of George Norris adorns the Senate Reception Room. Despite Chairman Kennedy's active support, a rule of his committee that required the choices to be unanimous and the persistence of Norris's political adversaries still in the Senate blocked his selection. While denied this singular honor, Norris subsequently gained another commendable distinction in becoming one of the few senators in history to be the subject of scholarly biography that filled *three* volumes.

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May 28, 1945

A Senate Journal, 1943-1945



In 1963, United Press correspondent Allen Drury published the diary he had kept from 1943 to 1945.

One of the best books ever written about the Senate took the form of a diary. Published in 1963, its title is *A Senate Journal, 1943-1945.* Here is what its author, United Press correspondent Allen Drury, had to say about a May 28, 1945, session in which the Senate rejected, for its own members, a politically explosive $2,500 congressional expense allowance. "The Senate decided today that Representatives are worth $2,500 more than Senators. It was an unhesitating decision, endorsed by an overwhelming vote. It . . . left the House out on a limb. Each house got something. The Senate got the glory and the House got the cash. It was quite a lively afternoon."

Assigned to cover the wartime Senate in December 1943, Drury immediately began to keep a diary. He hoped its eventual publication would enlighten Americans about the Senate. "There is," he concluded, "a vast area of casual ignorance concerning this lively and appealing body." Drury later used his diary notes to compose his 1960 Pulitzer-Prize-winning novel *Advise and Consent.*

As a journalist, Drury had the good fortune to arrive in the Senate at a time of obvious and dramatic change—from the crisis of World War II to the challenges of the postwar era. He met and observed a handful of the old-time senators, "delightful characters, one or two of them still in tail-coats and possessed of flowing hair, all filled with a lively awareness of their own egos, all imbued with a massive sense of the dignity and power of being a Senator of the United States." As he later wrote to the Senate Historical Office, "I've always regretted I abandoned 'Senate Journal' after a year. I could have gone on cannibalizing myself for years to come, had I but had the foresight."

A Senate Journal is packed with brilliant character sketches. Here is Drury's April 1944 evaluation of Vice President Henry Wallace. "Wallace is a man foredoomed by fate. No matter what he does, it is always going to seem faintly ridiculous, and no matter how he acts, it is always going to seem faintly pathetic. He looks like a hayseed, talks like a prophet."

Allen Drury set high standards for future Senate diarists.

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September 18, 1945

Truman Nominates a Republican Senator to the Supreme Court

The prospect of a vacancy on the Supreme Court generally stirs speculation about which incumbent members of the Senate might be eligible candidates. Given the increasing contentiousness of the Senate review process for high court vacancies, some believe that selecting one of the Senate's own members might smooth the road to a speedy confirmation. This raises the question: "How often are senators nominated to be justices?"

In all of the Senate's history, only seven incumbent members have moved directly to the Supreme Court—the most recent being in 1945. Seven others were seated within a few years of leaving the Senate—the most recent being in 1949. The first incumbent was Connecticut's Oliver Ellsworth, who in 1796 became chief justice. As a senator, Ellsworth had shaped the 1789 Judiciary Act, which put in place the federal court system. The only former senator to enter the Court as chief justice was Salmon Chase of Ohio. Chase had left the Senate to serve as Abraham Lincoln's treasury secretary prior to his appointment in 1864.

In the summer of 1945, the retirement of Justice Owen Roberts presented a political challenge to Harry Truman, who had been president for only three months. The seven remaining associate justices had gained their seats as Democratic appointees of President Franklin Roosevelt. In a gesture designed to improve relations with Republican congressional leaders, the new Democratic president decided to appoint a Republican.

In making his decision, President Truman consulted with Chief Justice Harlan Stone, the court's only Republican, to see if Ohio Republican Senator Harold Burton would be acceptable. Truman and Burton had become friends when they served together on the Senate Special Committee to Investigate the National Defense Program. Chief Justice Stone welcomed the appointment on the theory that Burton's Senate experience would be useful in helping the Court determine legislative intent as it reviewed statutes.

Truman's decision was not entirely altruistic. In sending a Republican to the Court, the president knew that the Democratic governor of Ohio was prepared to replace Burton in the Senate with a Democrat.



President Harry S. Truman, left, *congratulates new Associate Justice of the Supreme Court, former Senator Harold Burton of Ohio.*

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July 18, 1947

Congress Revises Presidential Succession Act

On July 18, 1947, President Harry Truman signed the Presidential Succession Act. The original act of 1792 had placed the Senate president pro tempore and Speaker of the House in the line of succession, but in 1886 Congress had removed them. The 1947 law reinserted those officials, but placed the Speaker ahead of the president pro tempore.



President pro tempore Kenneth McKellar of Tennessee (1917-1953), left, *receives the Senate gavel from then Vice President Harry Truman.*

Throughout most of the 19th century, the Senate assumed it was empowered to elect a president pro tempore only during the absence of a vice president. But what should senators do at the end of a session? Since Congress was customarily out of session for half of each year, what would happen in that era of high mortality rates if both the president and vice president died during the adjournment period and there was no designated president pro tempore? For decades, the Senate relied upon an elaborate charade in which the vice president would voluntarily leave the chamber before the end of a session to enable the Senate to elect a president pro tempore. Fearing that the presidency might thus accidentally slip into the hands of the opposition, vice presidents occasionally refused to perform this little courtesy when the opposing party held the Senate majority.

In 1886 Congress replaced the two congressional officials in the line of succession with cabinet officers, in the order of their agencies' creation. Proponents of this change argued that the Senate elected its presidents pro tempore based on parliamentary rather than executive skills. No president pro tempore had ever served as president, while six former secretaries of state had been elected to that office.

When the 1945 death of Franklin Roosevelt propelled Vice President Truman into the presidency, Truman urged placing the Speaker, as an elected representative of his district, as well as the chosen leader of the "elected representatives of the people," next in line to the vice president. Since one could make the same argument for the president pro tempore, Truman's decision may have reflected his strained relations with 78-year-old President pro tempore Kenneth McKellar and his warm friendship with 65-year-old House Speaker Sam Rayburn. After all, it was in Rayburn's hideaway office, where he had gone for a late afternoon glass of bourbon, that Truman first learned of his own elevation to the presidency.

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August 21, 1947

Member's Death Ends a Senate Predicament

In late July 1947, the Senate adjourned for the year without resolving a serious complaint against one of its members. Seven months earlier, facing charges of personal corruption and civil rights violations, Mississippi Democrat Theodore Bilbo presented his credentials for a new Senate term. Idaho Democrat Glen Taylor immediately demanded that the Senate delay Bilbo's swearing in until it could review the recently received findings of two special investigating committees. Angry at Taylor's action, several of Bilbo's southern colleagues launched a filibuster, which threatened to block the Senate's efforts to organize for the new Congress. They argued that the Mississippi senator should be allowed to take his seat while the Senate looked into the matter. A day later, on January 4, Senate Democratic Leader Alben Barkley temporarily broke the impasse by announcing that Bilbo was returning to Mississippi for cancer surgery and would not insist on being sworn in until he had recovered and returned to Washington.

Theodore Bilbo had been a highly controversial figure in Mississippi politics for 40 years. After two terms as governor, he entered the Senate in 1935. During the early 1940s, a growing national focus on civil rights issues spurred Bilbo to amplify his long-held views on white supremacy. As large numbers of black voters returned home to Mississippi at the conclusion of their World War II military service, Bilbo's racist utterances dominated his 1946 reelection campaign and drew national media attention.

Following his victory in the July Democratic primary, which guaranteed reelection in November, the Senate received a petition from a group of that state's African American residents protesting the senator's campaign tactics. The petition charged that Bilbo's "inflammatory appeals" to the white population had stirred up racial tensions, provoked violence, and kept many black citizens away from polling places.

Late in 1946, two special Senate committees investigated Bilbo's conduct. One looked into his campaign activities. A slim majority of that panel concluded that although he ran a crude and tasteless campaign, he should be seated. A second committee uncovered evidence that he had converted thousands of dollars of campaign contributions to his personal use. Both reports lay before the Senate as it convened in January 1947.

Following a series of unsuccessful medical procedures throughout early 1947, Theodore Bilbo died on August 21. Although his death ended the Senate's predicament over his seating, it marked only the beginning of an extended postwar struggle to protect the voting rights of all Americans.



