

APPENDIX B:

Brumidi's Assistants and Fellow Painters

The names of these mural painters have been compiled primarily from Capitol Extension time books and other lists made between 1856 and 1861. Spelling variations are found in the ways their names were recorded; the version believed to be correct is listed first, with variants in brackets. Some of the painters worked for only a few months; others were on the payroll for many years. A few, including Emmerich Carstens, Joseph Rakemann, and George Strieby, returned to work at the Capitol later.

Constantino Brumidi was the only artist who worked in true fresco and the only one who painted historical scenes, large allegorical figures, and portraits. The term “fresco” on the lists was used loosely to designate the painters performing the highly skilled mural painting that included small figures, animals, flowers, and other elements. Some of the men listed as “decorative” painters specialized in painting borders, and others also performed gilding or scagliola work. The men listed here were all more highly skilled than the plain wall painters who were also on the payrolls.

The asterisk (*) indicates the painters for whom biographical information has been found; biographical summaries follow this listing.

Aquillon, Alfred	(decorative)
Badger [Bagger], John	(decorative / fresco)
Bakerman, James	(decorative)
*Baumgras [Baumgrass], Peter	(decorative)
Beckert, Adolf	(decorative)
Belshaw, William J.	(fresco)
Bem[?], Antoine	(decorative)
Bense, L.O.	(decorative)
Bergman [Bergmann, Berzman], Bernhart	(fresco / decorative)
Biese, Ferdinand	(decorative)
*Bisco, Camillo	(fresco)
Bitalani, G.	(fresco)
Bryen, James O.	(decorative)
Buse, F.	(decorative)
*Carstens, Emmerich	(foreman of decorative painters)

Casadir, Antonio	(decorative)
Columbus, C.J.	(decorative)
Davis, William	(decorative)
Dempf, Antony [Anton]	(fresco)
Fiedler, Otto	(fresco / decorative)
Fontucie, Joseph	(decorative)
*Franze, Louis	(fresco)
Gainor, John F.	(decorative)
Geier, Urban	
Goette [Goethe, Gorthe], Louis [Lewis]	(fresco / decorative)
Harris, James	(fresco)
Herman, Henry	(fresco / decorative)
Hugot [Hergot], V. [Francis]	(decorative / gilding)
Hurdle, Albion	(decorative)
Inasy [Iuice, Imery], Louis [Lewis]	(decorative)
Jack, George	(fresco / decorative)
Keating, John	(decorative)
Knapp, William	(decorative)
Kroger [Kreger, Kreeger], Fritz	(decorative)
Lahayne [Lahayney], Charles	(fresco)
Lahayne [Lahaien], Otto	(decorative)
Lamb, James	(decorative)
Lankau, Leopold	(decorative)
Lecourlee [Lacourli, Lacourbi], Victor [Victa]	(fresco)
*Leslie [Lesley], James	(fresco)
Liemons, Derk	(decorative)
McCoy, Robert	(decorative)
Mercer, Prosper	(decorative)
Michaelson, Ernest	(decorative)
Molinari, E.	(decorative)
Nafflen, Paul	(fresco)
*Odense, Ludwig	(decorative)
*Oertel, Johannes A.	
Oxenham, A.	(fresco)
*Peruchi [Veruchi], Albert	(fresco)

Peters, John E.	(decorative)
Pfant [Plant, Plantz], Nathaniel [Nat, Nath]	(decorative)
*Rakemann [Rakerman, Rakeman], Joseph	(fresco)
Raklert, Herman	(decorative)
Rapp, William	(decorative)
Rastner, Charles	(decorative)
Robetsek, William	(decorative)
Roeth [Roath], Frederick	(fresco / decorative)
Rofsi, Alfonso	(fresco)
Rosenbaum, Ch. [P]	(decorative)
Sack, G.	
Schio [Scio], Peter	(fresco)
Seely, John M.	(decorative)
Shutter, Hurbert	(decorative)
Siemons, Derk R.	(decorative)
Smidt, Peter	(decorative)
Soutucie, Joseph	(decorative)
Springer, William	(decorative)
Stauby [Strauby, Staub], Joseph	(decorative)
*Strieby [Striby], George	(decorative)
Tonesi, Angelo	(decorative)
Trassy, L.	
*Uberti, Joseph	(decorative)
Walslayer, F.	(decorative)
*Walther [Walter], Henry	(decorative)
Weir, Robert	(decorative)
Wullschlager	

Baumgras, Peter, 1827–1904. Born in Germany, he studied at the Royal Academy in Munich and in Dusseldorf. After emigrating to the United States in 1853, he came to Washington, D.C., in 1857. He joined the Washington Art Association and worked and taught in Washington until 1877, when he moved to Illinois.

