

ABSTRACT

Title of dissertation: THE CHILDREN WHO RAN FOR
CONGRESS AND THE SCHOOL UP ON
THE HILL: AN ORAL-INSTITUTIONAL
HISTORY OF CAPITOL PAGE SCHOOL,
1926-1983

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Although the corpus of work on Congressional history is impressive, there is one aspect of life inside the Capitol that has been neglected for over 200 years. Young messenger boys, or Pages, have worked for Congress since its early sessions but have never received much attention. This dissertation traces the evolution of Capitol Page School and by doing so, also follows the evolution of the larger Page system. The purpose of the study is to find out what the historical record can reveal about the history of Capitol Page School. Once that story is told, conclusions can be drawn about things like institutional inertia in Congress, preserving tradition, unusual childhood occupations and informal civic education, among others.

Using both a documents review and an oral history approach allowed for a rich description of the evolution of Capitol Page School. Chapter Two reports on Page culture before 1926, concentrating on the relationships between Members of Congress and the boys, and how Pages formed their own culture and community as adjuncts of the Congress. Chapter Three examines the social conditions that were

present in the 1920s which forced the formation of a school specifically for Pages inside the Capitol, run as a private enterprise by an individual teacher, and the subsequent attempts to continue the school. Chapter Four describes how Senator Harold Burton intervened to improve conditions at Capitol Page School, and also includes a previously unknown cache of information and behind-the-scenes maneuvering. Chapter Five explains the physical move of the school and then traces the substantial legislation that Congress failed to pass in order to give Pages an official residence to live in, and describes the precarious nature of the school. Chapter Six gives special attention to three noteworthy subcultures within the Page system: girls, African-Americans and Supreme Court Pages, and describes how each group began and received special consideration. Chapter Seven reports on how Capitol Page School was forced to dissolve in the early 1980s and how two new schools were formed to replace it. Chapter Eight discusses what can be learned from the historical record.

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THE SCHOOL UP ON THE HILL:
AN ORAL-INSTITUTIONAL HISTORY OF
CAPITOL PAGE SCHOOL, 1926-1983

by

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Laws and institutions must go hand in hand with the progress of the human mind. As that becomes more developed, more enlightened, as new discoveries are made, new truths disclosed, and manners and opinions change with the change of circumstances, institutions must advance also, and keep pace with the times.

~Thomas Jefferson to
Samuel Kercheval, 1816

CHAPTER ONE: OVERVIEW

Introduction

When Congress convened for the first time in Washington in 1800, and probably even before that dating back to the First Continental Congress in 1774, young messenger boys, or Pages, were assisting legislators in routine tasks from running errands and delivering messages to filling water glasses and sharpening quill pens. Pages quickly proved to be an important ancillary group, necessary for the daily functioning of the legislative branch of the federal government, providing a vital service in both Chambers of Congress and eventually in the Supreme Court. As time went on, Pages created a unique community within Congress, becoming a Washington institution inside the Capitol as established as the Congress itself. Even though they stayed mostly out of the spotlight, their contributions made them integral adjuncts to the Congress, although the boys were as young as seven years old and rarely older than 18.

Even though there is a significant corpus of work on Congressional history, when authors wrote about Congress, it was unusual for them to give any more attention to Pages than a passing comment because there were always so many higher-profile subjects available to write about. Pages are truly the unsung heroes of American federal government because they have never been recognized with any sort of significant historical treatment, and very little is known about them-- a curious fact, given that they are an anomaly in plain view every day in an environment that receives as much scrutiny as any organization in the country.

This study serves to illuminate the hidden history of Pages, focusing specifically on the school that they attended from 1926 to 1983, Capitol Page School. Since the school cannot be explained in isolation, as a by-product of explaining the evolution of the school, the history of the larger Page system in which the school operated is also documented.

Part One: Preview

The attempts by Congress to provide traditional education for its Pages resulted in a unique school that faced a precarious future many times throughout its history. The inherent conflict between the experience of working for Congress as a Page and how that experience encroached on the boys' classroom education was always present, always with their jobs taking priority over their schoolwork. In its early years, the Page system was run by an ambivalent Congress, yet later it produced periods of in-fighting when Congressional decision makers who wanted to make significant changes in the system could not do so. The system was thus greatly contested at times, and both the system and the school were under regular scrutiny because key policymakers had differing viewpoints.

There are many different sub-plots in this volume and it is difficult to choose only one that describes everything that happened in the history of Pages. One of the most obvious themes running through the evolution of the school is a story of the Page system being broken for decades, yet changing only minimally, and the things that were in disrepair not getting fixed. For example, Congress was sponsoring a boarding school for several decades, yet Congress could not overcome the inertia needed to provide a supervised boarding facility. This is only one of several

examples where Congress could not make significant changes in the Page system, illustrating how an institution remains stable through time.

The contrast between continuity and change weaves its way through this work from beginning to end. In an organization that can change easily, this dissertation shows how Congress was instead resistant to change for many years in relation to the Page system, and when changes finally did occur, they were usually only marginal changes and even those were met with resistance. Take for example, the word “Page.” It conjures up images of old England and King Arthur’s court. Congress began using the term in the 1830s, yet for a new federal government that wanted to distance itself from England, it is curious that the title “Page” has endured for so long. This story is one in which a system is preserved due to institutional inertia, either by design or by lack of interest in changing.

Although institutional inertia is the most obvious screen through which to view this work, when talking about how responsive Congress was to change, there are other ways to view this history. One could easily view this study as one about an institution protecting itself and its traditions; how only marginal changes are made in an organization’s own self-interest to demonstrate compliance, in this case, with laws it passed itself. One can also look at other themes such as how politics was used as a work apprenticeship, or how Congress supported (or did not support) the lifestyle for a unique childhood occupation. It is a story of mandatory education that Pages were forced to pay for; it is a story of the patronage system in Congress and how it was the sentiment of Congress to use the Page system as a pseudo social-rescue program at times; it is an illustration of how children’s formal education in America was

considered secondary to their work until the first part of the 20th century, although for Pages, work always was more important than school; it is a story about institutional rivalry between House and Senate; it is a story of how the Page system went from an informal system to help families financially to a highly formal system, and how that system became institutionalized over time; it is a story of how Congress allowed a school to operate in the basement of the Capitol, run by an individual as his private business, until the school was handed over to education professionals-- only until Congress decided it could run a lone private school more effectively than education professionals who ran scores of other schools.

Another way to view this study is to say that Congress used the rationale of giving a small number of children a real-world experience in informal civic education to defend its exploitation of child labor. It is a story of how child labor laws affected life inside the Capitol; it is a story that shows to what degree the federal government served (or did not serve) *in loco parentis* for the small number of minors it employed. It is a study of the effect that one person can have (in the case of Senator Burton) or cannot have (in the case of Congresswoman Green) on the evolution of an organization; and it is an examination of the difficulty Congress sometimes has in passing legislation because informal and unrecorded deals are made.

It is also a story of how Congress provided experiential civic education to a small number of minors, something that is often used to explain why the Page system exists; however, the civic education that Pages received was so informal that it occurred only through the nature of the job itself. Maybe Pages were close to Members both physically and collegially but what they gained in terms of civic

education never was assessed and there is no body of evidence or research to determine if Pages were actually learning anything civic-related, or if their childhood involvement in government as Pages spurred them on to become civically involved as adults more than people who were not Pages. Therefore, any conclusions about the worth of the Page system because it provides meaningful civic education for a select few are solely conjecture.

At its core, this is a study of how Congress could not overcome institutional inertia to make needed changes in the Page system and how Congress was able to maintain tradition in the face of internal and external pressure to change. At certain points in the school's evolution, that pressure was intense, yet the consistent response from Congress was to change only marginally or not at all because mechanisms within Congress bogged down any attempts for significant change.

Part Two: The Written Records

Historians and political scholars have written countless volumes on the history of Congress and the Supreme Court. Most of them fail to capture a concise and vivid picture of what they intend to capture because when writing about Congress, choosing and maintaining the proper focus and emphasis are especially problematic.¹ Adding to the problem of writing histories of Congress is an inescapable paradox: the volumes of printed material obscure the informal record, that is, all those personal relationships, deals and compromises made in private which sometimes never are revealed.²

Most comprehensive reviews of Congress as a whole, or of the House or Senate separately, include not a word about Pages.³ Other books mention Pages

briefly for one or two paragraphs out of the entire book; for example, Robert Remini's comprehensive "The House" has a four-paragraph appendix, giving a cursory history and telling briefly about Pages of today.⁴ Writers have studied, dissected and analyzed seemingly everything about Congress and the Supreme Court including the committee system, the respective procedures in each Chamber, the role of leadership posts, the Senate filibuster and even the Senate press gallery.⁵ To date, none has given much attention to Pages at all, and certainly none has reviewed the comprehensive history of Capitol Page School.

There are several personal memoirs from ex-Pages and extended magazine articles that are useful in stitching together a history. These memoirs and magazine articles give varying levels of attention and detail to the years these young boys spent working in the Capitol, oftentimes focusing on the rest of their lives instead.⁶ While useful to gain a first-person perspective, they have limitations too since each account is unabashedly self-centered. They also lack the analysis and sometimes the maturity and proper perspective to be very informative; learning from an ex-Page that Daniel Webster was a good speaker is not ground-breaking. However, the memoirs do contain nuggets of useful information and serve as an important piece of the bigger puzzle.

There is also a series of several reports written by Mildred Amer for the Congressional Research Service, the nonpartisan branch within the Library of Congress that provides policy analysis to Members.⁷ These reports provide well-researched facts and chronologies about Page life, and although they report on a variety of topics, they do so in a relatively superficial and mechanical way. While

they provide only brief synopses of the history of Pages, they are more useful because they cite many pieces of legislation which in turn reference other Congressional documents. This was useful because it made it easier in tracing the history of certain legislation and events which are important in the evolution of Capitol Page School, information that can be otherwise difficult to discover.

Oftentimes, when information about Pages has been prepared for public consumption, it fixates on the same things that have previously been written about. Those stories include the appointment of Grafton Dulaney Hanson as the first Senate Page in the late 1820s, the first black Page, the first female Page, or the sensational events in the Page system in the early 1980s. Also, stories about former Pages who later became Members, various stories about Isaac Bassett, certain initiation rites that Pages went through and their special duties are all repeated time and again, even when they are incorrect. For example, it is reported in countless sources that Hanson was appointed in 1828 on the recommendations of Senators Daniel Webster and Henry Clay. However, the historical record clearly shows that Clay was not even in the Senate in 1828, yet that story is repeated over and over as fact. This dissertation goes well beyond those few often-repeated stories and provides a comprehensive and in-depth look into the history of not only Capitol Page School, but also the history of entire Page system and legislation having to do with Pages, and it includes what heretofore have been unknown caches of information, allowing for a better understanding of Capitol Page School.

There are two sources that merit special mention because they deal exclusively with Pages. Bill Severn's book "Democracy's Messengers," dedicated

solely to Pages, is a respectable description of the Page system and its history, with chapters dedicated to separate topics.⁸ Unfortunately, it is written on a middle-school level, with huge gaps in the story, which are either left vacant or filled in by Severn's imagination. (Severn's other books, mostly about magic and famous political figures, are also aimed at an adolescent audience.) Relying heavily on the few commonly-referenced Congressional documents regarding Pages, the book simply repeats much of what had already been written and is only marginally useful here. The second, Senator Robert Byrd's floor speech in 1980 about Senate Pages, is reproduced in a special volume of Senate history that compiles the many speeches Byrd gave over the years concerning Senate history.⁹ Byrd does a yeoman's job of describing the evolution of Senate Pages, although much of what he offers relies on the few memoirs described above and Severn's book, and it focuses largely on the tomfoolery that Pages were involved in, and leaves out the important events in the evolution of Capitol Page School.

Usually, when there is information written about the history of Pages, it is a single newspaper article, a few lines of text, a stray Congressional report or a random mention of them in a book or in someone's personal papers in an archive. In the archive I have compiled for this study, consisting of well over 1,000 separate documents, most sources are only one-page documents. The information that needed to be extracted was buried in a myriad of documents related to Congress, and this dissertation excavates the pertinent information from those disparate sources and weaves them together to tell the history of the school through analysis and interpretation.

Part Three: Methodology

DATA GATHERING

To tell a history of Capitol Page School, it was necessary to explore many sources of information. There are assorted depositories both in Washington and across the country that were helpful in providing the raw data used to construct the history. Some of the offices are the Senate Curator's Office, the National Archives, the Senate Library, the Legislative Resource Center, various Presidential Libraries, the Curator of the Architect of the Capitol, the Archivist of the Architect of the Capitol, Congressional Research Service, the Sumner Archive and Museum, the Curator of the Supreme Court and the Library of Congress. I also used several databases at the Library of Congress to search newspapers and magazine articles, dating to the early 1800s. Because there is so little written exclusively about Pages, the data were mined from these other unrelated sources, and then they were put together in what I hope is a coherent manner in order to tell the comprehensive evolution of Page School.

Data collection occurred over the course of several years, including several follow-up visits to each office to obtain whatever material it had regarding Pages. I then catalogued all of the materials chronologically in a master file system. I also cross-referenced much of the material according to subject, so that it was easier to find things on a given subject in a timely way. Through this, I became familiar with the reams of material, re-reading much of the data, so that I became an expert on the contents of my collection and I could locate a particular item relatively quickly when I needed to. I then took notes on each item, and because they were in chronological

order, I was better able to determine the evolution of Page School over time, and I was better able to determine cause and effect, make sense of the events and put them together to tell the story of the school.

Primary and secondary sources were as varied as the places they were located. Starting in 1942, school yearbooks gave a good look at life at the school; however, many other sources were helpful too. Things like the *Congressional Record*, articles from newspapers across the country and magazine articles, photographs, official reports, diaries and memoirs, Congressional Committee hearings, school handbooks, accreditation reports and excerpts from books, among other things, all added to the body of knowledge about Capitol Page School. I also found several primary sources that were previously unknown to the above offices. I feel confident that I did a thorough job with collecting data, and I doubt that there is significant published information about Pages that I do not know about or have in my archive, although local newspapers may still have articles that I did not access, since they are not yet indexed digitally and are too difficult to access.

INTERVIEWS

Because the documents review can tell only a part of the story, it was necessary to use interviews to fill in the gaps that existed in the documents. I conducted interviews with former Pages and people connected to Page School, and I included their comments to help breathe life into the story and to give a perspective on how things were that is unavailable in any written record. The interviews I completed gave me an almost unbroken representation of Page life dating back to 1923. Once the documents review was complete, I was better able to have an

informed conversation with each interviewee. Each interview was transcribed, and each interviewee had the opportunity to read over the transcript for accuracy and clarification. The full set of interviews is in the public domain.

I spoke with 46 different people, completing 52 interviews. The total time for the interviews is almost 48 hours of recorded conversation, and includes almost 1,100 pages of transcripts. I interviewed 26 House Pages, eight Senate Pages, eight Supreme Court Pages and five school teachers/principal both on the phone and at their homes. Most of the interviews took place in the greater Washington area; however, one in-person interview was conducted in Colorado. I also interviewed two current Members of Congress who started their Congressional careers as Pages. The complete details of the interviews are given in Appendix Six.

Part Four: Limitations and Delimitations

While the study tells a history of the Congressional attempt to provide education for Pages, it is not inclusive of every event the school experienced nor of all Pages' experiences since not every Page can be included. It is the story of only one specific school, bounded and situated in a very specific setting. What is found in the historical documents, the information from former students and school personnel and my own analysis and interpretation of events reinforce the uniqueness of the school, and bring the variables studied to the surface.

Also, there was not a truly random sampling of Pages throughout the life of the school. The study included interviews with those former Pages who were willing to give one, based largely on accessibility, schedules and geographic convenience. Some interviewees are former Pages who have remained connected to the current

Page system instead of sliding into obscurity. The caveat here is that these former Pages may be the ones who had positive experiences in Washington and who give a depiction of the school through a categorically positive screen (although the opposite could be true too).

Obviously, the study is narrowed in scope by writing about the things that I have chosen to include; a day-by-day record of the last 220 years is not practical nor desirable. Some things I left out, and I tried to choose only those items that were especially salient in order to illuminate a meaningful history; therefore, this study should be considered *a* history of Capitol Page School, not *the* history of the school because of my interpretation of what the historical record reveals about the evolution of the school.

Part Five: Chapter Preview

This study describes the evolving approaches by Congress to provide traditional classroom learning for its Pages and discusses the various transformations of Capitol Page School. To provide context for the school's beginnings, Chapter Two describes Page culture and the community of Pages prior to 1926, when Page School began, a time when the boys were responsible for their own education; there was little to compel them to attend night school during a period when Congressional involvement in Pages' education was negligible. Chapter Three then describes the start of the formal intervention of Congress in educating Pages and the formation of Page School, including the social climate which made the formation of the school possible in 1926. The school, passively sponsored by Congress, continued to operate in the Capitol undisturbed and largely unnoticed until the mid-1940s, during a period

when Congress maintained its marked ambivalence toward it. Chapter Four picks up where Chapter Three leaves off and describes how Senator Harold Burton intervened to improve the poor conditions at the school, and describes the series of events that his involvement had, including how and why Congress contracted with the District of Columbia Board of Education to run the school beginning in 1947. Chapter Five begins with the physical move of the school from the Capitol to the Library of Congress and continues to describe the school's evolution through the 1970s, including the housing situation that Pages faced, and how different groups within Congress were in an almost-constant battle for control of the Page system. It also examines how this exclusive private school was run by a public Board of Education as one of its schools, paid to do so by Congress with federal money, and how the school was able to survive in its unique environment. Also, Chapter Five describes how the school gave its students a solid educational experience through the 1960s, and how that changed with the hiring of a new principal in 1969. Chapter Six reports on how certain groups within the Page system were marginalized and it explains the histories of girl Pages and black Pages and the delays that Congress created to maintain the status quo, preventing it from being anything close to contemporary. It also explains how Supreme Court Pages had an advantage when it came to doing schoolwork, and other ways they were treated differently. Chapter Seven relies largely on oral histories to describe how the lack of change finally backfired on the entire Congress. Events within the Page system in 1982 caused Congress to act swiftly and decisively to create two new schools to replace Capitol Page School. Chapter Eight discusses implications and what can be learned from this history.

Notes

1. Kenneth Kato and Elizabeth Rybicki, "Congressional History: A Literature Review," *Organization of American Historians Magazine of History*, Summer 1998, 5.
2. Anna Nelson, "The Historian's Dilemma," in *Understanding Congress: Research Perspectives*, Roger Davidson and Richard Sachs (Eds.), House Document No. 101-241, 101st Cong., 2nd Sess., (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 63.
3. There are too many examples to list but among them are: Richard Baker, *The Senate of the United States: A Bicentennial History*, (Malabar, FL: Krieger Publishing, 1988); James Currie, *The United States House of Representatives*, (Malabar, FL: Krieger Publishing, 1988); George Galloway, *History of the House of Representatives*, (New York: Thomas Crowell, 1976); Bernard Schwartz, *A History of the Supreme Court*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); House, *History of the United States House of Representatives*, 87th Cong., 1st Sess., House Document No. 246, 15 September 1961; Neil MacNeil, *Forge of Democracy: The House of Representatives*, (New York: Van Rees Press, 1963).
4. Lewis Gould, *The Most Exclusive Club: A History of the United States Senate*, (New York: Basic Books, 2005); Alvin Josephy, *On the Hill: A History of the American Congress*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979); Alvin Josephy, *The Congress of the United States*, (New York: American Heritage Publishing Co., 1975); Robert Remini, *The House: The History of the House of Representatives*, (Washington: Smithsonian Books, 2006).
5. For examples of treatments on these topics, see Lauros McConachie, *Congressional Committees: A Study of the Origin and Development of Our National and Local Legislative Methods*, (New York: Crowell, 1898); DeAlva Stanwood Alexander, *History and Procedure of the House of Representatives*, (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1916); Ronald Peters, *The American Speakership: The Office in Historical Perspective*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990); Sarah Binder and Steven Smith, *Politics or Principle?: Filibustering in the United States Senate*, (Washington: Brookings Institute, 1997); Donald Ritchie, *Press Gallery: Congress and the Washington Correspondents*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991).
6. Among them are: Baker Jamison, *Memories of Great Men and Events, 1840-1861* (New York: Broadway Publishing, 1917); Christian Eckloff, *Memoirs of a Senate Page* (New York: Broadway Publishing, 1909); Richard Riedel, *Halls of the Mighty*, (Washington: R.B. Luce, 1969); Augustus Thomas, *Print of My Remembrance* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1922); Frank Madison, *A View From the Floor: The Journal of a U.S. Senate Page Boy*, (Englewood Cliffs, N. J: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1967); Edmund Alton, *Among the Law-Makers*, (New York:

Charles Scribner's Sons, 1915); David Barry, *Forty Years in Washington*, (Brown Publishers, 1924); Albert Losche, *Washington Memoirs*, (Indianapolis: Indianapolis Printing Co., 1940).

7. There is a series of these reports, but the most recent salient report is: Mildred Amer, *Pages of the United States Congress*, Congressional Research Service Report 90-470, 27 September 1990.

8. Bill Severn, *Democracy's Messengers: The Capitol Pages*, (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1975).

9. Robert Byrd, "Senate Pages," in *The Senate, 1789-1989: Addresses on the History of the United States Senate, Vol. 2*, (United States Printing Office, Washington: 1991), 375-390.

To every youngster of the sterner sex who has been a gallery witness of the doings of Congress, there has probably come a longing to be a Page in one of the legislative chambers of the nation. Perhaps no greater advantage can fall early to the lot of a boy cut off from the possibilities of scholastic training than to be selected for one to the junior houses of Congress, and I doubt whether any employment can better gratify the characteristic vanity of youth, the instinctive love of conspicuity burning the breast of every wholesome lad who has doffed pinafores. It is no mean apprenticeship wherein one may touch elbows with the giants of future history. These youthful Mercuries of the congressional halls are placed by fortune at the best possible vantage points to tempt the personal favor of the powerful functionaries who make and fill responsible offices.

~John Elfreth Watkins, Jr. "Pages in Congress, They are the Envy of All American Boys," *Washington Evening Star*, 24 May 1902, 24.

CHAPTER TWO: THE HISTORICAL ANTECEDENTS AND CULTURE OF PAGES, 1774 TO 1926

Introduction

A popular premise in historical studies is that the people, events and ideas that are involved in the study cannot be understood apart from the historical contexts in which they exist, and therefore, that context needs to be studied in order to understand the wholeness of the experience.¹ Therefore, to understand and appreciate the formation and evolution of Capitol Page School beginning in the late 1920s, it is important to recognize what was happening regarding House, Senate and Supreme Court Pages prior to that.² By reporting on the past as closely as possible, and by interpreting and explaining the significant events involved before formal education for Pages existed, a fuller understanding of Pages and Capitol Page School can be reached. Therefore, the chapter examines the non-involvement of Congress in Page education and the culture of Pages during the pre-1926 time period. Because not everything that has been written about Pages can be included here, and because the quintessential elements of being a Page remained remarkably constant during this period, the chapter employs a thematic approach to try and bring to life the experience of being a Congressional Page.

The chapter starts by looking at the origins of Pages serving Congress. It then examines the distinct culture of Pages which emerged, and the nature of the community of Pages that formed, documenting who Pages were during this period. Included in this is a discussion of the traditions and pastimes that became popular, mostly amusing vignettes of the mischief that Pages became involved in, thereby

defining their culture. Last, it will discuss the emphasis, or more accurately, the lack of emphasis, that was placed on Pages' schooling by an indifferent Congress.

Because the chapter covers some 150 years, the events described do not always move in a chronological, linear fashion. A chronological approach would produce a disjointed and confusing narrative, so, as depicted here, how Congress dealt with its Pages is an amalgamation of events during the time period, though the years of these events are oftentimes given to provide the reader with reference points. Because the duties of Pages and the nature of the Page system remained remarkably static for this 150-year time period, it is sensible to take a thematic approach since the events themselves are the salient characteristics of the time period, not the specific chronology of when they occurred within the time period.

Part One: America's Founding Fathers, and Her Founding Boys

CONGRESSIONAL MESSENGERS BEFORE 1800

The genesis of Pages can be found in the genesis of American federal government. As the Founding Fathers began to experiment with the idea of American democracy, they felt that they needed support staff to do the menial tasks they did not want to do themselves. There are five critical points in the formation of our federal government discussed here, and in each of them, the predecessors of Pages are prominently featured.

The roots of the Page community can be discovered in the embryonic stages of our federal government in September 1774, when the First Continental Congress met in Philadelphia to protest the Intolerable Acts, a series of laws that England passed in response to the Boston Tea Party the previous December. On the third day

the Congress met, it “ordered, That Isaac Lefevre and James Lynch, be employed as Door-Keepers and messengers to this Congress.”³

After adjourning in October 1774, the Congress met again in May 1775. The Second Continental Congress did not wait as long as the First to appoint a messenger, and on the first day of its session, “Andrew McNeare was also chosen door-keeper, and William Shed, messenger.”⁴

Twelve years later, when the Federal Convention of 1787 met in Independence Hall in Philadelphia, the first order of business was to elect a President. The Deputies elected George Washington, Esquire, and escorted him to his chair in the front of the room. Second, Washington proposed that a Secretary be chosen; third, they appointed one Nicholas Weaver to the position of Messenger, reinforcing the importance of having a messenger on hand for legislative activity.⁵

After America fought for its independence from England, and decided to set up its bicameral federal government, the Senate began meeting in March 1789. However, it took until April for the Senate to attain a quorum so that it could transact official business. On the first day of having a quorum, the Senate counted the votes for President and Vice President, determining that George Washington and John Adams had won those positions. On the second day, the Senate elected a doorkeeper, and on the third day, “the Senate proceeded to elect a Messenger, and Cornelius Maxwell was appointed.”⁶

In the House of Representatives, there is no mention of appointing messengers in the first session of the first Congress, but messengers surely existed, because midway through the first session, compensation for the Sergeant at Arms, messengers and

doorkeepers was a topic of discussion.⁷ Also, procedures for a messenger accepting or delivering messages had already been described earlier in the first session.⁸

In all five of these critical points in American history, where the federal government had its beginnings and determined how it should operate, messengers were on hand from even the early stages. The leadership of the governmental bodies recognized that messengers were vital to the day-to-day functioning of their organizations, and they took time to make sure that messengers were in place to help. These decisions to employ messengers early in American history planted the first seeds for the blossoming of Pages that came later. The Founding Fathers deemed it important enough to spend time on, even in the midst of a maelstrom of larger legislative decisions.

THE FIRST SENATE PAGES

It is widely reported and equally celebrated in Congressional historical accounts that the first Senate Page was nine year-old Grafton Dulaney Hanson, who started his service in December 1829, a time when “office making and office giving became the rage of the hour.”⁹ Hanson later wrote an account of how he was appointed in the Senate: “My Grandfather, General Mountjoy Bayly, was . . . Sergeant At Arms of the Senate and I, very much spoiled and petted by him, was appointed the first Page.”¹⁰ Almost any time an account of the first Senate Page is written, there is a reference to Hanson’s being appointed “on the austere recommendation” of Senators Daniel Webster and Henry Clay; however, since Clay was not even in the Senate in 1829, one must question the validity of that

information, and rest of the story too. A closer look at official records reveals more than this oft-repeated story tells.

Hanson is listed in the 1831 Secretary of the Senate's Report as a Senate employee, earning \$1.50 per day.¹¹ He is listed in the Secretary's Report for the first time chronologically in 1830 in the same place, along with another person, one James Tims, both of whom are reported to be "employed in the Senate."¹² However, their titles are not listed, and since Messengers are listed immediately before them at \$2.00 per day, they could not have been Messengers, but had to be doing something less prestigious that earned a lower pay than a Messenger, something like a Page.

Working backward from 1830, Tims also appears in the 1829 Report in the same place, earning the same \$1.50 per day, listed as being "employed in the Senate,"



Photo 1 Drawing of Grafton Hanson as an adult. *New York Herald, 19 March 1893, 32.*

identical to the 1830 report, while Hanson does not appear at all.¹³

One would assume that if Hanson was a Page as listed in the 1830 Report, and as he reported himself, then so was James Tims in the 1829 Report, making Tims a Page earlier than Hanson. Although not proof, there is also a James Tims buried in Congressional

Cemetery, who would have been 17 years old in 1829, providing for the possibility that a young man was doing the work of a Page before Hanson, although his official title cannot be determined.¹⁴

In 1822, a Tobias Simpson earned \$1.50 per day working as a "Messenger to the Office of the Secretary of the Senate during the recess of the Senate," although he was earning the \$2.00 per day rate as messenger while the Senate was in session.¹⁵

Also, there are two other references that pre-date Hanson in the 1823 Secretary of the

Senate's Expense Report that are salient to the discussion; one for "George Hicks, for services in preparing Senate chamber \$40.00," and one for "W. Fadewithe, services preparing Senate chamber."¹⁶ Lastly, there is further evidence that someone was doing the work of Pages much earlier than Hanson in the Senate: each of three people given the title "attendant" was paid \$150 in 1800.¹⁷ Though it cannot be shown that the people who did this work were specifically called Pages, or that they were young boys and not adults, it is clear that the Senate was fully supporting employment for people who were doing the same work as the young boys who were later called Pages.

When Asbury Dickins first became Secretary of the Senate in 1836, the term "messenger" was officially changed to "Page" in financial records, and the first "Pages" were Joseph Iardella, whose father was a stonecutter working at the Capitol, Joseph Follansbee, John Caldwell and Andrew Jackson Hurdle.¹⁸ A logical explanation for the change in title can be found by learning about Dickins' employment history. Dickins, who was born in North Carolina, "was appointed Chancellor in the office of the United States consul at London" at the age of 27.¹⁹ Over the next several years, Dickins served in a subordinate role in London, where he was passed over for promotions at different times. When he returned to America, he lost a vote for Senate Secretary before being elected to that position. Once elected, he made it his duty to improve the efficiency of the office, initiating a re-organization and writing job descriptions for each position.²⁰ Even though he served as Senate Secretary for 25 years, his tenure is remembered in the administrative history of the office. It must have been during this process that he made the change from

“Messenger” to “Page” since he must have been familiar with English Pages who worked not only in Parliament but also in the private homes of wealthy English families. He may have wanted to personalize the office during the re-organization and one of the things he did was to differentiate between “Messengers” and “Pages” and their respective duties, and made the American federal government more like the English system by making the change in title.

The ambiguity in titles in the 1800s is supported later by Isaac Bassett, who is celebrated officially as the second Senate Page appointed. Bassett worked in the Senate Chamber for 64 years, the first seven as a Page, then as messenger and Assistant Doorkeeper, and he was able to secure his original appointment as Page when his father worked as Messenger in the Senate in the 1820s. He is quoted in a magazine article late in his career explaining the evolution of Pages, saying that “the messengers . . . performed the duties of Pages up until 1827, when the first Page [Hanson] was appointed” (even though he was two years off).²¹

THE FIRST HOUSE PAGES AND THE FIRST SUPREME COURT PAGE

In the House edition of the *Congressional Record*, there is no mention of appointing Pages in the early Congresses, but one writer establishes that the House was also employing young boys in the Chamber in its early years. Christian Hines wrote, “I was in the gallery of the House of Representatives when the first session of Congress was held here in 1800 or 1801. . . . At this time, I believe, Mr. Claxton was the door-keeper, and his two sons and a nephew were the only Pages in the House.”²² It would make sense that Hines saw boys, who may have been called “Messengers” at the time, doing their work in the House Chamber in 1800, and wrote about it 65 years

later calling them Pages, since that is what they were called when he wrote it. Also, at least part of what Hines wrote can be corroborated. Thomas Claxton was the Assistant Doorkeeper in 1793, and became Doorkeeper in 1795, a position he held until 1821.²³ The earliest verification of someone getting paid in the House for performing Page work is when six messengers who earned \$200 in 1808 were listed in a report several years later.²⁴ Knowing the institutional rivalry between the two Chambers, if the House was employing boys as Pages (or messengers) in 1800, then the Senate probably was too.

Some of the Expense Reports of the Clerk of the House from the period also add to what we know about the early Pages in the House. In 1823, there are Messengers listed in the Expense Report who were paid \$2.00 a day as they were in the Senate, but then immediately following their names is a note: “There are also two

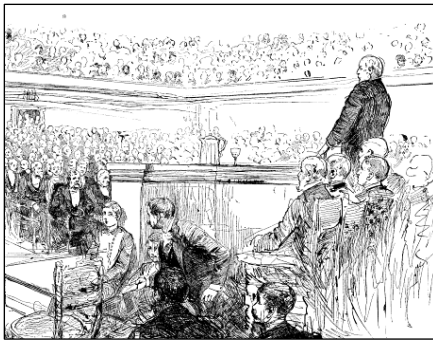


Photo 2 Pages ready on the rostrum. *Century Magazine*, April 1883, 815.

boys, employed in the Hall, as runners, &c” named Irvine Dunn and Charles B. Chalmers who earned \$1.00 per day.²⁵ A year later, that note changed to, “Two boys are also employed as runners, or attendants, in the Hall,” who were again Dunn and Chalmers.²⁶ Also, an obituary in 1892, listed a James Dobbyn, born in 1806 as being a Page and working in the Capitol for 30 years. Even if he was 15, relatively old for a Page, he would have served in 1821, well before the “first” Pages were appointed.²⁷

In 1838, the House authored a report that reveals more of the history of Pages in the early years. The report states that “with respect to the boys or Pages . . . the committee learn, by inquiry from the old officers of the House, that, certainly as early as the first session that Congress assembled in the city of Washington, it has been the practice to employ boys to attend in the House. At the [first] session . . . it is known that one at least was employed . . . The construction of the Hall, the seats and tables of the Members, and the manner of transacting business, render the service of such attendants indispensably necessary.”²⁸ This report formally ensconced their place in history. The House decided to employ “not less than ten of those who are rated and paid as boys” because there was enough work for at least that many of them to perform.²⁹ This included a Page exclusively for the Speaker, one for the Clerk and two (one on each side) to run between the rostrum and the Members who were “offering business to the House.”³⁰ Messengers were placed under the direction of the Doorkeeper, and Pages were placed under the direction of the Clerk because “the committee observe that, as the duties of these appendages are more closely and intimately connected with the business which passes to and from the Clerk and the Speaker.”³¹ This report is official evidence that the employment of Pages was solidly established with boys doing the work of Pages in 1800, although they were not called Pages until later, and this information is corroborated.

In 1841, the House released a similar report which stated that there were three Pages present in the 20th Congress (1827-29), and further cemented the use of young boys in the Chamber.³² The report states that from the origin of the government in 1789, messengers were used, and the “use of boys, or Pages, was introduced at a later

period; but, from the first session of Congress held at the city of Washington, they have continued to be employed, with the approbation of the House. The ready transaction of the business of the House, the committee believe, indispensably requires the services of such attendants.”³³ Therefore, in the House, Messengers were present from the very beginning, and young boys appeared, probably when Congress moved to Washington in 1800.

In the Supreme Court, Pages were used much later, but the particulars of its first Page are much less ambiguous. Eleven year-old James D. Maher worked as a messenger at the Supreme Court and was hired on May 20, 1867. He worked for three years as a messenger and was “not carried as a Page until May 1870.”³⁴ He later became Clerk of the Court. Supreme Court Pages received much less attention in the press, and usually were grouped with Congressional Pages as a whole, if they were mentioned at all.

For the purposes of this study, it is in fact insignificant who was the first Page, or when the first Page was appointed, or when “messengers” switched to “Pages.” What *is* significant is that from the first Congress, and even before that, we can see that the sentiment of having Pages around was established, with people doing the work that Pages did in both Chambers. Whether they were called messengers or Pages, and whether they were old men, young men or boys, there were people, and it seems like they were young boys, attending to both Chambers and to the legislators in them. That is the important part since it establishes the origin of the Page tradition, a tradition that continues today.

Part Two: Who Pages Were

USING YOUNG BOYS AS PAGES

One of the defining variables of the Page community in the 1800s was the age of the boys. One reason for using young boys and not older boys, or even grown men, to do the work that Pages did can be explained by thinking about the difficulty that each group would face in carrying out their work. Physically, a larger person



Photo 3 Depiction of Page during Senate session. This painting is on the ceiling of the Capitol. *Jim Oliver.*

would not be as fleet-footed as a young boy. A larger person would not be able to dart in between the desks to hand a bill to a Member or to make a quiet exit to call a Member back into the Chamber for an important vote. An older boy would not be responsive as a younger one.

This is described in a magazine article in 1835:

“While the House is sitting, neatly-dressed boys

run about carrying messages between the Members, or between the clerks and the Members, and delivering such letters or papers as may be necessary. . . . The employment of little boys in this manner is attended with the advantage, that they are much less in the way of the speakers or Members, and can move about among the desks without deranging the papers. When a Member rises to speak, one of the boys runs for a glass of water which he places on the desk, in case the orator should need such refreshment while speaking.”³⁵

Young boys, it would seem, would think that this type of work was fun and that they were doing something special, yet an older boy probably would think it was

boring and tiresome. From a Member's point of view, it seems sensible to think that he would want a young, inexperienced and impressionable boy around them all the time, doing the menial tasks that they did not want to do themselves, instead of a mature and knowledgeable older boy, who may question them and be less obedient and possibly be more of an annoyance than a help.

Another rationale for using young boys in the Senate is provided by another author: "The Senatorial temperament demands unsophisticated youth as a complement to its wisdom and profundity. Hence the Page of the more dignified legislative house must be in the age of knickerbockers and soprano voice."³⁶ Another observation was made in the 1960s by a Page who wrote that Pages matched in unimportance the importance of Members. "It was only a Page who was sufficiently unimportant not to embarrass [Members] by their presence because Pages did not matter and could be ignored. Such inconsequence meant that a Page had an unusual vantage point from which to observe what was going on" not to mention unfiltered access to Members.³⁷

Using young boys may make sense for these reasons, but the psyche of a young boy had to be considered too, and then, it may seem to make more sense to use older boys. These young boys would come to Washington, often by themselves, and they were often on their own. There was nobody to supervise them away from their jobs. Many of them found housing on their own, often living in boarding houses with older men, other times living with friends or relatives, and they learned how to live on their own much earlier than most. Regardless, boys as young as eight were appointed regularly.³⁸

Augustus Thomas, 13 years old in the 1920s, provides a poignant description of what happened on his first night in Washington. Arriving at Union Station after midnight on a cold and rainy December night, he found a ride on a mule cart to the boarding house he was set to stay in, and woke the owner after knocking several times. The owner dismissively showed him where his room was, and Thomas went in and sat on the bed. He later wrote, "I don't think at any time in my life since has there been an equal feeling of loneliness to what I then had as I put down my bag and took off my wet clothes in an unheated room."³⁹ Regardless of any ill effects to the psyche of a young boy, the reasons for using them must have outweighed any of the positive things of using another age group because once young boys were used as Pages, they were always used as Pages and this tradition was difficult to break.

Although Congress continued to use young boys for decades, it did not really consider any possible detrimental effects on them. It was considered an honor to be a Page boy, and because they were paid so well, most young boys would covet securing an appointment. While many boys in the country were working on farms to earn money instead of going to school, the few lucky boys who were Pages did not go to school either; however, they had two things other school boys in America did not have: a unique opportunity to earn a substantial salary, and a much different type of education working in Congress than the formal education they would receive in a rural schoolhouse.

BECOMING A PAGE

There are endless examples of boys becoming Pages because of both formal and informal patronage, although some boys did earn appointments because of their

perseverance.⁴⁰ We have already seen that Hines knew that the three boys he saw on the Floor of the House in 1800 were the two sons and nephew of Claxton, the House Doorkeeper. Hanson admits that his Page position was possible because his grandfather was the Sergeant at Arms of the Senate; additionally, his great-great uncle was John Hanson, president of the Continental Congress.⁴¹

Isaac Bassett, who was the second Page in the Senate officially, spent a lot of time on the Floor in the 1820s because his father worked in the Chamber as a



Photo 4 Page delivering message on Floor of House, 1800s. *Architect of the Capitol*.

messenger and then as a Doorkeeper. Seven year-old Bassett was allowed to run around the Senate on his own, and he befriended Daniel Webster in the late 1820s. Bassett later remembered that “Webster would often call me up to his seat and put me on his lap and smooth down my black hair, [and once] he said to me with his great eyes looking into mine, ‘My little man, would you like to be made a Page?’ and I told him I would. . . .

The Sergeant told [Webster] he would see about it and spoke to several of the Senators” with mixed feedback, “but Mr. Webster told the Sergeant that there ought to be one on each side of the Senate, one on the Democratic side and one on the Whig” [side].⁴² The Sergeant at Arms made a deal with Webster that Bassett could remain on the Floor to become familiar with his duties, and at the start of the next session, the Sergeant at Arms would appoint him.⁴³ There are plenty

of references to nephews, cousins, sons, grandsons and close friends of Members and Presidents being appointed as Pages.

Based on these examples alone, the patronage tradition within the Page system certainly was established early on. How young boys could be appointed to work such long hours is explained by Richard Riedel, himself only nine when he was appointed in 1918. He wrote that “Senators in those days could waive rules and customs as grandly as they could wave the flag. Bois Penrose of Pennsylvania . . . could have put a toddler on the rostrum if he had wanted to.”⁴⁴ How Members broke their own rules will be a point of focus in following chapters.

Some Pages were the grandsons of former Presidents or were appointed through other connections to Congress even when they were as young as eight.⁴⁵ To tell all the stories of Pages who were appointed through patronage would be onerous, but it is only a small leap of faith to imagine that there are plenty of those stories to tell; to belabor the fact is pointless. If a Member owed a favor to someone, a Page position was an easy position to fill: the work was less than strenuous and the pay was generous for any young boy. As Frank Lyman, a Supreme Court Page in the 1920s said, “Knowing that the pay was \$110 per month [in 1924] made the decision [to leave school] easy.”⁴⁶

Many other Pages received their appointment through their persistence in seeking a position. Stuart Robson, a Page in the late 1840s, who later became a well-known actor, hounded Robert Horner, the Doorkeeper of the House, until Horner agreed to allow Robson to substitute the next time a Page was sick. The first time a Page was sick after that, Robson appeared before Horner, but Horner said that he had

too many other favors to fulfill first. Congressman Toombs, who Robson had befriended in the interim, told Horner, ““The thunder you must! You either put this boy in or I’ll put you out!””⁴⁷

Persistence won another boy his Page position. After deciding he wanted the job, the nameless Page solicited a letter of recommendation from his small Illinois town. After riding a train to Washington, he approached a Senator and handed him his worthless credentials. The Senator “looked the little man over, talked with him a while, glanced at the letter with a smile, and then stepped over to the office of Sergeant at Arms Daniel Ransdell. ‘Put this little soldier on your roll,’ he said. ‘He has earned it by his pluck’” showing that not all Pages earned their appointments through political or family connections.⁴⁸

THE TRADITION OF APPOINTING ORPHANS AS PAGES

Another variable that defines the Page community in the pre-1926 period is the tradition of appointing orphaned boys. In 1838, a committee examined the personnel structure of the House and noted that the number of Pages went from three in 1827 to 18 in 1838. However, the committee was pleased to learn that this large increase was not due to House officers appointing relatives, noting that “most of the increase has been effected by Members of the House, in their desire to serve deserving and sometimes destitute orphan boys” in an effort by the House to diversify the composition of the Pages, so that the number of boys who came from upper class families was balanced with boys who came from families with very little money.⁴⁹

Three years later, the House again looked at how much money it was spending, and lamented the hiring of a large number of Pages that it did not need,

even though it was helping out boys who needed help: “It is difficult to prevent the employment of more than the business of the House actually requires. Members frequently take interest in a promising boy, or have their sympathies awakened by his orphan and destitute situation, and press the officer of the House to engage him in this service. Under such circumstances, the Doorkeeper would find it almost impracticable to refuse. Having thus been employed, the Committee on Accounts cannot well decline allowing the ordinary compensation; and in this way, from causes having their origin in the best feelings of the human heart, the expenses of the House are unnecessarily augmented” and, in an effort to prevent too many Pages from being hired, the report called for a prescribed number of Page positions to be filled each session instead of boys being appointed at the whim of any Member.⁵⁰ This maneuvering of the Page system was one of the first times Congress intervened directly and showed institutional concern.

In 1842, the House tried to standardize the selection of Pages in an amendment of a bill that said Pages should be “selected hereafter, when found possessing the requisite qualifications, from the indigent orphans of the District of Columbia.”⁵¹ That amendment did not pass; however, it shows that there was sentiment in the House regarding hiring orphan boys to be Pages, in an attempt to become involved in helping a handful of boys whose families needed financial assistance.