Theodore Bilbo, senator from Mississippi (1935-1947).

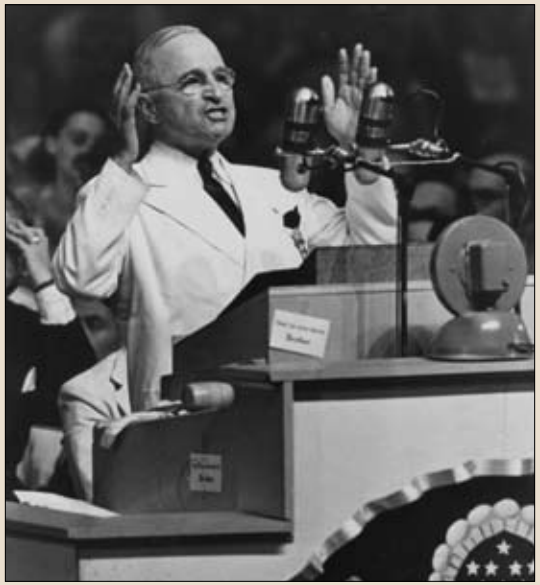
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July 15, 1948

Truman Calls for "Turnip Day" Session

President Harry Truman was desperate. With fewer than four months remaining before election day, his public approval rating stood at only 36 percent. Two years earlier, Congress had come under Republican control for the first time in a quarter century. His opponent, New York Governor Thomas Dewey, seemed already to be planning his own move to the White House. In search of a bold political gesture, the president turned to the provision in the Constitution that allows the president "on extraordinary occasions" to convene one or both houses of Congress.



President Harry S. Truman delivering his acceptance speech following his nomination for the presidency at the Democratic National Convention on July 15, 1948.

On 27occasions, presidents have called both houses into "extraordinary session" to deal with urgent matters of war and economic crisis. The most recent of these extraordinary sessions convened in July 1948.

On July 15, several weeks after the Republican-controlled Congress had adjourned for the year, leaving much business unfinished, Truman took the unprecedented step of using his presidential nomination acceptance speech to call both houses back into session. He delivered that speech under particularly trying circumstances. Without air conditioning, delegates sweltered in the Philadelphia convention hall's oven-like atmosphere. By the time the president finally stepped before the cameras in this first televised Democratic national convention, organizers had lost all hope of controlling the schedule.

At 1:45 a.m., speaking only from an outline, Truman electrified the soggy delegates. In announcing the special session, he challenged the Republican majority to live up to the pledges of their own recently concluded convention to pass laws to ensure civil rights, extend Social Security coverage, and establish a national health-care program. "They can do this job in 15 days, if they want to do it," he challenged. That two-week session would begin on "what we in Missouri call 'Turnip Day'," taken from the old Missouri saying, "On the twenty-fifth of July, sow your turnips, wet or dry."

Republican senators reacted scornfully. To Michigan's Arthur Vandenberg, it sounded like "a last hysterical gasp of an expiring administration." Yet, Vandenberg and other senior Senate Republicans urged action on a few measures to solidify certain vital voting blocs. "No!" exclaimed Republican Policy Committee chairman Robert Taft of Ohio. "We're not going to give that fellow anything." Charging Truman with abuse of a presidential prerogative, Taft blocked all legislative action during the futile session. By doing this, Taft amplified Truman's case against the "Do-nothing Eightieth Congress" and contributed to his astounding November come-from-behind victory.

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September 13, 1948

First Woman Elected to Both Houses

Is the Senate any place for a woman? This question dominated the 1948 U.S. Senate Republican primary in the state of Maine. Contesting for the seat of retiring Senate Majority Leader Wallace White were the current governor, a former governor, and four-term member of the U.S. House of Representatives Margaret Chase Smith.

Unlike her wealthy opponents, who enjoyed strong statewide political connections, Margaret Smith initially had neither adequate funding nor name recognition among the two-thirds of Maine's population living outside her congressional district. She also faced deeply ingrained prejudice against women serving in elective office. As the wife of one of her opponents put it, "Why [send] a woman to Washington when you can get a man?"

While a member of the House, Smith had built a record of left-leaning independence that irritated her party's more conservative leaders. Seemingly hopeless at its beginning, her primary campaign made a virtue of her independence and her pioneering efforts to provide equal status for women in the military during World War II. Eventually, she gained extensive national media coverage, attracting the admiring attention of prominent journalists, including widely read women writers such as May Craig and Doris Fleeson.

Sensitive to being considered a feminist, Smith said, "I want it distinctly understood that I am not soliciting support because I am a woman. I solicit your support wholly on the basis of my eight years in Congress."

In the June 1948 primary, Smith polled twice as many votes as all of her challengers combined. Her opponents' attacks against the capacity of women to hold public office, in a state where two-thirds of the registered voters were women, proved unwise.

In the general election, held in mid-September, she overwhelmed her Democratic opponent—a dermatologist who argued that since it was a sick world, the nation needed doctors in government.

In winning the September 13, 1948, election, Margaret Chase Smith launched a successful 24-year Senate career, becoming the first woman to serve in both houses of Congress.



Margaret Chase Smith, senator from Maine (1949-1973).

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October 1, 1949

Supreme Court Nominee Refuses to Testify



Sherman Minton leaving the White House on October 5, 1949, after visiting President Truman to thank him for the Supreme Court nomination.

Sherman Minton. An unfamiliar name today, perhaps, but in the fall of 1949, it was on the lips of all 96 U.S. senators.

An Indiana Democrat, Minton had won election to the Senate in 1934, joining a 13-member all-Democratic freshman class. That class included Missouri's Harry Truman, who was assigned a desk next to Minton's in the Senate Chamber. Minton rose rapidly in his Senate party's ranks. In 1937, as assistant Senate majority whip, Minton vigorously defended President Franklin Roosevelt's ill-fated legislative plan to expand the membership of the Supreme Court, packing it with liberal justices to undercut that tribunal's conservative course. He also proposed a constitutional amendment requiring a vote of seven of the nine justices to declare a federal law unconstitutional. Two years later, Senate Democrats elected the gregarious Hoosier their assistant leader. Defeated in 1940 for a second Senate term, partly because his call for American entry into World War II did not play well in isolationist Indiana, Minton worked briefly as an assistant to President Roosevelt. The president subsequently appointed him to a federal appeals court. In September 1949, President Harry Truman named his former Senate seatmate to the Supreme Court.

When Judge Minton's nomination reached the Senate Judiciary Committee, several members recalled his earlier views on restructuring the high court. The committee decided to summon the nominee to explain his views. Minton refused. He contended that as a Senate leader in the 1930s, he had the right to advocate his party's views to the best of his ability. But, now, as a federal judge, he had moved from player to referee. The sympathetic committee then withdrew its request and the Senate quickly confirmed his appointment.

Two Senate customs, both in decline by the late 1940s, reinforced Minton's unwillingness to testify. The first was that when a senator received a presidential nomination, the Senate would immediately proceed to its consideration without referral to a committee. On Supreme Court nominations, the Senate had followed this practice, with one exception, until the late 1930s. The second custom, closely observed until 1925, held that Supreme Court nominees, regardless of their prior occupations, were not expected to testify before the Judiciary Committee.

During his seven years on the high court, Justice Minton occasionally visited the Senate floor to listen to debate. Today, he is remembered as the last member of Congress—incumbent or former—to receive a Supreme Court appointment.

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February 9, 1950

"Communists in Government Service"

"Today we are engaged in a final, all-out battle between communistic atheism and Christianity. The modern champions of communism have selected this as the time. And, ladies and gentlemen, the chips are down—they are truly down."

On February 9, 1950, the junior senator from Wisconsin thundered this warning in a Lincoln's birthday address to the Women's Republican Club of Wheeling, West Virginia.

Joseph R. McCarthy had come to the Senate three years earlier after unseating 22-year incumbent Robert La Follette, Jr., who had devoted more energies to passage of his landmark 1946 Legislative Reorganization Act than to that year's Republican senatorial primary.

