

THOLOS

VOLUME 12

FEATURE

Charles De Witt: Founding
Farmer, A Life of Service

PROJECT UPDATE

Capitol Roof Project

LEADERSHIP SPOTLIGHT

Q&A with the 12th
Architect of the Capitol



TABLE OF

CONT

BEFORE & AFTER



FEATURE

*the case is to expect but little
to be done.*

*the whole for it is our opinion
vigilance ought to be exercised to
encroachments on our Territory
to expect no protection otherwise
our own arms, we are.*

*Excellent, most Wd. for
Ch De Witt
Ephraim Paine*

4 BEFORE & AFTER

Exterior Bronze Lettering Restoration on the
Senate Office Buildings

10 BY THE NUMBERS

Performance and Accountability
Report Statistics

12 FEATURE

Charles De Witt: Founding Farmer,
A Life of Service

20 COOL TOOLS

Plasma Cutting Machine:
A Matter of Precision

EVENTS

PROJECT UPDATE



24 PROJECT UPDATE

Capitol Roof Project

30 AWARD HIGHLIGHT

Capitol Power Plant Wins
Safety Award

LEADERSHIP SPOTLIGHT



34 LEADERSHIP SPOTLIGHT

Q&A With J. Brett Blanton, 12th Architect
of the Capitol





BEFORE & AFTER

EXTERIOR BRONZE LETTERING RESTORATION ON THE SENATE OFFICE BUILDINGS

WRITTEN BY ELIZABETH YODER
PHOTOGRAPHY BY THOMAS HATZENBUHLER

Architect of the Capitol (AOC) staff from the Senate Sheet Metal and Painting Branches recently completed a project to restore the bronze lettering on the exterior of the Hart and Dirksen Senate Office Buildings.

The lettering, which contributes to visitors' first impressions of the campus, had become pitted and dulled over time. The project team systematically cleaned, repaired and polished the exterior bronze letters to shine for the thousands of people who pass by them each day.

The restoration process was time-consuming, with each set of bronze letters taking more than 160 hours to restore, but well worth the effort, supporting the AOC's strategic goal of creating awe-inspiring facilities and furthering the AOC mission to "Serve, Preserve and Inspire."

THE PROCESS



TOP: Joe Barbieri, sheet metal mechanic leader with the Senate Sheet Metal Branch, carefully removes the tarnished bronze letters from the Hart Building.

BOTTOM LEFT: Barbieri pulls the threaded studs out of the back of each letter — a tedious process that ensures none of the studs break during their removal.

BOTTOM RIGHT: Barbieri immerses the letters overnight in a noncorrosive substance to remove the previous finish.





TOP: Barbieri pours a noncorrosive substance into a plastic-lined box.

BOTTOM LEFT: Barbieri removes imperfections on the bronze letters using a large buffing wheel.

BOTTOM RIGHT: Barbieri then uses different sizes of polishing wheels to reach into the grooves and crevices of the letters to remove smaller imperfections.





LEFT PAGE, TOP LEFT: Barbieri uses 320 grit sandpaper to remove oxidation that cannot be polished out, since even tiny imperfections will be magnified once a sealant is placed on their surface.

LEFT PAGE, TOP RIGHT: Barbieri hand polishes the letters. The polishing process is time intensive. Barbieri must carefully avoid scratching the bronze surface of the letters.

LEFT PAGE, BOTTOM: Max Ferentinos, painter-refinisher with the Senate Painting Branch, sprays a clear coat sealant on the restored letters to help protect them from future environmental damage.

TOP: Jaime Morillo, sheet metal mechanic with the Senate Sheet Metal Branch, puts silicone in the stud holes to reattach the letters.

BOTTOM: Barbieri gives the letters a final polish after reinstallation to maximize their shine.



BY THE NUMBERS

PERFORMANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT STATISTICS

2005

The first fiscal year (FY) the AOC prepared a Performance and Accountability Report (PAR)

8

Consecutive fiscal years the AOC has been awarded the CEAR

2011

The first fiscal year the AOC submitted its PAR to the Association of Government Accountants (AGA) for their Certificate of Excellence in Accountability Reporting (CEAR) Program

15

Number of consecutive
clean audit opinions
received by the AOC

100%

Every AOC office and jurisdiction
provides input for the PAR



5

AGA CEAR Best-in-Class awards
received by the AOC

- **Most Effective Management Discussion and Analysis (FY 2011)**
- **Best Analysis of an Agency's Financial Statements (FY 2012)**
- **Best Use of Hyperlinks, Drilldowns and Opportunities for Interaction (FY 2014)**
- **Best Executive Summary (FY 2017)**
- **Recognition of Agency Staff's Contribution to Mission (FY 2018)**

\$3.4 BILLION

Total assets managed as of September 30, 2019

the whole for it is our opinion
vigilance ought to be exercised
in encroachments on our
to expect no protection on
our own arm. We are

Caullery, West Ind.
C. G. W. H.
E. H. W. H.

mission. That
is to
territory
herewise

FEATURE

CHARLES DE WITT: FOUNDING FARMER, A LIFE OF SERVICE

STORY & PHOTOGRAPHY BY FRANKLIN BRADLEY

Colonel Charles De Witt knew that he might be killed within days, so he wrote:

"Considering the uncertainty of life, especially in these times of trouble, and as I am in a few days to go down to New York, where I may fall a victim to British Tyrants who are arrived in order to invade that Metropolis, it may be uncertain whether ever I return to make and publish this my last Will and Testament."