On the other side of the Capitol, the Senate also was interested in pursuing what type of boy should be appointed as a Page. A report in 1854 stated that Pages should be boys of character and intellect who could not afford to go school, and it

endorsed the idea that preference for Page positions should be given “to the children of poor widows, or other worthy persons whose claims and pecuniary circumstances entitle them to consideration.”⁵² Christian Eckloff, a Page from 1855 to 1859, acknowledged that Pages “with few exceptions were the sons of widows.”⁵³ One newspaper article at the time describing Pages noted that they were “soldiers’ orphans” specifically, illustrating that both Chambers were concerned with helping a handful of boys by giving them Page positions.⁵⁴

By 1880, “the old custom of appointing only orphan boys [was] no longer adhered to” and many Pages were “appointed because there is some great need in



Photo 5 Opening of a House session. *Architect of the Capitol.*

their families, or have some pitiable circumstances in their history. . . . Most of them have somebody beside themselves to take a share of their earnings” like a father in a wheelchair or a sick sibling.⁵⁵ So, although the focus shifted away from orphans exclusively,

it was still on boys whose families needed help, as Congress became more deeply involved in this pseudo social-rescue program, although in 1883, the Senate Sergeant at Arms recommended that Pages have a four-year limit, and that half of them (nine) be replaced at the end of each Congress.⁵⁶ In 1890, the orphaned son of a late Senator was appointed as Page, as the mother was in need of assistance, and the appointment was met with the commendation of the Senate.⁵⁷

At the turn of the century, Pages were again being given jobs specifically because of their orphan status, not just because their families needed money. Watkins wrote in 1902 that a “majority of the Senate Pages are fatherless boys whose mothers need assistance.”⁵⁸ In 1904, nine of sixteen Pages in the Senate were fatherless, as Congress remained involved in trying to help these few select boys and their families.⁵⁹

The tradition of orphans serving as Pages was still present well into the twentieth century. Frank Lyman, the Supreme Court Page in the 1920s recalled that, “in those days . . . they just decided to hire a boy but it had to be someone who needed the money. I think it stemmed from maybe back after the Civil War, the boys who were put on the Bench were sons of widows.”⁶⁰

MINORITY PAGES

As a side note, there are two boys who are credited with being the first Negro Page, depending on who one believes. There is an article in the *Progressive American* that says that a boy named Andrew Foote Slade, born in 1857, was appointed as “the first colored Page” in December 1869 in the Senate.⁶¹ Isaac Bassett reports that “Andrew Slade was the first Couleard Page that was appointed in 1868.”⁶² However, the *New York Times* reported that a boy named Eugene Patten was the first Negro to serve as a Page, sometime between 1843 and 1887, although it is difficult to precisely determine when he served.⁶³ (We will see that there was another “first” Negro Page 100 years after this, in 1954.) Also, in 1917, Jeanette Rankin, the first woman elected to the House, announced that she was trying to obtain a Page position for a 15 year-old girl named Cecelia Martin who had appeared in Rankin’s office,

asking for such an appointment.⁶⁴ Another Congressman, Clyde Kelley, also supported the girl's request which eventually got nowhere and it would be more than 50 long years after that before a girl would be appointed, as Congress began to show signs of the institutional inertia that will come to define this study.

Part Three: The Unique Community of Pages

PAGES AND THEIR RELATIONSHIPS WITH MEMBERS

Whether Pages were appointed in the 1800s because someone in their family knew a Member, or because the Page was an orphan and a Member took an interest in helping him, there is an undeniable fact of the Page system during the pre-1926 era: Pages and their patrons were a close group, and Pages had an air of privilege about them, unknown to other boys their age. Pages attended social events with Members, became involved in Members' family lives, and sometimes were treated like adopted sons. The historical record shows that Pages treated Members with an irreverent, yet good natured familiarity, and Members treated Pages with a whimsical tolerance. All of this served to strengthen the community and culture of Pages, as they boys' position in the Capitol became entrenched over time, and this section takes a look at the community of Pages during this time period.

One of the side effects of hiring Pages was that the boys learned how to act older than they really were thanks to working side-by-side with their older mentors, and they were not hesitant to show off their self-perceived maturity. One article described Pages' level of sophistication by saying that "the average Page of fourteen or fifteen years old counts in his wardrobe a beaver hat, a pair of knee breeches, a cigar case, a Lord Chumley overcoat and a horn-handled cane. Many of these [boys]

have a brilliant career during their tender years and have gone through all excesses of mature manhood before they are old enough to vote at any well-regulated election,” showing how the boys idolized their older colleagues.⁶⁵

Bassett also made observations about the maturity of Pages. He wrote that “boys now days seem to be men before they are sixteen years old, indeed they know



Photo 6 Senate Page, 1800s. *Among the Lawmakers.*

more than they ought to know of human nature. They come strutting into the Senate Chamber, with cigars in their mouths as if they were the most important part of the Senate [and] converse with me . . . telling me who they think is the greatest among the Senators.”⁶⁶ Bassett did not approve of such behavior but he could do little about it, as the boys tried to act like their older counterparts.

Regardless of how young Pages were, they still had collegial relationships with Members.

Because they were with each other for so many hours in such close proximity, the relationships between Members and Pages were bound to flourish. In 1841, the House acknowledged that the “messengers and boys in the service of the House, if attentive to their business, make friends among the Members; all feel an interest for them,” and one vignette demonstrates this relationship between Pages and Members.⁶⁷ During an 11:00 recess one night in 1878, some Pages and Members became bored and “regaled the galleries with popular songs, which were, in the main, well rendered. They rung the changes on ‘Home Again,’ ‘Mary Had a Little Lamb,’

‘Hold the Fort,’ &c., including ‘John Brown’s Body,’ which was all well enough; but when some wag in the crowd supplemented ‘John Brown’ with ‘We’ll hang Jeff Davis on a sour apple tree’ it was treason to the Democratic side, and the musicians quickly dispersed.”⁶⁸ For Members and Pages to be singing together to people in the gallery certainly would be unusual today.

Baker Jamison, who became a Page at the age of eight in 1843, wrote later that he made personal friendships with some Senators, and became one Senator’s personal secretary and aide, staying with him for weeks at a time.⁶⁹ Hawkins also paints a picture of Senators and Pages knowing each other on a personal level, each knowing the others’ likes and dislikes and learning what kind of people they were. The Pages knew which Senators were nice to them and which ones were not; they knew which ones would sit at their desk and make paper caps for them, and which ones to avoid.⁷⁰ In many instances, it seems like a sincere friendship was formed between the lawmakers and the Pages, more than simply a worker-supervisor relationship, a side effect of the having impressionable boys in such close proximity to Members, something that both sides seemed to favor.

Because the Capitol did not have electric heat in the 1800s, the Chambers were heated by fireplaces. Pages were responsible for tending the fires, and this task was given high priority.⁷¹ Eckloff provides the scene: picture a dimly lit Chamber with Senators and Pages with heavy wool shawls wrapped around their heads and shoulders, sitting at their desks, debating the issues of the day. “Many of the older men in their efforts to keep warm made frequent pilgrimages to the [fireplaces], and were far more interested in the state of the fires than in any State of the Union.”⁷²

When Senators like Sam Houston, Charles Sumner, Jefferson Davis and John C. Breckinridge were standing in front of the fireplaces, warming themselves in the drafty Chamber late at night, talking about slavery and other events of the day in the mid-1850s, “spinning yarns, exchanging confidences, and poking fun at each other,” Pages were sure to be participating in that fun.⁷³

In the inevitable late night sessions, Bassett reports that sometimes the Senators would drink from their flasks and “the officers and Pages would have a joley tim.”⁷⁴ In addition to their routine tasks, Pages also had to learn how to sneak in a mint julep to the Speaker, and then watch him handle it expertly, holding a handkerchief as a shield, and drink it through a long straw.⁷⁵ Pages must have learned something about consuming alcohol too since they were accused of being drunk on at least one occasion, again, showing that they grew up faster than they normally would.⁷⁶

Pages became privileged to the point where they put on plays for Members. One time, Pages “decided to give an entertainment Sunday evening in a local theatre, which President Taft and many Senators and Representatives have promised to attend.”⁷⁷ In another account, Jamison described when John Calhoun died. In the procession to the gravesite were the President and his Cabinet, the Supreme Court Justices, the Diplomatic Corps, Senators and Representatives. Additionally, “three or four carriages were reserved, as always, for the Pages of both Houses.”⁷⁸ At other Inaugural Parades, the National Fraternity of Pages made their presence known by their sheer numbers, and participated in some of the parades, strengthening the community of Pages.⁷⁹

As a side note, Captain John Chancey formed the National Fraternity of Pages in the early 1910s, an organization of current and former Pages. Chancey was an



Photo 7 Senator Stanfield with Senate Pages, 1924. *Library of Congress.*

influential person in the lives of many Pages, eager to dispense advice and direct the young boys in the right direction, and he is credited with helping many Pages enter law and medicine. He is given partial credit for helping 300 or so former Pages rise to the ranks of their respective state legislatures; however, the Fraternity peaked

quickly and it is not well-documented anywhere; there were a few school fraternities later in the 1900s unrelated this National Fraternity.⁸⁰ This institutional affiliation served to fortify the community of Pages too.

Jamison tells that Pages attended parties for Congressmen and other



Photo 8 Vice President Dawes at Christmas dinner with Senate Pages, 1925. *Library of Congress.*

dignitaries.⁸¹ This is confirmed by Willie Cheatham, as he describes attending social events with the President, the Supreme Court Justices and others when he was just a 12 year-old Page. Cheatham also described the annual Christmas dinner that the Vice

President hosted for Pages. Some of the Pages had prepared speeches to give after one of the meals in the early 1920s, but Vice President Coolidge excused himself immediately after he finished eating. Wrote Cheatham, “It seems funny that he didn’t wait and

listen to the Pages, when he can't listen to us speak but once a year, for we don't give him the chance of listening to us any oftener like the Senators do. Well, anyway, we had a nice audience, for Mrs. Coolidge stayed to hear the Pages' speeches . . . I guess V.P. Coolidge was sorry he missed them when Mrs. Coolidge told him about them."⁸²



Photo 9 Vice President Marshall receiving a cheer from Senate Pages after he invited them to Christmas dinner, c. 1918. *Library of Congress.*

The 12 year-old Cheatham, in his naivety, could not understand why Coolidge did not have time to sit around and listen to the young Pages make speeches. Donald Detwiler, a Page in the late 1910s when he was 15, also mentioned how special it was to attend the Christmas dinner hosted by the Vice President and said that "Senators would pitch in for gifts for the Pages."⁸³

The Christmas tradition traces back to 1887, when Pages were loudly celebrating the Christmas adjournment and were called into the Cloakroom, expecting to be reprimanded. Instead, Bassett gave each of them five-dollar bills, compliments of Senator Stanford, which earned him honorary Membership in the Pages Guild the next day.⁸⁴ Seven weeks later, Mrs. Stanford hosted a formal dinner for the Pages.⁸⁵ In each year following, until 1893, Stanford played Santa Claus to the Pages, and gave them each five-dollar gold pieces.⁸⁶ Beginning in 1906, Congressman Frank Lowden took over Stanford's duties, and made the same five-dollar presentation to all 40 Pages, although one account reports that he gave the gifts only to the Republican Pages.⁸⁷ He did that until 1911, and in 1913, Congressman Farr took over the

tradition, with several others carrying on the tradition through the years.⁸⁸ In 1913, Vice President Marshall sponsored the first dinner for Senate Pages, although Edwin Halsey, the Secretary of the Senate, sat in for him. This began a long tradition of Christmas dinners given by the Vice President, carried on by Marshall's successors for many years until the early 1940s when they were discontinued by Vice President Wallace. These dinners were given specially for Pages with full press coverage, and served to reaffirm the community of Pages. Sometimes, there was a dinner even when there was no Vice President, like in 1923 and the Congressional chair of the National Woman's Party came to the rescue to host it.⁸⁹

Members got personally involved in playing sports with Pages also.

Cheatham talks about using the Capitol grounds for a baseball diamond, and



Photo 10 Senator Pepper enjoying a game of baseball with Page boys at the Capitol, March 1924. *Library of Congress.*

convincing Senator Pepper to buy equipment for them, even after Senator Frelinghuysen had bought catcher's equipment for them a couple years before.⁹⁰ Obviously, Pepper, the former attorney for baseball's American League, must have enjoyed these games,

as his picture was taken of him, other

Members and Pages playing baseball on

the Capitol grounds several times.⁹¹ Pepper went so far in 1919 as to buy 21

uniforms for the Page baseball team, and an elaborate backstop to protect the Senate

Office Building from foul balls.⁹²

Baseball in particular has a long tradition with Pages. The first mention of a Page baseball team was in 1878, when the Pages of the Capitol lost to a high school team.⁹³ After that, they would often play on the grounds of the Capitol or play other teams in the area, mostly losing.⁹⁴ Almost each year, Pages had enough interest to get a team together. Beginning in the mid-1910s, the scores of Pages' baseball and basketball games (and an occasional swim meet) were reported in the *Washington Post*, although they never played more than a couple games each year, sometimes with Members serving as umpires.⁹⁵ By 1921, they also organized football teams, playing mostly inter-Chamber games.⁹⁶

One consistent theme running through accounts of Pages is that Members were most tolerant of the behavior of Pages. There are many references to “mock sessions,” where Pages would take over one of the Chambers during a recess and pretend to be Members, debating their own issues in their own Page Session. Picture the Page in his “white blouse shirt and knee breeches,” doing his impressions of Senators behind the gavel.⁹⁷ As Pages argued their bills, adults about the Chamber would look on and “in the press gallery, notes on the proceedings were taken with becoming solemnity;” as Pages debated a bill to “prohibit Senators from using fire water,” the “Sergeant at Arms of the Senate was standing in the doorway grinning.”⁹⁸ Pages would become bold and debate a bill to increase their pay from \$75 a month to \$200 a month, which of course would be answered with amendments to increase it to \$2000 a month until the Sergeant at Arms would break it up, and they would scurry to hide under the desks.⁹⁹ Jamison also wrote about the mock sessions and reported that “Senators would come in upon our meetings. They always insisted upon our

proceedings notwithstanding their presence, and would heartily applaud as we made telling points.”¹⁰⁰ The adults about the chamber are consistently described as “indulgent to the commerce” of these mock sessions.¹⁰¹ These mock sessions would pass important measures such as sending “for a pint of pea nuts” or a motion to adjourn “to some corn cakes and oysters” or voting for more spittoons to have a place to throw the peanut shells.¹⁰²

The mock sessions were somewhat of a Page trademark and an unintentional result of employing young boys. It got to where the people in the galleries would give their “hearty applause” for the performance, and report that it was “the most amusing scene they ever witnessed” with one writer overhearing that “three Senators say they would have given ten dollars to have been in the galleries, from whence, unobserved, they could have enjoyed the fun.”¹⁰³ During one particularly lively mock session, Congressmen discovered a Page singing in the Democratic Cloakroom and lifted him on their shoulders, carrying him to the Speaker’s desk “where he sang for nearly half an hour amid great applause.”¹⁰⁴ It is obvious that Pages were the mascots of the Capitol.

Some Senators seemed to enjoy having their capricious sidekicks nearby. Sam Houston, who constantly whittled blocks of wood as he sat on the Senate Floor, would carve not only wooden hearts for the ladies in the Gallery but he “would fashion with his knife every conceivable novelty and distribute them amongst the Pages” and seemed to enjoy having Pages around.¹⁰⁵ Jamison tells of running an errand for a Senator, whereupon the Senator “patt[ed] me on the head [and] expressed his satisfaction” and that the Senator was “quite fond of the little Page.”¹⁰⁶

While Members may have been the brunt of jokes at times, they also had fun with the Pages which is also well-recorded in historical accounts. Some Senators



Photo 11 Congressman R. Walton Moore entertains House Pages at his Virginia estate, 1922. Gus Meade is sitting with cap, at bottom of middle pillar. *Library of Congress.*

would host Pages at the circus or a wild west show, or take them home on weekends for football, baseball or attending the theater; other Senators would share candy with Pages on the Floor, or share their comic books

with Pages.¹⁰⁷ The Senate was so accommodating one time in 1922

that it cut short debate on a tariff bill

because the Pages were scheduled to go to the circus that evening.¹⁰⁸ Senator Sumner, who received letters from countries all over the world, would save the stamps for one philatelic-minded Page.¹⁰⁹ In the winter, it was not above some Members to join Pages in sledding down Capitol Hill. Pages would push them as fast as they could so that they could watch the older gentlemen lose the cardboard boxes they were sliding on so that they finished the ride with nothing between them and the snow.¹¹⁰

Although Members and Pages had a friendly familiarity with each other, it was not beyond Congress to put a Page on the stand to testify when needed to determine what he knew about a case that it was investigating.¹¹¹ At the same time, it was not uncommon for Pages to have nicknames for Members, names like Mutt and Jeff, or other equally derisive names.¹¹² Other times, Pages would “assert openly that

they would rather be doing something else when [Senator Vest] snaps his fingers for a Page” because of the way he treated the boys. We can see how the sincere camaraderie and the friendly conflict between Pages and Members existed simultaneously.¹¹³

Maybe there is no better example to show how Pages would feel a sense of entitlement from holding their positions than a story told by Detwiler. In 1917, he received a ticket to appear in court the next day for riding his bicycle where only streetcars were allowed. When he came back to the Capitol and told Edwin Halsey, then the supervisor of Pages, Halsey made a call to the police station and told the police that Detwiler was needed in the Senate, and asked them to forgive the ticket. He then hung up, turned to Detwiler and told him to “tear the thing up.”¹¹⁴ What 15 year-old boy would not feel at least some entitlement and privilege after an incident like that? That entitlement and privilege served to reinforce the culture of Pages and define their position inside the Capitol.

The relationship between Pages and Members was an unusual one. Pages did everything they could get away with, which often was a lot, and Members reacted coolly, mostly just laughing amusedly at them. Sometimes, when things got a little too relaxed and Pages acted up just a little too much, Members had to remind Pages who was in charge. However, little did Members know that most times, it turned out that Pages were more in charge than they (or anyone else) thought. All of this made the bonds within the Page community stronger and strengthened their identity and community, as they continued to have free reign of the Capitol and used it as their personal playground.

PAGE MISCHIEF

There are several accounts of what Pages did officially on a daily basis, but to understand the real vitality of being a Page, it is critical to look at what they were doing during those long hours spent in the Capitol, away from their jobs, things that further characterize their culture and community. These young boys must have had ample spare time, and lots of temptation to do all sorts of things, and it is important to examine what Pages did in their spare time. This section first will discuss what Pages were expected to do formally and officially, and then talk about how they amused themselves when they got bored in the informal and unofficial parts of their jobs.

Besides having to be ready to act at the snap of a finger or a clap of the hands to get a glass of water, a copy of a bill or to return a book, Pages had other duties. In the early years, they had to tend the many fireplaces in both Chambers, keep the candles lit, fold speeches, ride horses to deliver messages to the White House and other departments, and to prepare the desks of the Members, including cutting the quill pens to whatever width each Member preferred.

Bassett remembered in the early 1830s that “thar was no gass and at the night Session the Senate Chamber was litt up with oil and Candles. On the walles war large lamps...and on each Senator desk war Candels put in large Candle Sticks and the Pages haid to [use] a pair of Snuffers in our hands to Snuff the Candles. When the Senate last all night the Candles had to be removed Several times.”¹¹⁵ He also remembered having to take care of heating the Chamber: “In those days thay [used] fure and hickory wood and we had to goe out side of the Main entrance to get the Wood and bring it in and put it on the fire (in thoes days they had no furneseas).

Back of the Vice President's seat there was 4 fireplaces. On each Side of the Main door of the Senate there was two Stoves (I burnt my hands often). During the Session we had to keep the fires [going] and water on the Senator's [desks] besides. Those six fires heated the Senate."¹¹⁶

An early description of a Senate Page's duties described the diverse skills he needed, claiming that his duties were not menial but required a great deal of expertise. "Acute memory and quick co-ordination of brain and limb are essential to his success. He must combine in his makeup the functions of an animate congressional directory, a fleet-footed library catalogue, a prancing menu card, a fast-stepping base ball score, a smooth buffer between the impatient lobbyist and the busy lawmaker and the expert translator of Senatorial chirography. He must not only know all of the 90 senators by name, but be able to identify the conspicuous Members of the lower house. He must be able to keep strict account of funds entrusted to his care."¹¹⁷

Although that writer may have overstated the requirements, in reality, most of the official duties were mundane, though important to the Congress. If someone

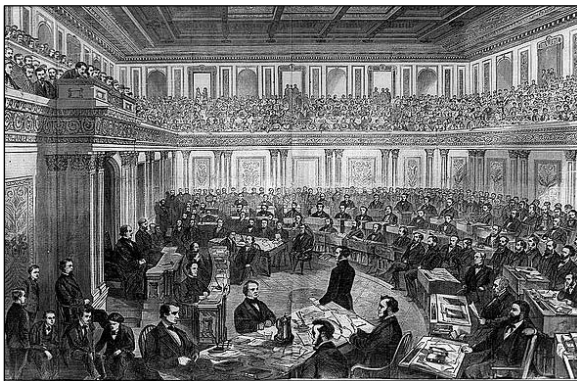


Photo 12 The Senate during the impeachment trial of Andrew Johnson, 1868; note Pages in lower left. *Library of Congress.*

wanted to talk to a Senator, the person would give a card to a Page with the Senator's name on it and then wait for the Page to summon the Senator. The Senator would then decide whether to entertain the request.¹¹⁸ Also, because there were no personal secretaries in

the 1800s, Pages had to prepare the majority of Members' mail. Pages were always

the last ones to leave the Chamber at night, and they had to make sure all Members' letters were ready to be mailed in the morning. One Page wrote that "all letters for the mail were given to us to be sealed. The table where the sealing was done was situated in the lobby, and a candlestick and sealing wax were always at hand."¹¹⁹ Pages always had to finish the letters before they left for the night. Pages were also responsible for miscellaneous tasks too, like chasing stray birds out of the chamber and whatever other odd tasks needed to be done.¹²⁰

In the Supreme Court, duties were relatively light, like getting things for the Justices when they wanted them after they snapped their fingers, and delivering



Photo 13 Senate Pages with electoral ballots, 1921. *Library of Congress.*

messages. However, Frank Lyman said, "Now, I won't say that's all we did, I mean, we had to make sure that the Court was in perfect order. . . . After the Crier was finished with his, 'Oyez, oyez, oyez...' all the Judges would sit down and we would have to push in their chairs for

them. But because there were only four of us and nine of them, we'd have to do it pretty quick . . . and occasionally we would have a little premature push, and we'd catch them in the back of the knee and bam! Down they'd go!"¹²¹

One special task reserved for Senate Pages was to carry the locked ballot boxes containing electoral votes for a Presidential election from the Senate through the Rotunda of the Capitol to the House to be counted, something that Pages still do today. Another official duty Pages had was at the beginning of each Congress when

seats were still assigned in the Chamber. Members were requested to retire behind the screens while a blindfolded Page drew from a box marbles numbered to



Photo 14 Page drawing marbles for seating assignments. *Leslie's Illustrated Magazine*, March 1869.

correspond to the Member's number on the roll-call."¹²² The first Member selected would be the first one to choose his seat, and so on.

The mundane duties of Pages did not deter them from having fun while on the job too.

"These light-hearted Mercuries, these young hands on the flying trapeze, these despisers of dignities, kick up their heels, punch their mates and do everything unseemly but stand on their heads . . . in a way that divides one between admiration and alarm in their audacity. . . . Take them all together, they are as merry, saucy and spirited a set of boys as any other."¹²³ Their official functions did not belie the actual face of their culture, as unofficial mascots of Congress and the Capitol.

One Page described his first day on the job, and was confused about why the Senators started clapping their hands right after the opening prayer. After all, it seemed like quite an ordinary prayer to the Page. As he stood and observed what was happening all around him, Pages darting and zigzagging here and there, he realized that the Senators "were not applauding the prayer-- they were merely calling for Pages" to run their errands, with the young boys pushing and shoving each other as they tried to be the boy the Senator selected.¹²⁴

They tried to carry out their duties as quickly as possible and while trying to be as quiet as possible. In fact, for a time, Senate Pages were required to wear

slippers inside the Chamber so that their shoes would not make creaking sounds.¹²⁵

Bassett tells how seriously the Sergeant at Arms regarded squeaking shoes one time:

“When I was a Page We haed a Sargent at Arms. His name was John Shackelford. When ever we displeased him [he] woul make us goe in to his room and Say Prareas ore us So that we would bee better Boyes in the fueater. He haed a Messenger by the name of Richard Young . . . and on one acasion his Shues screech. He made him tak them off, [then he took] an all, boar houels in the Soules and por water in them becas it made two mutch noues in passing true the Senate” letting them know to what degree they were to be noticed inside the Chamber.¹²⁶

While Pages knew what they were supposed to do, there was opportunity for them to engage in all sorts of other activities. In fact, when the “first” two Senate Pages met for the first time, Hanson, the incumbent, did not appreciate the fact that he



Photo 15 Senate Pages carrying electoral ballots through the Rotunda, 1941. *Library of Congress.*

now had to share his job, claiming that Bassett was there only because his father and Mr. Webster wanted him there. “In reply to this greeting, [he] pulled from [his] pocket [his] notice of appointment and shook it in [Hanson’s] face saying, ‘There is my appointment and I am as big as you now.’”¹²⁷ Hanson did not like

it any better, and challenged Bassett to a fistfight, quickly introducing the tradition of boxing to the Page corps. Hanson later recalled that “we appealed to arms in order to decide what kind of stuff we were made

of and which was the better man.”¹²⁸ We can see that there was a lot more going on inside the Capitol than we usually think of as Pagea created an entire subculture inside the Capitol.

Other information about boxing matches is available also. One article describes in detail how the Pages had a formal boxing ring set up in the basement of



Photo 16 Heavyweight champ Jim Corbett with Senate Pages, April 1926. *Library of Congress.*

the Capitol and how they would engage in boxing matches not really to hurt each other, but more for sport.¹²⁹ Other writers briefly mention how Pages, even the ones who were as young as nine years old, would settle disagreements by boxing.¹³⁰ Additionally,

Pages had a playroom in a distant part of the Capitol where “they kick up high jinks,” strengthening their reputations as the harmless pranksters working and playing in the Capitol as their community strengthened over time.¹³¹

One lively example of how Pages were not bashful about physical confrontation comes from Frank Lyman, a Supreme Court Page in the 1920s

Right in the Rotunda was a place where . . . you can check your hat and coat . . . and there was a guy in there, a boy, and he was a bully, and he picked on us Pages. He was a tough kid, there wasn't any question about it, but he took advantage of that fact and it was no place to be fooling around anyway, and we'd go by there and that sucker would jump out at us and give us trouble. And every now and then, we'd get him down and do a little wrestling around, fooling around, so I talked to the other Pages and said, “This fellow, you know, we're going to have to do something about him, because every time you go into the Rotunda, you got to contend with him.” So, he's checking hats and coats, because he works there and, so Sam Caldwell [a Page] is a pretty heavy boy, and I

said, “Okay Sam let’s work it out. I think four of us can handle him.” So, we got him in a proper place, and one of us went out as a decoy, and this bully came down on him, saying, “Hey boy, where you going?” and jumped on him. As soon as he did, boy, we all went at him! We had him down on the ground and I tell you, we had him there for a long time. . . . with the heaviest one of us sitting on his chest. . . . People came walking by, and I remember one kid saying, “Don’t worry about it, we’re not hurting him!” you know, to the people. But we just told him when we all got up, “Hereafter, this is what’s going to happen.” So, we were never bothered with him again. . . . To think [now] that here we are, five of us, wrestling around on the floor of the Rotunda when we’re supposed to be dignified and representing the Court is just a terrible thing. But that’s what happened.¹³²

Although most of the references to fighting describe merely hijinks and fights used to settle disagreements in a good-natured way with the knowledge of adults, with nobody suffering anything worse than a bloody nose or a black eye, occasionally, the rivalry between boys was more than simple sport. During a quarrel over a wastebasket in 1892 between two Senate Pages, one of them grabbed the nearest sharp instrument, either a pocket knife or an awl, and lunged for the other, causing a gash in the boy’s overcoat. Captain Bassett was able to separate the boys and cuff the offender before anything serious occurred.¹³³

Another aspect of Page culture that is well documented is how Pages tried to make money beyond their paychecks. The pay that Pages earned was considered more than fair for the work they did, especially given their age. They were hired under the assumption that their families needed the money, as explained above, but how much they kept and how much they gave to their families must have varied greatly.

It was a tradition in both Chambers to grant to certain employees extra pay at the end of a session to support them through the recess until the beginning of the next

session. During the pre-1926 period, Pages were included in this tradition. As early as 1836, an extra \$250 was given “to each of the little boys attending in the House.”¹³⁴ In 1838, Pages received an extra compensation, after a motion passed to “give the little boys &c. about the Capitol \$200 each, besides their full compensation of \$1.50 per diem” even after there was discussion earlier in the year about removing some Pages and regulating their duties.¹³⁵ Members obviously had a soft spot for the boys which must have made them even more desirous of more money, and in turn increased their attempts to earn more money.

Three years later, however, this tradition was investigated. The House committee looking into how much money was being spent wrote, “At the close of a session when the warmth of political excitement has subsided, and the asperity of party conflict is mellowed by the kindly feelings of the parting hour, it is difficult to resist the eloquent, though sometimes silent appeals of our obliging attendants; and, as before stated, the practice has grown up of making an extra appropriation” to the boys in the service of the House.¹³⁶ This report also recommended raising the pay to \$2.00 per day and forgetting about the extra pay at the end of each session as Congress attempted to intervene. However, this recommendation was ignored and three months later, the House again voted to give Pages the usual end-of-session payment, in one example of how old customs were difficult to break, something that Congress is guilty of time and again later in this study.¹³⁷

Although “Pages, then as now, were well paid for their light labors,” they always wanted more, even going so far as to lure Andrew Johnson out of the Chamber one time so that he would not be able to block the vote to increase their

pay.¹³⁸ Johnson was bitterly opposed to voting for the bill in the late 1840s to give Pages a bonus at the end of the session. At the Speaker Page's mark, each Page got his objector "out of the House by some hook or crook."¹³⁹ The boy assigned to Johnson ran to his seat and said, "Mr. Johnson, there's a lady outside dressed in very deep black, who brings some bad news from your family evidently, as she is crying."¹⁴⁰ Once the objectors were removed from the Chamber, the bill was passed. Another year, Pages lobbied hard for an extra month's pay at the end of a session, bombarding Members with their arguments.¹⁴¹

Their regular pay plus the additional payment at the end of the session apparently was not enough, and there are many vignettes throughout this time period about how Pages earned extra money. One of the ways was by selling Members' autographs to tourists. Taking advantage of their relationships with Members, Pages would often ask them for their autographs, and collect an entire set in the same book to sell to tourists. Bassett, looking back on his 60-plus years in the Senate wrote, "I am sorry to say that the Pages are in the habit of getting pay for carrying around autograph books and charge enormous prices for the signature of a Senator. When the election commission was in session the boys had a good time. They made enormous sums of money."¹⁴² Some Members were happy to become involved personally and to assist with the Pages' enterprise to earn extra money but sometimes Pages were hesitant to ask for autographs.¹⁴³ Pages had the temerity to approach even the President when he was in the Capitol to ask for his autograph.¹⁴⁴

Eckloff described a formal method that the Sergeant at Arms devised so that the total amount earned from autographs was divided evenly among all the Pages at

the end of the month, showing it was not something that they did behind their bosses' backs.¹⁴⁵ Pages also earned money by receiving tips from Members, and by selling subscription lists to speeches that Members made. They even would ask outgoing Members for the balance of their stationery accounts, and then raffle off fountain pens and other items.¹⁴⁶ Showing that the money management skills of a young boy was lagging behind their outward confidence, Pages spent impulsively, and one observer noted that "at lunch time, half a dozen Pages can be seen burying their noses into heaped-up plates of ice cream, while their faces are the very mirrors of contentment."¹⁴⁷ They were boys with too much money, too much time and too much nerve; the combination defined the face of the Page corps for decades.

When interviewed for a newspaper story, Bassett said, "I know a boy who made eighty dollars off the bier of Charles Sumner. He sold the flowers for twenty dollars. . . . When the casket was removed he watched his opportunity and cut the fringe from the altar. He sold it to the colored people for sixty dollars, dealing it out in pieces, on the same principle that some people sell bits of the rope a man was hung with."¹⁴⁸ It seems that opportunistic Pages knew few bounds, and probably sold many other artifacts to make some quick money.

Another often-repeated story is how Pages spent their spare time with the use of snuff, common among men during the nineteenth century, and Senators were no exception, and snuff boxes were all about the Senate Chamber. In fact, one of the duties of Pages was to make sure the snuff boxes in the Senate were kept full. Of course, sometimes Pages sampled it and had a good time with it too.¹⁴⁹ One Page, only to keep things lively, one time ran his handful of snuff under other Pages' noses

as they sat at attention, and the ensuing concert of sneezing “completely upset the gravity of the Senate.”¹⁵⁰ Not to be outdone by Senators, the Pages had their own snuff box on the back of Bassett’s chair and could indulge when proceedings got a bit boring on the Floor.¹⁵¹

Pages got into mischief not only with other Pages, but with Members too. If they were not conspiring with Members, then they were playing practical jokes on them, especially when debate became monotonous. “Like all boys, Pages were no respectors of persons, and while they were always polite to their faces, they mimicked the Senators behind their backs.”¹⁵² Pages “had little reverence for anybody or anything, and were merciless in their criticisms of the appearance and habits of Congressmen.”¹⁵³

One time, Pages planted fake money in an aisle to see the reaction of an unsuspecting Congressman when he picked it up, then “almost exploded with suppressed laughter” when they saw his reaction.¹⁵⁴ After the electoral votes from Vermont were “misplaced” in 1876 in the most disputed Presidential election in American history, and two identical envelopes appeared, some Pages were bribed by Senators to carry over to the House one of the envelopes, but only the men who did the bribing knew which one it was.¹⁵⁵ To think that Pages may have been involved in altering a Presidential election is nothing short of scandalous today.

Edmund Alton, a Senate Page from 1872 to 1876, played a trick one time that affected a vote in the Senate. The Clerk had called a Senator’s name just as the Senator was walking into the Chamber. The Senator looked around, not knowing what he was voting on, and Alton wrote that he “pitied him and called out from

behind him, ‘Vote ‘No!’’ And he did! Of course [the Senator] thought it was some responsible Senator speaking to him.” This provides a good example that Pages felt free to do things like this. Alton continued, “But I had been in the Senate *several days* before I had enough courage to pretend to advise a Senator (italics added).”¹⁵⁶ He further claimed that Pages would join in voice votes, especially on votes to adjourn, and would increase the noise in the Chamber at the appropriate time; after all, Pages always thought it was time to adjourn.¹⁵⁷

Pages played many practical jokes on Members too, especially around April Fools Day. The “mischievous little Senate Pages” and the “young scapegraces” probably did much more than we can know, but thankfully some of the things are recorded.¹⁵⁸ For example, in an article talking about Pages and their relationships with Senators, concentrating on Senators’ tolerance for providing autographs, the reporter wrote that the “lively and saucy biped known as the Page in Congress” sells autographs of Senators for six cents per name. The reporter asked what the Page did when a certain Senator did not want to give his autograph, and the Page answered, “We cusses him back in our minds. But I got him one’t. When he cussed me I said, ‘But Senator, this her album’s for your wife.’ He wrote down his name. No, ‘twant for his wife sure ’nough, but I made a bet with some of the boys that I’d get his name, so you see I had to have it.”¹⁵⁹

Andrew Johnson was a favorite target for Pages in the late 1840s. Pages would come up with schemes to get Johnson’s autograph just so they could laugh at him as he wrote it. “He was just then coming into significant public life and his education had not been gleaned in a school house. In signing his name, he would put

his tongue to one side of his mouth and sway his body with every movement of his pen, like an Irishman who is a little in doubt about his ability to even make a mark.” Pages would “constantly play pranks on him. The Members were as bad as the boys and they would put the Pages up to go to him for his signature for the purpose of watching him write it.”¹⁶⁰ This paints a picture of the community Pages had created as an exclusive boys club of the most literal kind.

Sometimes however, the pranks backfired. When a Page tried to play a joke in the House by putting a big bag filled with air in the fireplace, the bag stuffed the chimney and caused the Chamber to fill with smoke. Someone had to climb on the roof and pour water down the chimney to extinguish it, and everything eventually went back to normal.¹⁶¹ It was common to find “Pages at the Capitol, who are young and full of vitality, to work off a portion of the latter by sliding down the balustrade” of the nearest flight of stairs.¹⁶² One time a Page fell off the handrail when sliding down, fracturing his skull and sustaining other injuries severe enough to be taken home unconscious.¹⁶³ One day in 1871, the spirited Pages were excused from duty for the day because they could not be controlled, and it was easier for Members to be sent home than to try to make them behave.¹⁶⁴ These vignettes are noteworthy not because the events themselves are important but because it is interesting to note that they were reported in the newspaper, as Pages continued to be portrayed as mascots romping around the Capitol.

Not only did Pages play jokes on Members but they had “great fun playing jokes, particularly on the cranks and eccentric people who haunt the Capitol” too, even though Bassett tried his best to “keep the frisky Pages in order.”¹⁶⁵ One boy

who was a Page in 1870 wrote that Pages were required to take two baths a week in the marble tubs provided by the House. Pages thought that was cruel and unusual punishment, even though the large tubs were cut from solid blocks of marble and “[a] boy of twelve or thirteen could take a good swimming stroke in one of them.”¹⁶⁶ Each Page received two tickets a week to take baths, but when they felt like it, they would sell the tickets to friends, keep the money, and the friends got to take a warm bath in the Capitol, compliments of the federal government.

John Kelton, a Supreme Court Page in the 1920s, admitted to goofing off quite a bit. He wrote that Pages played “endless games of blackjack and penny ante. Checkers, dominoes, and even tiddlywinks were favorites for a time.”¹⁶⁷ He further admits to playing jokes on others and wrote, “We used to have great fun with the hordes of sightseers who infested the Capitol, inventing blood-curdling yarns, and . . . we played a great many pranks and practical jokes on each other, and on the Capitol police. We knew all the half-forgotten passages and tunnels down in the basement, and used to explore them.”¹⁶⁸ It seemed there was somewhat of a rivalry between Pages and the Capitol police, as they would from to time get into lively scuffles with each other.¹⁶⁹

Frank Lyman, who served the Court with Kelton, also spoke of the games he used to play. “A little crap shooting was in order sometimes when Court wasn’t in session. In fact, we were back by Attorney General Harlan Stone’s office one time . . . you didn’t have to slide [the dice] on the slippery floor, you could use the carpet . . . and I thought there was somebody standing behind me, and I looked back there and there was the Crier, our boss, [Thomas] Waggaman. He looked at us and

said, ‘This is not a very good place fellas!’ We looked at each other and said, ‘Oh, we were sort of thinking that,’ and so we stopped.”¹⁷⁰ It does not seem that the mild reprimand was a deterrent though. Lyman continued, “[Also] when they weren’t in session, we had a bowling set, and we’d set it up on the long carpet by the Attorney General’s office.”¹⁷¹

Detwiler also told about lots of game playing and mischief. He admitted to pitching pennies on the Floor of the Senate or in the hallways of the Capitol, at least when tourists would not get in the way. He also remembered making paper darts and seeing which Page could throw them the farthest, and making explosive devices from match heads to use for booby traps.¹⁷² It seems there were few bounds to what Pages would try just to have a little fun at work, and their culture inside the Capitol ended up being the unintended consequences of employing young boys in an adult environment where proper decorum was expected.

Alton provides a vivid description of the games he played when Senators could not think of anything for Pages to do. He wrote that at those times, instead of

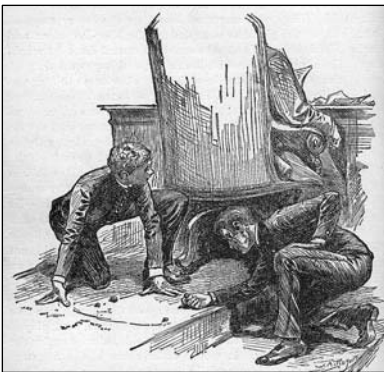


Photo 17 Pages sneaking in a game of marbles during a session, c. 1875. *Edmund Alton.*

“sitting, as we ought, in an erect and dignified position, we would kneel down upon the soft carpet and play marbles. I have often gone up on the Republican side to where the Vice-President sat, as on a throne, and played marbles with a Page on the Democratic side, almost under the Vice-President’s chair.”¹⁷³ One time, when a Congressman was sitting

down by the Page boys at the rostrum, the boys were lying on the Floor around him, listening to the stories he was telling.¹⁷⁴

Alton painted a picture in which Pages had the run of the Capitol. He wrote of times where they would put caps under the Vice-President's gavel so that the Chamber would jump when the gavel was struck; times when Pages would sneak through the Capitol and conspire with Senators to find out where other Senators and Pages were sleeping so that they could spread glue on their faces; hiding Senators' hats and canes; "inadvertently" putting salt instead of sugar in Senators' drinks; hiding when everyone left for the night so that they could stay overnight in the Capitol, and running and screaming through the halls all night; getting the keys to the Capitol and going on top of the Dome to eat dinner, and crawling through every tunnel that they could find. Even he admits that "to detail our many escapades would be a very difficult task."¹⁷⁵

Pages played practical jokes not only on tourists, Members and people in the Capitol but on each other as well.¹⁷⁶ There are repeated stories about initiation rites when a new boy came on board. One oft-repeated story is that the new boy would have to go find the fictitious Senator Sorghum for an important vote. The Page would bounce around from office to office in the Capitol, looking for Senator Sorghum and would be sent all over the Capitol, unaware that each person sending him to the next office was in on the joke.¹⁷⁷ This also happened with sending new Pages to find the bill stretcher, left-handed scissors, striped ink for the fountain pens or a left-handed pencil.

Lyman, the Supreme Court Page in the 1920s, tells one of the most amusing stories. He remembers an initiation that the new boys in the House had to endure. The veteran Pages would tell the new boys that there was a swimming pool under the House Chamber and to bring their swimming suits. “There’s a couple of trapdoors on the Floor up near the Speaker’s desk as I remember, and because I’ve been in there, I’ve seen it. . . . You can lift that trapdoor up and look down in there and it looks like there could be something down there.” The new Pages would change into their swimming suits and once they were ready to swim, they would gather in the House Chamber and the veteran Pages “made them leave their clothes on one of the chairs and they would lift the trapdoor and down they’d go, and then they’d close the door on them. And they’re down there with all the pipes, crawling around, and so what, right? But then they’d also take their clothes, and what they had on was just bathing trunks, or just boys’ shorts on, and when they finally found their way out, they’d be running around barefooted between the Rotunda and the corridor into Statuary Hall.”¹⁷⁸

Another description of initiation rituals describes how veteran Pages would take the blindfolded rookies to a mysterious round room two levels directly underneath the Rotunda where lots of discarded plaster models and statues rested. This crypt was the initiation chamber where new Pages were escorted by torchlight “to receive their degrees and qualify for duty” although what the initiates were forced to do is not detailed.¹⁷⁹

All of the misbehavior that Pages were guilty of seemed to be ignored by most, and it does not seem like there were ever any real consequences for their

pranks. In fact, the opposite may be true. One writer told about life as a Page, describing an improbable ending to an otherwise ordinary story. It tells of a Page



Photo 18 A marble championship between Senators and Pages, April 1924. *Library of Congress.*

holding a spittoon for Senator Zachariah Chandler in the late 1870s. Chandler spit the juice into the spittoon but it splashed on the Page's hand, and the Page became upset. Said the Page, "I rubbed my hands on his back and run. [Chandler] spluttered after me, and went to the Sergeant at Arms, appealing to him to discharge me. I saw the sergeant first, and he plainly told Mr. Chandler that the young man did exactly right; that he would retain him for that reason if no other, and [that I] should have wiped it in his *face*."¹⁸⁰ With job protection like that, no wonder Pages felt little restraint in what they did, as they were consistently portrayed as the mascots of the Capitol.