The *Saturday Evening Post* heralded McCarthy's arrival with an article entitled "The Senate's Remarkable Upstart." For the next three years, McCarthy searched for an issue that would substantiate his remarkableness. As one of his many biographers has observed, McCarthy's initial years in the Senate were characterized by his impatient disregard of the body's rules, customs, and procedures. Another scholar noted the ease with which he rearranged the truth to serve his purposes. "Once he got going, logic and decorum gave way to threats, personal attacks, and multiple distortions."

In the Wheeling speech, among the most significant in American political history, McCarthy's recklessness finally merged with his search for a propelling issue. He explained that home-grown traitors were causing America to lose the cold war. "While I cannot take the time to name all the men in the State Department who have been named as members of the Communist Party and members of a spy ring, I have here in my hand a list of 205." Until his Senate censure four years later, Joseph R. McCarthy would be that body's most controversial member.



Joseph R. McCarthy, senator from Wisconsin (1947-1957).

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May 3, 1950

Kefauver Crime Committee Launched

In April 1950, the body of a Kansas City gambling kingpin was found in a Democratic club-house, slumped beneath a large portrait of President Harry S. Truman. His assassination intensified national concerns about the post World War II growth of powerful crime syndicates and the resulting gang warfare in the nation's larger cities.



Members of the Kefauver Committee. Left to right: *Senator Charles Tobey of New Hampshire (1939-1953), Senator Herbert O'Conor of Maryland (1947-1953), committee counsel Rudolph Halley, Senator Estes Kefauver of Tennessee (1949-1963), and Senator Alexander Wiley of Wisconsin (1939-1963).*

On May 3, 1950, the Senate established a five-member Special Committee to Investigate Organized Crime in Interstate Commerce. Sensitive to the desire of several standing committees to conduct the investigation, Senate party leaders selected the special committee's members from the committees on Interstate Commerce and the Judiciary, including each panel's senior Republican. As chairman, the Democratic majority designated an ambitious freshman—Tennessee Senator Estes Kefauver.

The committee visited 14 major cities in 15 months, just as increasing numbers of Americans were purchasing their first television sets. When the panel reached New Orleans in January 1951, a local television station requested permission to televise an hour of testimony, perhaps to compete with a radio station that was carrying the entire proceedings. As the committee moved on to Detroit, a television station in that city preempted the popular children's show, *Howdy Doody*, to broadcast senators grilling mobsters.

Like a theater company doing previews on the road, the committee headed for Broadway, where the independent television station of the *New York Daily News* provided live feed to the networks. When the notorious gambler Frank Costello refused to testify on camera, the committee ordered the TV not to show his face. The cameras instead focused on the witness' nervously agitated hands, unexpectedly making riveting viewing. As the Associated Press explained, "Something big, unbelievably big and emphatic, smashed into the homes of millions of Americans last week when television cameras, cold-eyed and relentless, were trained on the Kefauver Crime hearings."

The Committee received 250,000 pieces of mail from a viewing audience estimated at 30 million. Although the hearings boosted Chairman Kefauver's political prospects, they helped to end the 12-year Senate career of Democratic Majority Leader Scott Lucas. In a tight 1950 reelection race against former Illinois Representative Everett Dirksen, Lucas urged Kefauver to keep his investigation away from an emerging Chicago police scandal until after election day. Kefauver refused. Election-eve publication of stolen secret committee documents hurt the Democratic Party in Cook County, cost Lucas the election, and gave Dirksen national prominence as the man who defeated the Senate majority leader.

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June 1, 1950

A "Declaration of Conscience"

Senator Joseph R. McCarthy encountered Maine Senator Margaret Chase Smith in the Capitol subway. He asked her why she looked so serious. Smith responded that she was on her way to the Senate Chamber to make a speech, and that he would not like what she had to say. McCarthy followed her into the chamber and watched as she began her remarks—her "Declaration of Conscience"—in a soft and trembling voice. As the freshman Republican proceeded, the color drained from McCarthy's face.

"Mr. President," she said on June 1, 1950, "I would like to speak briefly and simply about a serious national condition. It is a national feeling of fear and frustration that could result in national suicide and the end of everything that we Americans hold dear." She continued, "The United States Senate has long enjoyed the worldwide respect as the greatest deliberative body in the world. But recently that deliberative character has too often been debased to the level of a forum of hate and character assassination sheltered by the shield of congressional immunity."

When Smith completed her 15-minute address, McCarthy silently left the chamber. He explained his silence to an associate, "I don't fight with women senators." In a characteristically scornful manner, he privately referred to Smith and the six other senators who had endorsed her "Declaration" as "Snow White and her Six Dwarfs."

Initially, Smith had shared McCarthy's concerns, but she grew angry at the ferocity of his attacks and his subsequent defamation of those whom she knew to be above suspicion. Without mentioning McCarthy by name, she decided to take a stand against her colleague and his tactics.

The speech triggered a public explosion of support and outrage. *Newsweek* ran her photo on its cover and touted her as a possible vice-presidential candidate. Within weeks, however, the nation's attention shifted to the invasion of South Korea that launched the United States into a hot war against Communist aggression. For the time being, her remarks were forgotten. Four years would pass before Smith gained the satisfaction of voting with the Senate to censure McCarthy, thereby ending his campaign of falsehood and intimidation.



This cartoon, published in 1953 and reflecting McCarthy's hunt for Communists in the State Department, depicts a dismayed Secretary of State John Foster Dulles finding McCarthy hiding in his desk drawer.

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September 22, 1950

The Senate Donates a Historic Desk

In the summer of 1938, a structural engineer climbed to the roof over the Senate Chamber. After completing a thorough examination of the 90-ton iron and glass-paneled ceiling, he concluded that its beams and supports, installed 80 years earlier, were obsolete, over-stressed, and a direct danger to those below. Discussion of his finding quickly expanded to the related problems of the chamber's inadequate ventilation, acoustics, and lighting. By the time additional studies were completed, however, World War II had engulfed Europe. Facing a wartime emergency and the need to divert inventories of steel to military use, Congress deferred reconstruction of both its legislative chambers and provided for temporary supports that some senators likened to "barn rafters."



The historic walnut presiding officer's desk designed by Capitol Architect Thomas U. Walter in 1858 now resides at the University of Kentucky in Lexington.

With the war over, both houses accepted consulting architects' design plans for a complete renovation of their chambers. These new plans abandoned the Victorian-style Senate Chamber of the late 1850s in favor of the current chamber's neoclassical theme.

The reconstruction took place in two phases. On July 1, 1949, the Senate vacated its chamber to allow for the ceiling's construction and moved down the hall to its pre-1859 quarters for that session's remaining 14 weeks. Owing to the old chamber's smaller capacity, members moved without their desks. A year later, they again returned to those cramped quarters so that the chamber's lower portion could be refashioned.

No longer needed in the Senate Chamber's new design scheme was the historic walnut presiding officer's desk that Capitol Architect Thomas U. Walter had designed in 1858. This gave Senate Chief Clerk Emery Frazier an idea. A student of the Senate's history and a proud native of Kentucky, Frazier devised a plan to have the Senate present the surplus desk to its last user—at that time the nation's most famous Kentuckian—Vice President and former Senate Majority Leader Alben Barkley. Frazier noted that the desk's first occupant 90 years earlier—Vice President John Breckinridge—had also represented Kentucky in the Senate.

On September 22, 1950, the Senate agreed unanimously to present the desk to Barkley as "an expression of high appreciation." Today, it resides at the University of Kentucky in Lexington.

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February 3, 1951

Attending Physician Offers Advice to Lawmakers

In December 1928, one House member dropped dead and two others collapsed from causes attributed to overwork. Although officials in each case immediately summoned medical assistance from city hospitals, several hours passed before a physician arrived to render aid. In 1928 alone, incumbent members of the Senate and House were dying at the appalling rate of almost 20 per year.

On December 5, 1928, the House passed a resolution directing the secretary of the navy to detail a medical officer to be present near the House Chamber while that body was in session. The secretary assigned Dr. George Calver, who initially took up residence in the House Democratic cloakroom. Not to be outdone by the House in a gesture of concern for the well-being of its members, the Senate in April 1930 adopted a concurrent resolution extending Dr. Calver's jurisdiction to its premises. Although the House subsequently ignored that concurrent resolution, the navy secretary, on the strength of the Senate's action, directed Dr. Calver to "look after both houses." Thus was born the Office of Attending Physician, which moved to two ground-floor rooms in its current location near the midpoint of the Capitol's west-front corridor. Within several months, both houses recognized the office's existence by providing funding for its operations.