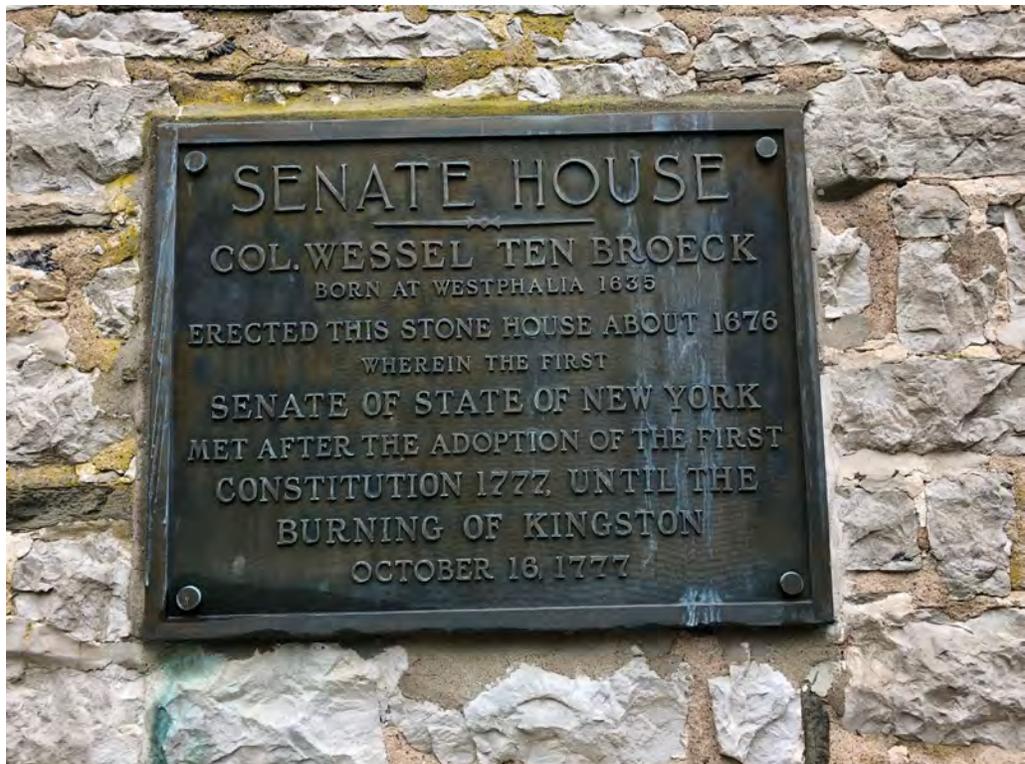
for
D.

De Witt was known by the British as an advocate for independence, even while serving in the colonial assembly under the royal governor. When the assembly refused to provide funds for quartering British troops, the governor dissolved the assembly and ordered new elections, in hopes that more of his supporters would be elected. Over his objection to their nomination because *"they are fiery young radicals,"* voters elected both De Witt and George Clinton, rejecting the governor's own son.

De Witt cemented his commitment to the new nation on his way to the Battle of New York, voting as a member of the New York Provincial Congress to ratify the Declaration of Independence. This was just one of many ways that he participated in the American Revolution, but his achievement that I'm most fond of is surviving the Battle of New York, because Colonel De Witt is my five-times great-grandfather.

His other accomplishments include:

- Serving on the committee that wrote the first constitution of New York state, chaired by John Jay, first chief justice of the United States



New York State Senate House

I'M REMINDED OF MY ANCESTOR'S CONTRIBUTIONS

TO THE FOUNDING OF OUR COUNTRY.

- Being named by New York as a delegate to the Continental Congress, serving with Thomas Jefferson in the Maryland State House in Annapolis
- Having been elected to the colonial assembly under British rule, he then was elected to the New York State Assembly
- Providing flour to the Continental Army throughout the Revolutionary War, including during their winter at Valley Forge

His career was closely connected to many prominent early American patriots, including the two who represent New York in the National Statuary Hall Collection: Robert Livingston and George Clinton. After his election with De Witt, Clinton went on to become the governor of New York for over 20 years and was elected vice president of the United States under two presidents. As vice president, Clinton presided over the Senate in two of its former chambers in the U.S. Capitol. His statue stands today outside the historic Old Senate Chamber.