Another story comes again from Captain Bassett, who supervised Senate Pages for over 30 years. He explains that when Pages misbehaved, there was little he could do. "Sence I have been assistant Doorkeeper I have had to put up with a grate deal of impertince. If I tell them thay must Stay in the Senate and not roun out for mutch thay will give me for answer 'I not Stay in the Senate' . . . I will tell them thay must Stay in the Senate; that is what ar employed for. Several have tould me thay do not come hear to weark that all thay wanted was the money that thear mouter and the Senator that got them apponted would See that thay wair not dissmid." ¹⁸¹ He must have tried to fire some Pages because he continues, "I found this to bee true for when

a Page was dismissed he was in most every case brought back and told me by saying 'I told you that I would come back.'"¹⁸² He conceded that it was difficult to restrain Pages once they secured the job and became despoiled by the others, especially with the influence that women had on Senators when it came to Pages.¹⁸³

In his papers, he shows his disgust with the behavior of Pages on several occasions. "I count several of the Pages seated around the Vice President's

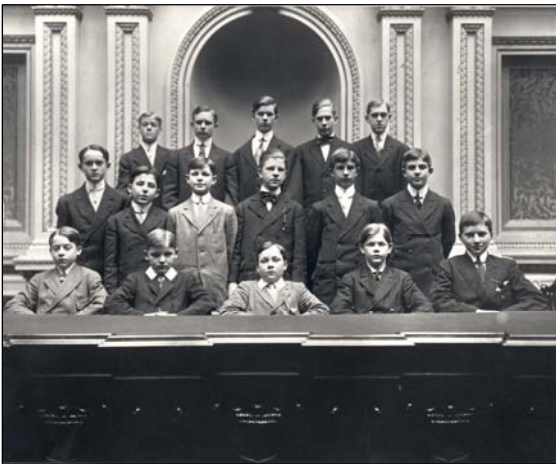


Photo 19 Pages in Senate, c. 1910. *Jim Oliver.*

platform amusing themselves, throwing up nuts and catching them in the mouths. (Just think of it: in the Senate of the United States, while the Senate is in session) and often have I caught them" doing something they were not supposed to be doing, and had to take them by the collar out of the

Chamber.¹⁸⁴ Another time he wrote, "I have frequently caught the boys tossing peewees up in the air and catching them as they came down, also playing marbles behind the Vice President's chair while the Senate was in session. I must say with very full exception, the Pages were very noisy boys" yet very little was done about it for over 100 years!¹⁸⁵

In another document, Bassett reveals not only the nature of Pages but also a bit of his own kind-hearted nature. He tells of a conversation he overheard in 1877 between a veteran Page and some new boys. The veteran Page said to them, "[Bassett] requires us to come up to the Senate every morning at 8:30 but if you don't

come he says, 'What kept you so late? I told you to be here at 8:30 and here it is after 9. I will let you off this time but you must not do so again.' We have done this all this session and he only pulls our ears and tells us to go and do our filing. . . . I tell you, we boys have our rights and we must maintain them! Don't you worry about Captain Bassett; he is too good a man to injure anyone."¹⁸⁶ This is another example of Pages taking everything they were given-- and then some, and wonderful support from a first-hand account that the other accounts are accurate in their portrayals of the community of Pages.

Maybe Pages became a bit too wild at some point and Congress attempted to control the boys and how much mischief they were getting in. These attempts to keep Pages in order climaxed in the early 1880s, a time when many Members and staff were walking around with missing limbs and other injuries, when a "bewhiskered, one-armed tyrant remembered only as Captain White," a Confederate veteran on the Democratic side, had charge of Pages and each morning, he would put them through drills.¹⁸⁷ He had Pages start in the House lobby and march in line to the Document Room to get the bills to put at each Member's desk. He thought the boys were becoming "soft and indolent" so he forced them to spend hours performing various military drills to cadence in the Cloakrooms.¹⁸⁸ Pages ended up "dead tired and fighting mad" and of course resisted White's attempt to have them wear uniforms.¹⁸⁹

Regardless of attempts to stop them, and the brief reign of Captain White, Pages continued to have the run of the Capitol. Alton wrote that although Pages went to the same dark recesses underneath the Capitol mentioned above that nobody but Pages had been to since it was built, they made themselves heard throughout the

building, as they scared off a fabricated band of thugs that lurked in those underground rooms. Of course, they often would take tin pans and musical instruments in case their yelling was not loud enough. When Pages acted up, “the Goddess of Liberty upon the dome, hundreds of feet above, must have shuddered to think of the pandemonium over which she was thus forced to preside!”¹⁹⁰

When Pages got to be too much, Senators would sometimes complain to the Chief Page, remembered J. Franklin Little, a Senate Page in 1910. The Chief Page would say, “Boys, just don’t let it happen again” and he would tell the Senator that it would be taken care of. “And after that [the Chief Page] would say to us, ‘Go on back and don’t worry about that.’ We knew [the Senator] had a couple drinks and he wanted to ball out a Page.”¹⁹¹

Sometimes, adults were the instigators of the mischief. During the 1910 World Series, Supreme Court Justice Day kept Pages especially busy but nobody thought anything of it. A few days later, it was revealed that Justice Day had been sending Pages for updates on the day’s game, and then whispering the score to other Justices, even while cases were proceeding.¹⁹² One can imagine that Members and Justices oftentimes would frantically write a note, hand it over to a Page to be delivered, and have the note be nothing more than a request for a special lunch, or some other trivial item.¹⁹³ Not only did Pages know all these things that nobody else was privy to, they could tell the stories of who made which deal with whom for whose vote; what the Members were whispering about during that vote; and which Member was not there for the vote because he was too drunk after dinner, or which Senators got in fights with each other.¹⁹⁴ It was an undeniable fact of the culture of

Pages that they had exposure to the lawmaking process that nobody else had, and they had direct access to the men making the laws.

Sometimes the mischief was not intentional. Lyman remembered that “one time, Judge Brandeis wanted somebody to go back and put back a book, and he snapped his fingers, and one boy, Sam Caldwell, stuck his head in between the chairs, right through there to get the book, and as he did, Brandeis had picked up the book and handed it back to him, and it hit him right in the face. He gave him a black eye! It was tremendous. He and Judge Brandeis were friends after that!”¹⁹⁵

While Pages had great fun inside the Capitol, they also had to practice the utmost discretion with things they saw. A good Page was one who knew the “dignity of his position and [took] a constant care not to offend any one.”¹⁹⁶ Little, a Page in 1910, remembered that “We had certain orders. For example, if you go into a room and see something going on there you just keep your damn mouth shut or you get fired. And believe me we saw it plenty of times. I've seen them come out with their pants down! We talked about it among ourselves, but it didn't get to the reporters. . . . I've seen those Senators and Congressmen so piss-assed drunk they have to have somebody to help them.”¹⁹⁷ So with the access and privilege came a responsibility to keep what they saw to themselves, but this is not something that has been recorded to any great extent.

The way that Pages are portrayed and the unusual relationships between Members and Pages comprises a small body of work in which Pages clearly are the whimsical mascots of the Congress. Having young boys working alongside Members is not something that one usually thinks of when thinking about how Congress works;

however, it is undeniable fact of Capitol life. Then, to think about all the things that Pages did to amuse themselves and have fun at work, when they were supposed to be on their best behavior at all times, representing the austere Congress, is extraordinary. The things that Pages did, the things they saw, and the things they got away with are really incredible, especially for someone as young as they were. The culture of Pages and the community they formed inside the Capitol was a one-of-a-kind phenomenon and certainly was unique.

Part Four: The Attention Paid to Formal Schooling

In the 1800s, there was a system for Pages to work inside the Capitol, but there was no provision for their schooling. In fact, before 1906, Pages were not required by law to go to school, and most of them did not attend, especially in the 1800s (and most did not attend for several years after 1906). It should be pointed out that it was not unusual in the rest of the country for young boys to be working and earning money instead of attending school during that time. Also, Pages were paid well, providing more incentive for them not to attend school. Their families probably were not too concerned about the lack of education either. It was a tremendous honor to be appointed as a Page boy in Congress, to the point where sometimes Senators' sons would volunteer to do it for free, and a family normally would not turn down the opportunity, even if it meant putting off school either for a couple years or permanently.¹⁹⁸ Being a Page boy in Congress was an opportunity that could be used to further oneself, and many did.¹⁹⁹

In 1870, Senator Cameron wanted to change the Page system and he presented legislation so that Pages would spend no more than four years serving and would not

stay later than their fifteenth birthday. He said, “My only desire is to have the term of service here short. I think no boy is permanently benefited by coming here as a Page. It may be a temporary benefit to the families; but the shorter their service here, in my opinion, the better for them. They had better go and learn some useful employment somewhere else.”²⁰⁰ This sentiment did not receive support because the counter argument, that the actual qualifications of a boy, not his age, should be the primary determinant of employment won the discussion even though the proper qualifications were minimal. This represents an early example of the institutional inertia that people who advocated for change ran into.

Some Pages did attend school, or had already attended school by the time they became Pages, like Arthur Gorman and Richard Townshend, both of whom later returned to the Capitol as a Senator and a Congressman, respectively. However, that was the exception rather than the rule. More common are stories from Page memoirs in which the authors tell of sporadic schooling and incomplete educations.²⁰¹ Once a boy became a Page, he was much more concerned with learning Members’ names, locating their offices and exploring the nooks and crannies of the Capitol than he was in a formal education.²⁰² It was advantageous to learn the likes and dislikes of individual Members instead of spending time learning traditional school subjects whose usefulness was questionable at work. After all, it was important to know the brand of mineral water, chewing gum, cigar and soft drink each Member favored, as well as his personal proclivities.²⁰³ If a boy was a Page, then his job was the driving force in his life, and school was not viewed as important, and it was not given highest priority.

Those who did attend school did so at night or whenever they could while Congress was out of session, or some hired tutors, but for many, school was simply a lark; they were more worried about the appearance of their uniforms and the marks they received in conduct, efficiency, appearance and intelligence at work.²⁰⁴ Since education was not a priority for the boys, whether they attended school during Congressional recesses really depended more on the individual boy and whether he could afford to pay for it than anything else. The Page system was an opportunity for boys to work and it did not address their education.

Custis Meade, a Page from 1921 to 1932 said, “I went to night public school most of the time when Congress was in session, and when Congress was not in session and school was in session, I transferred over to day school, so it meant that I was transferring back and forth a good deal of the time.”²⁰⁵ Little, a Senate Page from 1910-12, said, “I [graduated] high school going at night. I’m not going to tell you I had a thorough education, but I made enough points to get my degree. . . . I went to school three nights a week. And in the summertime, I went from morning until night. They encouraged it, but they didn’t make you. I noticed that those of us who were keeping up our education got the preference jobs around there.”²⁰⁶ Riedel, a Senate Page from 1918 to 1924, further explained, “I tried several times to continue schooling at night, [but] the irregularity of Senate sessions made it impossible to complete a standard program.”²⁰⁷

Donald Detwiler, a Senate Page from 1917 to 1918 at age 14, said, “[I didn’t go to] school while I was a Page. . . . I was [more] interested in what was going on in the Senate.”²⁰⁸ Detwiler even left school in Kansas City because of the prestige of

becoming a Senate Page. “I thought Senate Pages were important people back then. More important than the average high school student. It may have been a mis-guided, youthful notion, but that’s what we all thought. . . . I think it was more interesting than anything I learned in school [although] I don’t know exactly what I learned in the Senate.”²⁰⁹ He also said that trying to sneak in even a little bit of extra academic work was discouraged, at least on the job: “[Our boss] didn’t approve of Pages writing or reading-- [instead] we had to constantly be alert for the snap of the fingers” showing how the emphasis for Pages was on their jobs, not on education.²¹⁰

One argument that Pages did not need school was that they learned so much about political affairs during their tenure that they were ready to become political



Photo 20 Pages outside the Capitol, 1922. *Library of Congress.*

leaders themselves soon after they left their Page service. The education a boy received as a Page as he mingled with

Members, left him in a fine position to lead his own political agenda. While maybe not book-smart, Pages were educated with the affairs of state and procedure in the Chambers. Pages were “fully equipped for the position of Senator or Representative, but deficient in almost all other useful knowledge” which is not really an endorsement for the Page system in terms of their education, but it continued nonetheless.²¹¹

The boys faced an unpredictable schedule and it was too difficult to earn an education for many of them; once most Pages got a taste of working for Congress,

education was no longer important to them. Senate Historian Richard Baker illustrated how at least one Page viewed his formal education. “At Vice President Thomas Marshall's 1919 Christmas dinner for Pages, seventeen year-old Mark Trice explained, ‘A Senate Page studying history and shorthand has a better opportunity than a schoolboy of learning the same subjects, because we are constantly in touch with both. We boys have an opportunity to watch the official reporters write shorthand and they will always answer questions that we do not understand, thereby making a teacher almost useless.’”²¹²

With having to be at work as early as 9:00 AM and having to stay sometimes until after midnight, there was not much time during a typical day to earn a formal education. However, Pages received a different kind of education as they worked side by side with Members, a liberal education whose “curriculum was always unplanned and completely unpredictable.”²¹³ Though sometimes glamorous and always an honor, the jobs that Pages had required them to live lives that were totally unsuited to their years, sacrificing traditional education for a rare look inside Congress, and foregoing typical teenage pursuits in exchange for walking the marble corridors of Capitol Hill.²¹⁴ However, a Page was “the envy of every chap in town,” so school was simply secondary to their jobs, especially since their pay was more than a college graduate could typically earn.²¹⁵

At the turn of the century, more Pages began attending night school. In the Senate especially, an article at the time reported that “a majority of the lads attend night school and several receive private tutoring at home.”²¹⁶ Similarly, “two-thirds of the House Pages attend night school and several are studying law at the universities

of the capital,” including Willie Cheatham in 1926.²¹⁷ Even so, with many of them attending night school, “by listening to the debates and by reading the Congressional Record, [they] are receiving educations on national affairs and on economics such as no university in the world could afford to provide for its students.”²¹⁸

John Kelton, a Supreme Court Page in the 1920s, thought that leaving school to become a Page was a wise thing to do, and saw it as a chance to use his debate



Photo 21 Isaac Bassett with Senate Pages. *Architect of the Capitol*.

skills, although he admits that the high pay, the easy work and overall experience would not hurt either.

Kelton went to a tutor two hours a week to keep up with his school work. “His mother would not allow him to attend night school as the other Pages did, feeling that play was more important for him.”²¹⁹ Watkins put it

eloquently when he wrote “perhaps no greater advantage can fall early to the lot of a boy cut off from the

possibilities of scholastic training than to be selected for one of the junior houses of Congress. . . . These youthful Mercuries of the congressional halls are placed by fortune at the best possible vantage points to tempt the personal favor of the powerful functionaries who make and fill responsible offices.”²²⁰

Even with all the advantages and benefits of working as a Page, at least one former Page, Isaac Bassett, seemed to regret the absence of education. “My expereance is that if I had my time to goe over again I never would enter the Senate as a Page, messenger or an offercer. I have spent my hole life in it Servese and the Consuquence is that I have had a veary limited Education. [I] Could only goe to

Schools during the reses of the Senate and then only for a short time. I was compealed to Come and fould Speeches in the foulding room of the Senate.”²²¹ This is an important observation because Bassett is one of the most revered figures in Senate history and here he is saying that he wished he never worked there because he sacrificed his education. Little also seemed to regret that his education was minimal, saying, “They say you get an education up there [in the Capitol]. Maybe an inspiration, but you don't get an education.”²²²

As late as 1920, at least one writer wanted the Bureau of Education to complete a comprehensive research project with respect to Pages. One would think that this research project would look at how Pages’ education could be met by establishing a school for them, or some other worthy end result. However, the writer was simply calling for a survey to see how working in Congress had affected past Pages to determine if the government’s cost of having them work was worth the return, which had nothing to do with their education.²²³

In any event, as 1926 turned to 1927, as formal education throughout America was becoming more standard, had Bassett and the others been around, they would have gotten what they were lacking. Through a combination of social pressure and the efforts of a few people, a school specifically for Pages was about to be realized, as the Page system took a radical turn from a work-only system to one which also provided formal schooling for the boys.

Notes

1. C. Edson, "Our Past and Present: Historical Inquiry in Education." In R. Sherman & R. Webb, *Qualitative Research in Education: Focus and Methods* (New York: Falmer Press, 1988), 44-58.
2. Sometimes in source material, "Page" is capitalized and sometimes it is not. I have capitalized the term, even when it was not capitalized in a direct quote, so that it is consistent throughout the study.
3. *Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789*, ed. Worthington C. Ford et al. (Washington, D.C., 1904-37), 1:29.
4. *Ibid.*, 2:12.
5. *Records of the Federal Convention of 1787 (Farrand's Records)*, 25 May 1787, 1:2.
6. *Ibid.*, 8 April 1789, 10.
7. *House Journal*, 1st Cong., 1st Sess., 22 July 1789, 64.
8. *Ibid.*, 13 April 1789, 13; *Ibid.*, 9 May 1789, 32.
9. "Uncle Sam's Pages Are Bright Boys," *New York Herald*, 19 March 1893, 32; John Francis Steele, "The Post Impressionist: Our First Page," *Washington Post*, 27 December 1941, 6; Elmer Parker, "Letter to Lillian Kessel," Office of the Curator of the Architect of the Capitol, Record Group 43, Series 43.2, Art and Reference Subject Files, "Capitol Building, 1881-1986," Box 4, Folder 32, *Page Boys*, 27 April 1964.
10. Grafton Dulaney Hanson, "Letter to Isaac Bassett," 20 December 1880, Office of the Curator of the United States Senate, *Isaac Bassett Papers*, Box 20, Folder A, 1.
11. Senate, *Report of the Secretary of the Senate on the State of the Contingent Fund, Clerks, Messengers, &c.*, 22nd Cong., 1st Sess., 5 Dec 1831, 2.
12. Senate, *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Senate, Showing the Expenditures From the Contingent Fund, &c.*, 21st Cong., 2nd Sess., 6 December 1830, 2.
13. Senate, *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Senate, Showing the Expenditures From the Contingent Fund, &c.*, 21st Cong., 1st Sess., 7 December 1829, 2.

14. "Congressional Cemetery Home Page" (Congressional Cemetery). <http://www.congressionalcemetery.org> (accessed 7 March 2006).

15. Senate, *Report of the Secretary of the Senate of the Expenditures from the Contingent Fund of the Senate During the Year 1822*, 18th Cong., 1st Sess., 2 December 1823, 4.

16. *Ibid.*, 42.

17. *American State Papers: Miscellaneous*, 2:637-639.

18. Elmer Parker, "Letter to Lillian Kessel," Office of the Curator of the Architect of the Capitol, Record Group 43, Series 43.2, Art and Reference Subject Files, "Capitol Building, 1881-1986," Box 4, Folder 32, *Page Boys*, 25 April 1964; George Stewart, "Letter to Elmer Parker," Office of the Curator of the Architect of the Capitol, Record Group 43, Series 43.2, Art and Reference Subject Files, "Capitol Building, 1881-1986," Box 4, Folder 32, *Page Boys*; 1 May 1964; Senate, *Appointment of Female Senate Pages: Hearing Before the Ad Hoc Subcommittee To Consider the Appointment of Female Pages*, 92nd Cong., 1st Sess., 4 March 1971, 37.

19. Ruth Ketring Nuermberger, "Asbury Dickins (1780-1861): A Career in Government Service," *North Carolina Historical Review*, Vol. XXIV, No. 3, July 1947, 286.

20. *Ibid.*, 302.

21. Frank G. Carpenter, "The Pages of Congress," *The Youth's Companion*, 12 May 1886, 180. Note: The Isaac Bassett Papers, housed in the Office of the Curator of the United States Senate, contains handwritten notes from Bassett and other writers who recorded the stories that Bassett told them. Sometimes when excerpts are taken from the Bassett Papers, the English and spelling are correct; other times, the language is broken and there are many misspellings. The former excerpts are from the unnamed writers that recorded Bassett's stories, and the latter quotes are from Bassett's own hand. When there is a misspelling or poor English in a direct quote from Bassett, it is because I have maintained his original style, grammar and spelling; additionally, I have not used sic to indicate mistakes. A note from Amy Camilleri, Office of Senate Curator: "Bassett himself rewrote portions in a much neater version of his own hand. It is possible also that his son, George T. Bassett rewrote some. But the most common editor was H.O. Hall, who I believe was Bassett's nephew, and who wrote in a very neat, distinctive script. Hall also 'dressed up' some of the stories, making them read more like a book of that time."

22. Christian Hines, *Early Recollections of Washington City* (Washington: Chronicle Book and Job Print, 1866), 76-77.

23. "Doorkeepers of the House" (Office of the Clerk of the House)
http://clerk.house.gov/histHigh/Congressional_History/doorkeepers.html (accessed 13 March 2006).

24. *American State Papers: Miscellaneous*, 1:57-59.

25. Congress, *Letter From the Clerk of the House of Representatives Accompanied With Sundry Statements. . . Annual Statement of the Expenditures From the Contingent Fund of the Two Houses of Congress*, 18th Cong., 1st Sess., 2 December 1823, 4.

26. House, *Letter From the Clerk of the House of Representatives Accompanied With Sundry Statements. . . Annual Statement of the Expenditures From the Contingent Fund of the Two Houses of Congress*, 18th Cong., 2nd Sess., 9 March 1824, 6.

27. "Mr. James Dobbyn Dead," *Washington Evening Star*, 1 April 1892, 12.

28. House, *Duties of Officers of the House of Representatives*, Report No. 750, 25th Cong., 2nd Sess., 31 March 1838, 2.

29. *Ibid.*, 4.

30. *Ibid.* NOTE: So that the text is not overburdened with clumsy language, the general term "Members" is used to mean both Senators and Congressmen of the House of Representatives. When a Senator or Congressman is referred to specifically, it is stated explicitly but when a reference is made to "Members," it means men of either or both chambers. Also, I have capitalized "Members" even when it was not capitalized in original source material to maintain consistency throughout the study.

31. *Ibid.*, 5.

32. House, *Report on the Contingent Expenses of the House of Representatives*, Report No. 30, 27th Cong., 2nd Sess., 17 June 1841, 6.

33. *Ibid.*

34. Thomas E. Waggaman, *Pages of the United States Congress and Supreme Court*, 1 February 1948, Office of the Curator of the Supreme Court of the United States, Marshal's Records, 2; U. S. House of Representatives, *Capitol Page School Handbook*, c. 1976, Office of the Curator of the Supreme Court of the United States, Marshal's Records, 26.

35. "Chamber of Representatives at Washington," *Penny Magazine*, 10 October 1835, 397.

36. John Elfreth Watkins, Jr., "Pages in Congress, They Are the Envy of All American Boys," *Washington Evening Star*, 24 May 1902, 24; "Good Pay and Fine Opportunities For the Pages of Congress," *Brooklyn Eagle*, 25 May 1902, 25.
37. Frank Madison, *A View From the Floor: The Journal of a U.S. Senate Page Boy*, (Englewood Cliffs, N. J: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1967), 12.
38. Gershon Bickford, "Youngest Page?" *Washington Evening Star*, 3 October 1961.
39. Augustus Thomas, *Print of My Remembrance* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1922), 36.
40. "House Page Real Politician," *Washington Post*, 24 June 1912, 4.
41. Harry Wright Newman, *John Hanson Family Tree*, Office of the Curator of the Architect of the Capitol, Vertical file, *Pages*, United States Capitol, Washington.
42. *The Isaac Bassett Papers*, Office of the Curator of the United States Senate, Box 21, Folder E, 8-9; *Ibid.*, 30A-30B.
43. *Ibid.*
44. Richard Riedel, *Halls of the Mighty* (Washington: R.B. Luce, 1969), 19.
45. *Bassett Papers*, Box 34, Folder A, 92; Baker Jamison, *Memories of Great Men and Events, 1840-1861* (New York: Broadway Publishing, 1917), I; Gershon Bickford, "Youngest Page?" *Washington Evening Star*, 3 October 1961.
46. Frank Lyman, Supreme Court Page, 1923-1928, interview with author, 4 April 2003, Silver Spring, MD, tape recording. All quotes taken from interviews performed by the author are edited for clarity and readability. I have deleted pauses, starts and stops, and I have not used brackets to indicate words that have been added for clarification.
47. Stuart Robson, "Stuart Robson as Page," *Brooklyn Eagle*, 23 March 1890, 13.
48. Watkins, 24.
49. House, *Duties of Officers of House of Representatives*, Report No. 750, 25th Cong., 2nd Sess., 31 March 1838, 2.
50. *Report on the Contingent Expenses of the House*, 7.

51. *House Journal*, 27th Cong., 2nd Sess., 3 March 1842, 472.
52. Senate, *In the Senate of the United States*, Rep. Com. No. 344, 33rd Cong., 1st Sess., 10 July 1854, 15.
53. Christian Eckloff, *Memoirs of a Senate Page* (New York: Broadway Publishing, 1909), 10.
54. Shirley Dare, "Congressional Pages," *Atlanta Constitution*, 19 March 1870, 1.
55. Harriet Prescott Spofford, *Harper's Young People*, in *Bassett Papers*, Box 34, Folder F, 152, c. 1880.
56. Senate, *Letter of the Sergeant-at-Arms of the United States Senate*, Misc. Doc. No. 17, 48th Cong., 1st Sess., 10 December 1883.
57. "One of the Senate's Pages," 5 December 1890, *Washington Post*, 4.
58. Watkins, 24.
59. "Boys at Capitol Are Bright Lot," *Boston Daily Globe*, 24 January 1904, 47.
60. Lyman interview.
61. No title, *Progressive American*, n.d., Office of the Curator of the United States Senate; *Bassett Papers*, Box 34, Folder E, Page 130.
62. "Pages of the United States Senate," *Bassett Papers*, Box 10, Folder A, 29.
63. "Great Men as a Congress Page Has Seen Them," *New York Times*, 21 September 1913, SM2.
64. "Another Page in Progress-- And It's a Girl," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 12 September 1917, 1.
65. "Capitol Pages, 1903-1939," Office of the Curator of the United States Senate. n.d., 1.
66. *Bassett Papers*, Box 21, Folder E, 18.
67. *Report on the Contingent Expenses of the House*, 8.

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69. Baker Jamison, "Some Great Senators; How They Looked to the Lads Who Were Their Pages," *Boston Sunday Globe*, 5 February 1893, 9.

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71. Ruth Ketring Nuernberger, "Asbury Dickins (1780-1861): A Career in Government Service," *North Carolina Historical Review*, Vol. XXIV, No. 3, July 1947, 281.

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75. Thomas, 57.

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80. "Pages Make History," *Washington Post*, 1 February 1914, 8.

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82. Mary Roberts Rinehart, "Willie Cheatham Looks at the Senate," *Saturday Evening Post*, 20 March 1926, 14.

83. Will Scheltema, "Senate Page Looks Back at '18," *Roll Call*, 27 June 1985, 6.

84. "The Senate Pages' Christmas Gifts," *Washington Post*, 23 December 1887, 2; "National Capital Miscellany," *Chicago Daily*, 24 December 1887, 3.

85. "Entertaining the Pages," *Washington Post*, 12 February 1888, 3.

86. "Christmas Celebration at the Federal Capital," *Atlanta Constitution*, 23 December 1900, 18.

87. "Lowden is Santa to Pages," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 24 December 1910, 4; "Many Gifts for the President," *Boston Daily Globe*, 26 December 1910, 2.

88. "Mr. Farr Gives \$5 Gold Pieces to House Pages," *Washington Post*, 24 December 1913, 4; "Gold Given to Senate Pages," *Washington Post*, 24 December 1916, 5; "Santa Claus to Senate Pages," *Washington Post*, 26 December 1917, 8.

89. "Page Boys of Senate Vice President's Guests," *Boston Daily Globe*, 25 December 1913, 8; "Page Boys of Senate Dined by Marshall," *Atlanta Constitution*, 25 December 1913, 7; "Marshall Is Pages' Host," *Washington Post*, 24 December 1915, 4; "Pages Guests of Marshall," *Washington Post*, 28 December 1916, 2; "Senate Pages Dinner Guests," *Washington Post*, 26 December 1918, 5; "Host to Senate Pages," *Washington Post*, 14 December 1919, F2; "Santa Claus to Senate Pages," *Washington Post*, 19 December 1920, 72; "Coolidge Will Give Senate Pages Dinner," *Washington Post*, 23 December 1921, 13; "Senate Pages Dine Today," *New York Times*, 28 December 1921, 7; "Vice President is Host to Senate Pages Today," *Washington Post*, 28 December 1921, 9; "Vice President Will Dine Senate Pages," *Boston Daily Globe*, 28 December 1921, 18; "Vice President is Host to the Senate Pages," *New York Times*, 29 December 1921, 13; "Pages in Senate Have Lost Santa Thru Promotion," *Atlanta Constitution*, 23 December 1923, 16; "Senate Pages Feast Today," *Atlanta Constitution*, 30 December 1923, B13; "Senate Pages Dinner Guests of Vice President Coolidge," *Washington Evening Star*, 23 December 1922, 5; "Real Yuletide Spirit Much in Evidence at Capitol," *Washington Evening Star*, 24 December 1922, 2; "What Congress Did At Its Day's Work," *New York World*, 24 December 1922, 15; "Senate Pages Get Feast After All," *Boston Daily Globe*, 30 December 1923, 7; "Dawes to Fete Senate Pages," *Washington Post*, 23 December 1925, 18; "Dawes Has a Session with Senate Pages; Advises Them Not to Smoke, Swear or Drink," *New York Times*, 24 December 1925, 1.

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96. Photo Standalone, *Washington Post*, 26 October 1921, 22; "Riggs Eleven Best," *Washington Post*, 31 October 1921, 11; "Senate Pages Meet Park View on Grid," *Washington Post*, 20 November 1921, 30.

97. "Pages Ape the Senate," *New York Times*, 29 June 1913, 1.

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101. Dare, 1; "Good Pay and Fine Opportunities For the Pages of Congress," *Brooklyn Eagle*, 25 May 1902, 25.

102. Ibid.

103. "Pantaloon for Mary Walker," *Boston Daily Globe*, 2 February 1879, 6.

104. "House Quits After a Fight of 28 Hours," *Atlanta Constitution*, 20 February 1911, 1.

105. Eckloff, 42; Jamison, 35.

106. Ibid., 4; Ibid., 7.

107. Robert Byrd, *The Senate, 1789-1989: Addresses on the History of the United States Senate, Vol. 2*, Washington: United States Printing Office, 1991, 384; Untitled, *Washington Post*, 7 May 1912, 6; "Senate Pages See Circus," *Washington Post*, 30 April 1913, 4; "Chilton Invites Pages to Circus," *Washington Post*, 2 May 1916, 5; "Pages Guests at Wild West," *Washington Post*, 29 May 1916, 8; "Page To

Be Phelan's Guests," *Washington Post*, 21 April 1918, 6; "Senate Pages at Circus," *Washington Post*, 6 May 1918, 12; "Phelan To Treat Pages," *Washington Post*, 15 February 1920, 64; "Pages to See 'Wild West,'" *Washington Post*, 20 April 1920, 5; "Circus, Horse Show, and College Play Entertain Capital," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 17 May 1921, 21.

108. "Agree on Duty on Mustard Plasters," *Boston Daily Globe*, 17 May 1922, 4.

109. "A Senatorial Stamp Collector," *Boston Daily Globe*, 1 February 1885, 17.

110. Alton, 263.

111. "Senate Page Insists Loeffler Got Paper," *Atlanta Constitution*, 15 March 1913, 9.

112. "Pages' Nicknames for Senators," *Washington Post*, 2 June 1914, 6.

113. Willis Hawkins, "They Wait on Senators," *Brooklyn Eagle*, 13 July 1890, 17.

114. Donald J. Detwiler, *Senate Page, 1917 to 1918*, interview by Richard Baker, 8 August 1985, U. S. Senate Historical Office, 29.

115. *Isaac Bassett Papers*, Box 3, Folder A, 19-20.

116. *Isaac Bassett Papers*, Box 3, Folder A, 20-21.

117. Watkins, 24.

118. "Untitled," *Weekly Free Press*, Detroit, MI, *Bassett Papers*, Box 30, Folder G, Page 50, c. 1885.

119. Eckloff, 21.

120. "Senator Voorhees and the Pretzel," *Washington Post*, 23 June 1882, 2; "Couldn't 'Shoo' Bird Out," *Washington Post*, 3 October 1913, 4.

121. Lyman interview.

122. "In Extra Session, Congress Is Now Assembled," *Baltimore American*, 8 August 1893, np.

123. Dare, 1.

124. Edmund Alton, *Among the Law-Makers*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1915), 23. NOTE: Although the book lists him as "Edmund Alton," his real name was Edmund Alton Bailey (*Atlanta Constitution*, 30 January 1887, p. 2; "Uncle Sam's Pages Are Bright Boys," *New York Herald*, 19 March 1893, 32.)

125. Eckloff, 12.

126. *Bassett Papers*, Box 1, Folder B, 32.

127. *Bassett Papers*, Box 20, Folder C, 55.

128. Letter From Grafton Dulaney Hanson to Isaac Bassett, 2.

129. "From Boxing to Devotion" 2 February 1894, Office of the Curator of the U. S. Senate, Vertical File on Pages, United States Capitol, Washington.

130. "Bay-Window Jottings," c. 1885, *Bassett Papers*, Box 30, Folder G, 59; *New York Times*, 3 Jan 1926, Sec VIII, 5.

131. "The Senate Pages," *St. Louis Republican*, in *Bassett Papers*, Box 34, Folder E, 135.

132. Frank Lyman I interview, 22.

133. "Fights of Congress's Pages," *New York Times*, 17 April 1892, 9; "Captain Bassett Cuffed Him," *Brooklyn Eagle*, 17 April 1892, 7.

134. *Gales & Seaton's Register*, House of Representatives, 24th Cong., 1st Sess., 4 July 1836, 4623.

135. *Senate Journal*, 25th Cong., 2nd Sess., 7 July 1838, 569; *Congressional Globe*, 25th Cong., 2nd Sess., 6 July 1838, 505; *Ibid.*, 9 Jan 1838, 86.

136. House, *House Report on the Contingent Expenses*, 17 June 1841, 8.

137. *House Journal*, 27th Cong., 1st Sess., 9 September 1841, 490.

138. John F. Brownell, "Arthur Pue Gorman: Past-Master in Politics and Presidential Possibility," *Leslie's Monthly Magazine*, March 1904, 527.

139. Stuart Robson, "Stuart Robson as Page," *Brooklyn Eagle*, 23 March 1890, 13.

140. *Ibid.*

141. "Senate Pages 'Lobbyists,'" *Washington Post*, 10 August 1911, 2.

142. *Bassett Papers*, Box 10, Folder A, 35.
143. "Senator Sherman's Autograph," *Boston Daily Globe*, 14 March 1897, 39; "Pages in the Senate," *New York Times*, 26 March 1900, 1.
144. "Leaves as Citizen," *Washington Post*, 5 March 1909, 12.
145. Eckloff, 11.
146. "Raffles of Fountain Pens," *Washington Post*, 11 January 1901, 4.
147. "Capitol Chat," *Washington Post*, 5 February 1901, 6
148. "Behind the Scenes," *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, c. 1879, in *Bassett Papers*, Box 18, Folder C, 16; "A Senate Page's Opinion," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 10 September 1879, 11. NOTE: In the former, the quote is attributed to Bassett; in the latter, to a Page.
149. "Life of a Page in 1861," *Brooklyn Eagle*, 7 February 1897, 13.
150. Alton, 259.
151. Earle S. Kinsley, *Recollections of Vermonters in State and National Affairs*, (Rutland, Vermont: Author, 1946), 8.
152. "Life of a Page in 1861," *Brooklyn Eagle*, 7 February 1897, 13.
153. Stuart Robson, "Stuart Robson as Page," *Brooklyn Eagle*, 23 March 1890, 13.
154. "Cannon Was Fooled," *Washington Post*, 3 March 1906, 5.
155. "Behind the Scenes," 16; "Vermont's Stolen Electoral Vote," *Washington Post*, 3 September 1879, 2; "The Story of Senate Page," *Daily Constitution*, 5 September 1879, 2.
156. Alton, 26.
157. *Ibid.*, 169. Mike Revell tells a story of joining in voice votes when he was a Page in the 1950s; page 11.
158. *Bassett Papers*, Box 31, Folder B, 45, c. 1880.
159. *Ibid.*, Box 34, Folder A, 91.

160. "Stuart Robson as Page," 13.
161. "Prank of a House Page," *Washington Post*, 2 March 1901, 8.
162. "Untitled," *Washington Star*, 17 May 1876, np.
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165. "Capitol Pages, 1903-1939," 1; "Venerable Capt. Bassett. The Senate Could Not Get Along Without Him," *Dubuque Daily Herald*, March 3, 1894.
166. Thomas, 38.
167. John Kelton, "When I Was a Senate Page," *Anvil of Middlesex School* (Concord, MA), 16 Feb 1927, Vol. XXIV, No. 3, 21.
168. Ibid., 22.
169. "Pantaloons for Mary Walker," *Boston Daily Globe*, 2 February 1879, 6.
170. Lyman interview.
171. Ibid.
172. Scheltema, 6.
173. Alton, 31.
174. "Pendelton Can Go," *Atlanta Constitution*, 13 February 1890, 1.
175. Alton, 176-181.
176. "Capitol Chat," *Washington Post*, 9 April 1900, 6 and 19 January 1903, 6.
177. Riedel, 15; Gus Meade also provides an excellent description of this initiation rite in his interview, page 5.
178. Lyman I interview, 21.
179. Kinsley, 13; Edmund Alton, "Letter to David Lynn," Office of the Curator of the Architect of the Capitol, Record Group 43, Series 43.2, Art and

Reference Subject Files, "Capitol Building, 1881-1986," Box 4, Folder 32, *Page Boys*, 18 August 1936.

The room referred to is under what is now called the crypt in the Capitol. Although no trap door is evident on the crypt level, there is a round room directly below the crypt which now serves as the House Photography Office. The round room is mentioned by both Kinsley and Alton. On a recent visit, I was able to find a sealed-off and filled-in stone staircase in disuse, like Alton mentioned.

180. "Behind the Scenes," 16.

181. "Pages of the United States Senate," *Bassett Papers*, Box 10, Folder A, 34.

182. *Ibid.*, 30.

183. *Ibid.*, 34.

184. *Ibid.*, 33.

185. *Bassett Papers*, Folder 21, Box D, 32.

186. *Ibid.*, Folder 21, Box E, 19.

187. "High School on the Hill," *Time*, 27 June 1949, 61; *Congressional Record*, House, 10 April 1961, A2362.

188. Charles Russell, "History of the Congressional Pages," *The Congressional*, 1943, 30.

189. "High School on the Hill," 61; Charles and Jean Komaiko, "'Coming, Senator!'" *New York Times*, 15 December 1946, SM31; William Tyler Page, "Pages in the House of Representatives," *The Congressional*, 1942, Capitol Page School Yearbook, 18.

190. Alton, 181.

191. J. Franklin Little, *Senate Page, 1910-1912*, oral history by Don Ritchie, United States Historical Office, 9 December 1983, 6.

192. "Supreme Court Pages Whisper Score to Judges," *Christian Science Monitor*, 22 October 1910, 1.

193. Genevieve Forbes Herrick, "A Peek Behind the Scenes in the United States Supreme Court," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 18 September 1932, G1.

194. "What Every Page Knows," *Washington Post*, 12 March 1911, MS2; *Diary of Watson B. Smith, Senate Page, January 1, 1896 to June 14, 1896*, Office of the Senate Curator.

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196. Claude Bowers, *The Life and Times of John Worth Kern*, (Indianapolis: The Hollenbeck Press, 1918).

197. Little oral history, 7; *Ibid.*, 31.

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199. Lida C. Bulloch, "How Pluck and Energy Triumph at Washington," *Atlanta Constitution*, 9 February 1902, 11.

200. *Congressional Globe*, 41st Cong., 2nd Sess., 6 December 1870, 18.

201. See for example Eckloff and Thomas.

202. Riedel, 17.

203. Byrd, 383.

204. "House Pages: It's a Gay Life for Boys in Congress," *Boston Daily Globe*, 7 December 1913, SM15; Josephine Tighe, "The Pages of the United States Senate," *St. Nicholas Magazine*, January 1915, 224.

205. Jim Oliver, *A Conversation with Custis Meade*, unpublished oral history, 26 August 1985, 2.

206. Little oral history, 10-11.

207. Riedel, 19.

208. Detwiler oral history, 9.

209. *Ibid.*, 8.

210. *Ibid.*, 9.

211. *Capitol Pages, 1903-1939*, 1.

212. Richard Baker, *First Female Pages Appointed*, (U. S. Senate Historical Office), http://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/minute/First_Female_Pages_Appointed.htm (accessed 7 March 2006).

213. Riedel, 19.
214. Ibid., 20.
215. “Boys at Capitol Are Bright Lot,” *Boston Daily Globe*, 24 January 1904, 47.
216. Watkins, 24; “Good Pay and Fine Opportunities For the Pages of Congress,” *Brooklyn Eagle*, 25 May 1902, 25.
217. Ibid.; Rinehart, 24.
218. “Senate Pages Get Good Pay,” *Christian Science Monitor*, 26 August 1911, 19.
219. Elmendorf Carr, *John C. R. Kelton: A Boy’s Life* (Cambridge: Riverside Press, 1929), 36.
220. Watkins, 24.
221. *Bassett Papers*, Folder 1, Box A, 4.
222. Little oral history, 11.
223. “The End Result of Being a Page,” *The Outlook*, 10 March 1920, 414.

I had made acquaintance with Jim McClintic, our Congressman in the 7th District of Oklahoma, during his speaking visits in my area. So, I went to his office in the House Office Building, on Capitol Hill . . . He said the recession was in full force, and there was a shortage of jobs, but he could give me my choice of two positions. I could take a job as a Capitol policeman, or, since I had seven years of teaching and school administration in Oklahoma, I could start a school for the Page boys there in the Capitol Building . . . The latter offer seemed great! I accepted it immediately, and asked him if he could find rooms in the Capitol for my use, and perhaps some desks also . . . I was very interested, and without fanfare, approval of the House of Representatives or any underlings, I sealed the deal.

~Ernest Kendall's Unpublished Personal Memoir, p. 28.

CHAPTER THREE: CONGRESS PASSIVELY DELEGATES CONTROL OF CAPITOL PAGE SCHOOL TO PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS, 1926 TO 1942

Introduction

Congress tried many times to set the minimum age for Pages in the 1800s. However, the rules they passed (and then promptly broke) never seemed to be the most important issue of the day, and Members did not police themselves or each other when appointing boys as young as eight, and nobody seemed too concerned with it. However, in the early part of the 20th century, the welfare of children became more important in the public consciousness. Eventually, because of pressure from the legal system, which was becoming more and more concerned with child advocacy, child labor became an important issue for the boys working inside the Capitol too in their traditionally insular work environment and it forced Congress to change the Page system by providing educational facilities for them.

This chapter begins with a brief historical review of child labor laws and compulsory education laws in the District of Columbia, and how they influenced the formation of a school for Pages. It will then chronicle the school's first 15 years and how Congress passively delegated responsibility for Page School to a series of individuals who became concerned with Pages not only through luck and happenstance, but also through active and sincere interest in their welfare. This passive delegation of responsibility for running Page School was an attempt by Congress to avoid taking real responsibility for the school. Instead, Congress allowed things to unfold as they did, without direct intervention, and the success of running the school was only marginal. It took a few attempts and different formulas over the

course of a few years for the school to find stability so that it could succeed in its unique environment inside the Capitol building.

Part One: Child Advocacy Laws Put Pressure on Congress

CHILD LABOR IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Because child labor laws in the District had a direct effect on the Page system, which led to the formation of Capitol Page School, it is worthy to take a quick look at the history of those laws. In April 1906, the House debated legislation for the District of Columbia which prohibited children under 14 from working in most jobs, and prohibited those under 16 from working in those jobs between 7 PM and 8 AM, and also specifically prohibited children under 16 from working as Senate and House Pages, overlooking Supreme Court Pages who worked regular hours every day.¹ Although there were different versions of the bill in both chambers, and different amendments that were passed, sometimes specifically including Pages and sometimes specifically excluding them, the bill that the House passed included the provision that Pages had to be at least 16.² After the House passed its version of the bill, the Senate was expected to pass the legislation fairly uneventfully but when it arrived there for debate, the Senate in fact had objections.

The Senate did not want to change the ages of its Pages and wanted its boys exempted from the law. It wanted little boys working in the chamber, not older boys, so that Pages would remain inconspicuous while doing their work.³ The Senate was especially proud of its Pages because Senators thought that Pages were so involved in the goings-on in the Senate, that it was good experience for the boys to be working and they wanted to insulate Pages, if not all boys, from the bill. The “manly,

courteous, well-poised little fellows,” who were mature beyond their ages, received special protection from their patrons in the Senate.⁴ There were also many people who maintained that there was nothing wrong with young boys working and earning a wage, a common phenomenon in the early 20th century.

Sentiment in the tradition-rich Senate was that if its Pages were not exempt from the law, then no longer would the “diminutive Pages that have scurried around the Senate from time immemorial” be present, and if that happened, Senators said that it would show “the baneful effect of a good law; that while [Pages] may not attend school in the daytime regularly, they gain a broadening experience that is an education in itself.”⁵ Some Senators also claimed that many Pages helped their widowed mothers financially with their \$75 a month salaries, and most all Pages became successful anyway, so the law should not apply to them.⁶ The Senate clearly valued the experience gained from working as a Page over formal education.

Members of the Senate Committee on Education and Labor who were strongly opposed to the bill that the House passed thought that Pages received an education “which [was] superior to that they would get in school” and knew that Pages were successful after leaving service when they turned 16.⁷ In fact, “Senator [Jonathan] Dolliver told the committee that he wondered whether people had not become a little morbid in urging that boys should not work. He said that when he was a boy he was taught that sawing wood was a good exercise.”⁸ In one of the first of many examples of the House and Senate not being able to agree on a single version of the Page system, and one of the many ways that institutional inertia manifested itself,

the many arguments that Senators offered to keep Pages working eventually killed the bill, so that the efforts of the House to regulate the age of Pages were wasted.