Soon after he took office in the darkest days of the Great Depression, Dr. Calver earned national headlines with a stern warning to members. Following the collapse of the House Ways and Means Committee chairman during an influenza outbreak, and the sidelining of dozens of senators and representatives, Calver cautioned against overdoing committee work.

The Congress that began in December 1931 suffered a particularly large toll. Before it was four months old, that body witnessed the deaths of four senators and 16 representatives. Many others took to their beds under a legislative strain that long-serving members considered unprecedented.

For the next 35 years, until his retirement in 1966, Dr. Calver routinely captured national media attention with his advice to hardworking members. On February 3, 1951, the *New York Times Magazine* reported on his "nine commandments of health," which were printed on large placards and displayed throughout the Capitol. They included: "Eat wisely, drink plentifully (of water!). Play enthusiastically, and relax completely. Stay out of the Washington social whirl—go out at night twice a week at most." His ultimate advice: "Don't let yourself get off-balance, nervous, and disturbed over things."



George C. Calver, attending physician for Congress, photographed soon after his appointment in 1928.

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April 18, 1951

Arthur Vandenberg Dies



Arthur Vandenberg, senator from Michigan (1928-1951).

The April 1951 death of Arthur H. Vandenberg removed from the Senate one of its undisputed 20th-century giants. Although his death saddened his colleagues and admirers, it did not surprise them, for he had been away from the Senate for most of the 19 months since undergoing surgery for lung cancer. His son acknowledged that the senator had known of his condition for more than a year before that surgery in October 1949, but had been too busy with his Senate duties to seek timely treatment.

In 1945, Arthur Vandenberg delivered a celebrated "speech heard round the world," announcing his conversion from isolationism to internationalism. In so doing, he became the embodiment of a bipartisan American approach to the cold war.

Born in Michigan, he studied law at the University of Michigan but chose a career in journalism. Vandenberg served as editor and publisher of the *Grand Rapids Herald* from 1906 until 1928, when he was appointed to fill a vacancy in the U.S. Senate. Running as a Republican, Vandenberg then won election to the seat, which he held until his death.

During the 1930s, Senator Vandenberg became a leading proponent of isolationism, determined to keep the United States out of another world war, but the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor ended his isolationism. During the Second World War, he grappled with the potential international role for the United States in the postwar world. On January 10, 1945, he delivered his most memorable speech in the Senate, confessing that prewar isolationism was the wrong course, calling on America to assume the responsibilities of world leadership, and endorsing the creation of the United Nations.

In 1947, at the start of the cold war, Vandenberg became chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. In that position, he cooperated with the Truman administration in forging bipartisan support for the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, and NATO—the first mutual defense treaty that the United States had entered since its alliance with France during the American Revolution. When Vandenberg spoke, the Senate Chamber filled with senators and reporters, eager to hear what he had to say. His words swayed votes and won national and international respect for his nonpartisan, consensus-building, statesman-like approach to foreign policy.

In September 2004, the Senate formally recognized Arthur Vandenberg's singular contributions by adding his portrait image to the permanent gallery of outstanding former senators in the Senate Reception Room.

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May 3, 1951

A Constitutional Crisis Averted

Consider the dangers for a constitutional democracy of this potentially explosive mixture: a stalemated war, an unpopular president, and a defiant general with a plan for victory and a huge public following. In the somber spring of 1951, Senators Richard Russell and Tom Connally sought to diffuse this brewing crisis by arranging for the committees they chaired—Armed Services and Foreign Relations—to conduct a series of joint hearings.

The target of their inquiry was General Douglas MacArthur. Three weeks before the hearings began on May 3, President Harry Truman had fired MacArthur as commander of United Nations' forces in the Korean War. Truman had rejected the general's view that the only way to end the stalemate in Korea was to launch an attack on China. When MacArthur then publicly criticized his commander in chief, a furious Truman sacked him for insubordination. Instantly, MacArthur became a national hero—a potential presidential candidate. After he delivered his "farewell address" to a tumultuous joint meeting of Congress and rode in a massive hero's parade in New York City, senators received two million pieces of mail in his favor.

As chairman of the joint hearings, Senator Russell conducted the proceedings with great deliberation, providing for a full exchange of views. Realizing that the testimony would include highly sensitive war-related testimony, but also aware of the value of making these discussions quickly available to avoid trouble-causing leaks, he arranged a compromise. The joint committee would conduct the sessions in secret, but release immediately sanitized transcripts every 30 minutes to reporters crowded outside the Caucus Room's heavily guarded doors.

In three days of testimony, MacArthur weakened his own case with vague and overstated responses. He observed that his troubles came from the politicians in Washington who had introduced "a new concept into military operations—the concept of appeasement." When MacArthur was asked whether he thought his plan for bombing China might trigger another world war, he observed that this was not his area of responsibility. His case was fatally weakened with testimony from senior military leaders who strongly disagreed with MacArthur's plan. After seven weeks of exhaustive testimony, the public lost interest. By fully airing this dangerous issue, Chairman Russell had avoided a political conflagration and brilliantly demonstrated the Senate's proverbial role as the saucer into which the hot tea is poured to be safely cooled.



A cartoonist's view of Richard Russell's 1951 inquiry into the MacArthur dismissal.

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April 24-25, 1953

Wayne Morse Sets Filibuster Record

His admirers called him "The Tiger of the Senate." His many enemies, including five presidents, called him a lot worse. Today he is remembered as a gifted lawmaker and principled maverick who thrived on controversy.

Wayne Morse was born in Wisconsin in 1900. In his early years, he fell under the influence of that state's fiery progressive senator, Robert M. La Follette, a stem-winding orator and champion of family farmers and the laboring poor. In the 1930s, Morse became the nation's youngest law school dean and a skilled labor arbitrator. In 1944, despite his New Deal sympathies, he won election as a Republican to an Oregon U.S. Senate seat.



Wayne Morse, senator from Oregon (1945-1969), lying on a cot in the Senate cloakroom during a continuous debate over atomic energy.

During the 1952 presidential campaign, Morse broke ranks with Republican leaders over the party's platform and Dwight Eisenhower's choice of Richard Nixon as his running mate. Claiming the Republican Party had left him, Morse announced his switch to Independent status.

In January 1953, Morse arrived at the opening session of the 83rd Congress with a folding chair and a comment. "Since I haven't been given any seat in the new Senate, I decided to bring my own." Although he was placed on the majority Republican side, that party's caucus stripped him of his choice committee assignments.

Against this backdrop, Wayne Morse rose on the Senate floor on April 24, 1953. Described as "a lean trim man, with a clipped mustache, sharp nose, and bushy black eyebrows," he began a filibuster against Tidelands Oil legislation. When he concluded after 22 hours and 26 minutes, he had broken the 18-hour record set in 1908 by his mentor, Robert La Follette. Morse kept that distinction until 1957, when Strom Thurmond logged the current record of 24 hours and 18 minutes.

In 1955, Morse formally changed his party allegiance, giving Senate Democrats the one-vote margin that returned them to the majority. Majority Leader Lyndon Johnson gave him his choice of committee assignments. In 1968, Morse, a resolute critic of the war in Vietnam, lost his Senate seat to Robert Packwood by less than 3,000 votes. He died six years later in the midst of a campaign to regain that seat. This blunt-spoken, iconoclastic populist is remembered today with many colorful stories. For example, Clare Boothe Luce was forced to resign her newly confirmed ambassadorship after commenting that her troubles with Senator Morse went back to the time when he had been kicked in the head by a horse.

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June 9, 1954

"Have You No Sense of Decency?"

Wisconsin Republican Senator Joseph R. McCarthy rocketed to public attention in 1950 with his allegations that hundreds of Communists had infiltrated the State Department and other federal agencies. These charges struck a particularly responsive note at a time of deepening national anxiety about the spread of world communism.

McCarthy relentlessly continued his anticommunist campaign into 1953, when he gained a new platform as chairman of Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations. He quickly put his imprint on that subcommittee, shifting its focus from investigating fraud and waste in the executive branch to hunting for Communists. He conducted scores of hearings, calling hundreds of witnesses in both public and closed sessions.