Livingston served on the Committee of Five that drafted the Declaration of Independence, administered the oath of office to George Washington when he assumed the presidency in 1789 and negotiated the Louisiana Purchase as U.S. minister to France. Livingston famously observed that, *"We have lived long, but this is the noblest work of our whole lives ...The United States take rank this day among the first powers of the world."*

Every day that I come to work, I pass the chambers that Clinton

presided over and the statues of both these Founding Fathers, and I'm reminded of my ancestor's contributions to the founding of our country.

Starting in the 1650s, the De Witt family settled in and around Kingston, New York, and was prominent in the early history of Ulster County. However, the Livingston family could be credited with extending De Witt's career beyond his home county. De Witt succeeded his cousin as manager of the extensive Livingston estate,



Entrance of the cemetery where De Witt is buried

Annapolis Sept 9. 1774

Sir

We inform your Excellency, that when we arrived here, Congress had made an arrangement for garrisoning the Frontier Posts: with a view therefore to make such arrangements as favorable as might be to our State; we moved for the Resolutions herewith enclosed. The motion was referred to the Committee which was appointed to report the necessary arrangements &c. The Committee reported among other things that the Troops now at West Point be employed for the purpose of garrisoning the Frontier Posts. whether the House will agree to it is uncertain. We are very sensible that it would be exceedingly disagreeable to our State to have our Posts garrisoned by Troops chiefly Massachusetts.

We conceive that as matters are now situated

our State in such case is to expect but little aid from Congress.

Upon the whole Sir it is our opinion that the utmost vigilance ought to be exercised to prevent any encroachments on our Territory as we are to expect no protection otherwise than from our own arms. We are.

Your Excellency's most Obedt. Servt
 C. De Witt
 Ephraim Paine

To your Excellency Governor Clinton.

MS Permet Division.

ENHET COLL.
 MS DIV. NYPL
 EM 662

THIS LETTER IS FROM MS DE WITT'S LETTER BOOK IN THE POSSESSION OF THE STATE ARCHIVES

Charles De Witt's report from the Continental Congress to Governor George Clinton, 1784

collecting rent and taxes from tenants, paying workers their wages and purchasing tenants' produce and shipping it to New York City. When Charles De Witt decided in 1754 to leave the estate, he wrote in his diary that Mr. Livingston agreed to "put in a joint stock with me if I set up at a place." That investment, and others, helped secure De Witt's continued success.

By the start of the Revolutionary War, in addition to his public service, De Witt was running a prosperous flour mill near Kingston, powered by the Greenkill River, which never froze, no matter how cold the winter. This proved to be a strategic advantage for George Washington and the Continental Army when they were starving through a bitter winter at Valley Forge.

Washington appealed to Clinton, "with great reluctance ... on a subject, which does not properly fall within your province." This letter was truly Washington's last resort. He wrote that all the food in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware and Maryland would not sustain the army for a month. Clinton was now the governor of New York, and he directed farmers to bring their grain

to De Witt's mill, which could run through the winter. After the grain was ground, the flour would be transported in sleighs to Valley Forge.

Just a few months prior, British General John Vaughn called Kingston, the first capital of New York, "a nursery for almost every villain in the country," and said he reduced it to ashes, "not leaving a house." Despite this, De Witt continued to supply General

Washington's army with flour through the winter, his home having been spared the torch because of its location outside the town center, at the mill.

Throughout his life, De Witt hosted guests at his home, including John Jay, who later recalled, "I always met with a cordial reception and that under his hospitable roof we passed many agreeable hours together." Jay also wrote of a time during the war

when there were reports that the British, "were marching in a direction that led toward the place where Mrs. Jay then was with her father's family" in New Jersey. As governor, Jay was in the capital, Kingston, near Colonel De Witt's home in an area often referred to as Esopus.

Hearing of the danger his wife was in, Jay, "thereupon concluded to fetch her from thence without delay." But he was unable to hire a horse, so he



Charles De Witt's tombstone



Site of the De Witt house

turned to *"the Colonel to assist me in procuring one ... He immediately supplied me with a good one that was working on his plough."* When Jay returned safely with his wife and attempted to pay Colonel De Witt for the use of his horse, *"He declined it, saying that the pleasure of serving me on such an occasion was a sufficient compensation. This made an impression upon me which time has not impaired."*

Jay concluded, *"My opinion of the Colonel has undergone no variations. I have uniformly believed him to be a worthy gentleman — of good understanding — of a good*

disposition, and of determined Patriotism. I was a sincere friend to him and am persuaded that he was a sincere friend to me."

Following the war, De Witt's service — and flour — were well remembered. In January 1783, he received this order, *"His Excellency Genl Washington has applied to the contractors for a quantity of the best superfine flour. Mrs. Washington has a preference for the flour manufactured at Esopus."* The state of New York also named him as a delegate to the Continental Congress, so he reluctantly departed his native state to serve his term in Annapolis,

Maryland, where Congress met in the State House.