Two years later in May 1908, after the Senate released a report regarding child labor, a bill which included a “practical and moderate regulation of employment of children” for the District of Columbia was debated, and this time both chambers passed it, in an early example of direct Congressional tinkering of the Page system.⁹ The final version of the law was a compromise between the two houses, and it set conditions so that no child under 14 was allowed to work in most jobs, including specifically employment in “the distribution or transmission of merchandise or messages.”¹⁰ Further, a child under 16 could not work between 7 PM and 6 AM, nor could they work more than eight hours a day, not more than 48 hours in a week, nor during the hours that District of Columbia schools were in session.

This would seem to threaten the Page corps because all of those restrictions applied; however, the Senate was still satisfied with the final version because there was a proviso in the law which stated specifically that those stipulations did not “apply to children employed in the service of the Senate” although House Pages were subject to the law.¹¹ This specific exclusion for Senate Pages may have been included not only for the reasons given two years earlier in 1906 but also because the Senate had not been following the law, and it wanted to be in compliance, so instead of changing its customs, it simply changed the law. The House officially was forced to change and to appoint Pages who were 14 or older, but the Senate continued to do what it had always done.¹² In practice, the House continued to appoint boys regardless of age for many years after this.

Almost immediately, professional education and child advocacy groups outside of Congress began to criticize the law, specifically the exception for Senate Pages. Only a few months after the legislation was signed, the National Child Labor Committee gave its assessment of the law in early 1909, when the Secretary of the Committee spoke out against it, pointing out that the Senate had a monopoly on child labor, where 12 year-old boys were earning a substantial \$75 a month. The Committee declared publicly that there was nothing wrong with the bill that the House had passed two years earlier which prohibited children under 16 from working as Pages in either chamber of Congress, and the Committee further declared that the Senate should not have added the amendment in the current law that allowed Senate Pages to continue to work.¹³

In response, the Senate remained adamant in its views on the minimum age, and the resistance to change remained strong. The Senate renewed its sentiment that barring young boys from employment as Pages was senseless and remained adamant about not changing the age of Pages. Senator Nelson of Minnesota proclaimed that when he was 11, he earned his own living, and when he was 12, he had a pair of oxen in front of him and confidently declared it to be one of the proudest moments of his life. Senator Scott also said that he was nine when he was able to earn his own living, and he opposed restricting work opportunities for young boys.¹⁴ Besides, the Senate argued, the law was designed to prohibit employment in places like sweat shops and mines where children were put in physical danger by virtue of the nature of the work, not for doing good, clean work in the austere and pristine Senate.

Also, the sentiment that was present in the 1800s of giving Page positions to boys whose families needed the money still lingered. Even into the mid-1920s, the resistance to lowering the minimum age was strong. If the Senate lowered the age, then it would “be to blight the ambitions of many youngsters who are desirous of the experience . . . [and] it would also work a hardship upon the mothers of some of the boys who are the sole support of their families.”¹⁵ Obviously, traditions in Congress are not the easiest things to change.

For 20 years, this law remained in effect and exempted Senate Pages from its provisions. Then in 1928, the Congressional debate about child labor in the District of Columbia was renewed, as more outside child advocacy groups applied pressure for reform. At a hearing to determine what should happen with the District’s child labor law, there was strong support both for and against lifting the exemption for Pages. Some people, including Members, claimed that nothing bad had happened to them when they sold papers when they were young, and that too many children would be restricted from working in jobs that were not dangerous if the exemption was in effect. However, Miss Fay Bentley, director of school attendance and work permits, who represented the District of Columbia Board of Education at the hearing, told the committee that the Board approved of the bill with the exemption for Pages deleted, possibly exacting some degree of professional revenge from two years earlier, almost to the day (see page 103).¹⁶ Most other states had tougher child labor laws, and the pressure for the nation’s capital not only to conform with those laws but to be a leader among the states and act as a beacon for states to follow in terms of child advocacy

was too great; therefore, the law in the District was changed so that no exemption for Pages was included.

So, in May 1928, exactly 20 years after Senate Pages were exempted from the child labor law, Congress passed a new child labor law with additional restrictions added to it and with the exemption for Pages deleted; however, the minimum age for being eligible to work in most jobs was still 14.¹⁷ All Pages now were officially subject to the restrictions in the law which prohibited those under 14 from working. However, because Senators did not want to do the simple and undignified work that Pages did, and had been advocating to keep younger Pages, in practice, boys under 14 were still working as Pages for decades after this, as the Senate did not pay much attention to the law.¹⁸ So although the system changed in theory, it remained the same in practice.

It was not until the late 1940s that the Senate decided to bring its practices in compliance with the law. The Senate Rules Committee passed a resolution in 1949 increasing the minimum age of Pages from 12 to 14, with automatic termination coming at 17.¹⁹ This replaced a resolution from 1870 which set the minimum age of Pages at 12 so that the age requirements “conformed to the law of the District of Columbia” and the Senate began to follow the law too.²⁰

COMPULSORY EDUCATION IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

The child welfare movement affected not only labor laws, but it also spawned legislation regarding school attendance. It is valuable to examine the evolution of these laws too since they combined with the child labor laws and led to the formation

of a school for Pages as advocates for children continued to apply pressure on Congress.

In March 1862, a Senate bill established public education in the District of Columbia, and it was signed into law in May 1862.²¹ Two years later in June 1864, a law was passed stating that children between 8 and 14 were to be enrolled in school for a minimum of 12 weeks during the year, at least six of which were to be consecutive weeks. If a child was found to be in violation of the law, the parent, or other adult in charge of the child, was subject to a fine of \$20.²² However, nobody paid much attention to this law since it was not actively enforced, and it was ignored for many years to the point where the law might as well have been non-existent.²³

Thirty-four years later, in March 1906, a House subcommittee discussed school attendance in the District and found that children up to the fourth grade were attending school only half-days. The members of the subcommittee suddenly were alarmed, and they agreed that they must look into this “serious condition of affairs.”²⁴ A month later, in April 1906, the subcommittee released a report regarding education in the District, outlining the immediate need for a compulsory education law so that the District’s laws were at least comparable with most other states, although Senator Mallory, a former Page and former lawyer, served as evidence for some that school for Pages was obviously not needed.²⁵

With 94 percent of students not going to school after age 14, and with 18 percent of children not in school at all, the Committee must have felt that the time for compulsory education laws had arrived and put pressure on itself to do something for children. The report stated that the District of Columbia should be the leader in such

laws but in reality, it was behind the times, and proclaimed that education was “the most fundamental urgent need of the national capital.”²⁶

On the heels of this report, some parents of Pages were able to avoid any penalties for their children not being in school. Parents thought that the discipline and general education that their sons were receiving on the Floor was worth far more than any schoolroom work, so they arranged for private tutors to work with their sons.²⁷ Although not well-documented, some Pages had been under the direction of tutors already, but the Committee report may have compelled more of them to take education more seriously.

In June 1906, two months after the first child labor law, and two months after the above report was printed, Congress passed another law for the District of Columbia which stated that all children between 8 and 14 were required to attend school, although the aforementioned law from 1864 already stated the same thing.²⁸ The language of the new law was different but it was not different in substance; even the same \$20 fine applied. However, Congress did not pay attention to its own legislation and continued to ignore the school attendance law in regards to Pages for the most part. There is nothing in the record to indicate that Congress did anything different with the Page system at this juncture than it had been doing before; Members continued to appoint Pages with little regard to the boys’ education.

It seems that Members used the compulsory education law in the District more as a guideline than a mandate, and the law apparently did not apply to the boys inside the Capitol. Frank Lyman, a Supreme Court Page in the early 1920s, did not recall too much pressure to attend school; it was just expected that he make an attempt to

attend. His education was “sketchy” while he worked as a Page, and the only checks he had was when a Justice would ask in a cursory way during small talk if he was getting along alright at school, but there was no formal or on-going monitoring of his education.²⁹

Almost 20 years after the compulsory education law was signed, in January 1925, the House Committee on the District of Columbia released a report discussing compulsory education, after it ignored similar legislation in the previous Congress that the Senate had passed.³⁰ Two weeks later, after the report’s release in February 1925, Congress passed another compulsory school attendance law for the District of Columbia, following the report’s recommendation that all children between 7 and 16 be enrolled in school, although students who were at least 14 and had completed the eighth grade were exempt.³¹ This law had major implications for Pages, since we have already seen that they were as young as eight, and when this law was signed in 1925, more than half of the 21 Senate Pages were under 14, and even more under 16.³²

Because the Senate had circumvented rules about appointing young Pages a few years earlier with the child labor law, some were skeptical and thought that the Senate would contrive a way to get around the provisions of the school attendance law also, so that boys under 14 could continue to work as Pages and not have to attend school.³³ However, Frank Ballou, Superintendent of the District of Columbia Schools, commented publicly that Pages would not be exempt from the school attendance law, and he even contacted several Senators personally to inform them that the Page system was going to have to change, demonstrating the Board of

Education's "punctilious solicitude for the welfare of youth."³⁴ It appeared that this time, it was going to be difficult for Congress to ignore the education law with the opening of the 69th Congress a week later, especially because the child labor laws were also being scrutinized and changed at the same time. Ten months after the compulsory education law was passed, in December 1925, the minimum age for Pages was set officially at 14.³⁵ However, in a classic example of how Congress did not follow its own rules, in practice, boys under 14 were still working as Pages for decades after this. When an institution does not follow its own rules, it is no wonder that change comes slowly.

With a long-standing tradition of having young boys work as Pages at the expense of their schooling, the Congress was slow to react vigorously right away to the compulsory education law. The law may have affected other schools, but it certainly did not have the immediate effect it was intended to have in the insular environment under the Capitol Dome. Since Pages were so young, the law would change their daily lives and force them to attend school if they were not already attending, but because they worked during the day, and often well into the evenings, it was difficult for them to comply with the law, especially with halfhearted enforcement. For many years after the law went into effect, Members continued to ignore it and the system that Congress had created for its Pages remained unchanged. How the problem was solved in the early years is not extensively documented, and details are few; however, what little that is known is assembled here.

To comply with the education laws, Congress did nothing directly to support its Pages. However, it did allow individuals to run different versions of a school.

This passive delegation resulted in a disjointed education experience for Pages. I call it passive delegation because Congress was not active in seeking out a solution, yet when a solution seemed to present itself, Congress allowed it to be played out, adding to the inertia felt by those wanting change. Congress reacted to pressures from individuals both inside and outside of the Page system in regards to their education but did not do anything proactive to help them.

Part Two: The Page System Adds a School, 1926 to 1931

PARENTS HIRE A PRIVATE TUTOR, 1926

The earliest evidence of a formal and organized educational program for Pages comes from two pictures and an article that was written in January 1926, almost a year after the compulsory school attendance law was passed. It represents the first attempt by adults, in this case, child advocates outside the Page system, to alter the Page system and the day-to-day lives of the Page corps by making school mandatory.

A truant officer in Washington, Miss Fay Bentley, who was simply doing her job by enforcing the law, began to pressure the parents of Senate Pages to enroll their children in school in early 1926. Because the boys were not in school when they were supposed to be, the Pages' fathers were called before a judge to explain why. The judge asked them why a portion of their sons' salaries should not be taken as a fine for the fathers' preference for the "senatorial school of oratory" instead of what the fathers thought was the relative bland education offered in public schools.³⁶

Not having much of an answer in the face of the law, the parents formed an educational association and hired a tutor in January 1926, a woman named either Mrs.

D. J. Jones or Mrs. L. R. Jones (or both), and with the help of David Barry, Sergeant at Arms of the Senate, and Edwin Halsey, the House Pages' supervisor, both former

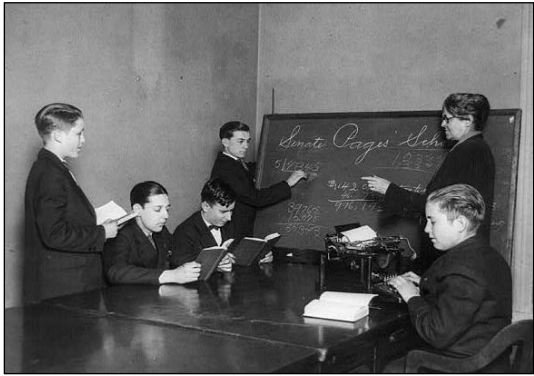


Photo 22 Mrs. Jones and the Senate Page School, 1926. *Library of Congress.*

Pages, “a room was fitted up in the basement of the Senate wing where instruction in line with the eighth grade school program [was] given the boys” although some of the boys in the pictures appear to be no more than nine or ten years old.³⁷ The parents did this so that

they could tell the judge that the boys were receiving the same instruction as they would be receiving if they were in public schools, and therefore, Pages would be in compliance with the law.

Bentley became angry enough at the parents for circumventing her authority that she still would not issue certificates to indicate that the boys were in compliance with the law, but nothing much more came of it after this. Regardless, this attempt by parents to comply with the law by supporting a one-room schoolhouse in the basement of the Capitol was the first real step that changed the Page system and that would eventually lead to Capitol Page School. It was also the first time that Congress passively delegated authority for education of its Pages.³⁸

When Congress passed the school attendance law for the District of Columbia in February 1925, and the child labor law in May 1928, Members must have known that the laws would affect the Page corps since they had contact with Pages every day. It would have made sense for Congress to appropriate funds to establish a

school specifically for Pages at that time to be in compliance with laws it had passed; however, Congress failed to act and provided no funds for such a school, possibly believing that it was not a pressing issue and there were issues with higher priority to be concerned with, maybe because it did not want to “fix something that wasn’t broken.” Well-established traditions are difficult to change, especially in a large bureaucracy like the federal government. Congress was not really being forced to do anything regarding the education of Pages, and so it did not act, passively allowing Pages’ parents to deal with the truant officer. If Congress wanted to overlook a law that it passed itself, it could with few ramifications. Additionally, with the parents of Pages being brought before a judge, and the subsequent attempt to comply with the word of the truant officer, Congress may have considered the problem taken care of already.

Instead of finding support for a solution to their schooling needs in Congress as a whole, Pages eventually found support in certain individuals. The end result of the intervention of this handful of men was that a spare room in the basement of the Capitol under the west terrace was designated as a schoolroom for Pages, with a single teacher and some surplus equipment. The details of how this occurred are an odd combination of happenstance and the desire of certain Congressional officers and certain Members to provide a school for Pages, possibly so that they were in compliance with the law, possibly simply because the circumstances presented themselves but certainly in response to the intervention of the truant officer. Without the combination of a passive Congress and the initiative and leadership of these few

child advocates both inside and outside the Page system, the course of Pages' education may have veered far from the direction it ended up taking.

LAUPHEIMER AND BUTLER COLLABORATE TO FORM A PAGE SCHOOL, 1927 TO 1929

In March 1948, a ceremony was held in one of the classrooms at Capitol Page School to honor a man named David Laupheimer, and to give him much of the credit for starting the School for Pages in the late 1920s. The event was covered in the 1948 Capitol Page School yearbook, although only a few details are provided. A prominent Baltimore attorney, Harry Leeward Katz, spoke about how Laupheimer became interested in Pages when he learned that they could earn an education only through tutoring or by attending night school.³⁹ After Katz spoke, he introduced Theodore McKeldin, the mayor of Baltimore from 1943 to 1947 and later governor of Maryland, who spoke highly of those individuals who do more than their share of work and who take on more than their share of responsibility-- people like Laupheimer.⁴⁰ The account of this ceremony gives credit to Laupheimer for founding the school on his own accord, noting that he "saw the need for a school, and therefore founded one."⁴¹ After Laupheimer himself was introduced, a portrait of him was given to the school and was at the school as late as 1952; unfortunately, today the location of that portrait is unknown, and an attempt to find out more about David Laupheimer by contacting all Laupheimers in America was unsuccessful.⁴²

Fortunately, a more detailed and probably more accurate account of this same ceremony appears in the Congressional Record, wherein Katz's entire address of that day and more details are included.⁴³ From this, we can gain a better understanding of how the school was formed in the late 1920s and how it became an adjunct to the

larger Page system, eventually becoming a separate institution itself. We can see that although Laupheimer was certainly largely responsible for the school, he did not act alone as alleged in this account.

It seems that Laupheimer was a noted educator in Baltimore at the time, although it can not be determined how he had distinguished himself. Beyond being a respected educator, Laupheimer was a man who had “also given generously of his time without remuneration in the service of his fellow man.”⁴⁴ It must have been this humanitarian part of his personality that drove Laupheimer to make a visit sometime in 1927 to Thomas Stalker Butler, a 15-term Congressman from Pennsylvania.⁴⁵ He was visiting Butler on behalf of a family whose father was a veteran of World War I. The family was in need of help, and for whatever reason, Laupheimer had taken it upon himself to ask Butler for assistance.

While Laupheimer waited in Butler’s office, a woman came in with her son, who was about 14. The woman appeared at a fortuitous time, since she was there to ask Butler to appoint her son as a Page boy. While the woman and Butler were talking, Butler expressed his concern for the stability of boy’s education, and he attempted to dissuade the woman from the idea, knowing that the boy would have to hire a tutor or attend night school instead of attending school during normal daytime hours in order to accept the appointment, and because Mrs. Jones’s school was for only Senate Pages.⁴⁶

Butler may have been more sensitive to students’ educational needs and to young people in general than other Members at the time, as he was serving as a trustee on the board of a state normal school in his district at the time, showing that he

had at least some interest and knowledge in education.⁴⁷ Regardless, Laupheimer, who may not have even had a passing interest in Pages up until that point, overheard the conversation between the woman and Butler, and after the woman and the boy left, he began to talk to Butler about why there was no school for the Pages who worked in the Capitol.⁴⁸

Presented with a problem involving education, here is Laupheimer, a respected educator and humanitarian from outside Congress, speaking to Butler, an influential 15-term Congressman who is involved in education, at least by virtue of his trusteeship on a school board. Laupheimer pointed out that the Pages were doing important work for both Houses of Congress and it seemed that they were entitled to some degree of consideration when it came to their schooling, especially since absolutely no consideration had been given to them up to that point, and Butler agreed with him.⁴⁹

After learning about Laupheimer's experience as an educator, Butler began to question him about the prospects of setting up a school in the Capitol specifically for Pages. They continued to discuss the potential of a school, and ultimately Butler asked Laupheimer to talk to Bert Kennedy, the Doorkeeper of the House and a former Page, who was the supervisor of the House Pages at the time.⁵⁰ Through happenstance, a meeting that started because of Laupheimer's humanitarian bent had turned into a challenge to his entrepreneurial side, representing the first direct manipulation of the Page system by an individual Member.

When Laupheimer and Kennedy spoke, Kennedy expressed his concern about the education of Pages too, and offered his full support if Laupheimer decided to

pursue forming a school. Kennedy knew that for the school to succeed, Laupheimer would also need the cooperation of the Senate, so he told Laupheimer to make inquiries on the other side of the Rotunda too.⁵¹

Accordingly, Laupheimer spoke with David Barry, who was the Sergeant at Arms of the Senate, and supervisor of the Senate Pages, himself a Page when he was younger.⁵² When Laupheimer told Barry what he wanted to do, Barry immediately recognized the need and the value of a school for Pages, providing more key support for a school. While Barry was enthusiastic about the plan, he thought that for it to be a real success, a prominent Senator should also back the plan. Laupheimer not only agreed with that, but went a step further and proposed that an outside expert should be part of the plan too. He suggested that Frank Ballou, Superintendent of the District of Columbia Schools, be engaged to assist them in an endeavor that had suddenly gained momentum to drastically change the Page system.⁵³ It seems that enough people were interested in doing something but the initial inertia could not be overcome until Laupheimer, an outsider, took advantage of a chance meeting by making contact with key people on the inside.

Soon after talking with Barry, Laupheimer met with Senator David Aiken Reed, also from Pennsylvania, who was the chairman of the Committee on Expenditures in Executive Departments, and with Superintendent Ballou.⁵⁴ Both of these men gave their endorsement to alter the Page system by adding a school and were in favor of the new educational plan for Pages. Kennedy, Barry and Laupheimer worked together to form a school-- one room in the basement of the Capitol across the hall from rooms housing large power generators. Laupheimer

agreed to be the first teacher at the school but as it turned out, he ended up being the teacher, secretary, principal, registrar and everything else as well-- this school had a staff of only one.⁵⁵

Soon after these meetings, things became especially busy for Laupheimer in November 1927, when he was setting up the school and getting it ready to enroll its first students. When the 70th Congress convened in December 1927, the school did not hold classes until afternoon or early evening, after the session of each day's Congress. Laupheimer immediately recognized this as a problem, since the boys had very little free time and did not have opportunities for any recreational activities. He felt that recreation was too important in a boy's life to ignore, so he gathered all the boys to get feedback on a plan he had been forming.⁵⁶

Laupheimer asked the boys if instead of attending classes after each day's session when they had already put in a full day's work, they would be willing to attend school before each day's session of Congress. They would go to school from 7:30 until only 10:15, so that they could be at work on time, and when they were released from work, they would be on their own to do what they pleased instead of having to attend classes. The boys were enthusiastic about the new plan, since they did not like attending classes in the evenings either, and so it was agreed that school would be held in the mornings, before each day's session. Although Congress was officially sponsoring a school for Pages now, it was sponsoring it only loosely, simply by letting it exist in the Capitol. Congress allowed the school to continue since it did not have to do anything and the work component for Pages was not affected. The first priority for Pages was still work so in that regard, the system was

not changed at all. Although Pages had a plan to go to school, it was not really being administered by Congress with Laupheimer free to set policy; for example, changing the time the school conducted classes each day.

Because the 70th Congress convened on December 5, 1927, and then took a two week vacation for Christmas beginning on December 21, it would make sense to speculate that for those two weeks of December, the school held classes at the end of the day, and when Congress re-convened on January 4, 1928, classes were held in the mornings. Laupheimer ran this school, or more accurately, he held private tutoring sessions while Congress was in session, charging tuition to anyone who attended.⁵⁷

One can imagine that the quality of instruction suffered, given that Laupheimer had to coordinate many students' studies in a number of subjects, from a number of states, at several grade levels, with no assistance from other teachers. Additionally, Pages probably saw the new school as an inconvenience, since they had been getting along fine without it before (from their perspective) and may have been reluctant students. Since the school was set up especially for Pages under the age of 14, those who were attending may have resented the fact that they *had* to attend, adding to the tough task for any educator to put together a quality program under those circumstances. The Pages continued to attend this school during sessions, and attended other schools while Congress was not in session, adding to the confusion and the general inconsistency of their education. At some point, school was split into morning sessions and afternoon/evening sessions simply because there was not enough time in the mornings to cover everything. But at least now, they had a space of their own and they knew that they had at least some support for their education.

Although the Congress as a whole was insensitive to the overall educational needs of Pages, individual Members did sponsor “educational” field trips for Pages, demonstrating that the relationships between Pages and Members were still close and that Members still got deeply involved personally with them. Possibly in response to Laupheimer’s concern about the lack of recreation the boys had, he led a procession of eight cars lent to them by Members in March 1928 to Atlantic City, only three months after he started the school. Upon their arrival in Atlantic City on an early Saturday morning, they were greeted by the mayor, and then rode horses on the beach, visited a skating rink and enjoyed other tourist activities in another example of how Pages could feel like privileged elite.⁵⁸

The trip to Atlantic City must have been successful because only a month later in April 1928, seven House Pages, along with Laupheimer, spent two days in New York City as guests of Congressman Sol Bloom, where they stayed in a hotel, swam in the pool and took tours of the city. Because Bloom had to attend to business in Washington, Laupheimer was in charge of the boys while they were in New York.⁵⁹ While their formal education may have been lacking, it seems that they were getting a different type of education, even for Pages, and they certainly maintained the sense of privilege they had in the pre-1926 period as a passive and seemingly uninterested Congress sat back and allowed the school to operate.

While the quality of formal education may have been in question, the school did serve another function, that of unifying the Page corps. After Charles Lindbergh flew solo across the Atlantic, he embarked on a worldwide tour and included Washington. While at the Capitol, he took time to greet the Pages. During this

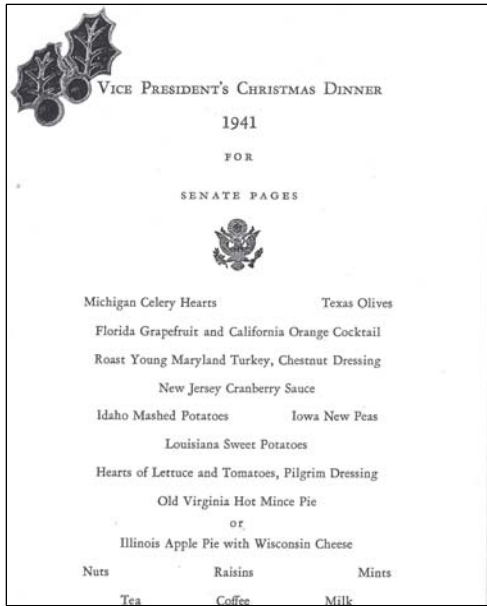
meeting in May 1928, Pages gave Lindbergh a letter congratulating him on the one-year anniversary of his solo flight which read, “We, the boys of the School for Pages of the United States Senate and House of Representatives extend our congratulations,” and was signed by 12 of the boys.⁶⁰ This also serves as some of the first tangible evidence that the school was established and operating as a bona fide school.

Pages received annual invitations to attend the Vice President’s Christmas Dinners. While the Christmas dinners were not something new for Pages, the dinners evolved into spirited roasts, where Pages and the Vice President would exchange gifts and then give speeches, satirizing each other. At the 1928 dinner, there were various good luck speeches to Vice President Dawes since he had not been re-elected and would be leaving his position soon, in comparison to two years earlier when the event turned into a “riot of fun with [Dawes] bearing the brunt of practical jokes.”⁶¹ Many Pages spoke during the program, and Dawes admitted that the Pages “really stirred my emotions by what they said [and] I responded the best I could.”⁶² One of his favorite memories during his time as Vice President was a picture of him standing with Pages on the steps of the Capitol, his arms around two of them. When the Vice President states in the press that some of his best memories are spending time with Pages, it is understandable how they could be made to feel more important than they really were.

A year later, on Christmas Eve 1929, Vice President Curtis continued the tradition of a holiday dinner and hosted a dinner for 16 Senate Pages in the private dining room for Senators in the Capitol. The fact that the Vice President would spend

his Christmas Eve with Pages is unheard of today and difficult to believe even then.

However, Curtis seemed to have plenty of time to spend with the boys, as he



exchanged gifts with them and took time to talk about various topics with them after the

meal.⁶³ The dinners for Pages continued

throughout the 1940s, complete with roast-type programs after the meal was served.

Vice Presidents, Members and other

dignitaries, like the Assistant Secretary of

War, would be in attendance.⁶⁴ At one dinner

Photo 23 Menu card from Vice President's Christmas dinner, 1941. *Kirby Metz.*

in May 1936, Representative Shannon, who

had taken over the tradition of hosting the

dinners, kidded House Pages to do something so that Senate Pages stopped receiving

all the attention in the press, in an example of how Members treated Pages with a

collegial familiarity and also illustrating the institutional rivalry between the House

and Senate.⁶⁵

Laupheimer ran the School for Pages for about a year and a half until the

spring of 1929, when he left his position to take a job as a representative of the

International Correspondence School of Scranton, PA.⁶⁶ One can imagine that the

stability and predictability of his schedule running the School for Pages was less than

ideal since his work schedule was determined by the whim of the Congress.

Additionally, Laupheimer was living in Baltimore, and the distance may have been

problematic, especially if he had to arrive for classes at the Capitol in the early morning.⁶⁷

Because of what Laupheimer had begun, and because of the general sentiment that after the 1925 compulsory education law and the 1928 child labor law were passed “no member of Congress would take it upon himself to stand for the exemption of Pages,” Page School was compelled to continue.⁶⁸ It could not just disappear after what Mrs. Jones and Laupheimer had started. But now, without Laupheimer, it had no direction and needed someone to provide leadership. Laupheimer’s school ended because he accepted a different professional position; however, the school was reborn with another man trying to meet the educational needs of Pages as Congress again passively delegated responsibility for the school.

DEVITT ASSUMES CONTROL OF CAPITOL PAGE SCHOOL, 1929 TO 1931

In the late 1920s, Devitt School, located at 1416 33rd Street, NW in Washington, prepared its students for college, but concentrated in particular on preparing boys for further study at West Point, Annapolis and the Coast Guard Academy. The school was founded by George Devitt in 1917, and it focused on cultural experiences, fitness and developing character so that it would be “the school that really educates.”⁶⁹ Also, Devitt School made it clear that it was not a “machine or drill school” and that it concentrated on self-reliance, athletics and the things “that really matter in Scholarship, Character, Culture and Health.”⁷⁰

Dr. George Devitt had been a Spanish and English teacher at Western High School, and when he decided to open his own school, 23 students from Western went with him. He was a well-liked teacher, “only he drank too much. He would keep a

pint of gin right in his desk drawer even when he taught at Western, but everybody loved him.”⁷¹ The school was in two converted houses, refurbished to connect to each other. Several graduates of Devitt School went on to become high-ranking military officers.

By 1929, Devitt School had its own dormitory at 4107 Connecticut Avenue, and Dr. Devitt lived around the corner at 2961 Upton Street.⁷² A year later, beginning in 1930, the school was also listed at that same Upton Street address, just off Connecticut Avenue.⁷³ By 1941, the school had moved next door to 2955 Upton where it remained for about ten years, and then closed in the early 1950s.⁷⁴ The Edmund Burke School is currently located at that address.

After Laupheimer’s School for Pages disbanded, Devitt School assumed responsibility for the education of Capitol Pages as the passivity of Congress



Photo 24 Supreme Court Pages, 1924. Lyman is second from left. *Frank Lyman.*

continued. Why Devitt, a military preparatory school located miles away from the Capitol, was selected is not known, although some connection between Devitt School and Pages surely existed. Lyman, the Supreme Court Page in the 1920s, remembers getting on a streetcar three nights a week to attend classes there, since he was working at the

Court during the day.⁷⁵ Devitt “had two or three houses-- they were joined together and quite a few Pages were there. The Supreme Court [Pages] . . . the three of us

went . . . and [Devitt] moved down to Connecticut Avenue later on.”⁷⁶ Lyman also remembered that the schoolrooms were converted bedrooms.⁷⁷ “I must say my heart wasn’t in it. My subjects as I recall were English, American history, and . . . that’s all that can be remembered. No one seemed to be concerned about learning anything. Maybe I should confine that just to me-- I suppose it seems rather unreal. I read about George Washington and Abe Lincoln in elementary school [but] what little grasp of the English language I had was obtained at the Supreme Court and home” not at school.⁷⁸ However, Lyman did not recall why Devitt was the school of choice for Pages, although a deep look into different sources provides clues.

While David Laupheimer was busy creating and working at the School for Pages in the Capitol from December 1927 until the spring of 1929, a man named Raymond Terry was busy founding three different schools in Washington from 1921 to 1926, all three of which were in the business of administering civil service exams. Two of those schools were created two years apart at the same address; they just had different names. Then in 1927 and 1928, Terry had jobs as a salesman at different real estate companies. Finally, in 1929, Terry worked as a teacher at Devitt School.⁷⁹

Although in 1928 Terry lived on 31st Street close to Devitt School, a year earlier in 1927, he was living at 100 East Capitol.⁸⁰ Curiously, when Laupheimer left his job at the School for Pages in 1929, he lived at 110 East Capitol.⁸¹ If it is merely coincidence that Laupheimer and Terry probably were neighbors, then it is a highly improbable coincidence. Given the proximity of their addresses, it seems more likely that the two men knew each other, and Terry had been hired at Devitt at about the same time that Laupheimer was leaving his School for Pages. It seems likely that the

two men talked with each other and saw that there was a need that Terry could help fill, and the connection to Devitt was made through him.

Another improbability supporting this argument comes in a basketball box score from February 1929. Devitt School beat the House Pages 17-12 but what is significant about the box score is that the referee for the game was a man named Terry.⁸² It seems reasonable to assert that it is the same Terry, providing another connection between him, Laupheimer and Page School, just as Laupheimer's time was ending there. To assume that the referee was the same Terry is not an unreasonable assumption because Terry, identified explicitly as a teacher at Devitt in a different newspaper article, was also involved in other sports at the same time there; specifically, he was the baseball coach in the spring of 1929, when he took it "upon himself the idea to revive baseball at Devitt."⁸³

(It is interesting to note that in September 1928, a House Page, Robert Richardson, drowned in the Potomac River. This is only noteworthy because at the time of his death, he was living at 130 East Capitol Street, and "attended the night school provided [in the Capitol] for Pages," providing more evidence for a connection between Page School and three neighbors living on the same block on East Capitol Street.⁸⁴)

In any case, the schedule of the school required Terry to come to the Capitol each morning beginning in the fall of 1929, and tutor Pages in the same one-room schoolhouse in the Capitol that Laupheimer had started. Because there was not enough time for a complete school day in the morning, the early session of school would end, Pages would go to work and Terry would return to Devitt. After

Congress adjourned for the day and Pages were finished with their workday, they traveled across town to Devitt to finish their school day, although not all Pages went to Page School; some went to night school and some received private tutoring.⁸⁵

This must have proven to be impractical because of the unreasonable arrangements. It was simply too difficult to have Terry available in the Capitol in the



Photo 25 Congressman Hamilton Fish helping with the Page basketball team, 1927. *Library of Congress.*

early morning hours for individual tutoring, then for Pages to go from the Capitol to Devitt after work, and then back to the Capitol at the end of the evening school session. Also, Pages had three different schedules because some worked in the House, some in the Senate and some in the Supreme Court, and it was simply

too difficult to arrange all the logistics efficiently to accommodate the different schedules. It must have also been arduous for Pages to maintain that schedule.

When the mandatory attendance law was passed in 1925, it was one thing for Pages to be forced to attend classes, but this new arrangement was something altogether different. Accordingly, resistance from Pages increased during this time, and they showed “an uncooperative spirit” toward the arrangement with Devitt.⁸⁶ Devitt probably did not like it either because of the disruptions it caused in its normal school routine. When a young boy has repartee with Members and the Vice President, it may have been difficult to get him to do the things that a military preparatory school typically wants its boys to do and in the manner it wants them

accomplished. Congress did not seem to mind the difficult schedule, as long as Pages were at work on time, and it remained as detached with Devitt as it had been with Laupheimer.

Although Pages' formal schooling seemed to be floundering at this point, Pages still were doing things that were typical for boys that age. They still were

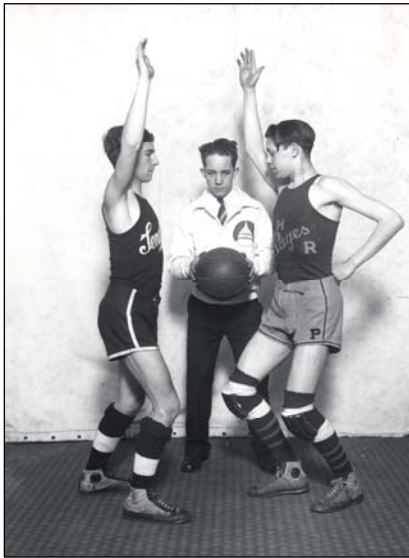


Photo 26 Senate versus House, 1927. *Library of Congress.*

playing baseball, football, basketball, golf, even competing in swimming occasionally, and Members still were in attendance and officiating the games, and oftentimes adults who worked for Congress served as coaches.⁸⁷ Page teams were different than the teams they played because they wore uniforms bought by Members of Congress, and they had the Speaker of the House throw out the first pitch.⁸⁸ In

fact, on the Floor of the House in the summer of 1935, in between discussion of a bill to amend the air mail laws and a bill regarding agricultural laws, Congressman James Mead announced to the House that Pages had a baseball game scheduled that day behind the White House with a team from Philadelphia right after adjournment and implored, "Officials of the House and Senate will participate. We want everyone down there to see the boys play."⁸⁹ When Pius Stewart, a former catcher for the Yankees was elected to the House, he of course got the boys together to play a few games.⁹⁰ Also, in early 1930, a Page who was an Eagle Scout convinced Senate leadership to sponsor a Boy Scout troop, and to meet in a basement room in the Capitol. The chaplain of

the Senate served as the leader of the troop, with other Senate officials serving on the advisory board.⁹¹ Soon after, they made Speaker of the House Garner an honorary Scout, and included him in their proceedings as well.⁹²

The relationships with Members continued to be close in the early 1930s. When it snowed in Washington, Pages usually took advantage of it by having a



Photo 27 Senate Pages have their annual snowball fight. *Library of Congress.*

spirited snowball fight outside the Capitol. During one such battle, Representative Melvin Maas of Minnesota was serving as referee, and the boys did not agree with some of the rulings he was making, so they of course turned on him, throwing snowballs at him, forcing him to have to defend himself.⁹³

Members continued to treat Pages familiarly, giving them silver dollars and other gifts at Christmas.⁹⁴ The

Members that Pages liked best though were of course the ones who gave liberal tips, like Mr. Lewis of Illinois, or just plain “nice fellows” like Mr. Lodge of Massachusetts, or those who took time to act like one of them, “pulling [their] noses and messing up [their] hair” like Mr. King of Utah.⁹⁵

The relationship with Devitt ended a short time after it started because of a combination of the difficulty in maintaining not only the logistical arrangements, but also because of Pages’ attitudes. So, two years later, at the end of the 1930-31 school year, this era of Capitol Page School was over, and Pages were again left with no school to attend.

It should be pointed out that here is another juncture where the Congress, as an institution, could have intervened to provide a school for Pages. Based on the two



Photo 28 House Pages prepare for the baseball season, April 1939. *Library of Congress.*

early attempts to form a school, the Congress could have concluded that Pages needed a special school exclusively for them, and could have appropriated funds for it, or at least could have investigated the question formally to try to find an effective answer; however, with

the Depression still going strong, a Page School certainly was not a top priority for the Congress. Although the Congress neither formally looked into the problem, nor appropriated money for it and continued its passivity, it did provide some support. This support again was not official action taken by the whole Congress, but instead again came in the form of support from an individual Member and a man concerned with the welfare of Pages who, much like Laupheimer before him, was in the right place at the right time with the potential to take advantage of a situation. This third time though, the actions that were taken and sanctioned by Congress were long-lasting ones and they affected long-term change in regards to the boys' traditional classroom education.

Part Three: Another Chance Meeting Leads to Another Page School, 1931 to 1942

KENDALL AND MCCLINTIC COLLABORATE TO FORM A PAGE SCHOOL, 1931

Ernest Kendall was born in 1906 and raised near Weatherford, Oklahoma, a rural community just west of Oklahoma City off what is now Interstate 40. Kendall was a precocious, entrepreneurial kid, who became financially independent when he was just twelve.⁹⁶ After graduating high school, Kendall attended Southwestern Oklahoma State University in Weatherford where he became involved in the debate club, sang second tenor in the glee club and served as President of the YMCA.⁹⁷ Soon after he graduated in 1928, he accepted a teaching job and quickly became the principal of a consolidated school in Granite, a town located a short drive south of Weatherford.⁹⁸

Kendall knew that the world held more than rural Oklahoma could offer, and his natural curiosity about history and the world around him compelled him to travel throughout his life; in fact, he took an around-the-world trip by himself when he was 75.⁹⁹ His wanderlust was strong even when he was young, and in the summer of 1930, when he was 24, Kendall took a trip from Oklahoma to the American south, up the coast through Washington, D. C. and on to Niagara Falls, the upper Midwest, and then completed the circle back in Weatherford. While touring Washington, something touched him, and while still there, Kendall decided some day to “come here and make my career.”¹⁰⁰

Upon his return to Weatherford, Kendall informed the Board of Education of his decision to move to Washington, and agreed to work one more year in his principal’s job, as long as they understood that the one year would be his last. He

assisted the Board in finding a replacement, and he left Weatherford after the 1930-1931 school year to make his mark in the world, the same time Devitt was ending its affiliation with Pages.¹⁰¹

When Kendall arrived in Washington in June 1931, he took a Library of Congress exam and earned a rating of History Librarian, and was told that he could have the position once it became available. In the meantime, he moved from place to place in and around Washington and northern Virginia, and took summer classes at George Washington University in history and economics, although English was his favorite subject.¹⁰²

Kendall was finding the cost of living a bit more than he anticipated, and with his savings dwindling, he took a job delivering magazines at night, so that it did not interfere with his class schedule. This job led to a salesman position, where he supervised kids selling the *Saturday Evening Post*. Kendall spent the summer of 1931 taking classes, selling and delivering magazines and learning about his new city.¹⁰³

Then, in September 1931, with his savings low and his job at the Library of Congress not materializing, Kendall realized that he needed a permanent and more stable job, so he went to Congressman James McClintic's House office to ask for assistance. McClintic was first elected to the House of Representatives in 1915, and by 1930, he was the Chairman of the House Patronage Committee. McClintic had seen how the early education of Pages had progressed and had already given much thought to establishing a Page school.¹⁰⁴ Fortunately, McClintic was also the representative from the 7th district of Oklahoma, where Weatherford and Granite were

located; McClintic also had a summer home just outside of Granite at Lake Altus. McClintic had met Kendall at least once before while speaking at commencement exercises at Kendall's school.¹⁰⁵

In response to Kendall's request for a job, McClintic did not offer much encouragement at first, pointing to the fact that the recession was causing a shortage of jobs. But then McClintic offered him a job as a Capitol policeman, which was a patronage position at the time. That prospect did not hold promise for Kendall but then McClintic "suggested that [he] was thinking of establishing a Page school, having in mind that these young men from the many States would be more happy if they could carry on their studies with their associates in an atmosphere closely allied with the Capitol."¹⁰⁶ McClintic gave himself credit with the idea of establishing a school, claiming that he "decided that the only way to keep these youngsters out of mischief at night was to establish such a school," overlooking the fact that there was a law that mandated they be in school and that educational programs, however primitive and rudimentary, had already existed for them.¹⁰⁷ So, knowing that Kendall had experience with "teaching and school administration in Oklahoma, [McClintic asked Kendall if he] could start a school for the Page boys there in the Capitol Building during the Congressional session" and the next phase of Capitol Page School was underway.¹⁰⁸

Of course, Kendall accepted this job immediately. Kendall, later described as a "studious, modest man," first needed a place to set up the school, and McClintic responded that there was a spare room across the hall from his office in the west terrace of the Capitol that he could use for the school.¹⁰⁹ Kendall also needed

furniture, and McClintic told him that there were old desks dating to the Civil War that had been used in the House Chamber in the basement, and that he could have as many as he wanted, although they were “covered with accumulated dust and dirt.”¹¹⁰ His pay would be whatever he charged students in tuition. He instructed Kendall to get approval to run this school as a private enterprise from the superintendent of the District of Columbia schools, which was merely a formality, and he was placed under the supervision of the principal of Eastern High School, a public school near Capitol Hill. McClintic told him to work with the Sergeant at Arms of the House and the Secretary of the Senate to obtain all the equipment he needed.¹¹¹ Before this meeting with McClintic, Kendall was an unemployed educator looking for a job to pay his bills; after the meeting, he was the new principal of a unique school for Pages inside the United States Capitol.

Because Congress was scheduled to convene in early December 1931, Kendall had less than three months to prepare for the opening of his school. Kendall contacted all Member offices that were sponsoring Pages to have Pages bring their home school textbooks with them. By the time the school opened, Kendall had 15 to 20 students in the one basement room, a room that was part of a suite of rooms occupied by the influential McClintic.¹¹² Because of the Congressional calendar, classes lasted for only two weeks, until the Christmas Break, and then the school shut down for two weeks since Congress was not in session. This gave Kendall a chance to assess what the school needed and to make arrangements for changes as Page School continued to evolve.

KENDALL'S CAPITOL PAGE SCHOOL GROWS, 1932 TO 1942

During the 1931 Christmas recess, after only seven months in Washington, and not even one month after school started, Kendall and a few Pages visited the White House on New Year's Day 1932, and were able to meet President and Mrs. Hoover at the last White House open house before they were stopped for security reasons.¹¹³ This may have been the start of an on-going relationship that the school had with the White House that will be significant later.

The District of Columbia School Board, urged by Dr. Stephen Kramer, head of high schools, recognized and accredited Page School, and served as the school's "chief advisory council and controlling unit of the school's educational policy" although this turned out to be a very loose relationship and the official accreditation is highly in doubt.¹¹⁴ The school was by no means a public school as Kendall charged \$20 a month per student and ran the school as a private enterprise, serving as an individual tutor to all the boys in all their subjects, from elementary to high school. He called the boys' home schools often, so that his lessons matched those that were being taught at home.¹¹⁵

Kendall provided stability to Pages' education in a unique arrangement in this phase of Capitol Page School. Congress was passively allowing a private entrepreneur to operate a school for Congressional employees in the Capitol, with loose supervision provided by a publicly-funded school board. How the school was able to straddle the line between public and private certainly is unique in American education.