A dispute over his hiring of staff without consulting other committee members prompted the panel's three Democrats to resign in July 1953. Republican senators also stopped attending, in part because so many of the hearings were called on short notice or held away from the nation's capital. As a result, McCarthy and his chief counsel Roy Cohn largely ran the show by themselves, relentlessly grilling and insulting witnesses. Harvard law dean Erwin Griswold described McCarthy's role as "judge, jury, prosecutor, castigator, and press agent, all in one."

In the spring of 1954, McCarthy picked a fight with the U.S. Army, charging lax security at a top-secret army facility. The army responded that the senator had sought preferential treatment for a recently drafted subcommittee aide. Amidst this controversy, McCarthy temporarily stepped down as chairman for the duration of the three-month nationally televised spectacle known to history as the Army-McCarthy hearings.

The army hired Boston lawyer Joseph Welch to make its case. At a session on June 9, 1954, McCarthy charged that one of Welch's attorneys had ties to a Communist organization. As an amazed television audience looked on, Welch responded with the immortal lines that ultimately ended McCarthy's career: "Until this moment, Senator, I think I never really gauged your cruelty or your recklessness." When McCarthy tried to continue his attack, Welch angrily interrupted, "Let us not assassinate this lad further, senator. You have done enough. Have you no sense of decency, sir, at long last? Have you left no sense of decency?"



Army lawyer Joseph Welch, left with head in hand, *and Senator Joseph McCarthy,* standing, *at the Army-McCarthy hearings in 1954.*

Overnight, McCarthy's immense national popularity evaporated. Censured by his Senate colleagues, ostracized by his party, and ignored by the press, McCarthy died three years later, 48 years old and a broken man.

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November 2, 1954

Senator Elected on a Write-in Ballot

On the first day of September 1954, South Carolina Democratic Senator Burnet Maybank died unexpectedly. Earlier that year, Maybank had won his party's primary nomination for a third full Senate term. With time running short before the November general election, the Democratic Party's state executive committee, on a divided vote, decided not to hold a special primary. Instead, the committee unanimously designated its own nominee—66-year-old state senator Edgar Brown. Known in state circles as "Mr. Democrat," Brown had long and effectively served the party. No one seriously questioned his right to the seat, but many questioned the process by which he appeared about to claim it. The executive committee badly miscalculated the depth of public feeling that such decisions should be made in the voting booth.



Strom Thurmond, senator from South Carolina (1954-2003).

At that point, 51-year-old former Governor Strom Thurmond announced his intention to run as a write-in candidate. Capitalizing on public outrage, he denounced the state party hierarchy for its high-handed decision and promised voters that although he would be running as an Independent, he would, if elected, participate in the Senate Democratic Caucus and vote as a Democrat to organize the Senate. (In 1954, Republicans controlled the Senate by a one-vote majority.)

On November 2, 1954, Strom Thurmond won with 63 percent of the vote and thereby became the only person ever elected to the Senate on a write-in. During his abbreviated 1954 campaign, he had pledged that if elected, he would resign prior to the 1956 primary so that voters rather than the party executive committee could make that crucial choice. True to his word, Senator Thurmond resigned in April 1956. He won that primary and the November general election. He once again took his Senate oath on November 7, 1956. Although he changed his party allegiance in September 1964 to become a Republican, Thurmond went on to establish two significant service records. On March 8, 1996, he became the oldest person to serve in the Senate at the age of 93 years and 94 days, breaking the record set by Rhode Island Democrat Theodore F. Green on January 3, 1961. A year later, on May 25, 1997, Thurmond became the longest-serving member in Senate history to that time when he reached 41 years and 10 months.

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November 17, 1954

The Senate's New Gavel

A visitor sitting in the Senate Chamber gallery on November 17, 1954, could have been excused for wondering what exactly was happening on the floor below. Just after 2 p.m., the Senate declared a recess. Instead of members heading away from the floor, many arrived and took their seats. Through the center doors appeared Majority Leader William Knowland and Minority Leader Lyndon Johnson, followed by the vice president of India. The leaders guided their guest to the rostrum and introduced him to the vice president of the United States, Richard Nixon.

In his remarks, the Indian vice president noted that his recently independent nation had modeled its democratic institutions on those of the United States. As presiding officer of his nation's upper house, he welcomed the opportunity to present to the Senate an instrument without which a presiding officer would be ineffectual—a gavel. He hoped the gavel would inspire senators to debate "with freedom from passion and prejudice."

In replying, Vice President Nixon explained that the donated gavel would replace the Senate's old gavel—a two-and-one-half-inch, hour-glass-shaped piece of ivory, which, he said, had begun "to come apart" recently. What Nixon failed to mention was that the gavel had begun "to come apart" thanks to his own heavy hand.

Vice President John Adams may have used that gavel in 1789, although he seems to have preferred the attention-getting device of tapping his pencil on a water glass. By the 1940s, the old gavel had begun to deteriorate; in 1952 the Senate had silver pieces attached to both ends to limit further damage. During a heated, late-night debate in 1954, Nixon shattered the instrument. Unable to find a replacement through commercial sources, the Senate turned to the Embassy of India. The replacement gavel duplicated the original with the addition of a floral band carved around its center.

There may have been no more effective wielder of that legislative instrument than Charles Fairbanks, vice president from 1905 to 1909. According to one witness, "He wouldn't hit it very hard, but when things started to get noisy on the floor, he'd lean over the desk and just tap-tap-tap a few times on the thin part of the desk. He used to say," according to the observer, "it wasn't loud noise that attracted the senators' attention, it was just a different noise."



The new Senate gavel, right, *replaced the old cracked gavel in 1954.*

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April 30, 1956

Alben Barkley Delivers Immortal Farewell Address



Alben W. Barkley, senator from Kentucky (1927-1949, 1955-1956).

It was perhaps the best exit line in all of American political history. Never has a United States senator bid farewell with such timing and drama.

Kentucky's Alben Barkley served in the U.S. House from 1913 until 1927, when he moved to the Senate. In 1937, Senate Democrats chose him as their majority leader. At the 1948 Democratic convention, the 70-year-old Barkley won the vice-presidential nomination. The following January, after 12 years of leading the Senate from the floor, Vice President Barkley became its constitutional presiding officer. His young grandson considered the formal title of "Mr. Vice President" to be a mouthful and invented an abbreviated alternative, by which Barkley was known for the rest of his life: "The Veep."

Barkley loved the Senate and became the last vice president to preside more than half the time the Senate was in session. He was also the last vice president not to have an office in or near the White House. Despite the honor of his vice-presidential position, Barkley missed being a senator. He enjoyed telling the story of the mother who had two sons. One went to sea; the other became vice president; and neither was heard from again. When his vice-presidential term ended in 1953, Barkley happily ran for Kentucky's other Senate seat. His 1954 defeat of an incumbent Republican returned Senate control to the Democrats by a one-vote margin and made Lyndon Johnson majority leader.

On April 30, 1956, the 78-year-old Kentucky senator traveled to Virginia's Washington and Lee University. There he gave one of his trademark rip-snorting, Republican-bashing speeches. At its conclusion, he reminded his audience that after 42 years in national politics he had become a freshman again and had declined a front-row chamber seat with senior senators. "I am glad to sit on the back row," he declared, "for I would rather be a servant in the House of the Lord than to sit in the seats of the mighty." Then, with the applause of a large audience ringing in his ears, he dropped dead.

For an old-fashioned orator, there could have been no more appropriate final stage exit.

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July 13, 1956

Dirksen Building Cornerstone Laid

The search for adequate office space proved to be a major theme in the institutional history of Congress during the 20th century. The first permanent Senate office building, later named to honor Georgia Senator Richard Russell, opened in 1909. In 1941, congressional officials acknowledged that this facility—despite an addition built along its First Street side in the 1930s—had reached its capacity. Faced with the option of leasing expensive space in nearby private buildings, they began planning for a second building. World War II intervened, however, and delayed action until 1948. By that time, the demand for additional quarters had reached a critical point.

Until the 1940s, Senate staff positions had been mostly clerical and custodial. The shock of the wartime experience convinced congressional leaders of the need to expand Hill staffs to include experts on a growing list of complex policy issues.