De Witt regularly wrote to his children as well as both Livingston and Clinton, updating them on the actions of Congress, with specific mentions of Jay and other mutual friends as well as the effects of actions on New York. Writing to Livingston he expresses ambivalence about his colleagues, *"there appears to be many wise men in the body tho some do not appear to have the greater abilities that I ever saw."* De Witt also succinctly depicts a false civility, *"An almost constant sound of the word Honorable attacks*

my ear. When I listen to debates and look at the faces it is difficult for me to tell the meaning of the word."

However, he is warmer in regard to his family, writing to his son Gerret that, *"I never felt more happy at any place than I do this day here, by the receipt of a pkg of letters from my dear family."* Colonel De Witt is happy to send family news from his journey, *"Baltimore is a flourishing town and very handsomely situated, Cousin Thomas De Witt now keeps a Coffee House there, he and his little fat wife both look exceedingly well, they treated me with great kindness and were extremely glad to see me."*

Although De Witt always expressed an eagerness to return to his native northern climes, he admitted Annapolis had a certain appeal:

"Annapolis is a small city beautifully situated on the great Chesapeake Bay which affords a most grand prospect and is a striking evidence of the greatness of its Maker, there are many ordinary buildings and some very

elegant ones; The State House in which Congress sits is the most superb, it is thought, in any of the United States."

When I visited the Maryland State House with my family, my children shared the opinion of their six-times great-grandfather, although they were unaware of their familial connection to the building. Having read Colonel De Witt's affectionate letters to his children, I can only imagine that he would have enjoyed seeing his young descendants gazing up in wonder at the towering wooden dome he served under. He surely would have been glad to know that the freedoms he worked so hard to win and the country he founded with his patrons, neighbors and friends continues to rank among the first powers of the world.

When that session ended, Colonel De Witt was able to return to his beloved children and home, where he lived out the remainder of his

days. When he died in 1787, he had lived 11 years after the Battle of New York, where he knew that he may *"fall victim to British Tyrants."* During that time, De Witt had served with Founding Fathers in battle and in Congress, fed the army to keep it from famine and defeat, and provided fellow patriots sound counsel and sincere friendship.

As I pass the statues commemorating my ancestor's friends and countrymen, I am grateful to them and the good fortune that protected him and his family, especially those generations who followed him down to my mother. I'm sure this founding farmer would have had the same wish for them as he did for his own children as he wrote from Harlem Heights, awaiting the attack of the amassed British army, *"May angels guard you while I am traveling through these dangers ... I am your ever loving and most affectionate father."*

MAY ANGELS GUARD YOU WHILE I AM TRAVELING

THROUGH THESE DANGERS ... I AM YOUR EVER

LOVING AND MOST AFFECTIONATE FATHER.