The school had an unremarkable beginning under Kendall, yet it continued to thrive through the spring of 1932 thanks in part to the cooperation and support of the Secretary of the Senate and the Sergeant at Arms of the House.¹¹⁶ In the succeeding months, Kendall was able to organize sports teams, so that he was serving as teacher, principal and coach, often using the House Gym. He also had Floor privileges, so he could enter the two Congressional chambers to confer with the boys, even during sessions. The school's popularity grew quickly and Kendall was soon able to secure more rooms and more teachers as Page School expanded. In June 1932, Capitol Page School had its first graduates, a class of two boys, C. C. Crowley and Joe Howerton. Because lame duck sessions of Congress had ended and school met only from March to June in 1933, and not again until January 1934, the next graduating class was in 1935, when the school graduated six students.¹¹⁷

Kendall's plan was to be more than simply a tutor, and he forged ahead with his vision for Page School. He wanted to build Page School to be something that the Congress would respect and be proud of.¹¹⁸ With the start of the fall 1932 semester, if not sooner, the now-established Capitol Page School ran a grueling schedule under principal Kendall. Each morning, classes would start at 7:15 AM and would end at 11:00. Pages then went to work, and when Congress adjourned for the day, they returned to school and finished their remaining classes. In the spring of 1933, Page School occupied four rooms and had six teachers, with Kendall serving as principal. There were 40 students in high school, plus an assortment of other boys in grade eight and younger. The curricula were strict also; Pages had to prove their mastery of succeeding units in each subject before they were permitted to move on. The

schoolwork was rigorous enough that Pages' home schools regularly accepted the credits they earned if they left Washington and returned home. However, many Pages stayed in Washington and graduated from Page School, while others chose to graduate from other District of Columbia schools.¹¹⁹

Not all Pages were attending school though. For example, Glenn Rupp, a House Page from 1932 to 1936, had already graduated high school when he became a Page. He called the position "the greatest job in the world," maybe because he drank his first beer and double-dated with one of the people he supervised, a young staffer named Lyndon Baines Johnson, who was in charge of the Speaker's doors.¹²⁰

For all its uniqueness, students at Capitol Page School attempted to maintain some normalcy. For example, Senate Pages started a newspaper as early as February 1933 to report on things happening on Capitol Hill, especially general stories about Page life and to express personal opinions on almost any topic.¹²¹ Only a month later in March 1933, the paper lampooned Senators and the way they carried on in the Senate, especially when they were in a filibuster.¹²² By May, one paper was not enough for all opinions, so Democrats published the "Senate Times" and Republicans printed the "Senate Tattler," later to be replaced by "Capitol Currents" a couple years later.¹²³

In early 1934, Pages learned a lesson about their tenuous position with the Congress. A student writer for the paper reported that "Senator McAdoo was seen dancing at the Shoreham [Hotel]. . . . The Senator is sure popular with the ladies."¹²⁴ This seemingly innocent comment intended as a compliment can have a different impact on Capitol Hill than it would in other places, and the Senator reprimanded the

Page author for the comments. That ended this particular student's journalism experiment but by May 1934, the school was publishing a four-page paper that cost five cents.¹²⁵

In the spring of 1934, Pages were earning \$125 a month, and one newspaper article called them the "world's highest priced water boys," although they had the unenviable job of listening to Members speak for several hours each day.¹²⁶ Also by



Photo 29 Pages changing into their uniforms, 1934. *Library of Congress.*

the spring of 1934, the Page system was established: the number of Pages was set by statute, with 21 in the Senate and 41 in the House.¹²⁷ The routine for Pages was

becoming more established too, especially in the Senate. They went to school in the

morning and then met in their locker room to

put on their uniforms: blue coats, knee pants, black stockings and black shoes. They then placed pens, pencils, ink, and the bills from the previous day's session on each Senator's desk, each Page responsible for five desks. While Senate Pages had a strict uniform policy, House Pages could dress "pretty much as they pleased."¹²⁸ They received a 15 minute break for lunch and dinner, if the session went that long, and then they had to clean up the Chamber after adjournment. Pages were treated to ball games, the circus and had their own swim meets, snowball fights and baseball games, where sometimes Democrats played Republicans.¹²⁹ Supreme Court Pages also received gifts from their patrons, as George Hutchinson remembers: "I remember

Justice McReynolds giving us tickets to the circus or something. He was single and lived by himself but he loved kids.”¹³⁰

It is interesting to note that Senate Pages were required to wear a uniform but House Pages were not. This was for two reasons. One, the Senate viewed itself (and still does) as the “upper chamber” and more privileged than the House. After all, our federal government is derived from the English system where there is a House of



Photo 30 Pages in front of the Capitol. Dracos Burke is furthest to right. *Dracos Burke.*

Lords and a House of Commons, and the Senate is the American version of the House of Lords. Two, the Senate still maintained its notion of having young boys do its bidding, and this was reflected in the Page

uniform. For many years in American fashion, only younger boys wore knickers.

When a boy reached puberty, one of the significant rites of passage into adulthood was eschewing the boyish knickers and switching to long trousers, the kind of pants that men wore. Kirby Metz, a Senate Page in 1940, remembers the transition to long pants: “In those days, boys wore knickers. I didn’t get my long pants until I was 13 or 14. Boys my age didn’t wear long pants till you got up in age; it was a big deal when you’re 14 or 15, maybe your parents got you a pair of long pants. That was what they call a ‘passage into manhood.’ So wearing knickers didn’t bother any of us because we were used to wearing knickers anyway.”¹³¹ So it makes sense for the Senate Pages to continue to wear knickers, since the Senate wanted little boys running around the chamber.

The schedule for Capitol Page School in the mid-1930s went like this: school still began in the Capitol at 7:15, but it ended at 9:30. Each boy paid \$15 a month to attend Page School, which now had six teachers. After the session ended each day, the boys would return to school for two one-hour classes in the afternoon. If sessions went into the late evening, then Pages had to make up the work they missed on Saturdays instead of weekday afternoons. Pages not only were being educated in the traditional school subjects, but also were “being trained for good citizenship and further public service in the future.”¹³² Kendall tinkered with the classes the school had and even offered a class in Esperanto in 1934.¹³³

Outside of school, the Page traditions discussed earlier were still popular.

New Pages were still searching for Senator Sorghum, bill stretchers, striped ink and



Photo 31 Kendall teaching about the Civil War.
Library of Congress.

the key to the flagpole, and many Pages were active at the YMCA.¹³⁴ The relationships that Pages made with Members were still strong. Pages still competed to be recognized by those Members who gave the biggest tips, and certain Members continued to treat Pages with a whimsical tolerance.¹³⁵

Capitol Page School grew both in popularity and size in 1937, and employed six part-time teachers who served 45 students, both House and Senate Pages, with Kendall teaching Ancient History and General Science; a graduate student named Norman LaFayette teaching math; a Mr. Fitzgerald teaching English; a Mr. Lazzeroth teaching the grade school students; and language teachers conducting their classes in the evenings.¹³⁶ Each Page’s tuition depended on how

many classes he took. In addition to the most unusual civics education they were receiving at work, Pages could choose among English, history, math, chemistry, physics, Latin, German, French, typewriting and shorthand, with physical education, commercial law and economics added in the spring of 1937. No class had more than nine students, who were between 12 and 16 years old.¹³⁷

The schedule of Page School by 1937 was more complicated also and Page School had to make accommodations to satisfy all its students. Because the Senate usually met earlier than the House, Senate Pages would go to two 45-minute classes between 8:00 and 9:30, and then go to work. House Pages went to school in four shifts so that three groups could attend at one time, with alternate starting times, although they were still attending school both before and after work. After each Chamber adjourned for the day, Pages would return to school to make up whatever they had not covered in the morning.¹³⁸ The school was still operating at no cost to the taxpayer and the “work accomplished [was] above the average in merit and [was] recognized by leading colleges and universities.”¹³⁹

The school started meeting for a full school year in 1937, employing nine teachers and a full time secretary.¹⁴⁰ The fledgling school was growing and enjoying its success, although for many years, it stayed open from 6:00 AM to after 8:00 PM to fit in all the staggered schedules of the Pages and to complete all the individual tutoring that they needed. Pages still were attending classes in the early mornings, and then again in the evenings, so that they could fulfill all their requirements, making the boys’ schedules overly burdensome.

Their busy daily schedule in the late 1930s and early 1940s was difficult to maintain. The Senate boys went to school every weekday morning from 7:15 to 9:15 or 9:30 for instruction, and House Pages would stay until 11:00. Depending on what they had to make up, they would report in the afternoon/evening for another hour immediately after the day's session. Eight instructors, teaching 6th grade through 12th grade, taught the same academic subjects required in District schools in a continuing odd dichotomy of public and private control commingling. There were 21 Senate Pages, and 41 House Pages, aged 12 to 18, attending school.¹⁴¹ The school "emphasize[d] liberal arts, and commercial subjects [were] discouraged," and Members followed their Pages' progress in school, often calling Kendall for updates.¹⁴²

In the mid-1930s, Capitol Page School was not available to Supreme Court Pages because of their 9:00 starting time, and they were forced to attend night school.¹⁴³ This is curious because it seems Kendall would welcome the additional tuition from four more students. It is even more curious when one considers that Congressional Pages had to go back to school a couple times a week after the session and sometimes on Saturdays, depending on the legislative schedule; Supreme Court Pages certainly could have attended then.¹⁴⁴

Kendall ran the school with little Congressional interference, and a consistent standard for each class was still at a premium, as the school put the onus of learning on each student. "Instead of having every fact and theory thoroughly discussed and explained and served to him on a silver platter, [each Page] must glean knowledge for himself from the inanimate combination of printer's ink and paper. It is quite

necessary for him to be able to weigh matters carefully in his mind, and to sort out the important facts and principles from those which are not so important. Unconsciously, an ability to form opinions based not on prejudice but on careful observation and analysis of facts [was] developed.”¹⁴⁵ Kendall was allowed to run the school as he saw fit, and as long as Congress did not receive too many complaints about the school, it was satisfied with how Kendall was handling his passively delegated authority to run Page School.

The schedule for Supreme Court Pages was a bit less complicated, though equally arduous. After working at the Court from 9:00 to 4:30 each day, attending to the Justices and their requests and then having dinner, they then went to a local school from 6:30 PM to about 10:00.¹⁴⁶ The Supreme Court Pages had a more predictable schedule because they ended their work day at 4:30 each day since the Court did not meet in the evenings.

A brief description of how Kendall operated Page School comes from a student there in 1937 and 1938: “There is not much you can learn early [in the morning] as there are 15 other fellows in the same room and most all recite different lessons. . . . So, we read from textbooks, referred to workbooks, and when we had a question we would raise our hand and Mr. Kendall would come to our desk and answer it.”¹⁴⁷ This description of students working quietly at their desks by themselves is reinforced by Myles Garrigan, a House Page in the early 1940s: “The assignments were posted; there wasn’t any class recitation in class. I remember going to him and saying, ‘Mr. Kendall, I don’t know if I’m going to make it here,’ where we essentially depended on what was posted on the board for our lessons. We did our

work, we handed it in and I guess I was asking him, ‘Am I doing alright?’ And he said, ‘Myles, you’re doing ok; stay here, stick it out.’ He encouraged me and I stayed with it and got used to the system.”¹⁴⁸

Looking back in 1937 on the evolution of the school, McClintic gave himself credit for putting Kendall in charge, and reported that Kendall was “more tickled with this work than teaching in other kinds of schools.”¹⁴⁹ After operating for six years, Capitol Page School had become a well-established educational institution and was viewed as a success. Kendall had started the school from nothing but an empty room and some battered desks to a respected school in one of the most unusual locations and with the most unique group of students of any school in the country.

The unique nature of the school can be illustrated by using its calendar as an example. The school calendar was not like any other school’s calendar, which was built around agricultural cycles because children were needed to work the fields. Page School’s calendar was dictated by the legislative cycle of Congress. When Congress was in session, Page School was in session, and the boys had to decide whether to enroll in another school while Congress was not in session. This, in part, made it difficult to argue with the notion that it was the “nation’s most unusual educational center.”¹⁵⁰

In early 1939, a newspaper article provided more insight into how Kendall operated the school, and how seriously he regarded school. The schoolwork was rigorous and the discipline was strict. The article talks about how Pages thought they were more important than they really were, and alludes to the sense of entitlement that was written about in Chapter Two. The article goes so far as to categorize Pages

as “conceited rascals” and also describes how Kendall dealt with Pages’ poor attitudes. He kept firm discipline and made sure the boys behaved at all times,



Photo 32 Principal Ernest Kendall. 1942 *Congressional*.

sometimes having to pick up a boy and throw him out in the hallway to remind him how to behave in school.¹⁵¹

When the boy agreed to act like he was supposed to, he was allowed to re-join the class. However, Kendall was fulfilling many different roles for boys who were living away from their parents. “Kendall saw that his job was

not only to teach the boys in schooling but to act as a foster father to them, to advise them in many things, and to make them feel happy in their new home. . . . He [was] continually trying to keep straight those Pages who insist[ed] on not keeping straight” and often called parents and Members to accomplish that.¹⁵²

The surrogate parent role that Kendall played was impressed upon the students at the school. Of the 12 people I spoke with who knew Kendall, not one of them had anything negative to say about him or his gentle personality, putting the above account into question. Dracos Burke, Kirby Metz and McAlpin Arnold, who were students of Kendall’s in the 1930s, said that he “kept discipline” but that “he was a very nice gentleman. He was business-like and very fair, and very helpful.”¹⁵³ His “quiet, reserved” personality made some see him as a “kind of a Caspar Milquetoast kind of man” more like a bookkeeper than a principal, someone who “didn’t have much of a presence around there in terms of making an impact” and a non-entity at the school.¹⁵⁴ When I asked Joe Bartlett, a House Page in the early

1940s about Kendall's physically throwing students out into the hall, he deadpanned, "Kendall wasn't strong enough to do that!"¹⁵⁵

The school curriculum was described as "extremely stiff" and future Pages were given a warning about the nature of being a student at Page School: a Page "must make wise use of a salary which would ordinarily put quite a strain on a young fellow's judgment. To get along well in the Pages School, on whose grade Senators and Representatives keep a sharp eye, the Page must sometimes remain at his homework far into the night and still report to work the next morning pleasant as a politician and alert as an antelope," as Congress continued with its passive approach in regards to control of Page School.¹⁵⁶

The Supreme Court seemed to handle its Pages with a bit more care than the Senate and the House did. In 1939, in a list of rules for Court Pages to follow, it was mandated that a two hour block of time be set aside for studying every day, and when the Court was not in session, there was another two hour period devoted for studying, although the Pages could leave the room if it was for official business, which may have meant they were spending more time running errands than actually studying.¹⁵⁷ Also, when the Court was not in session for two weeks each month, only three of the four Pages had to report to work on a rotating basis.¹⁵⁸ Supreme Court Pages also had special privileges, as for a time, they were the only ones besides the Justices in the room during Saturday conferences, where Justices would discuss cases, vote on each case and assign the writing of the opinions. No written record exists of these proceedings, and only Justices and Pages know what really happened in those most secret of meetings.¹⁵⁹

By the late 1930s, Pages were taking a special class in civics to supplement what they did at work, and Kendall and the other teachers used mostly individual instruction to teach. The school made it possible for House and Senate Pages to interact with each other in a cooperative way. Before the school existed, there was a



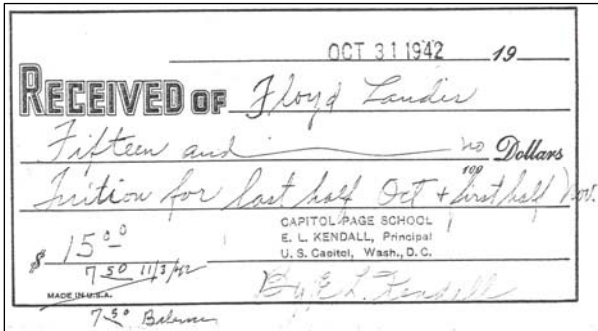
Photo 33 Senate Page making delivery to Congresswomen Julius Kahn and Edith Nourse Rogers, 1927. *Library of Congress.*

strong institutional rivalry between the two groups and interaction was limited; now, the rivalry had turned to more of a friendly rivalry since Pages were now a more cohesive group, although House Pages were still outwardly jealous of Senate Pages because of the

uniforms Senate Pages wore and because they received more attention than House Pages in the press.¹⁶⁰ In fact, in 1938, House Pages asked Representative Edith Nourse Rogers, one of their favorites because she would bring them big boxes of chocolates in the Cloakroom, if they could start to wear uniforms like the Senate Pages had been for years.¹⁶¹ When Rogers brought the idea to the Floor, which she thought would add to the dignity of the Chamber, the gavel fell immediately and Congressman Hoffman asked incredulously if she was “going to go as far as to require the Speaker to wear a gown and the Members to be properly dressed [too]? This is getting to be a personal matter.”¹⁶² Speaker Rayburn immediately brought up an unrelated bill to diffuse the situation, and the idea of uniforms for House Pages

died as quickly as it had come up, keeping the tradition of no uniforms in the House going strong.

However, not all was lost. Requesting that House Pages wear uniforms “served as the first step toward the government doing something for Pages besides paying them. . . . They pay you and do not care a hang about what you do, every Page



being on his own. . . . and after their work is done, [we have] unlimited privileges and no supervision at night.” The unlimited privileges and minimal supervision combined

Photo 34 Receipt signed by Kendall for tuition, 1942. Office of Senate Curator.

to make attendance at school a

sketchy proposition. Not parents,

Congressmen nor Kendall could make them go to school. “If [a Page] wants to [go to school], he does-- for his own good. If he doesn’t, he just doesn’t,” choosing to go out and carouse on paydays, coming in late and then being sent home from work so he could sleep. Kendall would ask Members to intervene, but the “weak-spined Congressman is always too busy.”¹⁶³ The reluctance of Congress to provide for basic necessities for Pages became an important theme as time went on, as there was plenty of resistance to change.

Part Four: Kendall and the Roosevelt White House

Kendall’s private school had no financial support from Congress which passively delegated authority to run Page School to Kendall. The only money the school had was the tuition that Pages paid to Kendall directly, and that was used

mostly for his and other teachers' salaries. The facilities had been poor when the school started in 1931, and by the early 1940s, there had not been much improvement, if any. The facilities and equipment probably were getting worse by this point because they were now being used every day, whereas they had only been sitting idle collecting dust before.

Possibly because of his visit to the White House on New Year's Day 1932, and possibly because Pages were close to Vice President Curtis, and then Vice President Garner, Kendall somehow was able to develop a diplomatic relationship with the White House, and especially with Eleanor Roosevelt, and he was eventually given White House privileges.¹⁶⁴ Mrs. Roosevelt, in her characteristic style, took a special interest in the Page boys and also in Kendall's vision of a Diplomatic Academy. Kendall wanted a school where young men could be trained for foreign service instead of using sons and friends of millionaires for those positions.¹⁶⁵ Mrs. Roosevelt soon came to be known as "the Pages Godmother" and is so honored in Page School yearbooks, with Bess Truman eventually inheriting that role.¹⁶⁶

Each semester, Mrs. Roosevelt invited Pages to visit the White House for a luncheon, a tour of the building and sometimes a movie, and sometimes to meet the President. End-of-year ceremonies eventually took place at the White House too, and many times, the President presented certificates to the graduating seniors.

In March 1943, Mrs. Roosevelt invited Pages to the White House for lunch and to meet the President. After lunch, she took the group to the family's private residence, where they were able to meet Mr. Roosevelt and talk for a few minutes. They ended their visit with a movie in the White House theater. Most were awe-

struck, but not for long, due to the remarkable graciousness of Mrs. Roosevelt.¹⁶⁷ Two students who made this visit remember it vividly. Ray Felts says, “She was as homely as could be, but she could just charm you out of your shoes,” and Carmen Trevitt says, “She was a very gracious, aristocratic, sincere, delightful lady, and had obviously a strong interest in the Page boys. I think that’s just the way she was temperamentally disposed. She was conscious that a lot of us were up there without any family, and that this being an enriching experience, so I think that was her motive. She was just a grand lady.”¹⁶⁸ Undoubtedly, the relationships that Kendall was able to make with Mrs. Roosevelt worked in favor of Page School, and indeed, it had influence on the decisions to improve and enlarge Page School in later years.¹⁶⁹

Kendall also seemed to establish a personal repartee with Senator and Vice President Truman from 1935 to 1945. Pages were familiar with Truman, as they interacted with him on the Senate Floor daily, and this familiarity spread to a relationship with Kendall. Probably using Mrs. Roosevelt’s influence when he could, Kendall was able to solicit Truman’s support in an endeavor to create a Diplomatic Academy, where Pages and others would be trained for foreign service to serve abroad instead of serving the Congress, in his attempt to steer Page School in a new direction.

Kendall also worked to get improvements made in Page School, and the Architect of the Capitol even completed drawings and architectural plans for major improvements in the school; however, there were not enough votes for the money to be appropriated and the idea was shelved.¹⁷⁰ This was the first of several unrealized plans prepared for Page School.

Here is another instance when Congress could have given its support to Page School. There were people who had sincere concern with the welfare of Pages and who wanted to improve their facilities. Kendall's plan called for an improvement and expansion of the facilities so that the school took on a different focus, possibly a dual

PAGES, U. S. SENATE	
ASSIGNMENTS..... 1941	
NAME	
BRITTON	Chief Stationery, Asst. Rep. P. Thomas
CARMACK	Pen & Ink, and
CARRICO	South Door
CLARKE	West Door
CLAYTON	Matches and Snuff
COLLINS	East Door
FORD	Asst. Records
HOUGH	Chief Clerk & Calendar, Halls
LUND	Chief Record
METZ	Republican Telephone Chm
MORGANE	Democratic Telephone
MULBRY	Asst. Stationery
NEIL	Asst. Pen & Ink
NISSON	Stanger
PURKEY	West Door
RAGSDALE	V.P. Desk, Halls
READ	Treasurer, Testimony
REYNOLDS	Asst. Calendar & Bill
RUSSELL	Democratic Telephone
RUTHERFORD	West Door - Halls
AUST	South Door

Photo 35 Duty roster, 1941.
Kirby Metz.

continuing to passively delegate authority for the operation of Page School to Kendall.

Part Five: Pages in the News, 1939 to 1940

As the 1930s were ending, Pages briefly had the spotlight on two separate occasions. In February 1939, a 12 year-old Page, Millard Fillmore Caldwell, the son of Congressman Caldwell, was hit by a car as he crossed the street in the early morning on his way to school. The car dragged him 50 feet, and then sped away.¹⁷¹ McAlpin Arnold remembers that “we heard one morning that he had been struck and it was enough to affect us emotionally to some degree, although I did not know him

focus: allowing young men to see how Congress works, and also grooming future statesmen and diplomats, something Kendall had envisioned for a long time. But when faced with a decision either to invest in Page School or to let the school continue as it had been, the Congress allowed it to carry on as it had before.

Instead of providing leadership and direction for the school by doing something actively, Congress sent still another message that Page School seemed to be running well enough and that it did not merit further attention,

very well.”¹⁷² Police searched for the car in “one of the greatest man hunts ever seen in the city.”¹⁷³ Any car with damage was suspect, and police questioned owners of those cars. No suspect was ever found, and two months after the boy’s death, Kendall presided over a ceremony for Caldwell at Page School, and dedicated a plaque in his memory.¹⁷⁴

In April 1940, Pages again made the newspapers, and became part of the American consciousness. A talent agent came calling, and offered to take Senate



Photo 36 Pages in the Speaker’s Lobby, 1941. *Jim Oliver.*

Pages to Hollywood to make a sequel to “Mr. Smith Goes to Washington” about Page life titled “Senate Page Boy,” starring Mickey Rooney; of course, House Pages were understandably upset.¹⁷⁵ However, the offer stood for Senate Pages only and the Senate gave its permission for the boys to start filming June 15, after adjournment on June 1.¹⁷⁶ Even Vice President

Garner was offered a role in the movie.¹⁷⁷ Kirby Metz remembers the offer of going to Hollywood to make the movie, but “with Germany invading Poland, that was the end of that. We never got there.”¹⁷⁸ Mickey Rooney had declined the lead role by January 1941 and when the movie was released in May 1941, it was titled “Adventure in Washington” and told the story of a boy sent to Washington to learn better manners and straighten out his life by becoming a Page boy.¹⁷⁹ The movie received the consternation of the House, not only because it focused on Senate Pages, but also because it showed them getting in fistfights and eavesdropping on Senators. In a late

House session, Representative McLean, a Page himself when he was younger, thought the movie was showing things that really do not happen which served to “undermine the confidence of the electorate” and he discounted the movie because of it.¹⁸⁰

In May 1939, the issue of Pages working in Congress again became a news story. The Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 mandated that no child under 16 could be employed in any occupation. At the time, the minimum age for a Page was 12 and the maximum was 16, so Congress’s maximum age was the law’s minimum. However, the Department of Labor made a ruling that stated specifically that having Pages who were under 16 did not violate the Act because the work they were doing had nothing to do with interstate commerce. Although Pages were breaking the spirit of the law, parents and Pages were not going to complain because it was “a position greatly coveted by parents and thoroughly enjoyed by the boys” in addition to allowing the boys to make lots of connections used later in life.¹⁸¹

At the end of the 1940-1941 school year, Capitol Page School conducted its first commencement exercise (although there had been graduates for several years), with eight students receiving diplomas. Kendall presided over the ceremonies held in the House Caucus Room, with Speaker Rayburn giving the keynote address.¹⁸² Instead of having their parents sign their report cards, each Page’s Member signed it, and an education at Capitol Page School was still considered by many to be the “kind of education every boy would like to have” maybe not for the actual classroom education he received but probably more for the totality of the experience.¹⁸³

Capitol Page School continued to function as it had for the several previous years as the 1940s began. The school now had several rooms in the terrace of the Capitol instead of just one, and it had several faculty members to teach a variety of subjects. However, the condition of the rooms that Page School occupied was not good. As the United States entered World War II, the Congress was forced to deal with a host of issues, the least of which was being bothered with Pages' education. However, it is during this time that Capitol Page School received its most direct Congressional support. Beginning in early 1942, certain things occurred to alter the evolution of the Page system. This chain reaction of events again involved a small handful of key players who helped the school to improve and to take the next step in becoming a permanent fixture on Capitol Hill.

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131. Kirby Metz, Interview with author, 8.
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141. Joe Bill Stephens, "21 Boys Lead Interesting Lives As Senate Pages," *Washington Post*, 28 December 1941, C-12; Dugas, D-1.
142. John Thompson, "Senate and House Pages Combine Play, Pranks and Study in Long Working Day," *Washington Star*, 26 March 1939, C-4.
143. George Hutchinson, Interview with author, 1, 2, 10.
144. Dracos Burke, Interview with author, 6; Suma, Interview with author, 7; Metz, Interview with author, 5; Middlesworth, Interview with author, 25.
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146. John R. W. Emory, "Day Is Busy Filling Wants of Justices," *Washington Post*, 16 May 1937, 2.

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153. Dracos Burke, interview with the author, 7; Kirby Metz, interview with the author, 6; McAlpin Arnold, interview with the author, 3.

154. Norvill Jones, interview with the author, 8.

155. Joe Bartlett, interview with the author, 25 (edited for clarification). For other comments about Kendall's personality, see these interviews: Carmen Trevitt, 11; Chester Middlesworth, 1; Don Fleger, 13; Myles Garrigan, 7; Ray Felts, 5; James Dingell, 7.

156. *The Congressional*, 1942, 25.

157. "Untitled List of Rules for Supreme Court Pages," Supreme Court Curator's Office files on Pages, 8 September 1939, Rule #13.

158. Richard Woolley, "The Supreme Court Page," *The Congressional*, 1942, 30.

159. R. L. Duffus, "Nine Men-- Portrait of a Court," *New York Times*, 18 February 1940, SM5.

160. John Thompson, "Senate and House Pages Combine Play, Pranks and Study in Long Working Day," *Washington Star*, 26 March 1939, C-4.

161. Losche, 160.

162. *Congressional Record*, 4 May 1938, 6248; "On Capitol Hill," *Washington Post*, 5 May 1938, X2.

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165. Ibid.
166. *The Congressional*, 1943, 7.
167. Charles S. Russell, "Graduates in 'Paging' Have Time of Lives at White House," *Washington Post*, 14 March 1943, 11; "Pages Have Wonderful Time As Guests at White House," *Christian Science Monitor*, 15 March 1943, 3.
168. Ray Felts, Interview with author, 6; Carmen Trevitt, Interview with author, 7. For more detailed accounts of these visits, see Garrigan interview, 13; Middlesworth, 14.
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170. Kendall, 27.
171. "\$200 Reward For Hit-Run Killer of Boy," *Washington Post*, 4 February 1939, 1; "Police Check Damaged Cars For Boy's Killer," *Washington Post*, 5 February 1939, 3.
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174. "Plaque Unveiled Honoring Memory of Young Caldwell," *Washington Post*, 28 March 1939, 4.
175. "Washington Sideglances," *Washington Post*, 13 April 1940, 3; "Senate Pages Set To Make Movie; House Boys Irate," *Washington Post*, 16 April 1940, 23.
176. "News of the Screen," *Christian Science Monitor*, 2 May 1940, 16; Christine Sadler, "The Pose Tours Capitol, Sees Legislators at Work," *Washington Post*, 2 June 1940, OT1.
177. "Garner Gets Chance to Enter the Movies," *Christian Science Monitor*, 18 January 1941, 17.
178. Kirby Metz, Interview with author, 20.
179. "News of the Screen," *Christian Science Monitor*, 3 January 1941, 11; "Garner Gets Chance to Enter the Movies," *Christian Science Monitor*, 18 January

1941, 17; Philip Scheuer, "'Adventure in Washington' Story of Senate Page Boys," *Los Angeles Times*, 23 May 1941, 16; John L. Scott, "Senate Page Boy Story Proffered," *Los Angeles Times*, 12 July 1941, 9.

180. "Indignant Over Film, House Sits Overtime," *New York Times*, 20 May 1941, 27; "Rep. McLean Asks Inquiry on Film About Page Boys," *Washington Post*, 20 May 1941, 23.

181. "Finds Congress Is No Exploiter of Child Labor," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 14 May 1939, 12.

182. "Capitol Pages to be Graduated," *Washington Post*, 6 June 1941, 12; "Capitol Pages to Graduate Tomorrow," *Washington Post*, 15 June 1941, L8; Lewis Riley, "Eight Finger-Snappees Get Diplomas From Page School," *Washington Daily News*, 17 June 1941.

183. "Washington Sideglances: From Red Tape to Funnies," *Christian Science Monitor*, 20 June 1941, 21; Joe Bill Stevens. "21 Boys Lead Interesting Lives as Senate Pages," *Washington Star*, 28 December 1941, C-12.

Pages do perform important services to the Congress and, furthermore, they are the only group of minors for whom the Congress is directly and personally responsible. We have the responsibility of seeing that adequate treatment is accorded to these boys who render excellent service. . . I think we owe a direct personal obligation, if we are to have minors in our employ, to look into [their] school system and put it on a first-class basis.”

~Harold Burton, *The Congressional*, 1946, 37, taken from his statement before the Joint Committee on the Organization of Congress, June 15, 1945.

CHAPTER FOUR: SENATOR BURTON ADVOCATES FOR PAGES, 1942 TO 1949

Introduction

Before discussing how the school changed beginning in 1942, it is worth relating a vignette which illustrates the relationship between Pages and Members, and how Members still were giving Pages special privileges. In January 1942, the Senate created a special subcommittee and sent two Pages, George Reynolds and Gene Ford, to New York City to inspect warships, simply because the boys had mentioned that they had only ever seen pictures of them. Apparently, they must have pestered the right person enough, and Senator David Walsh (D-MA), Chairman of the Committee on Naval Affairs (and also Chairman of the Committee on Education and Labor), arranged for them to tour the New York Navy Yard. During the tour, as an official Navy escort explained operations, the boys expressed their disappointment at not being able to see more.¹

A message was sent immediately to the Admiral, asking permission to give the boys a tour of inspection of one of the ships, and the answer came back immediately to “extend every facility to [the] Senate investigating committee.”² The boys then toured the entire yard for a full three hours, including a 40 minute rapid-fire question and answer session with the Rear Admiral in charge. The two-boy subcommittee was confident after the tour that the “Japs or the Germans” did not have very much to look forward to because of how well-prepared the Americans were but, being the boys they were, they were most impressed that “the sailors in the Navy sure do get good things to eat.”³ If the Senate could send two Pages on an official military investigatory mission in time of war, something innocuous like continuing to

appoint underage Pages or something like neglecting the education needs of Pages was certainly not going to attract much attention.

Part One: Burton Visits Page School and Effects Change

Kendall was able to stabilize Page School from 1931 to 1942, but at the same time, along with this stabilization, there was also stagnation. Granted, the school



Photo 37 Senator Harold Burton. *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress.*

grew in enrollment, and added teachers and rooms, and got bigger both physically and psychologically, but in many ways, the school in 1942 was the same as it was in 1931. It had changed, but it had not developed and matured. A series of events, beginning in early 1942, irrevocably changed the school. Again through a combination of happenstance and the involvement of a few key individuals in the Page system, the direction of the school veered dramatically from where it had been headed.

Because Kendall's school became more and more established as time went on, it received attention from more and more people, even from Members of Congress. The most direct and intense support of the Page system came from Senator Harold Burton of Ohio, who served in the Senate from 1941 until he was selected by President Truman to serve as an Associate Justice on the Supreme Court in 1945. Although he had no official ties to the Page system, he was one of those people through the years who took a special interest in Pages and is credited with probably doing "more to eradicate disturbing problems, to alleviate conditions in the School, and to aid the Pages as individuals, than any other man."⁴ The only thing in his

background that would make him likely to become involved with Pages is a two-year term on the Board of Education in East Cleveland about 15 years earlier, in 1928 and 1929. He even later admitted that his involvement with Pages came about because of a chance occurrence: “[W]hen I ran into [the school] here about the second year I was here, I ran into it in a purely incidental manner. I had no Page that I had appointed, but I knew one of them and I asked to visit his school after he had told me he went to school in the Capitol.”⁵ Regardless of the reasons, he became a key factor in the evolution of Page School, and his actions represent the most direct intervention and official support from a Member up to this point and also shows what one advocate, in this case a Senator, acting alone can do for a group of people.

Senator Burton’s involvement with Page School began two months after Pages George Reynolds and Gene Ford did their impressions of Senators in New York, when he made a visit to the school in early March 1942. A detailed day-by-day account of events during this period is useful because so many important things happened in a very short time span, and it is important to see how they evolved, and to see the cause and effect of each event over time. Senator Burton was the catalyst that Capitol Page School needed to overcome the institutional inertia that had had a stranglehold on the school for 15 years, bringing attention to the school and eventually changing its direction.

The first thing in the morning on March 5, 1942, Burton went with Gene Ford, from Burton’s own Ohio, to visit Page School, which now had 21 Senate Pages and about 31 House Pages attending. Ford had previously made arrangements for Burton to visit, tour the school and meet Kendall.⁶ After seeing the school, Burton remarked

on the overall impression that the school had made on him: “The accommodations were terrible-- dirty and out of repair and unequipped. The government’s obligation is to furnish the rooms . . . [There are] seven teachers [and] books, but no other equipment. [The school] apparently comes under no committee of Congress and is badly neglected. It used to be worse, but has been [like this] for about 11 years.”⁷ The details of his visit are noteworthy to include.

Ford first escorted Burton to the grade school room, Room 13 of the sub-basement of the Capitol on the Senate side. The room housed about 16 students the morning that Burton was there: one sixth-grader, and about fifteen seventh- and eighth-graders, including Ford. Kendall was waiting for Burton when he arrived, and while Burton was seemingly satisfied with the spelling contest being directed “by a man who was in charge of the room,” he was less than satisfied with the physical condition of the room.⁸ “Part of the ceiling had fallen off, the walls evidently had not been painted for many years, paint was coming off of them and they were badly smoked up. The furniture was old and dirty. The room was an inside room with no outside windows although there was a window facing on the inner court. The lighting was of the modern type but probably could have been improved upon for reading purposes and with cleaner walls the lighting would be much improved.”⁹ He was to find out soon after his visit that this room was assigned to the reporters of the Associated Press to use as a break room and lounge, who allowed it to be used for Page School purposes each morning before about 10:00.¹⁰

Kendall then escorted Burton down the hall to the four high school rooms, which were connecting rooms in a larger suite of offices, where two of them had only

a partition that reached halfway to the ceiling to separate them.¹¹ Burton was even less impressed with what he saw in these rooms. “The condition of the ceiling in these rooms is even worse than room No. 13, nearly a third of the area having come down. Apparently, some time ago, it had a false ceiling but this has broken loose and fallen down in many places. The rooms are in disrepair and need painting. The windows apparently have not been washed for a long time. In all appearance, the accommodations are dirty and the desk equipment is many years old. The books are old books, apparently supplied by the school. Mr. Kendall stated that he had been with the school for about 11 years and before that time it was” even worse than it is now.¹² Compounding these problems, it was also raining that day and water was dripping on the students’ desks. Students were trying to sit in between the leaks and study at the same time. Occasionally, a janitor would come in and mop up.¹³

While speaking with Kendall more in-depth, Burton listened carefully to how Pages’ education had been addressed in the past and he learned that they had recently received a pay raise so that they could better afford the \$15 per month tuition he charged, which they paid on the 15th and 30th of each month.¹⁴ Kendall defended his school by pointing out that nearly all “the boys made good scholastic records and all had passed whatever college examinations they had taken and had made good records” in college too.¹⁵ He also noted that the school was under the supervision of the District of Columbia schools, which supervised the educational program and any “matters of attendance” that occurred.¹⁶ While the degree of validity of this last statement is in doubt, it is what Kendall said on more than one occasion to defend his school.

Kendall also explained to Burton how Capitol Page School teachers conducted their classes. The boys did mostly written assignments which were posted for each class, and each boy kept track of his progress “by making a written report on the work assigned.”¹⁷ Because boys in the same room were taking different classes at the same time, the lessons needed to be done without recitation, although “they did use recitation in Latin, French and Spanish” in a room that had a bit of privacy.¹⁸ Kendall ran the school as a series of individual tutoring sessions and classroom lessons from the teachers seem to be lacking. More common are stories about students teaching themselves. Carmen Trevitt remembers that he “would just basically go in and look at the clipboard and see what the assignment was for the day and sit down at a table and desk and do it. And if you had a question, there would be a teacher in there that would maybe answer it but there was no recitation or anything like that. They didn’t really teach. They just sat in there. And like I said, they’d answer your question if you had one. It was not very strong academically, and just sort of a place to go and sit and do a little studying and that sort of thing.”¹⁹

In some students’ minds, that type of arrangement made it ideal: “The thing they gave you was a lot of personal assistance. You had small classes and you didn’t have any disturbances from unruly students. I would say Page School was superior because of the individual attention you got.”²⁰ Sometimes, students just did their work unsupervised too: “I’d manage some time during the day to go over [during work] and take a 45-minute typing class. Of course, it didn’t have to be supervised. All we had to do was just learn how to type.”²¹ Some Pages found tricks to cram in their work: “You’d sit on the [dais]; we’d get in the little trolley, go back and forth.

You'd be sitting there, palming a little study guide, and all morning long you were looking at your little cards, studying Latin vocabulary, Spanish vocabulary, American Lit. We had a lot of time. You know, you could be sitting there 20 or 30 minutes listening to debate that they make and all of a sudden bang-bang, a Senator snaps his fingers for you and off you go on your errand."²²

Burton also learned about the schedule that Pages had. From 7:15 to 9:30 each day, Senate Pages would be in school for three 45-minute classes, and House Pages would often stay until 10:45, with both groups returning after their respective sessions up until 8:00 PM to make up the missed time. Lunch was 11:20 to 11:45.²³ Most Senate Pages had to return to school in the afternoons to finish their work since they had a shorter morning school session.²⁴ If a teacher was not satisfied with any student's work, then the student had to return after his session of Congress was adjourned for the day.²⁵ He also noted that there was only the most rudimentary lab equipment in science and there was no formal physical education class, although Pages were given use of the House gym where Representative Gerald Landis (R-IN), a former teacher, volunteered his help after being asked by Burton, and two days a week, Pages played basketball at the YMCA. In addition to Landis, Burton enlisted other Members, all former teachers, to pledge their support in regards to the welfare of Pages: Knute Hill (D-WA), Jerry Voorhis (D-CA) and Senator Elbert Thomas (D-UT).²⁶

After he saw the poor conditions of the rooms that Page School was using, Burton took an interest not only in its physical environment but also for the people in the school as well. The circumstances were so bad, he asked, "What in the world are

you doing down here in this rat hole?”²⁷ He probably meant that as a rhetorical question, and as a metaphor for what he saw when he visited that early morning in March 1942. However exaggerated it may sound, it may not have been too far from the truth; the conditions were that bad.

Donald Detwiler, a Senate Page in 1917 and 1918, painted a vivid picture of what the bowels of the Capitol were like when he worked there. Talking about walking through all the tunnels that connect the various buildings in Washington, he said, “If you want to walk through those tunnels, you push a button that turns on lights for 100 or 200 feet ahead of you and when you get to the next button, you push it and that takes care of another section. And as you push the button for the next section, you see the rats running ahead of you.”²⁸

Although Kendall may have been running a relatively successful school, he was running it in a less-than-ideal location. The condition of this part of the Capitol must not have changed much since the people I talked to who were students at Page School in the 1940s supported Detwiler’s description. “It was not properly lighted or anything. It was not like being in a regular school because you would take off to go to work in the middle of something and come back; some nights you went to school, some nights you didn’t. It’s just that the novelty of the situation probably overcame the distaste for any of us for the inadequate facilities.”²⁹

However, make no mistake, the facilities were inadequate. “It wasn’t very painted or up-to-date. It was sort of rooms that they might have used for storage or something.”³⁰ “The halls were dimly lit. You walk through the hall and there’s no windows in the halls at all, with only a single light bulb hanging down from the

cord.”³¹ “The basement of the Capitol, down in the what we called ‘the dungeon,’ with all the steam pipes was not nice at all. Totally not nice.”³² “It was kind of a dingy, depressing place; nothing there but the walls and desks, and sort of a grayish environment.”³³ Even today, this description holds true.

In addition to the visual appearance, the terrace level of the Capitol had other problems as well. “The Page School leaked and when it rained, water would come down into the classrooms, some rooms more than others, but there would be standing water. And you'd have to walk in on planks to get to your place. Now, can you imagine this, walking in on planks; sitting down at your desk and then keeping your feet up because there was water on the floor. And the whine of the generators across the hall was constant.”³⁴ “It was pretty ratty. Walking through the halls to get to school every morning at 6:30, rats would be scurrying down the hallway. It wasn't very pleasant.”³⁵ “Hell, I remember we used to go and look for rats in the Capitol. Somebody had a pistol, or an airgun, but we used to walk in the basement and go shoot at the rats.”³⁶ “I remember chasing what I thought was a cat in the subway. Found out that it was a very large rat when it turned, and I thought I'd better get out of there in a big hurry. It was not the best of circumstances.”³⁷

Joe Bartlett, a House Page in the early 1940s, described the scene in the basement of the Capitol when he went to school there, a scene that must have been close to what Burton experienced during his visit, and possibly explains why there were so many rodents:

Well, they had lots of problems down in the basement. There was water dripping from the ceiling, water running on the floor, and a lot of it was a dirt floor at the time, so it was muddy too. We had to put wood

boards down so we could walk on them so we wouldn't get our feet wet. Of course, we were the first ones there in the morning, so when we turned on the lights at one end of the hall, they would come on all the way down the hall and we could see all the way down. So, lots of times, we would stand there and flip the switch and the lights would come on and we could see all the rats scatter and hide for cover and then we'd have to walk down the same hall. In fact, one of my friends was put in charge of catching rats-- that was his job in addition to his Page duties. He was put in charge of catching rats one year and they paid him by how many rats he caught. So he did that for awhile, and we were all wondering why he was catching so many of them but there were still so many around. Come to find out that he didn't want to lose his job, he kinda liked it because he got paid well, so in addition to catching rats, he was *breeding* rats down there!³⁸

Another, and more optimistic, way to look at the school comes from Werth Zuver, who attended in the mid-1940s: "It was mysterious and kinda marvelous down in the bowels of the Capitol; it was wonderful; 12 or 14 students in a class; you could really learn! [Break] I didn't think it was luxurious; I thought, 'Hey this is great; we're in the hidden bowels of the Capitol.' It's kinda romantic!"³⁹

After Burton made his visit to Page School, he spent more of his own personal time trying to improve this part of Page School than anyone else had. Immediately, he was on the phone with a number of people to talk about why the conditions were so bad and what could be done to make them better. The day after his visit, on March 6, 1942, he called a number of people: Superintendent of District of Columbia schools, Frank Ballou; Speaker of the House, Sam Rayburn; Architect of the Capitol, David Lynn; Secretary of the Senate, Edwin Halsey; Sergeant at Arms of the Senate, Chesley W. Journey; and Senator Francis Maloney of Connecticut, who was Chairman of the Public Buildings and Grounds Committee.⁴⁰

When Burton spoke with Superintendent Ballou, it became apparent that some of the things that Kendall had told him the day before seemed to be inaccurate. In reference to Page School's being supervised by District schools, Ballou told Burton that "neither he nor anyone in the District school system exercises supervision over" the school.⁴¹ It was Ballou's understanding that he had no rights or responsibilities in regards to Page School since it was not a District school, although the school apparently thought that the "Assistant Superintendent of Schools in charge of High Schools [was] the immediate supervisor of activity."⁴² Ballou informed Burton that the District schools had been involved with Page School a number of years before in connection with absenteeism and truancy, referring to the meeting involving Fay Bentley and the passage of the compulsory school attendance bill discussed in Chapter Three. However, the Congress made it clear at that time that the District School Board had no authority over the employment and education of Pages. Ballou had never been to the school, but because of the unique situation that Pages faced, his impression was that a regular school program would not benefit nor meet the needs of Pages, and an individual program for each boy probably would be most appropriate. Further, Ballou respectfully offered his assistance to Burton at any time it would be requested in the future.⁴³

When Burton called Speaker Rayburn about the poor conditions at Page School, Rayburn told him that although he had assigned the rooms to the boys to use as a school, he had never actually seen the rooms. It was Rayburn's understanding that Page School was part of the District's schools, and Burton had to inform him that the school was actually a private school with no affiliation with any outside school

system. When Burton told Rayburn about the condition of the rooms, Rayburn assured him that he would personally take a look at them, and then speak with the Architect of the Capitol, who could fix whatever needed to be fixed.⁴⁴ Suddenly, after years of Congressional non-involvement, the Speaker of the House was now personally involved in Page School.