Soon after the war ended, Congress passed the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946. This landmark statute allowed Congress to hire professional staffs in ranges of competence and salary equal to those employed within the executive branch. Each committee gained four professional and six clerical aides.

This surge of newly arriving staff intensified the need for a second building—one intended primarily to accommodate committees. In a departure from committee arrangements in the Russell Building, where members and witnesses sat around a common table, the new building would feature large hearing rooms with raised platforms for members and facilities suitable for the newly emerging medium of television.

In 1948, the Senate acquired land across First Street from the Russell Building. The block—known as "Slum's Row"—contained substandard housing considered an unsightly backdrop to the Capitol. When construction crews cleared the land, 500 people were left to find other homes.

As architects completed their drawings in 1949, a dispute among key senators over the building's size and cost delayed the project for another five years. Finally, the Senate agreed to a scaled back plan and officials laid the cornerstone on July 13, 1956.

When the new facility, later named in memory of Illinois Senator Everett Dirksen, opened in October 1958, few might have predicted that 14 years later a proposal for yet another building would begin its journey through the legislative pipeline. In 1982, this third structure opened as the Philip Hart Senate Office Building.



The new Senate Office Building, later named the Dirksen Senate Office Building, under construction in December 1956.

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July 27, 1956

Escaping Summer's Heat

On July 27, 1956, Congress completed work on its appropriations bills and adjourned for the year. In doing this at a time when the new fiscal year began on July 1, members followed the traditional practice of concluding the year's session before the truly sultry "dog-days" of August set in. The end to the 1956 session came at midnight, as Majority Leader Lyndon Johnson and his colleagues boisterously applauded the chamber's presiding officer, Vice President Richard Nixon.



Two women fry eggs on a cement wall near the Capitol in the hot summer of 1929.

As senators left town, none could have realized that day's history-making significance. Never again in the 20th century, owing to increased congressional workload and better air conditioning, would Congress adjourn for the year as early as July.

For years, diplomats received hardship pay for enduring Washington's oppressive summer heat. Members of Congress received no such bonus. Consequently, unless the demands of war or other national emergencies kept them in session, they tried to adjourn before high temperatures and humidity overwhelmed the Capitol's primitive air-conditioning system.

When the Senate moved to its current chamber in 1859, members paid particular attention to that room's steam-powered ventilation apparatus. In their first summer session there, during June 1860, senators complained of the hot, stale air. Only the looming crisis of the Civil War kept them from authorizing reconstruction of the chamber adjacent to the building's outside walls so that they could at least open some windows for cross-ventilation.

Another 70 years passed before the 1929 installation of a cooling system grandly advertised as "manufactured weather." That system also proved inadequate on the hottest days. Although some improvement came with the renovation of the chamber in 1950, members at mid-century still had to contend with the city's summertime climate.

There were other reasons for the 1956 July adjournment. Four days earlier, the House of Representatives had overwhelmingly passed a major civil rights bill. Georgia Senator Richard Russell, who opposed the legislation, convinced Majority Leader Johnson that bringing up that bill in the Senate would trigger a filibuster guaranteed to keep them in session until the mid-August Democratic national convention. The bitterness sure to result from a prolonged debate, Russell warned, would weaken the party at its convention and destroy any hope Johnson might have had of gaining a future presidential nomination.

Perhaps departing senators had in mind House Speaker John Nance Garner's advice about summer sessions: "No good legislation ever comes out of Washington after June."

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January 10, 1957

Citadel

On January 10, 1957, the chief congressional correspondent of the *New York Times*, William S. White, published a book entitled *Citadel: The Story of the U.S. Senate*. An immediate bestseller, *Citadel* soon became one of the most influential books ever written about the Senate.

In promoting this book, William White enjoyed several advantages. First, he admired the Senate, which he characterized as "the one touch of authentic genius in the American political system." He had covered Congress for more than a decade and had recently won a Pulitzer Prize for his biography of the late Republican Majority Leader Robert Taft. As pressures for passage of the first civil rights act since the Reconstruction era focused the public's attention on the Senate, one book reviewer commented that *Citadel* would help Americans understand the "mysterious ways of senators and the baffling behavior of the Senate."

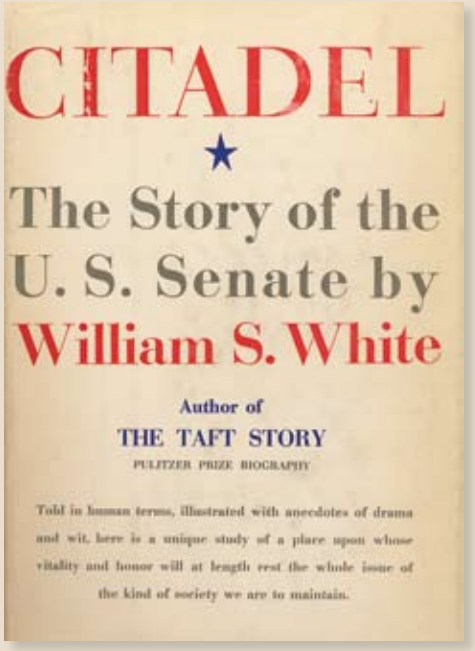
By any standard, William White was a Senate insider. A native Texan, White had known and admired Democratic Majority Leader Lyndon Johnson for 25 years. He proudly counted himself among Johnson's inner circle of advisers.

Employing a light and breezy style, White takes the reader into his confidence to explain what was really happening behind the public face of the Senate. An extended essay, rather than a scholarly treatise, *Citadel* remains worth reading decades later.

White popularized the notion of the Senate as a gentlemen's club, run by a small inner circle of intuitively skilled legislators. He described the model senator of his day as a "sensitive soul," with the temperament of an artist rather than a person in business. He characterized each major Senate committee as an "imperious force," whose chairman, "unless he is a weak and irresolute man, is emperor."

Thirty years after publishing *Citadel*, White looked back fondly at the Senate of the mid 1950s. "My old Senate had a full complement of big egos, but on the whole those who thought extremely well of themselves had good reason so to think."

Both *Citadel* and Senator John F. Kennedy's Pulitzer-Prize-winning *Profiles in Courage*, published within months of each other, enhanced the Senate's popular image. This did not go unnoticed on the House side of the Capitol. One day White ran into Speaker Sam Rayburn. Rayburn acknowledged him coolly and asked why he was visiting the House. White responded, "Do I need a passport?" Rayburn shot back, "Yes, hereafter you do."



An immediate bestseller, Citadel *soon became one of the most influential books ever written about the Senate.*

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March 12, 1959

The "Famous Five"

Just after noontime on March 12, 1959, a festive crowd jammed the Capitol's Senate Reception Room to induct five former members into a senatorial "hall of fame."

Four years earlier, the Senate had formed a special committee to identify outstanding former members, no longer living, whose likenesses would be placed in five vacant portrait spaces in the Reception Room.



Republican Leader Everett Dirksen delivers remarks at the reception honoring the five outstanding former senators whose portraits would hang in the Senate Reception Room.

Leading the five-member committee was a 38-year-old freshman who had recently written a book about courageous senators. That book, published in January 1956 under the title *Profiles In Courage,* earned Senator John F. Kennedy the 1957 Pulitzer Prize in biography. The committee also included Democrats Richard Russell (GA) and Mike Mansfield (MT), and Republicans Styles Bridges (NH) and John Bricker (OH).

The Kennedy committee struggled to define senatorial greatness. Should they apply a test of "legislative accomplishment"? Perhaps, in addition to positive achievement there should be recognition of, as they put it, "courageous negation." What about those senators who consistently failed to secure major legislation, but in failing, opened the road to success for a later generation?

Personal integrity? That might exclude the chronically indebted Daniel Webster. National leadership? That would knock out great regional leaders like John C. Calhoun. The unanimous respect of one's colleagues? That would doom the antislavery leader Charles Sumner. The Kennedy committee's established criteria nicely evaded these questions. It agreed to judge candidates "for acts of statesmanship transcending party and State lines" and to define "statesmanship" to include "leadership in national thought and constitutional interpretation as well as legislation." The committee further agreed that it would not recommend a candidate unless all its members agreed to that choice.