COOL TOOLS

PLASMA CUTTING MACHINE: A MATTER OF PRECISION

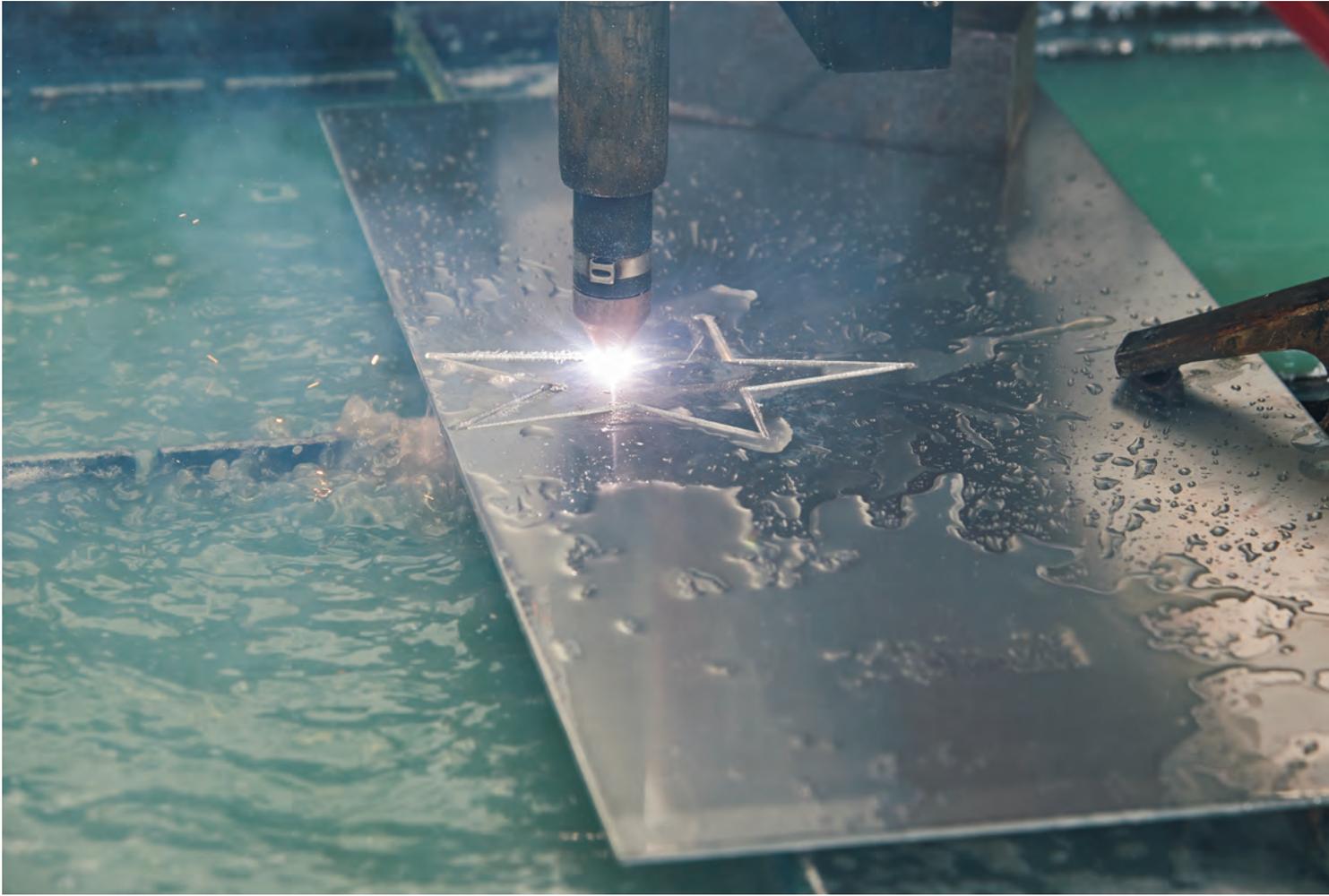
WRITTEN BY KATE HOLDER
PHOTOGRAPHY BY LUKE WALTER

Whatever the task, tools are essential to our work at the Architect of the Capitol (AOC), and this latest example of an AOC “cool tool” ranks among the hottest and fastest tools we use.

It generates temperatures of 35,000 degrees Fahrenheit or more and accelerates to nearly the speed of sound. Those extreme but highly controlled conditions allow the tool to cut through metal like a hot knife through butter.

And do so with precision.

The cool tool is a computer numerical control (CNC) plasma cutter. Located in the House Office Building’s Sheet Metal Shop, the tool was acquired about three years ago and allows the shop to cut metal parts, components and signage that it could never before do efficiently, if at all.



Sparks fly as the plasma torch cuts a star out of an aluminum sheet

The tool rests on a 4-by-4-foot table filled with water, which helps absorb the heat and sparks generated by the plasma cutting torch. The material to be cut is placed on the table on a grid raised just above the water level; above that looms the controller, a bar that straddles the table and holds and guides the plasma torch in any direction.

The plasma torch works by pushing compressed air through the torch nozzle while charging the air until it becomes a super-heated, high-velocity plasma jet that slices through molten metal. It cuts according to whatever design was created by computer-aided

design (CAD) software, which is sent from a laptop to the controller. The plasma torch is used on conductive metals including steel, aluminum and brass up to 4-by-4-feet in size, with thicknesses ranging from 1/8-inch to an inch or more.

Sheet Metal Shop Supervisor George Calloway demonstrated how the plasma cutter works by creating an approximately 6-inch-diameter star cut from a 1/8-inch-thick sheet of scrap aluminum. First, Calloway secured to the table the 1-by-2-foot rectangle of aluminum. Then, using CAD software on a laptop, he quickly designed the star to be cut.

Before the plasma torch was fired up, any observers not wearing shade 3 protective eyewear — required for workers who operate the machine — were asked to stand behind a yellow- or green-tinged plastic curtain to protect their eyes from the powerful ultraviolet (UV) light emitted by the plasma. The UV light is dangerous to unprotected eyes and is akin to staring at the sun.

That's because the sun is also made of plasma, an extremely hot, ionized (energized) gas that constitutes the fourth state of matter — after solid, liquid and gas. About 99 percent of all matter in the universe is plasma including stars, so it's fitting that a star symbol was cut

as an example of what the plasma cutter can do. Due to plasma's intensely high temperatures it is less common on earth, but examples of it occurring in nature include lightning and auroras (northern and southern lights).

As the plasma torch began cutting out the star, brilliant bursts of sparks and light seared through the aluminum as the torch followed precise lines and angles defined by the software. It finished within seconds. Moments later, Calloway held up the result — a damp but distinct five-pointed star that needed minimal finishing.



The five-pointed star was cut within seconds



George Calloway works the plasma cutter, which only requires one person to operate

The cutting machine's versatility allows the Sheet Metal Shop to create pieces ranging from basic components to elaborate signage: 1/4-inch-thick steel plates used to mount locksets for storage areas; 1/8-inch-thick aluminum bezels to mount the television monitors at United States Capitol Police entrance door screening stations; the sign for the O'Neill House Office Building; and intricate brass signage.