Next, Burton spoke with the Architect, David Lynn. He told Lynn that he had just spoken with the Speaker about the condition of the rooms being used by Page School, and that they wanted to improve things. Lynn told Burton that he had been trying to get funding for a few years to fix problems not only with the school rooms but with the entire terrace section of the Capitol; however, because of the war, Lynn had not requested funds in 1942. Burton offered to do anything he could to help Lynn and Rayburn secure funds to do what Lynn already knew needed to be done to those rooms in the basement.⁴⁵

When Burton spoke with Colonel Edwin Halsey, Secretary of the Senate, Halsey told him that he had an interest in improving things for Pages but that he had no control over what happened. Halsey was supportive of making improvements because he thought that Pages should not be handicapped in obtaining a quality education, even though the education that Pages received gave them somewhat of an advantage already. However, he said, it was the Sergeant at Arms, Chesley Jurney, who had direct supervision over Pages in the Senate.⁴⁶

Burton then spoke with Colonel Jurney, and he agreed that Page School was “quite inadequate and not well provided for.”⁴⁷ He offered his help to Burton but told

him that Pages really fell under the jurisdiction of the Secretary to the Majority, Leslie Biffle.

The next morning, March 7, 1942, a Saturday, Burton met with Earl Hart, his secretary, and with Kendall to clear up the discrepancy he had discovered while talking to Ballou about the status of Page School being a District of Columbia school. In response, Kendall referred Burton to Dr. Chester Holmes, Assistant Superintendent in charge of high school curricula, and Mr. Lawson Cantrell, also Assistant Superintendent, who had prior contact with Page School and had given their help. Kendall also gave Burton the name of a judge who had an on-going interest in the welfare of Pages, and who had also had contact with them in the past: Juvenile Court Judge Fay Bentley!⁴⁸

Burton also asked for the qualifications of each teacher at the school. This is significant because it is the first full list of instructors at the school. Prior to this, the names of the teachers at the school appear only haphazardly from time to time, and no full roster is available. Burton learned that the teaching staff was a group of graduate students and Congressional employees who were working second jobs as Page School teachers (see Appendix One). Kendall hired Congressional employees for the teaching positions; after all, they were already in the Capitol and would be around to answer student questions throughout the day, making it easier on himself. Mr. Lewis was either a Doorman for the House or a bug inspector and apparently a former player for the Chicago Bears; Mr. Perry was a Capitol policeman; Mr. Lund worked in the Senate Library.⁴⁹ Regardless of teachers' outside jobs, students were satisfied with the quality of education that they received at Kendall's school. Some did not

think it was the most rigorous work they have ever done but they had no real complaints probably because the totality of the experience overshadowed any shortcomings of the school.

Also on this Saturday morning, Burton spoke with Leslie Biffle, Secretary to the Majority, who was glad to offer his help with whatever Burton wanted to do. Biffle told him that in the House, the person to talk to was the Doorkeeper, Joseph Sinnott, although he was confident that Sinnott would delegate this work to his assistant, Miss Shepard.⁵⁰

He then phoned Sinnott and Shepard, who had gone with him to visit the school two days earlier.⁵¹ It seems that Burton was determined to investigate why the conditions at Page School were so bad and try to do something to make them better, and his persistence would eventually lead to improvements in Capitol Page School.

After only one week of involvement in Page School, Burton had invested more time and energy in the welfare of Pages than anyone else, and his advocacy continued. The Wednesday of the next week, March 11, 1942, Burton met with the Architect of the Capitol, David Lynn, to inquire about making repairs and reconditioning the rooms of the school. He then met with the Chairman of the House Subcommittee on Legislative Appropriations, Emmet O'Neal. At this meeting, O'Neal told Burton that unfortunately his subcommittee's report was already completed and no appropriation could be added. However, since Page School involved both chambers of Congress, the Senate still could include some money for repairs if the request was submitted soon since the Senate had not yet concluded

writing its portion of the bill. Lynn then agreed to propose cost estimates for repairs and upgrades.⁵²

Less than a week later, on March 17, 1942, Burton reported that Kendall was organizing a “Sponsoring Committee” for Page School, including Burton and Senator Alben Barkley, among others. This sponsoring committee, which turned into sponsorship of not only the school, but also specifically of the school’s first yearbook, would within weeks include Speaker Rayburn, Vice President Wallace, seven other Senators and 22 other Congressmen.⁵³ Kendall recognized an opportunity to make some allies and took advantage of the chance to have supporters of his school. The same day, Robert Holcomb of the Architect’s Office submitted his \$2,000 estimate for the electrical work needed at Page School.⁵⁴ With the cost estimate for the electrical work, and other estimates completed March 13 and 17 for replastering walls, redoing ceilings, painting, waterproofing, plumbing and new blackboards, Burton was armed with information to try to include about \$8,700 in the pending appropriations bill.⁵⁵ So, on March 26, Architect Lynn wrote a letter to Millard Tydings, Chairman of the Legislative Subcommittee on Appropriations, asking the committee to consider making an unused appropriation from the previous year’s bill available for improvements at Page School, although a small additional appropriation from the current fiscal year would also be needed to get all the work finished.⁵⁶

Four days later, on March 30, 1942, in an attempt to rationalize his request, Burton also wrote a letter to Tydings telling him how shocked he was at the condition of Page School during his visit. Because there was no official oversight of the school since Congress was allowing Kendall to run it, Burton felt that the Congress owed it

to the boys “to see to it that the rooms be suitable for [a school] and be in reasonable good shape.”⁵⁷ Burton told him what he saw during his visit, adding that recently, a portion of the ceiling had fallen “in such a way as to barely miss doing personal injury to one of the boys.”⁵⁸ Burton ended his letter by telling him that if Tydings needed any more convincing, he needed only to make a short visit to the school himself because it was so obvious that the rooms needed work. With this request, Burton had officially decided to attach his name to the effort to advocate for Pages.

Also on March 30, Burton again visited Page School after speaking with Architect Lynn about the appropriation for repairs. He found the conditions poor again, as the walls and ceilings were leaking from a recent snowstorm.⁵⁹ Burton was determined to do something about the condition of the school, and he continued to press to secure funding to make the upgrades. Meanwhile, Speaker Rayburn was stalling the appropriation bill so that Burton could finalize the amount he wanted for improvements at the school.⁶⁰

On May 11, 1942, H. R. 6802 was passed, which included Burton’s request for funding to be used specifically for improvements at Page School and for waterproofing the entire terrace section of the Capitol.⁶¹ At commencement exercises in the Majority Caucus Room a month later on June 18, 1942, Burton introduced Majority Leader John McCormack as the keynote speaker, and the 1941-42 school year came to a close.⁶² Soon after graduation, work on the rooms of Page School began, and over the summer the repairs were completed. When Pages returned in September 1942, the rooms were set up “appropriately to the needs of a modern school. The suite now consisted of six well-ventilated (air-conditioned) rooms, each

expertly lighted with indirect lighting. The rooms are appropriately seated, decorated and equipped to maintain a high standard of education” including a new science department and an air conditioning unit handed down from the Supreme Court.⁶³

After 11 years of poor conditions, Burton was able to make a few quick phone calls and write a few simple letters to get what seemed to be deplorable conditions improved at the school in less than a month, after seeing firsthand how poor the conditions really were. Although his efforts were not complicated, Burton’s advocacy was the most that Pages had received up to this point, but Burton had just begun his efforts to make Page School more comfortable to those in it.

Although the formal classroom education may have been lacking, Pages’ “education during that period of time didn’t necessarily come from the school, but it came from the day-to-day association with some of the greatest leaders in this world.”⁶⁴ Indeed, “school was something quite incidental. It was the work that was important to us,” says Norvill Jones, a student there at the time.⁶⁵

Part Two: Burton’s Involvement Continues, 1942 to 1943

Senator Burton spent part of his summer vacation in 1942 working out west and in Alaska with the Truman Commission, a group formed to ensure that companies were not taking advantage of the federal government during World War II. Upon returning to Washington in early September, he read the first Capitol Page School yearbook, *The Congressional*.⁶⁶ Possibly because he served as editor-in-chief of his college’s yearbook, and because of his involvement the previous spring, he read *The Congressional* with great interest, and after reading certain parts of the book, specifically an article by Page Robert Biben about the lack of adequate housing

for Pages, Burton wanted to do more to help Pages instead of being satisfied with what he had already done for the school.⁶⁷

The article by Biben described the Page system in not so glamorous terms. He explained that many Pages came to Washington with no place to live, a problem that Pages had been dealing with for over 100 years. Many boys were forced to stay in rooming houses, where circumstances were deplorable and where the judgment of 12 to 16 year-old boys came into question. Impressionable boys were bound to imitate those they lived with, and they were “tempted to begin drinking, smoking, gambling and staying out all hours of the night” and wasting their salaries without anyone supervising them.⁶⁸ Biben declared that it was “the fondest wish of all the Pages that some day they shall have a home where they can live comfortably and happily together.”⁶⁹ He claimed that the boys would be able to elect officers, form teams and get to know each other much better, the way they should, and he continued, it would not be financially difficult to obtain a residence since the boys were already paying room and board. Possibly in a veiled plea directed at Burton, Biben wrote, “All it takes is an impetus-- someone who has the foresight and the will to build or find such a home and then make it possible for the Pages to make use of it and develop it. Perhaps there is some person or organization looking for just such a project? Perhaps the government would erect such a home for the Pages?”⁷⁰

Whether Biben’s writing was directed at Burton or not, it did provoke Burton to take action. The same day he read *The Congressional*, he wrote a letter to Kendall asking to meet with him to “discuss the interests of the school.”⁷¹ Two days later on September 3, 1942, the two men spoke about the living conditions of Pages.⁷²

Although Burton was able to improve the school rooms with relative ease, finding a place for the boys to live was much more involved and more expensive. Although Burton tried to assist in finding a house, and stayed involved with Pages for a few more years, it would be another 40 years before Pages had a government-sponsored place to live.

Burton went back to Page School to meet with Kendall and some of the teachers as well, and to inspect the refurbished rooms on March 4, 1943. He reported that “the school rooms are now in excellent condition” one year, less one day, after he made his initial visit.⁷³ Kendall reported that there was a “much better ethical standard among the boys” thanks to the renovation, and he was grateful for Burton’s intervention.⁷⁴ Senator Burton had taken one year to become Pages’ favorite Senator.

In June 1943, just before the school year ended, Congressman Alfred Elliott introduced a bill to provide funds to purchase a home for Pages to live in since, he reasoned, the welfare of Pages was the government’s responsibility.⁷⁵ Although Elliott and Burton were invited to the White House to talk to Mrs. Roosevelt about it, and they told her that they wanted a place for Pages so that “they don’t gamble, drink and smoke and drift off into other channels,” the bill was referred to committee and was not heard from again.⁷⁶

At the June 1943 graduation ceremony, Senator Burton was the featured speaker, and Mrs. Roosevelt handed out diplomas to nine Pages in an evening involving many Members and distinguished guests. Mrs. Roosevelt, who was introduced by Chester Holmes from the Board of Education, said that the work the boys did as Pages would equip them to be active in a democracy, and after the war,

they would have great opportunities to exercise their citizenship both as voters and workers.⁷⁷

The 1942-1943 school year ended with Kendall still responsible for advising students, helping them find a place to live and get meals, solving their myriad problems and instructing them from 7 AM to 8 or 9 PM each day. Kendall still had grander ideas for the school and wanted Page School to be the “West Point of Diplomacy.”⁷⁸

Eleanor Roosevelt again invited Burton to lunch at the White House in June; this time, Burton took Elliott and Kendall with him. At the lunch, Elliott and Burton explained to Mrs. Roosevelt the nature of Page School. She learned how Pages were the responsibility of Congress and heard about how a plan was underway for a school and residence to be provided. Burton, clearly seeing the possibility of having the White House act as advocate for the boys too, thought maybe she or Mr. Roosevelt could be of help, if they had time and were so inclined but he knew it was difficult for either of them.⁷⁹

Part Three: The Little Congress and Alice Tuohy

In the 1930s and 1940s, the Little Congress was “was a very active group. It met a certain night each week in the House Caucus Room and it was usually made up of staff people from the Congress and they would meet and debate issues that were before the House at the time.”⁸⁰ The club was popular with Pages because in part, there were no dues. The club served a second function in addition to being a debate club: organizing social activities like weekend trips to New York City, dinner dances, river cruises and hosting guest speakers, the likes of Nelson Rockefeller.⁸¹ The Little

Congress participated in a quiz show on a New York City radio station and was an active group on Capitol Hill.⁸² In fact, the Little Congress carried enough import in 1935 when it sponsored a trip to New York City that Mayor LaGuardia, Jack Dempsey and Jim Crowley welcomed the club to the city in a formal ceremony.⁸³ By the mid-1940s, the Little Congress “was fast falling apart for a lot of reasons. I don't think Mr. Rayburn thought well of the idea. And I don't think some other leaders thought it was a good idea for these people to presume” to know more about legislation than the Members and soon after, it disbanded.⁸⁴

The formal social scene for Pages had been dismal for decades. Most of the boys concentrated on work, maybe on school, certainly on surviving on their own, but



Photo 38 Page Hostess Alice Tuohy. *1942 Congressional.*

none of them really had much time for dating or long-term relationships. To combat the poor social lives of Pages, sometime in 1940 or 1941, two women volunteered their services as Page hostesses, to organize dances for the boys, and arrange other activities, such as weiner roasts, waffle parties and club dinners so that Pages were not “loitering around the various grills and drugstores often doing nothing more constructive than tilting a pinball machine.”⁸⁵ Miss

Alice Tuohy, a graduate of Columbia Law School in 1939, who was a secretary for Congressman John Tolan, had become acquainted with Pages, in part through meetings of the Little Congress, and she agreed to serve as hostess to House Pages.⁸⁶ She threw many parties, helped Pages raise money for baseball uniforms, organized a

banquet that Pages held for Congressmen and secured a standing invitation at the Arlington Hall School for Girls and would perform odd tasks for Pages, like host a Congressional quiz show between Members and Pages.⁸⁷ Mrs. Thelma Reid, a secretary for Senator Edwin Johnson, acted as Chaperone of Senate Pages and organized similar things for them.⁸⁸

McAlpin Arnold, a House Page in the early 1940s, describes Tuohy as “a very attractive and outgoing lady.” Joe Bartlett, also a House Page during that time says that he “always thought Alice was in love with one of the older Pages; pretty darn sure she was. She entertained us at her home and she had all kinds of drinks there. She acted like a mother hen but she was a great defender of the Page system.”⁸⁹ One would think that someone like Tuohy would be a champion of Pages; an advocate for their cause; someone who was willing to try to make things better for them. She may have tried to do this, but the results turned out to have unintended consequences. She is guilty of setting in motion a series of events that contributed to the plight of Pages more than anyone to date, leading to unprecedented changes for Capitol Page School.

Part Four: The House Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds, October 1943

Kendall’s responsibilities in the fall of 1943 were the same as they had been in the spring, not only at the school but also in the surrogate parent role he continued to find himself fulfilling, having to find Pages a place to live and a place to eat, sometimes at two different locations. There were 20 Pages who did not live with relatives and needed a place to stay, and Pages continued to clamor for a fraternity-style house where they all could live together.⁹⁰

Seeing an obvious need for housing, in mid-October 1943, the House Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds held hearings regarding buying a house for Pages to live in. Congressman Elliott again had introduced a bill and had enlisted the Sergeant at Arms of the Senate and Doorkeeper of the House, who were both willing to help, to support the Pages' cause.⁹¹ First to testify at the hearing was the main advocate for Pages, Senator Burton, who called the condition of the school only a few months before "a disgrace to Congress" and intimated that many people claimed that they wanted to help but nobody actually did anything to help. He told the Committee that the lower school was a dark room, with plaster falling and water leaking through the roof, with no blackboards, and was used by news reporters when they wanted to play cards and smoke. He underscored the condition of the school by telling the Committee that in the high school, water actually dripped on students' desks each time it rained.⁹² He later described the school as being "in the most disreputable and unsuitable conditions. Dickens' Do-the-boys school had nothing on it at all. . . . The whole place looked as disreputable as it could be."⁹³

Burton continued, telling the Committee that a school should be included in the residence that should be built for Pages. There were a couple of relatively expensive properties available, and although there was a moratorium on spending money on anything not related to defense, Burton wanted to purchase or build a house right away, or at least have the plans to do so in order to execute the plan when the war was over. Compared to what was being spent on the war, the Page residence would take only a very small appropriation.⁹⁴

Elliott agreed with Burton, pointing out that many Pages were living in basement rooms with bad air, sleeping right next to a furnace. Edward Levine, a Page, testified that he had seen boys living in boarding houses who began to “smoke and cuss and all those things. . . . We have our own hours. We can come in anytime we want. We don’t have to go to school at regular hours,” showing how the system really was not working that well during this time period.⁹⁵ Carl Brown, another Page, told the Committee that a residence was a good idea because it would encourage good moral development of each boy and provide Pages with a group affiliation outside of work, something needed because they had few chances for recreation.⁹⁶ Kendall also told the Committee that “there is no feeling of fraternal fellowship [with Pages] at all. They go their way and have their own friends,” and he also advocated for a house.⁹⁷

Finally, the aforementioned Alice Tuohy testified via a letter to the Committee in which she said that she became very interested in Pages even before she became Page Hostess, and that she was a confidant to many of them. In her letter, which was included in the hearing proceedings, she was trying to point out that Pages needed a new school and she tried to make a case why Congress should support investing in a Page home, but her comments were soon to backfire.⁹⁸

The bill that Congressman Elliott had introduced provoked enough interest to have this hearing, and after the hearing, there was quite a bit of follow-up on the testimony. Assistant Architect of the Capitol Horace Rouzer investigated several properties near the Capitol to convert into a residence. Three houses at 44, 46 and 48 Independence Avenue would have cost \$37,000 and housed 34 boys; a house on the corner of New Jersey Avenue and C. Street, SE would have cost \$115,000 for all the

Pages; a house at 305 New Jersey Avenue, SE would have cost \$23,000 to house 23 boys; and a house at 130 B. Street, NE would have cost \$17,000 to hold 34 boys.⁹⁹ Kendall made appropriate changes on all of Rouzer's blueprints in November 1943 so that they were more conducive to what a Page school/residence needed.¹⁰⁰ Rouzer went so far as to obtain bids from retailers to furnish at least the three houses on Independence Avenue in December 1943, and Woodward and Lothrop submitted a bid itemizing everything from beds and mattresses to juice glasses and dessert plates. Rouzer made detailed plans for needed renovations at each of the addresses, with Kendall providing his suggestions on what kind of equipment to purchase to increase the capacity of the buildings in February 1944.¹⁰¹

One of the Committee members claimed that if the patronage part of Paging was abolished, then only local boys would be able to serve and the problem of housing would be resolved; however, that would limit opportunities for everyone else. Burton pushed for a permanent policy regarding a residence for Pages after having ignored it for 150 years, and the end result of the hearing was that a subcommittee was appointed to look for suitable housing.¹⁰² Sending all the boys home and using the money on something useful was also the opinion of at least one writer of a letter to the editor.¹⁰³ However, one letter to the editor was nothing when compared to what happened next.

Part Five: Fallout From Tuohy's Letter, December 1943 to the Summer of 1944

Jerry Kluttz, a reporter for the *Washington Post*, read the Committee hearings and reported on what Tuohy, who had switched jobs and was now working as a secretary for Congressman James O'Leary, had written in her letter. He relayed her

allegations about the Page system somewhat out of context, including that Pages were unhappy with the school, as well as expressing her own general disapproval of how Congress was handling Page School. Tuohy claimed that Pages thought they got a sub-par education and she wrote, "I have never known a boy who didn't have to repeat some of the work that he took here at Capitol Pages' School. I have never known a case where a boy went straight from graduation from Pages' School into college. All those with whom I have spoken have said that they had to take additional training before they could go to college. I have talked with the boys' mothers or guardians and have been told 'What a mess' had been made of" their educations, and how entire school years had to be repeated.¹⁰⁴ She also pointed out how unfair it was that Pages had to pay tuition to attend school when they could be attending their home schools for free. She also criticized Page School facilities, claiming that a chandelier had recently fallen on a seat where a boy had been sitting only moments before.

Tuohy suggested strict discipline and supervision for the boys in the new residence and pointed out that it was not uncommon to find Pages drunk, because they were trying to act older than they were. She claimed that there was "no more urgent problem of adolescent care in the world today," even during wartime, than Capitol Pages, neglect so bad that it caused a 15 year-old Page recently to kill himself.¹⁰⁵ While these hearings were held to consider a residence for Pages, of course, Page School was bound to at least be mentioned, and although she was advocating for a new residence with a school included, at the same time, she was exposing all the warts that Page School had for all to see.

The letter was an attempt to reiterate to the Committee how badly Pages needed their own residence, and Tuohy thought she was helping their cause. However, after Kluttz printed excerpts of it in the paper, it began a chain reaction of events which led to a number of other events, including Kendall's dismissal and the District of Columbia Board of Education taking over control of Capitol Page School.

The letter and the *Post* article sent a shock wave through the Page ranks, and the same day that the article appeared in the *Post*, the father of a Page who had spent four years at Page School and had graduated the previous June, wrote a letter to the editor of the *Post* defending the school. The father wrote that the school was a good school, having been accredited by the District of Columbia Board of Education, and was a part of the District of Columbia school system.¹⁰⁶ This is noteworthy because it demonstrates that someone who should have known about the status of the school in fact was mistaken about its private classification. Granted, District of Columbia schools were represented at Page School graduation exercises and the school was loosely supervised by the District Board but the bottom line was that Page School was a private school, not part of the District's school system at all. Joe Bartlett put it best saying, "Kendall wasn't associated with the District schools in any way. He always made sure that their representatives came to graduation ceremonies and things like that. But that was kind of a leap."¹⁰⁷

Regardless, three days after the Kluttz article in the paper, on December 15, 1943, Senator Burton wrote to Superintendent Ballou (although Ballou was no longer Superintendent; Robert Haycock was) because although he felt many of the things in the Kluttz article were not true, the statements had "been given such currency that in

the interest of the school and the boys attending it as well as the Congress itself, I would like to receive from you an official statement as to your opinion of the character of the educational service supplied by the school.”¹⁰⁸ Burton now was not only trying to improve things for Pages, but also took a certain guardianship role, as his personal stake in the school had increased. He had become the unofficial face of Page School and wanted a professional opinion as to how the school was functioning. Burton continued to be the catalyst needed to overcome the inertia that was preventing change.

Haycock replied two weeks later on Christmas Eve 1943 that based on conversations with colleagues and the fact that 60 percent of Capitol Page School graduates who enter college made the Dean’s List, the school was of sufficient caliber, and instruction was of sufficient scholarship, to put it on par with a District of Columbia school. Haycock further suggested that Burton ask the Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools to complete an evaluation of the school, pointing to the fact that five of the eight white high schools in the District had recently done that and had found it to be worthwhile.¹⁰⁹ Burton then asked Kendall to consider the evaluation since Burton thought it would be a wise thing to do for the school’s own good.¹¹⁰

Probably because of the Tuohy letter and the Klutz article, Mrs. Roosevelt invited Burton’s wife Selma to lunch in January 1944.¹¹¹ Selma was not in town at the time and had to decline the invitation but Mrs. Roosevelt also wrote a note to the Senator, saying that she was disturbed by some things she had learned about the school. She relayed to Burton that she had been told that the low standards of the

school did not prepare the boys for college and that they must take additional classes before they were ready to begin college. “It is most regrettable to have a school which is not doing a better job, both in caring for [Pages’] time outside of school hours and in giving the education which they need.”¹¹² She then suggested that Members get together with the teachers and maybe even talk to some of the boys too to see how the school could be improved. While Kendall probably treasured the fact that he had an ally in Mrs. Roosevelt, he would soon wish that Mrs. Roosevelt had never made the casual remark to Burton about listening to what the boys had to say about the school.

Two days later on January 22, 1944, with a Senator, a school Superintendent, a Congressional Committee, a newspaper reporter, the Page Hostess and the First Lady all criticizing his school, Kendall had had enough. He sent a four page, single spaced typed letter to Burton relaying a number of things. First, he told Burton that an inquiry to Middle States had already been submitted because the school was “interested in maintaining a high scholarship and [was] always grateful for constructive criticism.”¹¹³ However, he also labeled the comments in Tuohy’s letter slanderous both to the students and the teachers at Capitol Page School, as he tried to protect the interest he had in Page School.

Kendall was upset also because he had received an unacceptable answer when he had asked the Clerk of the Committee, Albert Woods, why Tuohy’s letter was included in the Committee’s report without it being approved first. Woods answered that neither he nor the Chairman had actually read the letter but thought it would be acceptable to be included because Tuohy was rather well-known around the Capitol

and it was taken for granted that her letter would contain nothing objectionable. He told Kendall to ignore “the incident since first, no one reads a committee hearing and, second, no one takes seriously anything the young lady might say.”¹¹⁴

Kendall had no intention of ignoring it though, as the damaging part had already appeared in the *Post*, and he began a concerted effort to defend his school. He told Burton that students came to Washington to attend school for anywhere between two months and six years, and with so many different boys from so many different school systems and so many subjects to teach, it was a complex problem. To alleviate the problems that boys had in making the adjustment to a new life in Washington, he pointed out that the school remained open 12 to 14 hours a day for individual tutoring for those who wanted it; unfortunately, those who needed it the most were not the ones who sought it out. The boys who became Pages were appointed through patronage and not selected on a scholastic basis; because of that, sometimes boys showed up in Washington reading on a first grade level.¹¹⁵ Burton agreed with Kendall on this point, later writing that the school “ha[d] been getting far too many of the boys from public schools that have been malcontents and when their parents find they no longer can keep them interested in going to public schools, a [Page] position is sought for them so that they may be stabilized.”¹¹⁶ Kendall further pointed out that Page School graduates did very well at some of the most prestigious colleges in the country, and they were complimentary toward the school for preparing them well for their studies.¹¹⁷

Burton appreciated the information Kendall had given him and relayed the same to Mrs. Roosevelt, after urging Kendall to press on with the Middle States

study.¹¹⁸ He also relayed to Mrs. Roosevelt what Superintendent Haycock had said about the good scholastic record of the school, and explained that there were many Members on a newly-formed advisory committee to the school, although he admitted that it was “not particularly active in connection with the school,” in a perfect example of how Congress was supporting the school, as long as it did not have to do too much.¹¹⁹

In the meantime, in March 1944, Congressman Elliott again introduced a bill



Photo 39 Eleanor Roosevelt signing yearbooks, June 1944. Note Ernest Kendall turning to talk to Joe Bartlett. *Library of Congress.*

to provide for a place “which the young fellows can call ‘home’ without wincing at the paradox.”¹²⁰ He maintained that where they were living, in basements and boarding houses, was hardly conducive to producing stalwart young men. A school was included in the bill, so that the building would have

everything Pages needed under one roof.

The subcommittee that this bill was referred to had selected for purchase a building a couple blocks from the Capitol at 120 B. Street, NE. This three-story brick building had 15 bedrooms, 9 baths, and was big enough to house the approximately 30 boys each term that were not living with family or friends in Washington.¹²¹ Finally, Pages were authorized to have their own house to live in.¹²² However, in the summer of 1944, after graduation ceremonies where Mrs. Roosevelt again handed

each graduate his diploma, and Burton assured her that plans were still underway for securing a place to live for the boys, “Elliott’s bill ran into opposition in the House on the part of some of the men in charge of the Pages and also [by] some of the Representatives who were opposed to the acquisition of land by the government for dormitory purposes” because there were more important things to spend money on during wartime, and the bill died.¹²³

We could wonder why Burton did not push harder for a residence for Pages. Joe Bartlett remembers that Burton was “one of those that backed off when he lost interest. One of the Pages, Bill Effington, convinced Congressman Victor Wickersham that they shouldn't have a dormitory. And so, when Wickersham said he was going to oppose it, Burton decided he didn't want to be any part of a contest over something like sponsoring a dorm.”¹²⁴ The reason Burton did not push harder seems to be lost in the unwritten deals and mercurial alliances that characterize each Congress.

At the workplace, Senate Pages were still wearing knickerbocker uniforms and House Pages were still wearing dark suits of their choice. At school, Pages reformed an Explorer’s Club to explore and rediscover all the passageways and forgotten staircases in the Capitol. This unsanctioned club existed for decades, and Bob Bauman, a House Page in the 1950s, remembers that he “crawled through the top of the old Supreme Court Chamber; there are ways to get from the House to the Senate side without ever touching the floor; you can go through the roof and so on. Oh, yeah, we learned all that kind of stuff.”¹²⁵ Also, the school continued to compete in a variety of sports, including football, baseball, swimming and tennis, with

Congressman Gerald Landis coaching the basketball team. School was from 7:15 to 9:30 and classes were held three times a week in the late afternoon for Pages to catch



Photo 40 CPS basketball team, 1945-46. Richard Kuhn is seated, fourth from left. 1946 Congressional.

up on what they missed in the mornings.¹²⁶

Rites of passage for Pages had not changed much either. In the Supreme Court, veteran Pages stuffed a new Page, Robert Higbie, into a

dumbwaiter and closed the door. They then sent the scared Higbie on a short

trip and stopped the dumbwaiter in between floors, officially initiating him into the select ranks of Supreme Court Pages.¹²⁷ The Explorer's Club did change though.

After climbing to the roof of the Capitol one night, a guard shot his gun at the boys, subsequently causing membership in the club to dwindle and making the meetings to become less frequent.¹²⁸

In June 1944, Pages once again grabbed headlines. The mother of Page Robert Jackson appeared on a radio show complaining that her son was fired after she complained about a kickback that he was being forced to pay to Congressman Richard Kleberg. Kleberg wanted him to stuff envelopes after normal work hours, but he could not do any work after hours because he had to concentrate on his schoolwork.¹²⁹ The mother accused Kleberg of using the money to buy office furniture but nobody wanted to admit any wrongdoing.¹³⁰ Kleberg maintained that about one-third of Johnson's paycheck was being deducted but it was not for office

furniture, it was because he had to hire another clerk to do the work that Johnson could not do. He also asserted that he did not fire Johnson; the Doorkeeper fired him for not showing up for work, although the Doorkeeper denied firing him too.¹³¹ Kleberg then placed the blame on his secretary; however, the secretary had died recently, so Kleberg had nobody to corroborate his story. In any case, Jackson was fired, and Kleberg, an eight-term Congressman and one of the wealthiest Members of Congress, was not re-elected in the next election in the fall of 1944.¹³²

Part Six: Setbacks For Kendall, 1944-1945 School Year

INTRODUCTION

By all outward appearances, the 1944-1945 school year was uneventful as Capitol Page School continued to operate in its routine and unique way. However, an investigation deep into primary source documents reveals a tumultuous and chaotic year behind the scenes, unknown even to the Pages who I talked to from this time period. Although the fall semester passed without incident, as did most of the spring semester, in May, Burton must have wished that he never had gotten involved with Pages.

Before the storm hit however, the school enrolled 100 to 110 students, 40 of whom were not Pages but other minor Congressional employees, all of whom were taught by five full-time teachers and five part-time teachers.¹³³ Each course at the school had about a 20 percent failure rate each semester. Kendall again blamed this high number on the fact that Pages were the product of the patronage system, which brought with it a host of problems. Some Pages were appointed for only a month, and the school could make no attempt to educate them in that short time. Kendall would

plead with Members not to appoint anyone younger than a boy in his junior year, yet he still was forced to enroll at least a couple of grammar school-aged kids each semester, with boys that age on long waiting list. It was a combination of the waiting list and tradition that kept out girls up to this point in time.¹³⁴ Poor marks were a touchy subject at Page School too, because when a student received one, sometimes the Page would talk to his Member about it, and sometimes the Member would have to talk to the teacher, asking for their leniency, even though it was the Doorkeeper and the Secretary who officially monitored grades. This certainly affected instruction and grading, and may have affected school spirit too, something that Kendall expressed his concern about in the press.¹³⁵

Burton, now trying to get involved with policy decisions, suggested that no boy who had not yet completed the eighth grade be allowed to be Page. Because boys were studying different subjects in the same room at the same time with the same teacher, e.g. three history classes in one room at the same time; and one teacher teaching different classes in different rooms, or even in the hallway at the same time, it was too difficult for a younger boy to keep up with the older boys the way he was supposed to.¹³⁶

Because housing in Washington was at a premium during the war, even some Members did not have a place to live. Congressman Luther Patrick introduced a bill in early 1945 to fund two apartment units, one for Members and one for their secretaries, and Pages.¹³⁷ However, that bill also died without incident.

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT DIES; TRUMAN ABANDONS DIPLOMATIC SCHOOL, APRIL 1945

When President Roosevelt died in April 1945, Harry Truman became President. Chester Middlesworth remembers being on the Floor of the Senate when Truman was notified: “Some Secret Service agent came up to him and whispered something in his ear. He called Kenneth McKellar to preside for him. He came up to preside, and Truman left out the back door of the Senate. And we saw him soon after in Congress as President. I remember when he came back; the whole Capitol was bubbling over.”¹³⁸ When Truman returned to the Senate to say goodbye, he made it a point to spend a few minutes with the Pages.¹³⁹ Three weeks later in early May 1945, even though Hitler had died that day, on the front page of the *Washington Post*, there was enough room to report that Truman again visited the Capitol and this time made it a point to say goodbye to House Pages.¹⁴⁰ The House Pages lined up to shake his hand and Larry Earley, one of the Pages, got in line to shake his hand again after already having done so in the Speaker’s Office moments before when he was helping a Congressman. Truman recognized Earley the second time, much to Earley’s embarrassment.¹⁴¹ This prompted him to write a humble letter of apology to Truman, who answered it by graciously telling Earley that he was glad to see him twice.¹⁴²

This incident is recalled vividly by James Dingell, a House Page: “The kid in front of me had been a smart aleck, and he got through the line once and ran around and jumped back into line in front of me, and Truman said, ‘Aha, you’re back again!’ And course the kid was just in shock, but Truman patted him on his back and said, ‘Lot of spunk, son!’”¹⁴³

These visits by Truman are important to mention not only because Truman was taking time to meet with Pages and to send handwritten personal notes to them as World War II was ending, but also because at some point during the first days of his Presidency, Truman also met with Kendall.¹⁴⁴

Kendall had talked with Truman several times about his ideas for a Page Diplomatic School when Truman was Vice President, and Truman was fully behind the idea; however, it never generated much interest and that school never materialized. When he became President, Truman called Kendall into conference and told him that the duties of the Presidency would be his priority, and that he could no longer extend his help toward forming the Diplomatic School. He wished Kendall well, and Kendall thanked him for the support he had given him in the past.¹⁴⁵ Now, with Truman too busy, and Eleanor Roosevelt no longer in the White House, Kendall knew that it was the end of any White House support he had had in the past. His only ally now was Burton, and even that was soon to be in question.

Although no longer First Lady, Mrs. Roosevelt was given much of the credit for the direction the school took. Because of her behind-the-scenes “influence on others, a movement to better the average Page’s lot-- in school, as well as in the residence-- was perpetrated. As a result of her constructive influence, the school was renovated and enlarged, the faculty increased, and-- what was still more important-- for the first time, the bright light of interest was thrown on the conditions of a Page’s stay in Washington-- harshly revealing, and forcing out in bold relief, the malefic effect of these upon a growing youth.”¹⁴⁶ Although she is not given official credit, she was able to use her influence to make lasting changes in the Page system.

ANDERSON ATTACKS KENDALL AND PAGE SCHOOL, MAY 1945

Burton had all he could handle about a month after Roosevelt died. In mid-May 1945, Burton had a meeting with Kendall and a Mrs. Anderson, who was filling in for Yeppa Lund, the science and math teacher, who was on extended sick leave in Utah. To say that Anderson seemed like a “woman on a mission” would be an understatement. She was a 46 year-old Swedish woman from Minnesota who worked as a nurse and who had completed two years of law school. To illustrate her demeanor, she claimed that she had uncovered a conspiracy in a court case and when she published her book revealing everything, it would “be a veritable bombshell in the United States.”¹⁴⁷ Her interest in Page School was equally intense. When Kendall would not give a diploma to Bill Loukota, who was due to enter military service, because he was 20 days short in two subjects, Anderson went over Kendall’s head and contacted the recruiting officer directly. She struck a deal with the officer that if Loukota could get a letter from Kendall saying he needed only ten more days, then the recruiting officer could give Loukota a ten-day deferment and he would be able to begin his service.¹⁴⁸

Burton’s personal papers are meticulously typed, clear, detailed and concise, and his hand-written diary is equally thorough. The documents having to do with Anderson though are long, rambling, unorganized missives, reflecting the direction of the conversation, and it is difficult to summarize everything she said and did in these meetings and it is difficult to convey the mood of these documents. It seems like Anderson presented herself and did not stop talking even as she was being escorted to the door when she left. Regardless, on May 15, 1945, Burton met with Kendall and

Anderson, and Anderson informed him that she had studied every subject the school had and apparently, she had her own ideas about Page School, as she asked Kendall several questions and gave Burton “the knowing wink.”¹⁴⁹ Anderson wanted to be Chief Investigator for the subcommittee that was looking into purchasing a building to house Pages, and both Kendall and Anderson wanted to show Burton the plans they had for the building, which included the school. They told Burton that every room at the school was crowded, each one having many more students than it should.

To illustrate the need for housing, they pointed to the fact that only 60 percent of the boys lived with family in Washington and that Pages were all about town cavorting and causing trouble all the time. They said that Pages had outside jobs and they implied that Pages did not take school seriously. In fact, Pages had been talking to an adult about their drinking and gambling derring-do, not knowing who the man was, but he turned out to be an official who worked at the Library of Congress, who, along with the Capitol Police, was thereafter keenly interested in controlling Pages. In the 1944-1945 school year, 21 students were expelled from Page School, 17 for truancy, 10 of whom were D. C. residents. One of them was a resident of Canada who got his job through Congressman Arthur Cannon. Compounding these problems was that there was currently an illiterate Page attending the school.¹⁵⁰ Burton had been proactive the week before, inviting President Truman, a Dr. O’Connor of Georgetown University, Architect Lynn, Secretary Biffle and Kendall to lunch to discuss housing and the possibility of making Page School a specialized Diplomacy School but he must have felt renewed pressure to do something about the school now as it started to grow beyond his control.¹⁵¹

Burton must have been confused at this point too. Kendall and Anderson came to him, seemingly as a team working together for the benefit of Pages, yet Anderson was sabotaging Kendall even at the meeting. He did not have to wait long to learn more about the relationship between Kendall and Anderson, who was putting significant pressure on Burton for changes.

Only two days later, Anderson came by herself to meet with Burton, and for two and a half hours, she told him things that she thought he should know. She wanted to let Burton know that Kendall was a real grifter and that he had a racket going on at the school. He charged 115 students \$15 each month, and she was interested in having something done about it, under the guise of improving the school. Telling Burton several times that she was not there “for the purpose of carrying tales,” in reality, she was overflowing with gossip, spending most of the meeting complaining about the people connected to Page School and indicating that she could do a much better job with the school.¹⁵² She felt obliged to tell Burton what she perceived was wrong with Capitol Page School.

Kendall was the first target on her list. She said that he hired below average teachers, ones the boys did not like and who were ignorant of the subjects they taught and who could not get the boys to cooperate in order to teach a good class. She also criticized Kendall’s management style, saying that he would embarrass students in front of others as a form of discipline. Students did not respect nor admire Kendall and there was a definite lack of cooperation between them. She continued criticizing the rest of the faculty, complaining that some of them were already full-time employees of the government, and describing them as poor teachers who students did

not like, although she gave two of the teachers, Lewis and Hoffman, lukewarm approval. She also happened to mention that in her substitute role, she had done an outstanding job.¹⁵³

She thought that Kendall was interested in obtaining the \$5,000 that was to be allocated to the subcommittee to defray related expenses during its investigation according to S. Con. Res. 17, legislation Burton introduced to create a governing board for Pages.¹⁵⁴ She claimed that Kendall was fearful of an investigation into the school because he did not want the true picture of the school to be known, and he was fearful that the decision to form a different school was out of his control. She was hoping that the ultimate outcome of the hearings might be the end of his racket. Eyeing the \$5,000 herself, she told Burton that she could not spend any more time and effort on collecting information about Page School without being paid, but Burton told her that as far as he knew, that was not going to happen.¹⁵⁵

Talking to Burton about day-to-day happenings at the school, she claimed that there was no discussion in history class. The way the teacher ran class was to tell the students to read a portion of the chapter, and then the teacher would sit in the back of the room and answer any questions they had in whispers. When the chapter was over, the teacher used the questions in the back of the book as the test. When the student handed in his answers, there was still no discussion of the answers. She claimed that the chemistry teacher was smart, but certainly was no teacher, especially because there was such poor lab equipment. She reported that the English teacher had been out all week, but it did not matter much because there was no discussion in those classes either, so the students were not missing much. She did have positive things to

say about Mr. Sullivan, who was employed by Senator Reed and taught math at the school.¹⁵⁶

Burton, while seeing what Anderson was trying to do, also began to question Kendall's abilities and wrote that "[Anderson's] every effort was made with the thought in mind of knifing Kendall in his effort to run the school. She may be right in many respects [concerning] his ability to manage such an institution" but he also thought that she was selfishly prejudiced against him. Burton thought that she was hoping that she "would profit by this whole investigation and possible reorganization of the Page School" and wanted the \$5,000 for herself.¹⁵⁷

Burton told her that he was going to interview some Pages to see if her stories had any legitimacy, and she was pleased with that because she knew that Kendall was hiding the true nature of the school. She wanted to know if Burton could find out how much Kendall's deposits in his bank accounts were so that they would know how lucrative his school business was. She ended her diatribe by telling Burton that she did not want Kendall to know that she had been meeting with him.¹⁵⁸ If what Anderson said about Kendall's not wanting what really happened at the school to be known was true, it may explain why Kendall drew out the accreditation process with Middle States and never got around to having it completed.

Although he doubted at least some of what Anderson claimed, Burton got to work right away on getting feedback from students anyway. He must have called Kendall to tell him to have Pages write their assessments of the school, get them typed and sent to Burton's office, because the next day, May 18, 1945, a Friday, Burton was disappointed that they had not arrived in his office by mid-afternoon. He

sent Earl Hart, his secretary, to get the ones that Kendall had finished. When Hart got to the school, he discovered that none of the students' reviews had been typed yet. Kendall seemed "very much put out by the request" to have the essays typed with the original attached so soon, and Hart asked him to have at least some of them ready by 5:00 so that Burton would have them over the weekend and could look at them at odd times. Kendall "demanded to know the reason why" the originals needed to be attached to the typed essays, and Hart told him that they were needed for the Committee to review.¹⁵⁹

In reality, either Hart or Burton thought that Kendall was going to delete any information from the students' reviews that would reflect poorly on him, the school or the teachers, serving to cover up any complaints that students had, especially after Anderson had put this idea in their heads.¹⁶⁰ Kendall must have been feeling the pressure from Anderson and although it cannot be determined if Kendall complied with the request that day, at some point, at least 32 letters were delivered to Burton, which contained all sorts of complaints typical of high school students about the school and teachers.¹⁶¹ These colorful narratives describing the school go on and on, bearing sad testimony to the moral problems that clearly prevailed among the Page corps. Whether the complaints were substantiated remains a question but there is no question that this was a good example of letting "the inmates run the asylum." Kendall's actions fit Anderson's description and Burton must have been interested in how Kendall reacted.

CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS TO INVESTIGATE PAGE SCHOOL, JUNE 1945

Three weeks after Anderson came to speak to Burton, the House held hearings in June 1945 to look at, among other things, the state of Capitol Page School. A Dr. Martin of the National Educational Association and a Dr. O'Connor from Georgetown University had visited the school for a day and reported to the Committee that trying to teach in circumstances that the school faced every day was an impossible task, although they were pleased that since 1937, the school was following a regular school calendar and not just the Congressional calendar, when school would not open until December. However, with Kendall teaching Spanish, Latin, geometry, algebra, English, history and other subjects, he had his hands full in 1937 in retrospect. The school had grown from 15 students and one teacher in its first year to where it now had 8 teachers, a full-time secretary plus Kendall. The school's impact on students was not questioned because "many graduates go to college; nobody has failed and one-third of them are on the Dean's List. Many of them write back and say, '[College] is play compared to what we had in Washington,'" making Anderson's claims less important.¹⁶²

The Committee was sympathetic to the situation Page School faced. With 118 boys enrolled at school, although there were only 71 Pages, there were not enough rooms for the school to use in the basement of the Capitol. Even though Pages were supposed to be at least 14 and in eighth grade, sometimes there were fourth graders appointed. Additionally, the generators across the hall from the school were noisy, and different people were always coming and going in and out of the rooms, making it difficult to hold classes.¹⁶³ The office was being used as a classroom at various

times, and as a library and information clearinghouse all of the time. Kendall did not have privacy to confer with teachers or discipline a student, and the space was “wholly inadequate to meet even the minimum requirements of any school, public or private.”¹⁶⁴ Burton again pointed out that the boys needed a regimented schedule and supervision because Members were increasingly finding inebriated Pages in the street, and there were an increasing number of stories about “boys being carried in drunk, [and] hanging nude from second-story windows.”¹⁶⁵

Burton told the Committee that a survey about how the school was performing had been partially completed, referring to the boys’ essays, but that it was difficult to assess the quality of the school because it was a unique institution in a unique situation. Certainly, he continued, the boys who graduated did well in college and it was difficult to argue with their academic results, yet the school did not even have a proper library. He reiterated that he thought the government owed them housing, recreational activity and a certain standard of education, and that was why he introduced S. Con. Res. 17, creating a supervisory board to try to improve the way Pages were selected, and to take action when necessary to improve anything else for them.¹⁶⁶ This resolution later passed the Senate but could not work its way out of the House in another example of the two chambers failing to agree on the details of how to run Page School.¹⁶⁷

As the 1944-1945 school year ended, the school’s yearbook was released and Burton gave Kendall a little bit of hope, telling him that he was “sure it will be helpful in explaining the Capitol Page School situation to the Congress” since the book contained several student-written essays lamenting the condition of their lives

although the school itself was portrayed positively.¹⁶⁸ Burton wrote one of the essays and summarized his thoughts by advocating for “an overall sympathetic review of the Capitol Page system with the purpose not only of improving its service to Congress

Last Name		First Name and Initial		High School Report Card											
JONES, JOHN		NORVILL		Class—First Semester 11A Credits—Beginning First Semester											
SCHOOL YEAR	Days Absent	Times Tardy	Department	English ()	Math ()	Science ()	History ()	Language ()	Physical ()	Art ()	Music ()	Health ()	Average	Rank	
19 45															
19 46															
1st Semester															
1st Six Weeks	4	6	B+	C	C	A	C	C							
2nd Six Weeks	6	7	B	C	B	A	C	C							
3rd Six Weeks	5	3	A	B+	B+	A	B+	C							
Semester Av.			B	B	B	A	B	C							
2d Semester															
1st Six Weeks	5	1	B	B+	B	B	B	A							
2nd Six Weeks	3	4	A	B+	B	B	B	B							
3rd Six Weeks	2	6	C	B+	C	C	D	D							
Semester Av.			B+	B	B	C	D	D							

CAPITOL PAGE SCHOOL
E. L. KENDALL, Principal
U. S. Capitol, Wash., D. C.

PARENT'S SIGNATURE
John Norvill Jones

Principal *Ernest L. Kendall*

School Service Co., 154 E. Erie St., Chicago 11, Ill.

Photo 41 Norvill Jones’s report card from the 1945-1946 school year. Note the signature of Senator Fulbright in the space provided for parent’s signature. *Norvill Jones*

but also of insuring educational and living conditions” for Pages.¹⁶⁹ One strong possibility for the school still was a transformation into not only a school for Pages, but to train the boys for future diplomatic and government positions. Many Pages

liked the idea of the school being like West Point or the Naval Academy whose students were appointed through competitive exams.¹⁷⁰ Additional blueprints were prepared for a school/residence, just in case Congress decided to appropriate money for one, but those blueprints ended up archived instead.¹⁷¹

Away from school, Pages still were holding their initiation ceremonies. One Page, whose father was a secretary to a Member, missed three weeks of work because he broke his hand when “a big Page was spanking a little new Page with a broom, and when I ran up the steps to the House floor, he said I was next. He started to hit me, so I put my hand back real quick and he hit that instead!”¹⁷² They also would spray new Pages with seltzer and put their clothes on the Capitol subway so that they had to run out naked and get them as the press continued to portray them as whimsical sidekicks scampering around the Capitol.¹⁷³

Pages were frequent visitors to the Gayety Theatre in Washington, a burlesque club, prompting Senator Theodore Bilbo to call for its closing, because he considered it “one of the greatest evils of our Capital City” since “it [was] driving our boys to evil. Even the Senate Page boys are frequenting that place. I cannot speak too much of its elaborate evil. I wish you women would do something about it.”¹⁷⁴ What is even more interesting about this is that in the margin on the copy of this article in the Supreme Court Curator’s office files, someone has written in the margin, “Ha! What’s new?” demonstrating that Pages had a well-established reputation as rabble-rousers.¹⁷⁵ Myles Garrigan supports this: “Two or three of us went down to the Gayety Theatre and I think we saw a stripper. It was a part of our education, and the thing that I always remember, it didn’t feel so bad in a sense, the Congressman who was also there, came out with the rest of us after the show, so I rationalized, ‘This must be legal!’”¹⁷⁶

Pages across the street at the Supreme Court were no less innocent. They ran back and forth behind the Justices and found it difficult to hide the hilarity and kidding among themselves, even during sessions of the Court.¹⁷⁷ They even got annoyed sometimes at Justices’ frequent requests, especially those from Justice Frankfurter, so they would shuffle their feet on the carpet as they approached him, purposely touching his hand when he handed his note to the Page, so that he would receive a shock and the Page could get back to reading his comic book behind the Bench as quickly as possible.¹⁷⁸

Another short item worthy of mentioning was that Pages, especially the school fraternity Sigma Kappa Lambda, held several war bond dances to raise money, a

popular school activity at the time in America. In May 1945, the Coast Guard christened one of its new helicopters “The Congressional Page,” after Pages donated the money they had raised from the dances to the war effort. Many dignitaries attended a ceremony on the East Front of the Capitol in which Pages got to break bottles of champagne on the helicopter, and then watch as it picked up one of the boys tied to a rope and put him back down before flying away.¹⁷⁹

Part Seven: Pages Secure a Residence, and the 1945-1946 School Year

In early September 1945, a meeting was held between Pages, representatives of American University and possibly Kendall and Anderson. The meeting was to discuss a new Page School but when the meeting’s spotlight was turned to the American University administrators and they were asked to sponsor the school, they immediately withdrew, saying later that they were at the meeting only because they were invited to learn more about the school and discuss the possibility of taking over some responsibility for the curriculum and selection of teachers.¹⁸⁰ This meeting was obviously held with the idea that if a different school was formed, then it would be in addition to Kendall’s school because Kendall later wrote to the American administrators that he “appreciate[d] fully the effort which recently has finally been made to start the Capitol Page School which would be in competition with the school which has been operated for several years in the Capitol Building” which also makes one think that Anderson may have instigated the meeting.¹⁸¹ Burton, who resigned from the Senate at the end of September 1945 to accept President Truman’s nomination to the Supreme Court, slowly began to appear more and more on the periphery as an advocate of Pages as his professional duties changed.

When school began in September 1945, Mrs. Anderson had not given up on taking over Kendall's role as head of the school, and she reported that she had already signed up 20 boys for her new Page School. She did not want any of the rowdy boys and accepted only "the statesmen type," glad that she was not forced to take all of them.¹⁸² Because she had been working as a substitute at Kendall's Page School for six months, she thought it was best to keep her name out of everything. She and some unnamed others bought a house at 128 B. Street, SE, to accommodate all 20 boys. All told, they allegedly spent almost \$100,000. She claimed that she had three majors, all with master's degrees, and one with a Ph.D. to teach at the school. She reported that she did not want trouble with Kendall and she was hopeful that the papers would not learn about her involvement because she wanted to keep her name out of it. She then claimed that her method of education would spread rapidly across the nation, declaring that several universities were interested in her educational philosophies and practices already and that she had someone in line to take care of the business dealings since they would be so significant. In any event, Kendall's Page School opened September 19, with classes beginning a few days later.¹⁸³

During Christmas vacation 1945, Pages leased a house at 305 New Jersey Avenue, SE, to live in, complete with a housemother, Mary Rotenberry/Rotenbury, who cooked meals and supervised the maids; and her son, Lee, who was adviser and director; Inez Wiggins, the school's English teacher, was the faculty adviser.¹⁸⁴ On February 1, 1946, 20 boys moved into the house and Pages finally had a house of their own.¹⁸⁵ Whether Mrs. Anderson was working behind the scenes in getting Pages to lease the house is unknown but it is certainly plausible. However, it is

known that she never realized her own Page School. On March 8, 1946, there was an Open House for Pages to look at the house and decide whether they wanted to live there; soon after, the Rotenberrys/Rotenburys and Wiggins yielded to a couple named Strosnider, who ran the house as a private business for a short time.¹⁸⁶

Congress must have taken notice of the boys now living together because it was something that the Committee on the Organization of Congress took up in March



Photo 42 Pages in front of the Page dorm, 1946. Mary Rotenbury is on left; Inez Wiggins on right; Norvill Jones fifth boy in back row. *1946 Congressional*.

1946. The report that the Committee released stated that “[i]f Congress is to retain the use of young boys in their traditional role as Pages of the House and Senate, improved facilities must be provided. Our hearings developed much evidence that present scholastic facilities

provided in the basement of the Capitol are not only unhealthful but extremely ill-adapted to use as classrooms. Further evidence was introduced showing the lack of proper housing and supervision of boys brought to Washington to enter the employ of the Congress.”¹⁸⁷ The Committee further recommended that Congress should “decide whether the use of young boys as Pages is to be continued and, if so, that adequate school and housing facilities be provided for them so that their health, education, and morals can be safeguarded during their service here.”¹⁸⁸ This is the first of many times that Congress would question the Page system and yet not change it. Burton

disappeared from the Page landscape in an advocacy role, and was replaced by a series of Committees instead. These Committees could not overcome their own inertia for decades and the advocacy role for Pages went largely unfulfilled.

The 1945-1946 school year ended without incident, and the graduation ceremony in the new House Office Building was well-attended by Members.¹⁸⁹ It was over the summer when a decision was passed down from Congress that shook Page School. Taking heed of the report released in March, the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 directed the Secretary of the Senate and the Clerk of the House jointly to enter into an arrangement with the District of Columbia Board of Education to provide for the education of Pages, with Congress responsible for



Photo 43 Edgar Bergen visits Page School, October 1945. *Library of Congress.*

paying the Board for its services.¹⁹⁰

Finally, it was official: Pages would have a school to go to that was part of a larger school system with standard curricula and professional, full-time teachers.¹⁹¹ If Kendall was less than

optimistic about his Diplomatic School when Roosevelt died, then he had no

reason to be optimistic now, and he must have been anxious about a takeover of the school he had built. It was only a few months after the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 that another law was passed, making other minor employees of Congress eligible for enrollment at Page School although they had already been attending and paying tuition to Kendall for years.¹⁹²

Problems with Pages going to the Gayety Theater still existed, which prompted Associate Justice of the Supreme Court Burton to ask the Attorney General to increase police patrols in regards to Pages since he was receiving so many complaints.¹⁹³ Pages stayed busy doing other things as well: the basketball team was still losing most of its games, but there were oratorical contests, White House trips to visit with the Trumans and a chance to spend some time with Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy when they visited the Capitol.¹⁹⁴ Pages' relationship with the White House was still strong, as they sent President Truman a birthday card, and he responded with a hand-written thank-you note.¹⁹⁵

Part of the huge Reorganization Act of 1946 that directed Congress to hire the District Board for Page education also said originally that all Pages should be appointed from the orphans in the District, reflecting the hard-to-lose sentiment of Congress to help these boys financially. However, several Senators, especially some Southern Democrats, objected to this because they wanted to retain the privilege of appointing a boy from their home states, and threatened to filibuster over it. However, reform of Congress was a pressing issue at the time and discussion continued; still other Senators could not believe that they spent their time discussing trivialities like appointing Pages "when the world was on fire."¹⁹⁶ Ultimately, this provision was dropped and Page School continued as it had been.

Because the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 directly addressed a dissolution of the current Page School, Kendall began to try to save his job. He was able to earn the endorsement of Architect Lynn and Congressman Mike Monroney, who both stated that they wanted Kendall to remain as principal if and when the

school was reorganized.¹⁹⁷ Congress had become involved directly with the direction of Capitol Page School, in complete contrast to how it had supervised it before.

On August 12, 1946, all parties involved in having Page School transferred to the District of Columbia Board of Education (DCBOE) met to decide how the school was to be administered. At this meeting, it was decided that students in the future would have to have already gone to eighth grade to be eligible for Page School, which was to continue to operate in the Capitol. Since there was no money appropriated for the school, the change over to DCBOE would have to come no earlier than January so that those arrangements could be worked out. Also, the present staff was going to be allowed to remain at the school, provided they could present appropriate credentials, and although Monroney's letter in support of Kendall was read at the meeting, his job was officially in limbo.¹⁹⁸

Part Eight: Control of Page School Goes From Private to Public, and the 1946-1947 School Year

With Burton no longer able to act as catalyst for making improvements at Page School, the school drifted through the fall semester with 60-some students paying \$20 per month to attend school with Kendall and his crew still working.¹⁹⁹ In December 1946, Page School received another new coat of paint when the entire Capitol was cleaned and painted.²⁰⁰

When Congress convened for the opening of the 80th Congress on January 2, 1947, Page School had about 100 students. More importantly, this marked the official beginning of the DCBOE having control of Page School as it changed from private individual control to public School Board control. Inez Wiggins, the English teacher who served as faculty adviser to the residence hall, may have been prophetic

and quit her teaching job, transitioning into the housemother position.²⁰¹ Yeppa Lund, the math teacher who Mrs. Anderson had been substituting for, stayed home in Utah on sick leave for the entire year but whether Anderson was filling in for him at this point seems doubtful.²⁰²

Although the DCBOE was now in charge, very little changed about the school. In fact, Don Fleger, who was a student at the school when it changed from private to public control said, “I had no idea. I think my thought was, ‘Oh, is that right?’ and I just said, ‘Oh, I thought we were always under D.C.’ but then I figured, ‘Who cares? It’s still a private school. I don’t care.’”²⁰³ Kendall and the other teachers remained, the schedule was the same and Pages carried on like always, although now, the teachers’ new salaries were only \$6 more per month than Pages’ salaries with Congress paying the boys and DCBOE responsible for paying the staff.²⁰⁴ Because nothing had changed in practice, it did not seem like DCBOE was in charge because it was in charge in name only. Maybe before this, it was difficult to determine who really was in charge of the school, Kendall or Congress; now, it was rather simple to determine who was in charge: nobody was, yet everybody was. Kendall and the teachers still worked there and ran the school day-to-day, under the DCBOE’s loose supervision, except they did not work for the DCBOE, so they were not even being paid even though their salaries were stated in the paper. They did not work for Congress either but surely both DCBOE and Congress wanted a say in how to run the school, splitting Kendall’s loyalties among too many supervisors. Congress’s attempts to simplify and improve its Capitol Page School only created a more complicated situation.

Even by mid-February 1947, Congress and DCBOE were not sure of their respective roles because the Reorganization Act of 1946 contained vague wording about what should happen, and nobody seemed to know what to do. It seems like all parties were waiting for one of the others to set the course for the new school. One thing was definite though: because the Act stated DCBOE should take over the school, Pages no longer were paying the \$20 per month tuition. Because of that, and because the DCBOE had not hired the staff yet, Kendall and the teachers were not being paid.²⁰⁵

Finally, Secretary of the Senate Carl Loeffler, met with DCBOE on February 17, 1947 to decide how to proceed in regards to keeping the teachers, most of whom worked part-time. The DCBOE maintained that its money would not be used for teacher salaries, saying that federal funds should cover their salaries but that the current teachers would be kept on if they could meet DCBOE standards.²⁰⁶ The next day, Loeffler met with Superintendent Corning, to clear up the details of the transfer of the school and to end the payless days of the teachers.²⁰⁷

By the beginning of April 1947, Loeffler had arranged it so that DCBOE would keep Page School under its supervision for the rest of the school year and the Board would ask Superintendent Corning for recommendations on how to proceed beginning in September.²⁰⁸ At a Board meeting in April 1947, the Board accepted a report from the Superintendent saying that to make it easier, the school should continue as it was with the present staff in its present location but the Board should decide what should happen at the beginning of the 1947-1948 school year in September. Corning recommended looking at creating an evening school for Pages

meeting in one of the District's public schools, beginning in September 1947. The Board also appointed Kendall as principal of Page School at this meeting, so that he was an employee of the Board, making \$500 per month, but his employment was not to extend beyond the end of June 1947. The Board made all of the current Page School teachers temporary employees of DCBOE too, their employment not to extend beyond June 30 so that it could dismiss them after the school year ended..²⁰⁹

In one of his last official acts as principal, Kendall invited President Truman to the June 1947 graduation ceremony as the featured speaker. Truman replied that he would not be able to make it but that he would sign the certificates one last time for Kendall.²¹⁰

Although the transition to DCBOE was a rather significant event in the life of Capitol Page School, not much was written about it. Because not much changed substantively in terms of procedures or personnel, maybe people did not notice or even care that Kendall now was employed by DCBOE instead of running his own business. Certainly, the students did not care much. Not even Kendall wrote much about it in his personal memoir. The teachers were appointed temporarily so that they were DCBOE employees and the Board made their appointments effective on January 2, 1947, so that they were back-paid for the time they worked.²¹¹ In May 1947, as DCBOE grappled with what to do with Page School, one Board member suggested that the name of the school be changed to the "School for Pages at the Capitol" which received no support.²¹²

At work, House Pages were surprised to receive written notice from Doorkeeper M. L. Meletio that they were to begin wearing uniforms on April 1, 1947.

Pages needed uniforms because some of the Congressmen were only 27 or 28, and looked younger, and too many people were confusing them with Pages. Up until now, Pages had always had a loose dress code, and could wear what they wanted and nobody was too concerned, even when one of them wore a cowboy suit to work once.²¹³ The House Pages were to be “required to dress in a uniform manner the same as the Senate Pages-- however, in place of the knickers, the House Pages will wear long trousers. The suit must be a dark blue serge, white shirt, black tie, and black shined shoes. . . . [All] Pages will be required to dress in this manner at all times while on duty.”²¹⁴ “I guess they couldn’t tell some of the younger Members from the older Pages or something, so they decided to put the House Pages into uniform,” says James Dingell, a House Page at the time.²¹⁵

According to Joe Bartlett, a House Page at the time, “Meletio found this Army-Navy uniform serge. It was the hardest stuff. You couldn't wear it out in 100 years! I must have had that doggone suit for decades. But he suited us all up, and Joe Martin was the Speaker, and he paraded them all out on the steps of the Capitol and did a little inspection tour.”²¹⁶ The change to a uniform may have been in response to the DCBOE taking over the school. It could be that as the bureaucratization of the school increased, Meletio wanted to be consistent and implemented the more formal dress code as the Page system continued to be tweaked.

The behavior of Pages was getting worse, backed up by stories in the press about them being wastrels, going out with women and drinking at all hours, and in February 1947, P. H. Crook, the Captain of the Supreme Court Police, wrote a letter to Marshal of the Court Thomas Waggaman alleging that Pages had ruined the

Lawyers' Lounge at the Court just before Thanksgiving.²¹⁷ He said that the room was a mess, with food smeared on the walls, chairs upset and garbage thrown about.

Pages were in the building because they had permission to use the Supreme Court gym, as long as they were supervised. However, instead of using the gym, they were wandering all over the building, including the Chamber, without permission or supervision. In still another example of how Pages were portrayed to have a sense of entitlement, when the Labor Foreman at the Court found Pages in the Chamber and questioned them about what they were doing, the Pages told him that "they would go where they damned well pleased."²¹⁸ The adult who was supposed to be supervising them was leaving right after dropping them off, and the boys felt free to go where they wanted and become belligerent with the police. Crook politely told Waggaman that the boys would no longer be allowed to use the gym.

Waggaman passed it on to Kendall, since they were not Supreme Court Pages who were making trouble. Kendall took full responsibility and apologized for any embarrassment that their behavior may have caused.²¹⁹ Former Page Waggaman had a soft spot for the boys though and wrote back to Kendall, telling him that he knew that nothing short of incarceration would keep Page boys in line, so if they wanted to use the gym again, Kendall was just to make sure an adult was with them.²²⁰ This was also the time that Waggaman was strictly enforcing the maximum height rule for Pages. No Page still could be taller than 5' 4" tall so that he remained inconspicuous behind the Bench.²²¹

Although DCBOE had officially assumed responsibility in January 1947 and then again more officially after the meeting with Loeffler in April, nothing really had

changed in terms of procedure, schedule, personnel or classes. Throughout the spring of 1947, the old teachers were still teaching, and Kendall was holding on to his job and Capitol Page School continued as it had been. If he was encouraged by his appointment as principal in April, his hopes were dashed when he and the rest of the staff were summarily dismissed in June. After serving as principal for over 15 years at Page School, Kendall bought a few acres of land in Silver Spring, Maryland, and built Alexander School, and the Ernest L. Kendall Day Nursery, the first of six schools he would operate. Later in his life, he ran a place back in Weatherford for kids to have a place to play and not get in trouble called “Ernie’s” and also ran a motel in Weatherford named “Kendall House” which is now an Econo Lodge.²²²

Part Nine: Capitol Page School Operates Under Public Control, 1947-1949

THE 1947-1948 SCHOOL YEAR

As the fall semester of 1947 opened, an English and geography teacher from Paul Junior High School named Orson Trueworthy was named principal of the new Capitol Page School, and an entire new set of teachers selected from around the D. C. schools was appointed to teach there as Page School took on a totally new profile. Trueworthy had been in the Army for four years and had learned his classroom technique when he was an assistant to the Director of the Bureau of Education in Korea.²²³ He was given a one-year probationary appointment as principal but he was not appointed until September 17.²²⁴ Trueworthy was “just a total gentleman and very professional,” says Tom Brown, a student of Trueworthy’s in the late 1940s.²²⁵ Frank Slayton says of Trueworthy, “I liked him a lot. He was very open and very

helpful. And he enjoyed his job and he wanted us to be successful. He was just always a very pleasant person; I really thought a lot of him.”²²⁶

The fall semester brought a whole new reorganization of the school too.²²⁷ At the start of the fall 1947 term, “[t]he job of reorganization began in earnest affecting almost everyone. The first few weeks found the School in a frenzy of moving and painting, with books, bookcases, and desks scattered all over the rooms and

overflowing into the halls. Rooms were cleaned, pictures were hung, and plants and teaching equipment were added to give the School a more cheerful atmosphere. Trouble developed because of the shortage of teachers and books.

Because of this factor the holding of regular classes had to be suspended about a week.”²²⁸ By the time classes started, it

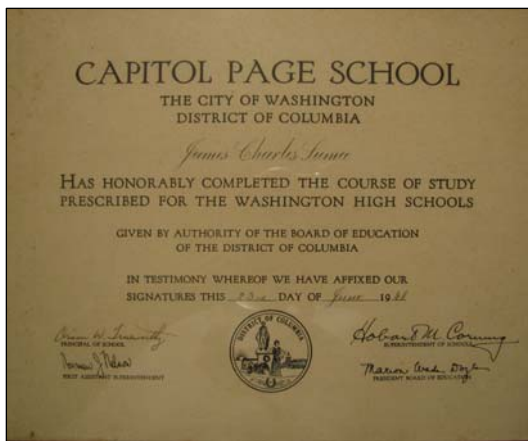


Photo 44 Diploma from CPS, 1948. *James Suma.*

was September 29.²²⁹ Congress did not want Pages hanging around the Capitol when it was not in session, and so for the fall of 1947, Pages were taken off the payroll, forcing many of them to return to their hometowns, and only local Pages were attending the school in the early mornings and had the rest of the day free.²³⁰ The law clearly states that only those minors who are employed by Congress are eligible to attend the school and yet in the fall semester of most years, many students were not employed by Congress, yet they still were able to attend the school. Since they were not working for Congress, there also was no reason for the school to meet so early in

the morning, yet the school operated as if Congress was in session. This is one of the things that the historical record did not provide answers to.

The organizational chart for Capitol Page School was certainly confusing now. It was a school now fully supervised by the DCBOE which provided and paid



Photo 45 Page refilling a snuff box in the Senate Chamber. *Library of Congress.*

the school's staff, although Congress paid DCBOE to do this.

The leaders of Congress were hiring DCBOE to run a private school for them, although the school was paid for with public funds. Because it was part of the

DCBOE, and because it was run using public money, it was a public

school. But because it used federal money and students had to have a special appointment from a Member and first be a Congressional employee to be eligible to enroll, it was a unique private school being supervised by a public school board.

The lone football game of the year was an intra-squad game between House and Senate which ended 0-0; the basketball team again played in the YMCA league against other league teams, and went without uniforms for its first four games; the baseball team went 3-8 in its season.²³¹ Financial arrangements must have been in flux because even as late as 1950, the school did not have funds to pay for sports equipment and could afford to field only a basketball team.²³² Pages' mothers sponsored a Prom in June 1948, and 13 Pages earned diplomas at graduation

ceremonies.²³³ A school newspaper was still being published, and there were clubs for drama, debate, travel, student council and National Honor Society, and the President and Mrs. Truman again hosted the entire Page corps at the White House.²³⁴

Because of the location of the school in the basement of the Capitol across the hall from big power generators, the constant noise coming from there was distracting (and always had been). Regardless, when the spring semester was underway, when Congress was in session, there were 82 students attending in the several rooms that Trueworthy oversaw, which now included an enlarged library, an activities room and a locker room, with standard school furniture in all of them. Although the lighting was still not great, and Kendall had taken with him the lockers that he had bought, students were enjoying the same curricula as other D. C. schools, with central office subject administrators supervising each course of study. When Superintendent Corning visited the school, he gave plaudits to Trueworthy, even though school was in session from only 6:30 to 9:30.²³⁵

The biggest news story of the year outside of school was that, by order of the Majority Policy Committee and the Secretary of the Senate, all Senate Pages began to wear long pants instead of knickerbockers at the beginning of the second session of the 80th Congress on January 6, 1948. Too many Pages were complaining that knickers and long stockings were too hard to find in stores because they were outdated items but the new blue suits were common and easy to find.²³⁶ Most of them liked the change because they felt funny wearing the out-dated knickers but some of them thought that the long pants wrinkled too easily and that they spent too much time and money tending to the wrinkles. However, some like Werth Zuver,

thought it was important to wear them because of what they represented: “I thought it was fantastic! I was honored. I mean it went along with snuff on the tables, right? I think the knickers were interesting because you had a sense that you were part of a long tradition that went back 150 years.”²³⁷ In any case, finally, practicality had won out over tradition in the Senate. Knickers were not worn again in the Senate but Supreme Court Pages still were wearing them. Also, both Chambers agreed to appoint no Page who was under 14, and agreed to hold fast to it.²³⁸

THE 1948-1949 SCHOOL YEAR

Page School continued to operate from 6:30 AM to midmorning, leaving Pages with little time to do school work, as always. However, because the school was now under the supervision of DCBOE, it was now providing “better instruction than in the past.”²³⁹ Pages were now getting paid about \$250 a month, and they no longer had to pay tuition, just taxes, which amounted to about \$30 a month.²⁴⁰ The school continued to have activities that other schools had, with its own unique twist on everything. Trueworthy was promoted to a permanent position as principal, after his one-year probationary period was successful.²⁴¹

One of the first things that Trueworthy wanted to accomplish was to secure the school’s accreditation from Middle States, since all previous evaluations of the school had been informal and thus meaningless. Kendall had never followed up with a proper accreditation with Middle States as any school would, maybe afraid of what such a report would reveal about the school, if we are to put any credence in what Mrs. Anderson alleged. The real standard in the education community was the accreditation from the recognized evaluating organization.

The school's four teachers and Trueworthy completed a self-study for the evaluating committee made up of several area educators in April 1949. It is an unusual document, simply because of the school's unique mission and setting. No other school can have as its custodial staff cleaners provided by the U. S. Capitol or have as its health service the official Capitol Physician or could have received its students the way Page School did, or have the schedule it had. Since Congress paid the DCBOE every three months to run the school, it was financed like no other school too. Certainly no school straddled the line between "public" and "private" the way Capitol Page School did, since all of these things were unique among American high schools, as Congress continued to try to find acceptable education for its Pages.²⁴²

But for all its uniqueness, the new staff was providing a standard program that the evaluating committee recognized as acceptable, and the school received its first professional accreditation in January 1950. School started at 6:30 and all students were in class for four periods, until 9:39, time enough for most Senate Pages to get to work. Fifth and sixth periods were flexible with many of the remaining students having a study hall and only two of the four teachers offering a class either period in the five rooms that Page School occupied. On Tuesdays, however, the drama club, radio club, photography club, debate club and music club met during second, third and fourth periods, with one Tuesday a month reserved for classes or special assemblies.²⁴³

In the Supreme Court, the Marshal reiterated that he still wanted to appoint the boys instead of having Justices do it, so that Pages would not favor one Justice to the detriment of the others. The Marshal still did not want a boy over 5' 2" so that the

boy would be able to work for a few years, and he preferred to give the jobs to “well-behaved boys of families who need the money,” turning down many boys who were otherwise qualified, but who were too tall.²⁴⁴

In June 1949, to celebrate the end of the year, the parent-teacher club sponsored a Prom, and the next night, 13 graduates accepted their Presidential certificates at commencement ceremonies.²⁴⁵ This marked a major turning point in the life of Page School, for it was the last official ceremony of the school located in the basement of the Capitol. Page School was about to move up in the world-- from basement to attic.

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30. Kirby Metz, Interview with author, 4.
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33. Carmen Trevitt, Interview with author, 2.
34. Joe Bartlett, Interview with author, 16.
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139. Walter Trohan, "New President's First Day on Job is Crowded One," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 14 April 1945, 1.

140. Mary Spargo, "Truman Again Goes to Capitol, Greets All Members of House," *Washington Post*, 2 May 1945, 1.

141. Laurence Burd, "Truman Visits Capitol; Shakes Hands of House," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 2 May 1945, 8.

142. Larry Earley, "Letter to President Truman," Truman Library, Independence, MO, *President's Personal File*, No. 484; Harry S. Truman, "Letter to Larry Earley," Truman Library, Independence, MO, *President's Personal File*, No. 1576, 3 May 1945.

143. James Dingell, interview with the author, 3.

144. "How Word of F. D. R.'s Death Reached Truman," *Washington Post*, 11 May 1952, B7.

145. Kendall's personal journal, 29.

146. "Pages Godmother," *The Congressional*, 1946, 33.

147. Harold Burton, "Page School," Harold Burton Papers, Manuscript Reading Room, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C., Box 29, Folder 5, *General Correspondence*, 17 May 1945.

148. Ibid; Trying to find out exactly who Anderson was and what her motives were proved to be futile. None of the Pages I spoke with who were there in 1945

remembered her. I finally was able to track down 83 year-old Bill Loukota and asked him why Anderson felt the need to intervene in his assignment to the military, yet not even he remembered the name. Just coincidentally, the quote he selected to be placed next to his senior picture in the 1945 Capitol Page School yearbook reads, "The truth ye know, and you shall learn the truth you need to know." (Mcdonald) I didn't learn the truth in this case.

149. Harold Burton, "Page School," Harold Burton Papers, Manuscript Reading Room, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C., Box 50, Folder 8, *Committee on Rules*, 15 May 1945.

150. Ibid.

151. House, *Hearings Before the Joint Committee on the Organization of Congress*, 79th Cong., 1st Sess., 12 June 1945, 71.

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160. Ibid.

161. These letters are contained in Box 50, Folder 8, *Committee on Rules* in the Burton Papers.

162. House, *Hearings Before the Joint Committee on the Organization of Congress*, 79th Cong., 1st Sess., 12 June 1945, 68.

163. Ibid., 75.

164. "Present Physical Conditions," Harold Burton Papers, Manuscript Reading Room, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C., Box 50, Folder 8, *Committee on Rules*, c. 1945.

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177. Arthur Lueck, "Letter to Clerk of United States Supreme Court," Office of the Curator of the United States Supreme Court, *Page File*, 9 April 1945.

178. Leonard Lyons, "Gossip From Gotham," *Washington Post*, 14 May 1945, 7; Leonard Lyons, "Gossip From Gotham," *Washington Post*, 17 June 1946, 5.

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180. Tom Marshall, "Letter to Harold Burton," Harold Burton Papers, Manuscript Reading Room, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C., Box 29, Folder 5, *Legislative Correspondence*, 15 September 1945.

181. Harold Burton, "Letter to Tom Marshall," Harold Burton Papers, Manuscript Reading Room, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C., Box 29, Folder 5, *Legislative Correspondence*, 17 September 1945.

182. Harold Burton, "Statement by Hugo De La Croix after his interview with Mrs. Anderson on September 13, 1945, as to her new Page school," Harold Burton Papers, Manuscript Reading Room, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C., Box 47, Folder 15, *Legislative Correspondence*, 13 September 1945.

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216. Joe Bartlett, interview with the author, 26.
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There is one aspect of [Pages'] tenure here in Washington that disturbs me. That is the fact that they do not have a central, supervised, dormitory-like residence in which to stay, but on the contrary, are forced to stay at whichever boardinghouse or tourist home in which they find a vacancy . . . I have always felt a sense of personal responsibility for the young men . . . and while I rejoice in offering them this valuable educational experience, I am also apprehensive about their personal welfare as long as they are unsupervised and left to their own resources during the long hours when they are not at work or in classes. . . . We all know that this Pages' residence is needed. . . . Let us provide it and add personal supervision and moral training to the excellent educational opportunities now offered Pages.

~Senator Ralph Yarborough speaking before a hearing of a Subcommittee of the Committee on Public Works on S. 1847, 88th Congress, 1st Session, 19 November 1963, 3-4.

CHAPTER FIVE: ATTEMPTS AT CHANGE AND INSTITUTIONAL INERTIA, 1949 TO 1982

Introduction

For over 30 years, from the late 1940s to the early 1980s, the most noteworthy events in the Page system revolved around trying to obtain a suitable place for the boys to live. During this time, many plans for government-sponsored housing were proposed, and some of them even came close to being voted on, but because of the strong traditions on Capitol Hill, in the end, Pages received no officially sanctioned housing. Because this time period is dominated by the story of certain people trying to make improvements in the Page system only to find ongoing institutional inertia, this chapter deals primarily with telling that story. The chapter begins with the physical move of the school from the Capitol to the Library of Congress, and the subsequent plans to house Page School permanently in the New Senate Office Building. It then traces the myriad legislation involving Pages through three decades of policy churn to a point where the Page system implodes.

Part One: Page School Outgrows Its Space In the Capitol

PAGE SCHOOL MOVES UP IN THE WORLD, FROM BASEMENT TO ATTIC, 1949

When the Main Building (now called the Jefferson Building) of the Library of Congress was built in the late 1890s, the third floor (now called the Attic) housed a cafeteria. In December 1939, the District of Columbia fire marshal stated in his report of inspection of the cafeteria that the “[t]he only means of exit therefrom were an elevator and a 30-inch spiral stairway which is inadequate in case of an emergency. This situation is dangerous to life and limb.”¹ There was no immediate action taken after this 1939 report, and the cafeteria remained popular with employees

of the Library and with the public. Even knowing that the cafeteria was a potential fire hazard, it was there in the early 1940s that Librarian of Congress Archibald MacLeish continued to host his Round Table meals, a privileged weekly gathering of fellow luminaries for lunch.²

Because the enforcement of fire codes had suddenly touched the public conscious three years later, after the tragic fire in November 1942 at the Cocoanut Grove nightclub in Boston, Chief Associate Librarian Verner Clapp further warned MacLeish in December 1942 that the exits, especially the narrow, winding stairs from the cafeteria could “by no means be considered a proper passageway for ordinary use.”³ Two weeks later, MacLeish requested another official inspection from the fire marshal because the doorways at the top of stairs had recently been unlocked to accommodate people evacuating the floor during air raid drills, and he wanted to know if this had any effect from the fire marshal’s perspective.⁴ After his inspection, fire marshal Calvin Lauber stated in his report back to MacLeish in mid-January 1943 that the “egress facilities are inadequate” and he recommended “that the cafeteria be closed” since the only egress from the cafeteria was either by elevator or down that narrow and steep spiral staircase.⁵

Soon thereafter, the cafeteria was closed and in the following few years, it was converted into work space for different Library offices, including the Keeper of Collections, the Editor of Library Staff Manuals and, ironically, the Division for the Blind.⁶ Other rooms on the third floor were used as meeting rooms for Library groups that did not have another space to meet, and eventually, the Round Table Room was also added to the list of available meeting rooms.⁷ One room in the Attic

was assigned in 1947 to a Senate Advisory Council appointed by Senator Millikin, under chair Edward Stattinius, to study social security reform, although it was contrary to the Library's policy of allowing Library space to be used for non-Library related gatherings.⁸ In early 1949, the rooms were renumbered from 300 to 324 instead of simply Room A, Room B, etc.⁹

Because the school had outgrown its space in the basement of the Capitol, even after adding Room 9 on the Senate side of the terrace basement, and because the school's rooms continued to be damp and poorly lighted, another space that was suitable for a school was needed.¹⁰ Even the extensive improvements that



Photo 46 Principal Orson Trueworthy.
1950 Congressional.

Trueworthy asked for in the summer of 1948 after Kendall left, including paint, shelves, blackboards, new glass in the doors, bulletin boards, a bell system, clocks in each room and general cleaning, were not enough to satisfy the school's needs.¹¹ So, on September 12, 1949, Capitol Page School opened on the third floor of the Main Building of the Library of Congress for the fall semester.¹² Why a space that was closed for fire code violations was suddenly

suitable for a school is unknown; the only exits from the floor even today are the same ones that were there in 1943.

The Library seemed to be territorial about its space, and it is surprising that Page School, a non-Library entity, was allowed to use so much of the Library's

coveted space. MacLeish enforced the policy of allowing only Library-related groups to use Library space in the beginning of 1950 school year, only one year after Page School moved in, when the District of Columbia High School Teachers' Association requested to use some space in the new Page School's rooms for a meeting. His hand-written note attached to the request leaves no doubt about how he felt about allowing non-Library groups to use Library facilities, and maybe how he felt about Page School itself: "Do not recommend approval. Has no relation to LOC; nothing doing," although Page School was part of the association.¹³ Five years later in November 1955, MacLeish must have wished Page School had never moved in when one of the boys, whose grandmother would not allow him to keep his pet snakes at home, kept them at school instead. The snakes escaped and caused a panic among the librarians, archivists and other staff, although the snakes were eventually found and returned to their cages in another example of Pages being portrayed in the press as whimsical sidekicks.¹⁴

PLANS TO MOVE PAGE SCHOOL TO THE NEW SENATE OFFICE BUILDING, 1949 TO 1958

At about the same time the school moved to the Library, the Senate Office Building Commission, with help from DCBOE, had approved plans in 1949 for the New Senate Office Building (now called the Dirksen Building) that included a school for Pages.¹⁵ Congress acquired and cleared the land for the building, and a New York architectural firm, Eggers and Higgins, was hired to complete the plans for the building's design. Originally, it was to be a seven-story building (with two additional floors below ground level) diagonally across B. Street (now Constitution Avenue) on the Senate side of the Capitol, complete with a large auditorium, cafeteria, parking

garage and fluorescent lights. The school's move from the Capitol to the Library was supposed to be a temporary one, just until space in the New Senate Office Building



Photo 47 Senator William Purtell breaks ground for the New Senate Office Building, new home of Capitol Page School, as Vice President Nixon and Chief Justice Earl Warren look on. 1955 *Congressional*.

was complete. Page School was going to occupy eight rooms, including a science laboratory, a library, a small recreation room and a locker room, plus the principal's office, on the ground floor along First Street between B. Street and C.

Street.¹⁶ All Page School had to do was wait until the New Senate Office Building was built and it would have a brand new

space with brand new equipment built specially for educational purposes, which of course pleased Superintendent of Schools Corning because he was getting a new school at no cost to him.¹⁷

However, during the building's construction, there were delays, and ground-breaking ceremonies were put off for a few years. During this time, construction costs increased, and the building had to be scaled down for budgetary reasons. However, the plan to include Page School was still in the building's design, even into the spring of 1958.¹⁸ Then, on April 29, 1958, at the direction of influential veteran Senator Carl Hayden, Architect of the Capitol George Stewart gave the order to the construction company to "discontinue until further notice prosecution of the work with the Pages School Area from and including the Library to and including the General Science Room."¹⁹ Three months later in July 1958, Stewart ordered that the

chalkboards in all of the Page School rooms be taken down, and the rooms be used to store the school's new equipment until further notice because the designation of the rooms was being changed from "Page School" to "general office space;" eventually, the Pages' gym was converted into a lounge for the Capitol police.²⁰ The plan for Page School to be included in the construction was suddenly wiped clean as if it had never existed. Page School was at the mercy of the Congressional puppeteers that controlled it, working it over like a marionette.

The decade that Page School was waiting for its space in the New Senate Office Building was unremarkable. Because DCBOE had taken over, the school between 1949 and 1958 was settled, routine and plain ordinary, at least for its unique nature. Not much at the school changed as it became a recognized private school, even though it continued to be administered by a public school system. Simply as context, remember that in September 1949, the equipment from the school in the Capitol was transferred to the school in the Library, and classes met from 7:00 AM to 9:00, and then again in the evenings. The time was changed soon after this so that school started at 6:30 and ended at 9:39, enough time for the boys to get to work by 10:00. Chemistry was still not being offered, now because the Library did not want to risk fires and damage to its inventory, so if a boy wanted to take chemistry, he had to take it at night school.²¹ The age of Pages was again changed officially when Congress passed another child labor law in 1950 stating that 14 and 15 year-olds could be employed as long as they had finished eighth grade. That meant that no boy below ninth grade could be a Page and this time, Congress followed it more than in the past. The law also stated that children under 16 could not work during school

hours, which would seem to affect Pages, but Congress again got around it by putting special language in so that the boys could continue working.²² So even though the specific details of the variables were changing a little bit, there really were no substantial changes. The last of the boys who started at Page School when they were under 14, John Tracey and Bill Bassett, graduated in June 1950, having spent seven years at the school.²³

After replacing Kendall in 1947, Trueworthy's time as principal of Page School did not last long. Even though Trueworthy's "administrative skills [were] unexcelled" and the "school ha[d] rapidly been brought up to the standards of other public high schools" by 1950, his impact on the school was small.²⁴ After four years, he resigned to accept a position at the State Department, and the DCBOE transferred Ruth McRae, a former home economics teacher and more recently an eight-year assistant principal at Central High School, into the principal's position.²⁵ Pages Mike Revell and



Photo 48 Principal Ruth McRae. *1952 Congressional.*

Don Karp remember McRae as a pleasant woman: "I remember her as a very nice lady. One of the great things about the school was the casualness of the relationship between students and teachers."²⁶ Even though she made the school more comfortable by adding some couches and a piano, McRae must have been a better disciplinarian too because people around the Capitol were noticing a difference in the behavior of Pages, and the boys were sure never to play hooky, even though they had to be at school before sunup.²⁷ One elevator operator

commented that Pages were only “half as much trouble as they were last year” only six weeks into McRae’s term.²⁸ Students remember McRae as a tough disciplinarian too: “She was a pretty tough broad; she had sort of a Margaret Thatcher attitude.



Photo 49 House Pages in the Republican Cloakroom, 1951. Note their casual dress. *Library of Congress*.

When there were disciplinary infractions, she didn’t let them slip. She was a pleasant lady who ruled with a pretty iron hand. There wasn’t any nonsense in school.”²⁹

She also added a typing/shorthand class for the boys and she made special arrangements for them to

compete against other schools in golf, the only sport that Page School could compete in, since they were at a disadvantage in basketball because of some of the boys’ height restrictions.³⁰ There was no official season in golf but they were allowed to compete with other schools, although the matches did not affect league standings.