An advisory committee of 160 scholars offered 65 candidates. Sixty-five names for five spaces! Senator Kennedy quipped that sports writers choosing entrants to the Baseball Hall of Fame had it easy by comparison. As its top choice, the scholars' committee named Nebraska's Progressive Republican George Norris, a senator from 1913 to 1943. Senate panel member Styles Bridges disagreed and, along with Nebraska's two incumbent senators, consequently blocked his further consideration.

On May 1, 1957, the Kennedy Committee reported to the Senate its choices: Henry Clay (KY), John C. Calhoun (SC), Daniel Webster (MA), Robert Taft (OH), and Robert La Follette, Sr. (WI). In 2004, the Senate added Arthur Vandenberg (MI) and Robert Wagner (NY) to this distinguished company.

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April 14, 1959

Taft Bell Tower Dedicated

The Taft family of Cincinnati, Ohio, has inspired two major Capitol Hill landmarks. William Howard Taft, the nation's 27th president and 10th chief justice, successfully campaigned for construction of the Supreme Court Building, allowing the Court to move out of its cramped Capitol quarters in 1935. His son, Robert Alphonso Taft, who represented Ohio in the U.S. Senate from 1939 until his death in 1953, is the subject of the Taft Memorial, located one block north and west of the Capitol.

On April 14, 1959, a crowd of 5,000 braved a morning chill as President Dwight Eisenhower dedicated the Taft Memorial to the Republican Senate majority leader whose presidential hopes he had extinguished in the 1952 Republican primaries. Following Eisenhower's brief remarks, and a eulogy by former President Herbert Hoover, Vice President Richard Nixon accepted the structure on behalf of the Senate.

The memorial, authorized in 1955, includes a 100-foot bell tower of Tennessee marble resting on a base 15 feet above ground level. A 10-foot bronze statue of Robert Taft stands on that base, along the tower's west side. Incised in the marble above his head are words paying tribute to "the honesty, indomitable courage and high principles of free government symbolized by his life." The bell tower's unadorned design reflects Taft's "simple strength and quiet dignity."

The tower's carillon includes 27 matched bronze bells ranging in weight from 126 pounds to 6 tons. The large central bell strikes on the hour, while the smaller fixed bells chime on the quarter-hour. By resolution of Congress, they play the Star Spangled Banner at 2 p.m. on the Fourth of July.

A month before the tower's dedication, a portrait of Robert Taft had been unveiled in a Senate Reception Room ceremony honoring five outstanding former senators.

These memorial activities sparked great interest, over the next quarter century, in naming office buildings and Capitol rooms after esteemed former members.



The Robert A. Taft Memorial and Carillon, located on Constitution Avenue between New Jersey Avenue and First Street, NW.

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June 19, 1959

Cabinet Nomination Defeated

Over its more than two centuries of existence, the Senate has formally rejected only nine cabinet nominees. The 64-year period between 1925 and 1989 produced just one rejection. It occurred on June 19, 1959.

President Dwight Eisenhower called it "the second most shameful day in Senate history," second only to Andrew Johnson's impeachment trial. *Time* magazine pronounced it a "stinging personal slap . . . U.S. history's bitterest battle over confirmation of a presidential nomination." Others debated whether it was a "legislative lynching or political suicide."



Clinton P. Anderson, left, *senator from New Mexico (1949-1973), shakes hands with Admiral Lewis Strauss, President Eisenhower's nominee for secretary of commerce.*

When Eisenhower gave Admiral Lewis Strauss a recess appointment as secretary of commerce two weeks before the 1958 midterm congressional elections, neither man expected the cataclysm that awaited the Republican Party on election day. Strauss had served for the past four years as chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission. His tenure there had been particularly stormy. On one occasion, he angrily stated that New Mexico's Democratic Senator Clinton Anderson, chairman of the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy, had "a limited understanding of what is involved" in cold-war atomic energy policy. Although Anderson never forgave Strauss for that remark, he told the White House he would not stand in the way of his confirmation to the lower-profile post as commerce secretary.

The 1958 elections, however, dramatically changed the Senate's composition and outlook. An economic recession, White House influence-peddling scandals, and concerns over Soviet breakthroughs in outer space produced the largest transfer of seats from one party to another in the Senate's history. Democrats gained 13 Republican seats, plus two seats from the new state of Alaska. This added up to 64 Democrats and 34 Republicans.

With the 1960 elections nearing, congressional Democrats sought issues on which they could conspicuously oppose the Republican administration. The Strauss nomination proved tailor made. During confirmation hearings that quickly turned sour, Strauss displayed a condescending and disdainful attitude toward members of the Senate. His insistence on remaining at the witness table to cross-examine hostile witnesses—and senators—angered his supporters and delighted opponents. Anderson abandoned his earlier hands-off pledge and vigorously lobbied his Senate colleagues to reject the imperious admiral.

At 35 minutes past midnight, on June 19, 1959, in a packed Senate Chamber, the Strauss nomination died on a cliff-hanging roll-call vote of 46 in favor, 49 opposed. The Strauss rejection heralded a period of legislative stalemate for the remaining 18 months of the Eisenhower presidency.

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November 8, 1959

"Wild Bill"

North Dakota Republican William Langer was one of the 20th century's most colorful United States senators. In 1959, he was described as "tempestuous," "swashbuckling," and "thoroughly unpredictable in his actions and attitudes."

"Wild Bill" Langer, as he came to be known, began his public career in 1916 as North Dakota's hard-charging attorney general. In 1932, he won the state's governorship thanks to support from Depression-ravaged farmers. Two years later, however, he was convicted and removed from office for forcing state employees to donate 5 percent of their salaries to his political organization. Always a fighter, Langer won exoneration and another term as governor. In 1940, he gained a seat in the U.S. Senate.

On January 3, 1941, when Langer appeared in the Senate Chamber to take his oath, Majority Leader Alben Barkley announced that several citizens of North Dakota had petitioned the Senate to deny him a seat owing to his financial misconduct as governor. The Senate seated him without prejudice and referred the matter to the Committee on Privileges and Elections. That inquiry by the committee consumed an entire year.

In January 1942, the committee's 4,200-page majority report recommended Langer be denied his seat as morally unfit to be a United States senator. Allegations included jury tampering and inciting to riot. A committee minority sharply disagreed, noting that voters had been well aware of the largely unsubstantiated charges at the time of Langer's election. The minority warned against allowing the Senate to be used by a winner's opponents to overturn the results of a lawful election. In its requirements for election to the Senate, they noted, the Constitution makes no reference to moral purity.

For two weeks in March 1942, as the challenges of the nation's recent entry into World War II confronted Congress, William Langer sat in the Senate Chamber listening to colleagues debate his moral character. In the end, by a two-to-one margin, they upheld his seating.

Langer went on to win three additional Senate terms and to serve as Judiciary Committee chairman. A strict isolationist, he was one of only two senators to vote against the United Nations charter. (Henrik Shipstead of Minnesota was the other.) He won his final election in 1958 without the endorsement of his party and—refusing to leave his ailing wife's bedside—without making a single speech. Langer died on November 8, 1959. His funeral is memorable as being the most recent to have been held in the Senate Chamber.



William Langer, senator from North Dakota (1941-1959).

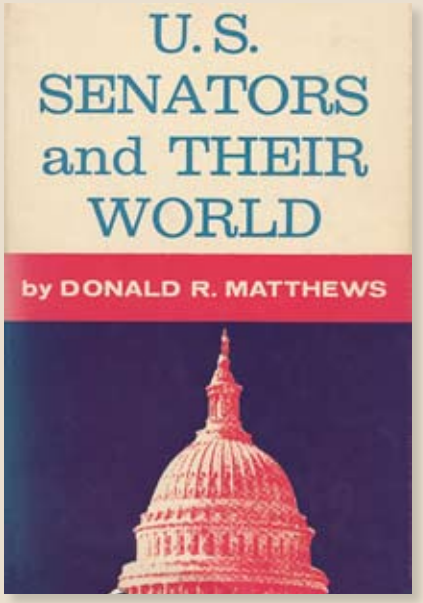
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October 1, 1960

U.S. Senators and Their World



Senator John F. Kennedy called U.S. Senators and Their World *"sharp, perceptive, instructive and entertaining."*

Following World War II, scholars and journalists took a searching new look at the U.S. Senate. They saw the Senate as a counterbalance to a presidency whose powers had been sharply inflated under the guise of wartime emergency. Of the resulting books, one of the most influential was entitled *U.S. Senators and Their World*. It was published in 1960, by University of North Carolina political scientist Donald Matthews.