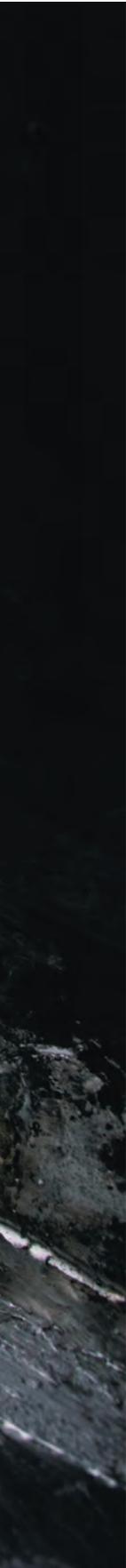
"We recently cut drain covers for Rayburn, 7-inch round circles with 20 half-inch circles inside each one," Calloway said. "We made 30 of those in three hours. If

we had to do that by hand, it would probably take an entire shop three months to finish."

By contrast, it only takes one person to operate the machine. "The plasma cutter has saved us significant resources," said House Office Buildings Assistant Superintendent Ryan Columbo.

"It's a 'cool tool' because it saves a lot of time and does things we couldn't do before," Calloway said. "It makes a perfect circle and a perfect square every time. You couldn't do that by hand. So that's pretty cool."





PROJECT UPDATE

CAPITOL ROOF PROJECT

WRITTEN BY LAURA CONDELUCI
PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHUCK BADAL

The roof is the first line of defense against the elements for any building. And the copper roof of the U.S. Capitol — comprising about 200,000 square feet — is particularly vital because of the priceless art, decorative ceilings and the business of democracy housed beneath it.

The copper has aged to a beautiful green patina over time; while it looks beautiful from afar, the roof needs constant attention and upkeep. That's where the Capitol Building Sheet Metal Shop comes in, providing intensive labor and careful craftsmanship.

Much of the roof looks similar to the untrained eye, but each section was replaced at different times, the oldest section now dates back to the 1940s. A soldering date on each section marks the time when it was installed. The team has recently been replacing a section on the Senate side, between the cupola and East Front extension, which was installed in 1963.



Copper has been used as a roofing material for centuries because it is watertight and durable. Acid rain and the freeze-thaw cycle each winter wear at the copper. When the copper becomes too thin, tiny holes can form and let water in. There are nearly 100,000 small copper panels covering the roof. As part of the Capitol Sheet Metal Shop's ongoing preventive maintenance, the crew regularly walks the roof to clear drains and to look for broken solder joints, cracks and holes that need repair.

Image: Copper roofing thins over time, and when holes are found, they are patched until the section is replaced



The roofing copper comes in large sheets, some as big as 3 feet wide by 10 feet long. First, the sheets must be sheared down to the correct size. Then a stripe of solder is applied before the sheet is bent into shape, and finally cleats lock in the edges. This prep work is performed in the shop. Getting the copper up to the roof is its own challenge. The team has to be careful of their surroundings once on the roof, as there are different substrate surfaces and slopes to cross.

Image: Brian Jerdon bends a copper wall flashing



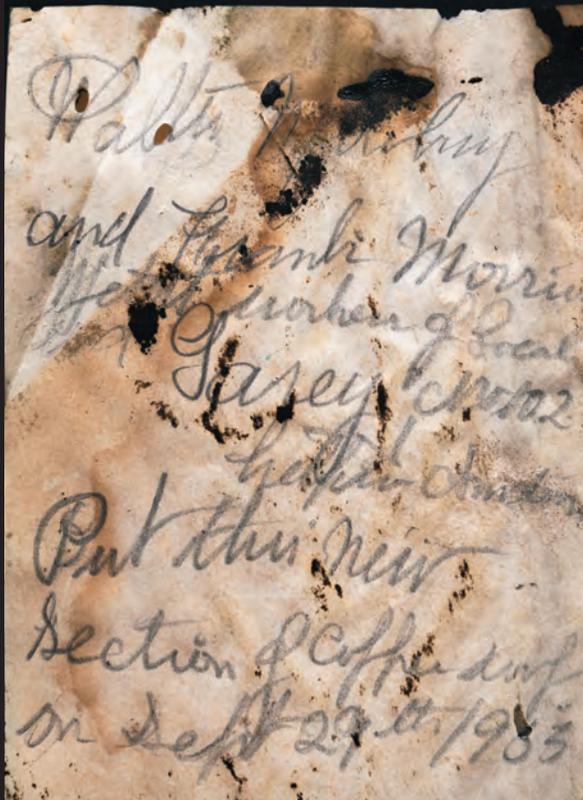
Before the copper flashing can be installed, a waterproof membrane is applied to protect the underlying roof from moisture, water and ice. This layer is tacky, self-adhesive and seals around any nail penetrations. The membrane is then covered in both felt and rosin paper before it is covered in copper.