Bisco, Camillo, dates unknown. Bisco was employed in the Capitol as a “fresco” painter from October 1856 to January 1858. He assisted Brumidi in the decorative or ornamental painting in several important rooms, including the Senate Library ceiling (S–211), the Senate first-floor corridors, and the Senate Naval Affairs Committee room (S–127). In the Senate Military Affairs Committee room (S–128), he painted the borders that framed Brumidi’s battle scenes. He was fired because Brumidi told Carstens he had seen him loafing.

Carstens, Emmerich A., 1823–1902. Born and trained in Germany, Carstens came to New York in 1851 and established a successful decorative painting business. In 1854, he was invited by Captain Meigs to become foreman of decorative painters for the Capitol extensions. He accepted the offer in January 1856 and worked until he was fired in 1859 by the new secretary of war. He returned to work at the Capitol from 1861 until 1898. He designed ornamental decoration for rooms such as the Senate Judiciary Committee room (S–126) and supervised the painting in many rooms, including the House and Senate Chambers. In the 1870s, he painted murals in S–118 and the ceiling of the north entry. Carstens also provided decorative designs for the White House, Patent Office, Pension Office, Interior Department, and Smithsonian Institution.

Franze, Louis, dates unknown. Franze was recruited by Brumidi, who had seen his work in New York, and was employed as a “fresco” painter in the Capitol from October 1856 to February 1857. He worked for 156 days with Brumidi in the Agriculture Committee Room (H–144), and he claimed that he had the ability to create his own designs and to execute Brumidi’s.

Leslie, James, d. 1860. Apparently trained in England, Leslie was a highly skilled decorative painter and was considered an independent artist. He first approached Meigs in 1855 and began his employment at the Capitol in 1856. Leslie designed and painted the murals in the Committee on Territories room (H–128), trophies in the Senate Committee on Military Affairs room (S–128), the House Post Office ceiling (H–124), and walls and ceilings in the Senate first-floor corridor. Leslie died of typhoid fever in 1860.

Odense, Ludwig, dates unknown. Odense was employed at the Capitol from 1856 to 1862. The German decorative painter worked closely with Brumidi, who came into conflict with Carstens over who had authority to supervise him. Odense worked with Brumidi at Walter’s house in Philadelphia in 1863.

Oertel, Johannes Adam, 1823–1909. Born in Germany and trained at the Polytechnical Institute in Nuremberg, Oertel emigrated to the United States in 1849 and settled in New York. Meigs employed him in January 1857, first asking him to make designs for the Senate Library (S–211) and then assigning him to design the state seals for the glass skylight of the House of Representatives. Oertel resigned in 1858, after discovering Brumidi already painting in S–211 and other rooms. His letter of complaint was published and helped stir up support for an art commission. Later he became a Protestant minister known for his religious painting. He died in Austria.

Peruchi, Alberto, dates unknown. An Italian, he worked as a decorative fresco painter from 1856 to 1862. He assisted Brumidi in the Senate corridors and Senate Post Office (S-211), where he specialized in arabesques as well as small figures. He worked with Brumidi in the Capitol in 1861 and 1862 and at Walter's house in Philadelphia in 1863. Peruchi was included in Brumidi's 1866 estimate to complete the Senate Post Office (S-211).

Joseph Rakemann, 1832–1917. Rakemann was born in Germany and at age 14 was apprenticed to a house painter in a neighboring town. He came to the United States in 1856 and applied for a job as painter at the Capitol, where he worked, specializing in painting flowers, between 1857 and 1861. Rakemann eventually opened his own business, but in 1901, at age 69, he returned to oversee extensive redecoration of the Speaker's Lobby.

George F.W. Strieby, 1841–1908/9. Born in Germany, Strieby emigrated to the United States in 1853. He worked at the Capitol as an apprentice from 1857 to 1859. He later worked alongside Brumidi in the 1870s, becoming a friend, to whom Brumidi left his desk.

Joseph Uberti, dates unknown. A witness for Brumidi when he filed his final naturalization papers, Uberti worked with Brumidi at the Capitol between 1857 and 1858 and at Walter's house in 1863.

Henry Walther, c. 1822–1913. Born in Prussia, Walther worked under Carstens in both the Capitol and the White House from 1857 to 1859. He specialized in flowers and fruit. Walther was a partner in a Washington paint store and later worked at the Smithsonian Institution.