Matthews approached the Senate like an anthropologist discovering a new civilization. Beginning in 1947, he conducted dozens of off-the-record interviews with members. "How did senators think?" "In what ways did service in the Senate change them?" This led Matthews to explore the "unwritten rules of the game." "How do those rules affect senatorial behavior?" "Who is influential in the Senate and why?"

As Matthews developed his study, he identified six "folkways." He said, "Only those who have served in the Senate, and perhaps not even all of them, are likely to grasp its folkways in all their complexity." Here is what Professor Matthews had to say about the folkway he called "reciprocity":

> Every senator, at one time or another, is in a position to help out a colleague. The folkways of the Senate hold that a senator should provide this assistance and that he should be repaid in kind. The most important aspect of this pattern of reciprocity is, no doubt, the trading of votes. [Reciprocity] demands an ability to calculate how much "credit" a senator builds up with a colleague by doing him a favor of "going along." If a senator expects too little in return, he has sold himself and his constituents short. If he expects too much, he will soon find that to ask the impossible is fruitless and that "there are just some things a senator can't do in return for help from you." Finally, this mode of procedure requires that a senator live up to his end of the bargain, no matter how implicit the bargain may have been. "You don't have to make these commitments," one senator said, "and if you keep your mouth shut you are often better off, but if you do make them, you had better live up to them."

U.S. Senators and Their World is now considered a classic. It is worth reading as a reminder of how much the Senate has changed over the last half century—and how much it has stayed the same.

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March 20, 1962

Hollywood Comes to the Hill

On March 20, 1962, 60 senators went to the movies. They traveled to Washington's Trans-Lux Theater for a sneak preview of Otto Preminger's *Advise and Consent*. Based on Allen Drury's best-selling novel involving a bitter Senate confirmation battle, the film presented a star-studded cast that included President Franchot Tone, Vice President Lew Ayres, controversial secretary of state nominee Henry Fonda (whose character had lied to a Senate subcommittee about a previous youthful flirtation with a pro-Communist political group), Senate Majority Leader Walter Pidgeon, and President pro tempore Charles Laughton, with other roles played by Peter Lawford, Burgess Meredith, and Gene Tierney. Preminger had tried unsuccessfully to get Martin Luther King to play an African American senator from Georgia.

Senators had a more than passing interest in this film. For several months in the fall of 1961 film crews had swarmed over public and private spaces within the Russell Senate Office Building, turning its corridors, offices, and especially its Caucus Room into stage sets. A patient host, the Senate drew the line at using its chamber. For scenes in that location, Preminger updated the Hollywood set used for the 1939 filming of Frank Capra's classic, *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*. The director recruited senators to act as extras and convinced 58 of them to sponsor premieres in their home states. He also hired 400 socially prominent Washingtonians, with $25 donations to their designated charities, to participate in a party scene, filmed at the palatial Washington estate, Tregaron. Democrat Henry Jackson of Washington State seized the opportunity to invite Helen Hardin, his future wife, on a cheap but impressive date. Jackson, an extra in the party scene, got the premiere's biggest laugh from colleagues as he declined a drink from a passing waiter.

Senators offered predictably mixed reviews. Ohio Democrat Stephen Young, mindful of ongoing cold war crises, considered this "a bad time in world history to downgrade the U.S. Senate" and introduced legislation to prohibit the film's distribution outside the United States. New York Republican Kenneth Keating thought the film was "terrific." He wired Preminger that incumbent senators should henceforth "look to you for tips on how a senator should walk, dress, and posture with his hands." South Dakota Republican Karl Mundt had the final word. He pronounced the film "fictionalized entertainment with a touch of reality, while the U.S. Senate is a lot of reality with a touch of entertainment."



Actor Charles Laughton, in white suit, *was filmed on location outside the Russell Senate Office Building for the movie* Advise and Consent.

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April 2, 1962

S-207—The Mike Mansfield Room



S-207 as it appears today.

In the decade following the end of World War II, Congress added large numbers of professional staff to its workforce. These additional employees quickly saturated available Capitol Hill office space. As construction of a second Senate office building neared completion in 1958, Congress agreed to provide more new space by extending the Capitol's East Front. The 32-foot addition, built between 1958 and 1962, added 90 prized rooms to the overcrowded Capitol.

On April 2, 1962, 70 senators gathered in one of the largest of those new rooms to celebrate the project's completion. Known as S-207, and later named to honor Majority Leader Mike Mansfield, that room promised a convenient setting for many of the Senate's legislative and social activities. Its elegant appointments included walls paneled in American black walnut and a mantel of "Meadow White" Vermont marble. In the years ahead, it would accommodate the weekly party caucus luncheons, serve as a dormitory for senators during overnight filibusters, and host countless festive receptions.

Perhaps the most notable reception ever held in S-207 was the first one. At mid-afternoon on April 2, Senate restaurant workers set up a large bar and—according to the custom of the day—stocked it with the ingredients essential to produce an imaginative variety of mixed drinks. By 5 p.m. the room had more than reached its capacity with the arrival of dozens of senators, cabinet officers, and the guest of honor—President John F. Kennedy.

Noticeably absent from that festive gathering was the maverick Oregon senator, Wayne Morse. At that moment, Morse was conducting one of those late-afternoon Senate floor speeches that had caused those who disliked evening sessions to dub him the "Five-o'clock Shadow." As a cloud of cigarette and cigar smoke thickened over the heads of the throng in S-207, Morse suspended an attack on the privatization of communications satellites to address another issue that deeply irritated him—the serving of hard liquor at social functions in the Capitol.

Senate Republican Leader Everett Dirksen greeted President Kennedy at the door of S-207 and quietly warned him that Morse was "on the floor assailing the iniquities of drinking in the Capitol." Looking relieved at the opportunity to abandon the reception's choking ambience, the president headed for the nearly empty chamber. Glimpsing the indefatigable Morse at his late-afternoon best, he defused the tense moment by joking, "This is the way it was when I left the Senate."

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September 24, 1963

Smile: Photographing the Senate in Session

In September 1963, an irritated Senator Richard Russell exclaimed, "All senators like to have their pictures taken! When I look around and see some of my colleagues and then view my own physiognomy in the mirror, I sometimes wonder why. But," he said, "that is a weakness of mankind."

Rule IV of the rules regulating the Senate wing of the Capitol forbids "the taking of pictures of any kind" in the Senate Chamber and surrounding rooms. The Senate's suspension of this rule on September 24, 1963, for the purpose of taking the Senate's first official photograph provoked Russell's scorn.

The Senate did not formally adopt a rule limiting photography in its chamber until the 1950s. That decade's introduction of high-speed film led to a proliferation of easily concealed pocket cameras. Adventurous photographers, both amateur and professional, found the chamber a most inviting target. Several decades earlier, on June 20, 1938, *Life* magazine had published a chamber photo, which it headlined as the "first picture ever taken on the floor of the U.S. Senate in session." The magazine proudly noted, "The only previous photographs of the Senate at work have been sneak shots taken with smuggled cameras from the gallery."

In 1963, the National Geographic Society requested permission to take the first formal portrait of the Senate in session. That organization was preparing the first edition of *We the People*, an illustrated book on Congress. The book's editors insisted on photos of the Senate and House in session.

Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield scheduled the picture-taking session to occur just before a historic vote on the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. Ninety-eight members took their seats at 10:15 a.m. Concerned about adequate lighting, cameraman George Mobley had set up three giant reflectors containing 21 large flashbulbs. Following each of six exposures, technicians hurriedly replaced the burned-out bulbs for the next shot. During one exposure, a bulb exploded and showered glass onto Representative Fred Schwengel, whose Capitol Historical Society had sponsored the *We the People* publication project.

The Geographic's photographers next captured the Senate in 1971 and again in 1975. These three photos, taken from the rear of the chamber, document the evolving face of the Senate. The 1963 image shows senators sitting stiffly at their desks facing the presiding officer. In the 1971 picture, some members are slyly observing the photographer. By 1975, the entire Senate, perhaps more media-savvy, had turned to embrace the camera straight on.



1963 photograph of the U.S. Senate, just prior to a historic vote on the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty.

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