Image: Brian Jerdon installs a waterproof membrane before the copper wall flashing is placed at the base of the Senate cupola



The roofing process has essentially remained the same as when the copper roof was installed in the 1940s, though some of the waterproofing materials and soldering tools have improved over time. The old way of soldering used copper irons heated with a charcoal pot. Now soldering torches with gas-burning nozzles continuously heat a copper iron, which is cleaner, safer and reduces the chance of starting a fire. "It's still just as labor intensive now as it was when the roof first went on," says Capitol Sheet Metal Shop Supervisor Bryan Glotfelty.

Image: Kevin Golden soldering while Jason Stone and Darren Barnett install flat seam copper roof panels



HIDDEN HISTORY

You never know what surprise you may find just below the surface on any given project. When removing an existing section of copper roof at the northeast base of the cupola, the Capitol Sheet Metal Shop received an unexpected message from the past.

The team discovered a handwritten note with the names of the workers who installed this section of the roof on September 29, 1963. The note was discovered lying underneath a piece of copper on a sloped section of the roof.

Since the letter was hidden away for more than 50 years, the damage it sustained was minimal. It's a great testament to the expertise and superior craftsmanship of the workers. And finding it was a delight to those who are continuing the meticulous mission of maintaining the U.S. Capitol's distinctive copper roof.



The tent provides shade for both the workers and the copper. Copper holds heat, making it hot to the touch in the summer sun. The joints of the flat seam copper roof panels are soldered to ensure that the roof remains watertight. Well-soldered seams require a lot of skill. Fortunately, the Capitol Sheet Metal Shop has extensive experience with copper roofing. Of the 10 people in the shop, four are concentrated on the roof project.

Image: Jason Stone, Brian Jerdon and Kevin Golden install flat seam copper roof panels



The shiny copper turns into warm brown pretty quickly in the rain. However, it can take 20 to 25 years for the natural weathering process to turn the warm brown tone into the distinctive green patina. The thought of rain midproject keeps Glotfelty up at night, “You’re always worried about rain — once the old copper has been removed, the roof has to be covered with the waterproofing membrane and plastic and weighed down.”

Image: Kevin Golden and Jason Stone cover the newly placed copper with plastic sheeting at the end of their shift

The U.S. Capitol’s copper roof provides durability and longevity, with warmth and beauty, protecting everything inside the building. And it offers the Capitol Sheet Metal Shop a chance to shine and showcase their proficiency.

Like most beloved national treasures from the Golden Gate Bridge to the Statue of Liberty, the U.S. Capitol Building roof requires continuous care. Once a section has been replaced, it is regularly inspected as part of the shop’s preventive maintenance.

When this section is complete, the crew will identify their work by soldering in the date to help a future Sheet Metal Shop team know when the work was done. And then they’ll get started on the next section of roof.



AWARD HIGHLIGHT

CAPITOL POWER PLANT WINS SAFETY AWARD

WRITTEN BY KATE HOLDER
PHOTOGRAPHY BY AOC PHOTO BRANCH

There's a saying: **"SAFETY IS NO ACCIDENT."**

At the Architect of the Capitol (AOC), it's also no accident that our core value of safety can produce award-winning results.

Take the Capitol Power Plant's Cogeneration (Cogen) Project, which was recently recognized for its outstanding safety record.

Engineering News-Record (ENR) MidAtlantic awarded the Cogen Project its 2019 Excellence in Safety Award of Merit, which was celebrated at an awards ceremony in Baltimore.

ENR MidAtlantic is a regional edition of ENR, the leading media group covering the U.S. construction industry. Over 40 projects were considered for the award with only two winners selected for going "above and beyond baseline industry safety standards." Award criteria included "what training/safety programs were implemented to prevent injuries and assure a safe jobsite," and how the project's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) recordable and lost time rates compare to other projects in this category.

NO
PARKING
IN
DRIVEWAY



CAUTION
HEARING
PROTECTION
REQUIRED
IN THIS AREA





Employees who worked on the Cogen Project

AOC Capital Projects Administrator Karim Moore oversaw the day-to-day installation of the Cogen Project from its beginning in October 2015 until it was completed in December 2018. “We had an OSHA recordable incident rate (RIR) of zero-point-zero,” Moore said. “That means no time was lost by any workers due to project-related accidents or injuries during the life of the project.”

ZERO-POINT-ZERO

This milestone was achieved despite the transport, crane lifting, placement and installation of a couple hundred tons of heavy equipment. It was achieved

despite the Cogen Project’s mechanical, electrical and structural demands and significant space constraints.

It was achieved despite the project requiring over 180,000 hours of work!

“Having an installation that includes such large, heavy equipment to lift always involves substantial risk and safety issues for the workers,” said Moore. “Given the industrial complexity of the project, completing it with zero time lost for any worker is pretty unusual.”

To Capitol Power Plant Director Christopher Potter, everything they do at the plant starts and ends with safety. “I always say, safety is not only our top priority, it’s our most important core value,” Potter said.

NOR COULD THE AOC DO WHAT IT DOES

WITHOUT ITS DAILY FOCUS ON SAFETY.

“Every contractor who is on-site and gets an AOC badge has to attend a safety orientation,” Potter said. “I welcome each new group to say two things: one, if they see any AOC staff doing something that could be done safer, they need to tell us about it because we want to learn from them. Two, if we see them doing something that could be safer, we’re definitely going to tell them about it because we can’t allow unsafe behavior.”

Nevertheless, Potter had nothing but the highest praise for the Cogen Project contractors and sub-contractors, who brought to bear their own rigorous safety ethos. “It’s a partnership, we’re all looking out for each other’s safety,” he said. “I always end my welcome remarks by thanking them because what we do together supports the Capitol.”

Nor could the AOC do what it does without its daily focus on safety.

“Our core value of safety was demonstrated throughout the Cogeneration Project,” said Director of Safety, Fire and Environmental Programs Patricia Williams. “AOC

leadership and contractor executives clearly communicated their expectation for the safe project completion. Everyone on the project worked together to assure they all went home without injury. Kudos!”

Planning and Project Management Director Peter Mueller agreed, “The Cogeneration Project and its record of achievements provides an outstanding example of fully integrating safety into all aspects of the project delivery. It gives credence to the question for all projects: ‘Why not zero injuries?’”

Cogeneration, also known as combined heat and power, uses a single fuel source to simultaneously produce electricity and heat. The Capitol Power Plant’s new cogeneration system will increase reliability and efficiency, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and save taxpayer dollars for years to come.

ENR MidAtlantic started its safety awards seven years ago to recognize large construction projects that performed complex tasks while maintaining a strong safety record.

The images below show two additional views of the completed Cogen Project



LEADERSHIP SPOTLIGHT

Q&A WITH J. BRETT BLANTON 12TH ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL

On Thursday, January 16, 2020, J. Brett Blanton was sworn in as the 12th Architect of the Capitol by Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts, Jr., at the U.S. Supreme Court Building.

Q: Why did you want to be the next Architect of the Capitol?

A: To answer this question, I must begin with the mission of the Architect of the Capitol: Serve, Preserve and Inspire. It is the Serve aspect that is most inspiring to me. I hope to maintain the legacy of my 11 predecessors and usher in a new era for the Architect of the Capitol (AOC).

Q: What are your first priorities as Architect of the Capitol?

A: My initial priorities will center around our human capital. We will transform the culture to one of transparency, accountability and responsiveness; harassment of any form will not be tolerated; we will work to better

attract and retain a skilled workforce; and we will begin using decision-quality data to drive both budgetary and project management decisions.

Q: What are the lessons you have learned that you hope to bring to the AOC?

A: It is wisest to approach any issue collaboratively until a decision is required. Then make decisive decisions.

Q: What do you want AOC employees to know most about you?

A: I expect candid and straightforward answers to questions I ask. I will always be straightforward when engaging our personnel, so I require the same in return.

Q: How would you describe your style of leadership?

A: My leadership philosophy can best be described as empowering and inclusive. Although responsibility will always remain with me, I believe in delegating authority to practicable levels within an organization. As such, workforce managers will feel more empowered and take more pride and ownership for their day-to-day activities. The results of empowering the workforce include the ability to make accelerated facility decisions and improved customer service.

Q: What do you like to do for fun when you're not at work?

A: I enjoy working out. I need to because one of my other passions is smoking meat.

Q: What's the best book you've read in the last year?

A: I often reread "Lincoln on Leadership." It is an easy read so I would recommend it to everyone. However, I recently read "Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln" by Doris Kearns Goodwin. There are key lessons to take away from Lincoln's leadership philosophies such as: collaborating, understanding other points of view, surrounding yourself with people who will challenge you, standing up for deeply held principles, and being bold or decisive when needed.





Communications and Congressional Relations
U.S. Capitol, Room SB-16
Washington, DC 20515

Tholos Winter 2020

The Architect of the Capitol strives to meet its mission 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to **serve** Congress and the Supreme Court, **preserve** America's Capitol, and **inspire** memorable experiences for all who visit the buildings and grounds.

Tholos is distributed by the Architect of the Capitol primarily for AOC employees. Questions regarding content and publication should be directed to AOC Communications and Congressional Relations at communications@aoc.gov, 202.228.1793, or U.S. Capitol, Room SB-16, Washington, DC 20515.

JOIN AOC ONLINE:

[Twitter.com/uscapitol](https://twitter.com/uscapitol)
[Facebook.com/architectofthecapitol](https://facebook.com/architectofthecapitol)
[Instagram.com/uscapitol](https://instagram.com/uscapitol)
[YouTube.com/uscapitol](https://youtube.com/uscapitol)
www.aoc.gov

FRONT COVER: Photo by
Thomas Hatzenbuehler

BACK PHOTO: Photo by
AOC Photo Branch