Because a description of the variables that made up Page School have been given already, it is important to shift the focus now to factors affecting Page School beginning in 1949. Many things that did not change, like initiation pranks, school times, student activities, patronage appointments, ages of Pages, the desire to have little boys working, White House visits, graduations, hiring boys whose families needed financial assistance and other topics will not be covered in this chapter since it would only be redundant to report on them; they remained remarkably static for many years.³¹

The rest of this chapter will focus on the history of legislation and policymaking, or more specifically, the lack of policymaking, concerning a school/residence.

Part Two: A Page Residence and More Inertia, 1951 to 1963

The entire story of the attempts to secure a residence for Pages from 1943 to 1983 is a story of people who wanted the government to take responsibility for Pages' living situation who ran into significant institutional inertia in the form of other people who saw no need to change the things on the other, and an organization that either did not care about the problem or had more important things to occupy itself with. Try as they might, the people who wanted government supervision for the boys could not escape the political inertia to make it happen, preserving the status quo for 40 years. This section reviews the political tug-of-war for control of the Page system.

REVIEW OF LEGISLATION, 1951 TO 1956

Living arrangements for Pages had already been a concern for the Congress after the October 1943 hearings, and lots of activity took place but because of the focus on the war, nothing had been accomplished, with no action taken on any of the bills that were submitted.³² After the war, the push to secure housing for Pages again became a concern. The path to a Page residence is one seemingly without an end, circling around on top of itself, in a convoluted and complicated matrix of legislation that took 40 years to go nowhere.

Pages had befriended Florida Congressman Charles Bennett and they suggested to him to introduce a bill in October 1951 to provide for a house that the boys could rent and live in together.³³ Although Bennett served 22 terms in the

House, he was just starting his career in 1951, and his bill did not attract too much attention. Two years later, in February 1954, Congresswoman Ruth Thompson introduced a bill to establish a Page Boy Academy because she was concerned with their eating and sleeping habits and their general well being.³⁴ It was her contention that Pages could not handle the overly generous \$240 a month they earned in a city like Washington with its reputation for lawlessness. Pages were outspoken about giving up their freedom and they thought that being subject to rules and supervision was a grand idea-- for the next group of Pages, but certainly not for them. Thompson maintained that the boarding houses that Pages were living in were dilapidated, even though the Page School parents' organization approved all of the houses the boys lived in. Her bill, even by her own admission, was doomed to fail unless some unforeseen momentum was to build up behind it; however, she was right, and the bill died.³⁵ These two Members who tried to alter the Page system found that just because a bill contained a good idea, it did not necessarily merit enough attention to effect change.

Principal McRae knew that Congressmen sometimes noticed Pages' drinking and fast living, and admitted that they needed better supervision. However, as principal of the school, in this situation, she was powerless to do anything because it was not a school problem, it was a Page system problem and she had her hands tied by the very constructs of the system that Congress had created.³⁶ She was encouraged that the boys' sponsors and their wives many times took an interest in the boys' welfare, and she pointed to the fact that every six weeks, each boy received a grade report assessing him on appearance, job performance, courtesy and school

work. However, “although the Secretary of the Senate claimed responsibility for the Pages, the boys actually [were] on their own most of the time, free as adults in the most important city in the world” and their paltry “meals [were] eaten at soda counters, restaurants or their Senate lunchroom” with no supervision outside of work.³⁷ McRae was not willing to fight the fight that it would take to make improvements, even though she knew the Page system needed to change. In any case, by July 1953, another bill to provide a residence was submitted which again did little to satisfy the need for one.³⁸

In a letter to the editor in June 1954, the writer said that a residence for Pages would be good because the “recreation and welfare of Pages is the responsibility of



Photo 50 Pages Bill Emerson (pointing) and Paul Kanjorski (glasses) carry wounded Members from the House Chamber, March 1, 1954, after a shooting in the gallery. Both Emerson and Kanjorski later became Congressmen. *Library of Congress*.

the Capitol Hill community,” showing that if Congress did not want to support the boys, then at least some in the community were willing to.³⁹

This writer continued, writing that the Capitol Hill community “should not wait until some tragic event occurs to stimulate us to action. Let

us close the stable door before the horse runs away.”⁴⁰ Less than a week later, the President of the Parent-Teacher Club wrote a response, defending the boys and their recreational opportunities, their preparation for college and their supervision. He

pointed out that Pages had plenty of opportunities that other boys their age had and Pages had stellar records, concluding that between the parents and the sponsors, the boys were well taken care of.⁴¹

Ironically, only eight days later, something happened that would prove the President of the Parent-Teacher Club wrong and provide the foundation of the quest for Page housing for decades because it provided evidence that Pages needed better supervision. Four Pages, one carrying a knife and the other a monkey wrench, were arrested for shooting out streetlights with a BB gun at the end of June 1954. The timing of this incident was bad because it came on the heels of a report that Congressman Curtis was attacked in a stone-throwing incident, which had started a probe of juvenile delinquency in the District. The Pages were released to their parents and received only a warning from the law officers but they were suspended from their jobs.⁴² When this story hit the newspaper, the press suddenly decided that Pages were leading unwholesome lives and thought that changes should be made in their housing situation.⁴³

Immediately after this, another letter to the editor appeared in which the writer questioned the letter from the Parent-Teacher Organization President, saying that he had done his own investigation and found that Pages' participation in activities was negligible and that Members did not supervise their own Pages. He called on all civic groups to back a plan for a house so that Pages had a place to live and so that things like the BB gun incident did not happen again.⁴⁴ At least one student felt that this independent investigation was incorrect, replying that students were satisfied with the lives they led, having plenty of chances to participate in outside activities, and in-

school activities too.⁴⁵ Not even Pages wanted to recognize the beneficial effects that change would bring about, change that some were clamoring for.

McRae's time as principal was short-lived and she served only three years, and then became the head of the Home Economics Department for DCBOE after the 1953-1954 school year.⁴⁶ In July 1954, a man named Harold Henegar, a ten year



Photo 51 Principal Henry DeKeyser. 1955 Congressional.

assistant principal at Deal, Taft and Paul Junior High Schools was promoted to principal at Capitol Page School.⁴⁷ Henegar apparently did not like something about the job, or saw another opportunity that he needed to act on, and only four months later in mid-November 1954, he was named principal of Taft, but not before asking for more space in the New Senate Office Building because six teachers, two of whom needed science lab

space, would not fit in the allotted plan.⁴⁸ Naomi Ulmer, a teacher at the school when Henegar was appointed says, "Henegar was a very, very good principal; excellent."⁴⁹ Apparently, Henegar is still alive but did not respond to letters or phone calls and was not home on the many occasions I stopped by his homes in Washington and Virginia. Stability finally came to the principalship with the arrival of three-year assistant principal of Kramer Junior High, Henry DeKeyser in January 1955, and he served as principal until he retired from DCBOE in January 1969.⁵⁰

"DeKeyser was kind of a bookish guy; he was sort of remote but always very nice. He was a very easygoing guy and very easy to work with," said Bob Bauman, a student at Page School in the mid-1950s and later a Congressman. Most other

students remember DeKeyser as a benign leader: “He was a mild-mannered gentleman for the most part. He was very pleasant and I don’t remember anything negative about him.”⁵¹ At least one student remembers DeKeyser differently. Charles Bush remembers him “as a martinet and I didn’t get the feeling of any intellectual depth at all. He struck me as a retired military guy who hadn’t quite gotten over himself.”⁵²

The third time Congressman Bennett introduced a bill for a Page residence, in February 1955, it had a companion bill written by Senator Olin Johnston.⁵³ The bills called for a supervisory board to find a place for Pages to live and authorized it to hire matrons to look after the boys so that they ate properly and had adequate sleep and recreation. The reasoning was that Congress should take responsibility whether or not there was a legal responsibility for them. Bennett’s previous bills had not worked because they were too grandiose in scale, but these new ones were simply setting up a supervisory board and authorizing it to take action.⁵⁴

This prompted another letter to the editor in which the writer spoke out against a home for Pages because it was required that each boy live there which would take away any choice from local parents whether their kids would live with them at home. The writer claimed that to solve a minor problem, a top-heavy bureaucracy was not needed. Sure, he claimed, Pages worked hard and they deserved unsupervised relaxation but they were not wards of the state, and living with their parents should be a choice.⁵⁵ The boys were in a precarious position. Even something simple like providing supervision for them and providing a residence for them had its detractors.

We can see that not only was there conflict within the Page system about whether to provide housing but there was also conflict from outside the system about what to do. It was an example of a situation in which everybody thought they knew what was best and yet nothing got accomplished. Bennett wanted to do something positive for Pages but he ran into others who negated his legislation.

EARLY ATTEMPTS AT CHANGE, 1956

Other bills were introduced in the 84th Congress, and when the second session began in January 1956, the Subcommittee on Accounts of the Committee on House Administration held a hearing to discuss the several bills having to do with a Page residence.⁵⁶ It is worthy to detail this hearing because it marks the first time that Congress contemplated a residence for Pages in an official way after the 1943 hearings. Because 13 years had elapsed since the last serious look into a residence, and several Congresses had adjourned in the interim, there were different people now taking leadership roles for change in the pursuit for a residence who thought they knew what the missing ingredient was in the Page system.

The House hearings in January 1956 produced a good deal of testimony about the necessity for a residence for Pages, with every indication that all those interested wanted to do whatever they could to help secure a place for the boys to live in. Congressman Bennett summarized the feeling of those who were advocating for change when he said, "It is a futile gesture to say we are not responsible [for Pages]. At any time, something very horrible could happen with regard to these youngsters and certainly it would be a heavy condemnation on our government if we allowed that to occur."⁵⁷ The hearing repeated this sentiment time and again and all indications

pointed to something happening in terms of building a residence for Pages. It looked like the advocacy from within the Page system finally was going to be able to accomplish something.

Bennett stated that the hearing was the first full hearing to be held on the subject of a residence, and since he had been trying to get one for the seven or eight years he had been in Congress up to that point, he wanted to take advantage of the opportunity since he did not feel that he would still be around for another seven or eight years.⁵⁸ The hearing occurred at a good time because Bennett knew some information regarding Pages that he would not reveal on record but said that if he divulged what he knew, it “would unduly hurt Congress, unduly hurt a very fine lot of young men” and he wanted to do something since some of the boys “have been detrimentally affected by their being Pages.”⁵⁹

Also testifying was Congresswoman Thompson, who related her experience with seeing Pages in the morning, since she lived in the same neighborhood a couple blocks from the Capitol as they did. She would see Pages outside, drinking a bottle of milk for breakfast, and then she would see the same boys in the Cloakroom eating candy bars, ice cream and soda pop for lunch.⁶⁰ Thompson was interested enough in the plight of the boys that when she saw a “Room for Rent” sign in the window of one of their boarding houses, she made a visit to see what the room was like. She related her experience to the Committee and summarized one of the more important aspects of the Page system vividly:

I went to the door and rang the bell. An awful-looking woman came to the door and I asked her if she had rooms to rent and she said, yes. I asked if I might see one and she said, yes. So I stepped in and I never went into such a dirty, filthy place in my

life. She said, “I have a nice big room here right on the street floor.” She opened the door and I followed her in and there were twin beds there. She said, “Now, this is a lovely room; nice, airy and cool in the summer time. Of course, it has twin beds. I have a man using one of the beds. Would you be interested?” That is the kind of a home these boys were living in.⁶¹

Thompson also alluded to the moral problems that Pages were involved in, specifically relationships with older women.⁶² Congresswoman Katharine St. George agreed that Pages would sooner or later cause some sort of tragedy that would focus attention on an unresponsive Congress unless something was done to improve their situation.⁶³ Even the chair of the committee, Congressman Samuel Friedel, urged both party’s leadership to support a residence, or the proposed solution to all the boys’ problems would be halted. The leadership, he concluded, “have to be sold on the merits of the proposal, to be made aware of the evils that now exist.”⁶⁴ Jack Spain, the president of the Parent Organization at Page School, admitted that it had become “exceedingly difficult to find [the boys] proper and adequate surroundings here in the Capitol area.”⁶⁵ Although the testimony was overwhelmingly in favor of doing something to provide an official, government-sponsored residence, these efforts failed to trigger any official action and the Congress ended with no changes to the Page system although the Architect of the Capitol got as far as creating another set of blueprints for a Page residence but it went no further.⁶⁶

It needs to be pointed out at this point that although the Page system was in a bit of turmoil regarding the living situation, the school itself was remarkably unaffected. The school remained a stable, high quality educational institution. With small classes and a strong staff provided by the DCBOE, students have many fond

memories of their time spent there. “So I had these three teachers for four years for one course or another almost every semester. We were very, very small from September through January; there was nobody there. I mean, it was almost like private school,” said Mike Revell.⁶⁷ Relationships between teachers and students were so unusual and the atmosphere so relaxed that they were able to spend time doing an activity not normally described in a high school setting: Donn Anderson recalls, “When I walked into DeKeyser’s office, he was puffing on his pipe, and on the table were four or five filthy ashtrays full of cigarette butts. The principal’s office was the one place in the school where the students *had* to go to smoke. The booklet about the program said that smoking was forbidden, yet it was clearly sanctioned. In fact, in my fifth hour, there were two of us in the class and as soon as the bell rang, Mrs. Harper closed the door, pulled out a couple of ashtrays and the three of us would light up.”⁶⁸

After four small classes starting at 6:30 and ending at 9:45, including a break for breakfast, students would then go to work-- and some of the teachers would go to jobs at local universities. The school was able to attract good students, good teachers and good principals and held classes in a “very clean, bright, modern place.”⁶⁹ Some House Pages took a fifth class until 10:30 and then went to work since the House adjourned later than the Senate. None of the students interviewed had many negative things to say about the school. Congressman Tom Davis credits his time at Capitol Page School for helping him later in his life: “It’s a hard job coming here, going to school four hours, early in the morning and then working the rest of the day. That’s a

tough life for a 14 or 15-year-old. And getting that discipline helps you later on in life.”⁷⁰

Although students were learning discipline, they were also foregoing typical high school activities and instead participating in a “fantastic experience” on Capitol Hill.⁷¹ In exchange for giving up Friday night football games and a full range of academic offerings, Pages could see something unique every day, from their vantage point in the Attic of the Library of Congress: “You could look through those half-round windows down and see the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution in the lower floor at the Library. They were both on display before they were moved over to the National Archives. There was a Marine guard on duty 24 hours a day down there, and you used to look down and see these documents. That was the essence of the school. It was really special,” said Vance Morrison.⁷²

The school that Trueworthy, McRae and DeKeyser headed is consistently viewed by its students as a good school. One of the big reasons for this is because the teachers who worked at the school were good teachers, and it is worthy to briefly examine who these teachers were. Two of the teachers, Naomi Ulmer and Fred Hilton, worked there for almost 25 years each. Ulmer was a science and math teacher, and not one of her former students had anything negative to say about her. In fact, when her name came up, there was very little discussion about her. A typical comment was that she was a really good teacher and a really good person, and then the interviewee would be ready for the next question, almost as if to say, “The fact that Naomi Ulmer was an excellent teacher does not need discussion; it’s a given fact

and there is nothing more to say.” Every former student had positive things to say about her.

Fred Hilton was the history teacher, who had a reputation for being tough but fair, an intellectual, and someone who did not tolerate misbehavior. Vance Morrison had Mr. Hilton in the mid-1950s and said, “He was a strong moral example for the Pages. He took no nonsense in his classroom, on the one hand. On the other hand, if you needed any help, he’d give it to you. And he was fair, eminently fair.”⁷³ Mike Revell said of Hilton that he was “probably one of the best-liked teachers there” and Tom Davis said, “Fred Hilton was a wonderful man. He was a good history teacher. He had good knowledge of the stuff and he was a good inspirational history teacher.”⁷⁴ In addition to being a good teacher, Hilton helped to control behavior of the students. “Hilton was sort of the dean of the teachers, and head of the chess club. If a boy caused trouble, Hilton would grab them by the scruff of the neck and take him down to the principal’s office. He was sort of the unofficial vice principal.”⁷⁵

Florence Block taught French at the school for a number of years and is remembered by all of her students as a good teacher too. Typical of what students said about her is what Ken Smith said, “I always felt I was one of her favorite students, but I think everybody felt that way. That’s the kind of teacher she was.”⁷⁶

Former Pages looked back with affection on even the teachers who were perhaps not really great teachers. Earl Vail taught English in the mid-1950s for only three years, but students remember him vividly. Vail had trouble with classroom management and earning the respect of his students, and the students preyed on him. Whenever I brought up Vail’s name in an interview, the person I was talking to

invariably smiled and looked like he was keeping the biggest laugh of his life to himself. Mike Revell tells of time when “somebody said, ‘Oh, turn our chairs to the back of the room.’ So we’re facing the back of the room, and he comes in and he couldn’t get us to turn around, so he walks to the back of the class and teaches from there.”⁷⁷ Terry Scanlon said that “Vail’s nickname was ‘Toad’ among the students. He didn’t have good discipline in the classroom. The others demanded the respect and got it. Then this guy who wanted it and should have had it, didn’t, but something was lacking there.”⁷⁸ Ken Smith summed up everyone’s comments and said, “If ever there was a teacher who was in the wrong place at the wrong time, it was Mr. Vail.



Photo 52 President Eisenhower presenting certificates of completion, 1953. *National Archives.*

He didn't survive. He didn't know how to control a class, and so they all just ran over him. We would sing songs in a whistle and be disruptive. And he just could not control the class.”⁷⁹ However, it is important to note that even a teacher with weak classroom management skills like Earl

Vail was run over by the students in a good-natured way; nothing about how students treated him was mean-spirited or in bad taste. Granted, students had a few laughs at his expense but he still was able to do the teaching he was supposed to do. This is important to note, because when Page School has teachers later on who are below average instructionally, it leads in part to the end of Capitol Page School.

THE CHANGE EFFORT GAINS MOMENTUM, 1956-1957 SCHOOL YEAR

Soon after the opening of the 85th Congress in January 1957, Senator Olin Johnston introduced another bill, identical to S. 973 in the previous Congress to purchase a residence. He maintained that Congress was spending billions of dollars on defense and in aiding other countries; a few thousand dollars to take care of the only teenagers that Congress employed was certainly something that should have been approved with little discussion. His bill, S. 733, was referred to the Committee on Rules and Administration, fell into the legislative abyss, and was never heard from again.⁸⁰

A few months later, things were a bit more hopeful for the possibility for change. After three bills were introduced, all similar to S. 733, there was enough interest to schedule another hearing in May 1957, a year and a half after the last one.⁸¹ Congressman Bennett, who had appointed 28 short-term Pages in the previous three years, was intensely interested in changing the Page system by securing a residence, and he thought it was the responsibility of Congress to give the boys “the moral guidance and recreational opportunities which they need in order to develop into fine American men.”⁸² He made the point that Congress had nothing to lose in doing this. With the small step these bills called for, simply creating a supervisory board, if it was unsuccessful, it could be abandoned with little objection. The Page system certainly could handle it if it turned out to be a bad idea.

At the hearing, Congressman J. Arthur Younger alluded to the fact that Speaker of the House Joseph Martin did not agree with the Page system in its present form, and he suggested that maybe college age Pages should be used instead of

younger boys.⁸³ There were too many problems with supervising Pages, especially when it was well known that some Pages drank alcohol “and more than to sample it.”⁸⁴ Both Younger and Congressman Peter Frelinghuysen warned the Committee that Congress had been lucky up to that point in that nothing serious had occurred with Pages, but it was only inevitable that something serious was going to happen under the circumstances, and they both boosted the effort to build a residence. The appeal of building a residence seemed universal and even the parents of the current Pages voted 42-1 supporting the initiative.⁸⁵

Although he enjoyed the freedom at the time, Ken Smith looks back on his time as a Page in the 1950s and admits, “There should have been supervision. There was no provision for supervision; no vehicle to have supervision. And I’m not aware of any Congressman that provided supervision. If they were going to get kids in Washington, they had a responsibility to provide housing. The parents probably had no idea and probably assumed that there was more supervision than there was.”⁸⁶

The school received only cursory attention in this hearing when Carl Hansen, Assistant Superintendent of Schools, testified that the school should become a junior academy of political science to teach the boys lessons in public service and to encourage them to make politics a career.⁸⁷ However, Congress was paying DCBOE to run a traditional public school, not to make systemic changes and this idea received no attention. Because this hearing had different leadership than the last one, the school’s schedule was again in question to a different group of people: classes met from 6:30 to 10:30 for those who were allowed to stay that long, but most of the time,

Senate Pages, about one-third of the school, had to leave by 9:45 in order to get to work on time.⁸⁸

As the 1956-1957 school year was ending, Capitol Page School received some bad press. A few Pages were complaining to news reporters about the school, telling them that they would not be returning in the fall because they did not like the way the



Photo 53 Page Jim Bedenbaugh accepts his certificate from Vice President Nixon as Henry DeKeyser watches tolerantly. *1957 Congressional.*

school was run. Principal DeKeyser was accused of running the school like a monarchy when he broke the school constitution, independently making a rule that he thought should be implemented instead of asking for student feedback. DeKeyser further upset these students by

saying that the constitution was just a set of working rules that

“amount[ed] to absolutely nothing.”⁸⁹ Students then began to criticize the lack of academic rigor in Page School classes, and they became openly defiant about his rule prohibiting them from talking to newspaper reporters, which he enforced by threatening them with expulsion. Remember, this criticism of DeKeyser is the exception not the rule. One graduate of Page School, who had seen three principals during his time there, thought that the adverse publicity was long overdue and deserved because DeKeyser had too much authority. His “dictatorial administration” was creating “terrifying conditions” at Page School, yet DeKeyser had his supporters

too.⁹⁰ Bob Baumann wrote that DeKeyser was not arbitrary or inconsistent in his job and pointed out that it was not a good thing to run a school by majority vote of its students.⁹¹

Ten months after the May 1957 hearing, the Committee on House Administration sent a letter to each Representative asking for their input and thoughts on a residence for Pages. The letter urged them to support the idea and to relay their thoughts to the Committee chair, Mr. Friedel. The letter also pointed out the inherent dangers in the unregulated and unsupervised lives that Pages were leading after work each day.⁹² The Page system looked like it was going to receive a major upgrade from Congress; however, by the time the 85th Congress ended, inertia had taken over and there was no action taken involving a residence for Pages.

There is one story that illustrates how Pages' unsupervised lives could lead to their doing things they were not supposed to be doing, to people they should not have been doing them to. Bob Borsari, a Senate Page in the 1950s, amusingly tells a story of how he and Vice President Nixon became close:

Because I was living at home, I had friends from my neighborhood. And one of the girls that I dated from time to time during high school also babysat for people. And one of the people she was babysitting for was Richard Nixon. At the time Nixon lived in Spring Valley. There was no Secret Service protection; there were no chauffeurs. He was Vice President of the United States and lived in Spring Valley like everybody else, and had a house and needed a babysitter. And so, I was over at his house because this girl was babysitting; and there was a cake for his birthday, and it was in the shape of the White House. They recreated the White House in this cake, so it was just sitting there. And, I don't remember exactly, but I probably had a little bit of his bourbon and got hungry, so I ate the balcony off of the White House. You talk about enflamed! There were few times that I ever saw Richard Nixon lose

his temper on the Senate Floor but the next day was one of them; he was after me! Bobby Baker is holding the Vice President back saying, "Don't hit him!"⁹³

EFFORTS TO SECURE HOUSING CONTINUE, 1959 TO 1963

When the 86th Congress convened in January 1959, Congressman Abraham Multer introduced a bill to provide a residence and to create a supervisory board for Pages because he thought that Congress had a responsibility to provide at least that for them.⁹⁴ In the second session of the 86th Congress in 1960, the focus on a residence for Pages was lessened, and other bills regarding Pages were introduced: Senator Thomas Hennings, chairman of the Rules Committee, wrote a bill to regulate the age of Pages, so that Senate Pages would have to be at least 14, have completed eighth grade and not be older than 17.⁹⁵ Congressman William Broomfield submitted a bill to select Pages by national exam instead of appointing them with patronage in order to raise the academic standards at the school.⁹⁶ So, a few people had ideas on how to change the Page system but again, little happened.

In June 1960, another incident occurred that provided more reason to hasten changes. Four House Pages were attacked only five blocks away from the Capitol by a gang of ten that had ice picks, belt buckles, knives and other weapons; all four Pages suffered cuts and bruises.⁹⁷ This elicited several more bills concerning a residence, including another one from Broomfield because he thought Congress should “expect a real scandal” if Pages were not all under one roof soon.⁹⁸ He thought that the non-responsive Congress was “sitting on a keg of dynamite” by paying them and letting them run loose in the city. There was no doubt in his mind

that teenagers with a salary that most grown men were envious of needed supervision.⁹⁹

While President Kennedy was unable to entertain the boys for their graduation ceremony in 1961 or even to sign their certificates because he was too busy dealing with the Bay of Pigs situation, other bills were introduced, all leading up to another hearing in November 1963, this time held by a Senate Subcommittee of the Committee on Public Works.¹⁰⁰ Before the hearing was held, the Committee wrote a report saying that it had looked at houses within a four-block radius of the Capitol and it concluded that none of the available properties were within a reasonable budget. The Report advocated for a residence to be built on Capitol Hill, and went so far as to have a sample building drawn up, complete with rooms and a basketball court.¹⁰¹

The schedule of Page School was still at the mercy of the legislative schedule at the end of February and the beginning of March 1960. During the Senate's record five-day filibuster on the Civil Rights Act of 1960, Pages attended school in two shifts, if at all. Some boys left the Senate at 9:00 AM and went to school, while those at school then went to work.¹⁰² Florence Block, the French teacher, had to dictate her lessons into cassette tapes, so that the boys could listen to them when they had a chance.¹⁰³ The Senate Chamber was equally dysfunctional one night, at least as far as Pages were concerned, with a Page boy on the rostrum busily doing his homework as the clock neared midnight.¹⁰⁴

The school itself had recently been declared a "near Utopian school" with four classes having only two students each and two classes having only one student each,

with the largest class having only 14.¹⁰⁵ This was because more than half the Pages were not in Washington since Congress was out of session in the fall of 1960, and only local boys or those who had another job in Congress were attending Page School. When questioned about the schedule of Page School, Superintendent of School Hanson admitted that it was “difficult to operate a school following the rhythm of Congress.”¹⁰⁶

A CONGRESSIONAL HEARING AND THE *WASHINGTON POST* SERIES, 1963

The hearing in November 1963 was somewhat repetitive of what already had been discussed in previous hearings; however, there was also some new information. Senator Ralph Yarborough testified that when his turn to appoint a Page came up, he was warned by several other Senators not to do it because there was too much responsibility and too much potential for wrongdoing involved.¹⁰⁷ Senator Olin Johnston had similar experiences.¹⁰⁸ If supervision was provided in a residence, the Clerk of the Supreme Court, John Davis, who was representing the Justices at the hearing, declared that the Court would “be delighted to change its policy of appointing largely local boys.”¹⁰⁹ Congressman Bennett again strongly urged the Committee to do something and said, “Nearly everyone acknowledges that [the need for a residence] exists, and even that it is urgent. . . . Why not establish the home now, before some tragic occurrence compels us to do it later?”¹¹⁰

Although this hearing did not solve anything immediately because the Committee did not act, it still was a small victory for those who wanted changes made, as it did bring more attention to the living situation, especially because the President of the Parent-Teachers Association testified that she had made a visit to

their boarding houses recently and found little supervision for the boys, and beer bottles littering their rooms.¹¹¹ Efforts for change inside the Page system certainly had enough support to rationalize a new residence, but soon, pressure from outside the system built to a point where Congress was going to have to defend not only a new residence but the mere existence of Pages.

An influential three-part series in the *Post* less than two weeks after the hearing called for a new kind of Page system: the articles advocated for getting rid of the Pages altogether because they were simply an unneeded anachronism; however, if Pages were to remain, then having a place for them to live was requisite because their situation was “scandalous.”¹¹² The series profiled the school, quoting teachers saying that they did not think that 14 and 15 year-old boys were capable of handling both work and school, and both teachers and students pointed out how hard it was to succeed as a Page.¹¹³ The series ended by asking why Pages were so young, and concluded by submitting that college students would present many fewer problems than the present teenagers who were serving.¹¹⁴

On the same day as the third article of the series, Congressman Clement Zablocki again submitted a bill, this time to house Pages in the Congressional Hotel, since buying land, designing a building, and constructing it would take too long; moving them into the government-owned hotel could be done immediately.¹¹⁵ His Floor speech pointed out their poor living conditions, which he described as “rat holes,” and quoted Mrs. Smith, the owner of one of the Pages’ more popular boarding houses that she had seen Pages “so drunk they have to be carried up the stairs,” and that they lacked physical activity, ate poorly and consistently destroyed their

rooms.¹¹⁶ Zablocki wanted to remedy the situation immediately, and moving them to the Congressional Hotel would have done that, but his bill died.

The subcommittee that held the hearing in November 1963 withheld action and instead chose to wait for word on whether the entire Page system was going to be



Photo 54 President Kennedy receiving Pages in the Rose Garden, 1963. *National Archives.*

kept because now there was a serious movement to change the entire Page system and hire college students as Pages. The subcommittee referred the bill to the full Committee on Rules.¹¹⁷

The next week, in December 1963, there was a concerted effort by a

handful of Congressmen to combat the articles in the *Post*, and Congressman

Charles Wilson defended Pages and the residence idea, and he expounded on all the good things about the school.¹¹⁸ Also, Congressmen John Dingell and Compton White, both Pages themselves, and Congressman Charles Wilson, whose son was then a Page, all criticized the articles in the *Post* and pointed out the good things of the Page system.¹¹⁹ Had the series in the *Post* not appeared, the subcommittee might have taken action to house Pages, but with two competing ideas to deal with, the age of Pages had to be clarified before the question of a residence could be addressed.

Although the Page system obviously had influential advocates, with this lack of focus and unfortunate timing, Congress found it difficult to overcome the experiences of

former Pages and their argument carried more weight, and again, no changes were made.

Part Three: Edith Green Gives the Change Movement New Focus, 1964 to 1965

GREEN'S COMMITTEE CHINKS AWAY AT INSTITUTIONAL INERTIA, 1964

When the second session of the 88th Congress got underway in January 1964, it took only a month for the first of several legislative actions dealing with Pages to occur. Congress had to do something in response to all of the press that the problem of housing Pages was presenting because too many questions had been brought up, and too few of them had answers. In typical Congressional fashion, at least as far as Pages were concerned, the solution was to appoint a subcommittee to conduct an investigation, and this subcommittee became involved in looking at all possible changes to the system.

At the beginning of the second session, former teacher Edith Green was appointed to chair a Select Subcommittee on the Welfare of Pages. She took her responsibility as chair seriously, and she wasted little time getting started. In the beginning of February 1964, Green and three other members of the subcommittee made a surprise visit to Capitol Page School when classes started at 6:30. She was interested initially in how many of the boys had eaten breakfast that day. Of the seven boys in the library, only one had eaten breakfast, and of the fifteen boys in the biology class she visited, only three had.¹²⁰ The next day, Green and two others on the subcommittee made a surprise visit to three of the Pages' rooming houses, as she wanted to learn more about their living situation since a property at 921 Pennsylvania

Avenue, SE, the Temporary Home for Soldiers and Sailors, had become available for purchase.¹²¹

Due to Green's recommendation, in mid-July 1964, an omnibus education bill including a Page school/residence with a \$1.5 million limit was recommended by the House Education and Labor Committee.¹²² The next day, as part of the National Defense Education Act, the Capitol Page Facilities Board, consisting of two Senators, two Congressmen and one Supreme Court Justice, was established to plan a building



Photo 55 President Johnson ready to present certificates to Pages. Note Henry DeKeyser and Naomi Ulmer to Johnson's left. *Library of Congress.*

and select a site for a Page residence because the school/residence had been approved.¹²³ Green's leadership was effective at creating positive change for Pages. Two weeks after this, the Senate's Committee on Public Works reported favorably on S. 1847, and proposed a three-story building with

bedrooms, a gym, kitchen, library, lounge and meeting rooms at an estimated cost of \$1.4 million, although the Senate version did not include a school.¹²⁴ With both Chambers agreeing to similar proposals, it represented significant progress in obtaining an official residence for Pages. It seemed like significant change had finally come to the Page system.

However, the inertia in the Senate could not be defeated. Senator Milton Young called the residence "an unnecessary extravagance and [it was] not compatible with the austerity program" that President Johnson had recently announced to cut

government spending.¹²⁵ He pointed out that change does not necessarily include reform, and reform was what the Page system needed. Young's solution was to propose further hearings to determine whether Pages should be college students instead of high school students. So although Young's solution included change in the current Page system, his real intent was simply to stall the others' efforts so that his traditional philosophy would be cause for the Page system to maintain the status quo.

The Senate was set to vote on the building proposal in the beginning of August 1964, but on the 13th of the month, two things happened on either side of the Capitol: Senator Young again opposed the bill in a Floor speech almost identical to the one he had given two weeks before in which he proposed that the age be increased, and almost on cue, on the other side of the Rotunda, Congresswoman Green introduced a bill to study the Page system further, as Senator Young had suggested, and the vote on finding a building was postponed.¹²⁶ Even more curiously, the next day, Green agreed to delete the Page school/residence from the huge National Defense Education Act in exchange for appointing a special committee dedicated to studying the problems within the Page system in-depth, with no fewer than four other bills being submitted, in a big cycle of repetitive legislation.¹²⁷ Any flicker of change had seemingly been extinguished.

Senator Young somehow was able to bury the provision to build a school/residence, and simultaneously to propose that the age of Pages be raised to college-aged students. He maintained that many of the inherent problems of having young boys serve as Pages would be eliminated if Pages were older because a school would not be needed, and Congress would not have to concern itself with their

supervision outside of work. He was also irked by the pay raise that Pages had recently gotten, so that now they were making more than some adults who worked for Congress.¹²⁸ However, in the waning days of the 88th Congress, when Congressman Elliott wanted to appoint a special committee to look at the entire Page system instead of just having a board studying the problems, it looked as if the residence was a dead issue.¹²⁹ The 88th Congress adjourned *sine die* in the beginning of October 1964; however, the Select Committee on the Welfare and Education of Congressional Pages, chosen on the penultimate day of the Congress, held a hearing in mid-December 1964, with chairwoman Green again presiding.¹³⁰ Change was still possible.

GREEN FIGHTS FOR CHANGE AGAIN, 1964 TO 1965

The Select Committee identified available properties within a ten-block radius of the Capitol this time for its hearing but still could not find one that was available at a reasonable cost. The Library was “desperate for the space” that Page School was using but the school had nowhere to go.¹³¹ Green questioned every facet of the Page system, including the possibility of dropping ninth grade, and dropping both ninth and tenth grades. She asked very pointed and direct questions about changing the Page system, and she seemed to be convinced that having college students fill Page jobs was the solution. The strongest argument for not having college students, that they would feel the work was not dignified enough for them, was not a problem for Green; she maintained that someone who thought the work was beneath them simply should not apply for the job.¹³² She also questioned the generous salary that Pages made.

She pointed out that there were 35 million adults who made less than \$3,000 a year in America; Pages made more than \$5,000 and she thought that was a bit extravagant.¹³³

The other things that this hearing highlighted were equally indicting. Green found that the school had been accredited most recently for only one year because the Middle States committee was disturbed by the lack of housing at what was really a boarding school. Charles Martin, the headmaster at St. Albans and a member of the accreditation committee, wrote in the evaluation of Page School that the committee expected to find significant progress in that area by the next school year, in May 1965.¹³⁴ The committee criticized the lack of stability of the student body, noting that any boy on a one-month appointment would consider it a vacation from school.¹³⁵

The committee wrote that

[i]t seems inconceivable to the members of this committee, all but one of whom are parents, that a 14 or 15 year-old boy should be turned loose in a large metropolis to find his own room, make his own arrangements for eating well-balanced and nourishing meals, engage in healthy and moral activities, and watch over his own physical and moral well-being. It is one thing for a Page to live at home or in the home of his sponsor, where he can be a part of normal family living so necessary at this stage in growth. It is something else again to give these youngsters the great opportunity to be of direct service to the Government, and at the same time deprive them of the basic protections to which they are entitled at this stage in their development. The Washington of today is a different city from that of 20 years ago.¹³⁶

Green went on to question everything from the school's schedule, the lack of chemistry classes, the fire exits and the classes with only one student enrolled, and she forced the Committee to explore the idea of split shifts for the school, with half the students attending classes in the morning and then going to work, while the other

half went to classes in the afternoon.¹³⁷ She made it clear that no state in the nation would allow 14 or 15 year-olds to go to school for only half a day, nor to work more than three hours on a school day nor to work 18 hours in a school week, especially after 7:00 PM.¹³⁸ Pages violated all of those regulations and Green questioned the



Photo 56 Fishbait and Pages, 1969. *Library of Congress.*

validity and wisdom of allowing it. Ultimately, she said, the “committee will have to decide what the dominant purpose of the Page system should be: i.e. to provide young people as

helpers in some of the necessary but routine work of Congress or to couple that purpose with some broader educational experiences for college students.”¹³⁹ The Committee was split about exactly what to do, but it agreed that Pages needed more supervision in a revamped Page system which should include Negroes and girls.¹⁴⁰ Green’s efforts as a change agent had gone from securing a residence for Pages so that they were taken care of, to totally changing the Page system and making Pages college students.

The day after this hearing, it was reported in the *Post* that the previous year, even though conditions were ideal, about one-third of the students had done unsatisfactory work, even with individual instruction and small classes.¹⁴¹ To top it off, DCBOE was spending more than twice as much per pupil at Page School than at its other schools. Green reiterated her desire to have Pages be college students, as she was confident that they would covet the positions. Several others, including the

Doorkeeper of the House, William “Fishbait” Miller, DeKeyser and the Chief Pages, who supervised the boys, all resisted this. They said that they needed small boys for the work because older boys were too independent and less receptive to discipline.¹⁴² The other choice was to continue to use high school age students, but if that was done, then it was imperative that a school/residence be built at an estimated cost of \$1.2 million.¹⁴³

The former choice, to use college students, was gaining momentum under Green’s leadership, and a writer in the *Post* called the committee’s recommendation “irrefutably sensible.”¹⁴⁴ The fact that Congress spent more than twice per pupil than DCBOE did, plus the fact that Pages were paid, added up to what the writer called a “scandal” and thought that “Congress cannot act too quickly to abolish the present Page system. Continuance of it is courting tragedy. The members of Congress who bring young boys to this worldly Capital assume a reckless degree of responsibility for their welfare.”¹⁴⁵ Even in the face of pressure from the press, inertia was able to keep change from occurring.

Green’s committee’s Report was released just before the 89th Congress convened in January 1965. This Report gave the school high marks but put forth two choices for the Page system: either use college age Pages or continue to use high school age Pages, changing Page School to only juniors and seniors, building a school/residence and appointing them by national competition, not patronage.¹⁴⁶ Because this was a Report from a House committee, it recommended a joint committee to examine these recommendations more in-depth and warned the future joint committee to act quickly because the Page system was such a volatile

situation.¹⁴⁷ This round was a clear victory for those who advocated for change in the Page system, led by Green and her committee.

THE AFTEREFFECTS OF GREEN'S ADVOCACY, 1965

When the 89th Congress convened in January 1965, one of the first pieces of legislation to be submitted was Green's bill to establish such a Joint Committee, although the bill was never acted on and any momentum that had built up in the 88th Congress suddenly disappeared.¹⁴⁸ Throughout the spring of 1965, there were various bills submitted and different Floor speeches in the Senate too, led by Senator Young again, to abolish the Page system and use college students instead.¹⁴⁹ Young continued to call the Page system "archaic and troublesome" and continued to say that it was "outmoded and really serve[d] no useful purpose."¹⁵⁰ However, the House Office Building Commission acquired a small triangle of land bounded by D. Street, Canal Street and South Capitol Street, SW, which was a possible site for a school/residence to be built (it is now a parking lot).¹⁵¹

Even though Green's bill died, there was enough interest in the Page system for the House to hold yet another hearing in May 1965 to consider the various bills concerning Pages that had been submitted. The bills ran the gamut of establishing a residence, or a Board to look into establishing a residence, or using college students, or any combination of those things, all ideas that had already been discussed about for years. At this hearing, Congressman Younger said that in the past, the police were good about keeping news about Pages out of the papers but that "someday we are going to get into a mess here with a Page or two that is going to strike the front pages. Then you are going to wonder why we have not done something."¹⁵² He also related

that Speaker Rayburn had always been against having young Pages and wanted to change the system and that he was against building a residence for them because he thought it was wrong that Congress brought them to Washington in the first place, maintaining that he thought that 18 should be the minimum age. Younger also said that Speaker Martin also had wanted to abolish young boys and have college age Pages and he warned the Committee about the precarious nature of the Page system: “it [was] time for the House to take some action, because, sooner or later, you are going to have something happen here that is going to put the House in a very, very compromising position to allow a situation like this to exist.”¹⁵³

Congressman Wayne Hays objected to the fact that Congress spent so much money on educating Pages because “eighty percent of them are a real fine bunch of little smart alecks. I have had some personal experience with them. They will tell you to go to hell as quick as look at you” and was in favor of abolishing the Page system.¹⁵⁴ Congressman Charles Chamberlain told a story of anxiously walking near the Capitol at dusk on a recent evening in front of a house with “some colored people sitting on the steps and a great big old police dog out there and everything, [and] a little boy came bounding out” who was obviously a Page.¹⁵⁵ Chamberlain asked what the boy was doing in the house and he replied that he lived there. “Well, that was just about it for me,” Chamberlain said. He could not believe that the boy was actually living with people that he himself was apprehensive to walk by at night and thought there were inherent dangers in the entire Page system.¹⁵⁶

Because all the different versions of the bills that had been introduced were dealing with things that had been introduced before, and because everyone involved

had a different opinion on what to do regarding dropping ninth grade, dropping tenth grade, building a residence, living in boarding houses, using college age Pages, having split shifts, etc., there was little focus and nothing could be agreed upon, in a great example of policy churn. No progress was made but lots of people spent lots of time talking about what the policies should be. This hearing in 1965 could have happened in 1945 and nobody would have been able to tell the difference because the same things were being debated over and over with the same arguments and the same solutions as always offered.

Another advocate for change, Congressman W. R. Hull, decided to put pressure on changing the Page system in July 1965 and introduced the U. S. Capitol



Photo 57 House Pages leaving work, 1968. Jim Oliver is the second one from left. *Jim Oliver.*

Page Act of 1965. He called the Page system “archaic, cumbersome, wasteful, and in many respects, detrimental to the young men it purports to benefit” and alleged that the school was of “debatable long-range value.”¹⁵⁷ He maintained that the Page system should be phased out and the high school boys should be replaced with needy college students, both young men and young women. Because they were grossly overpaid,

making more than 45 percent of adults in the country, and more than many commissioned officers in Vietnam, their pay should be cut too. Because the system

was one with built-in dynamite which could blow at any minute, it was time for a change.¹⁵⁸

A month later in August 1965, Hull gave a Floor speech updating his bill, in which he quoted several newspapers around the country which were supporting him. He still contended that Pages were “overpaid, undereducated and recklessly exposed to temptation.”¹⁵⁹ Support for abolishing the Page system as it existed seemed to be swelling; some people were saying, “imagine what spoiled brats [the Page system] makes, what malcontents it sends home when the Pages’ tenure is done,” and many critics called the system a “silly and needless expense.”¹⁶⁰ Hull again pointed out that federal labor laws had no room to allow Pages to work more than three hours a day nor past 7:00, but in the very building that law was made for the entire country, Pages regularly worked 40 hours a week and oftentimes after midnight. Raising the minimum age of Pages to 18 was the only sensible solution to “relieve the taxpayer of this silly and needless expense.”¹⁶¹ Clearly, the sentiment for change was undeniable and the long-standing Page system was in jeopardy.

Unfortunately, Pages were doing nothing to help their own cause. When Hull spoke with one of the landladies about the behavior of Pages, she said that the boys had told her that “Congressmen get drunk and chase around with women, so why can’t we?”¹⁶² Hull was trying to make himself out to be the one who effected positive change, citing one newspaper’s coverage of his “gutsy attack on this inept, timeworn patronage system” although ultimately his efforts yielded no results.¹⁶³

Part Four: Continued Attempts at Change, 1966 to 1982

THE PERIOD OF POLICY CHURN CONTINUES, 1966 TO 1970

This routine of introducing bills to examine the Page system, along with counter bills, amendments to bills, amendments to amendments, and hearings, reports and recommendations repeated itself over and over for the next 15 years. There were calls for college age Pages, renewed movements to build a school/residence, impassioned pleas on the Floor to do something about the Page problem, and yet the sum total of all the activity was only continued inertia in the end.¹⁶⁴ Bills died in committee, reports fell on deaf ears, the two chambers continued to fail to agree on legislation that they both could pass and nothing was ever solved. What happened during these hearings is the same thing that happened in the hearings that have already been reviewed, that is to say, what happened in 1950 was the same thing that happened in 1960 which was the same thing that happened in 1970 and 1980, although things at least appeared to get closer to changing. Each time period had its own nuances and unique characteristics, and this section will report on the highlights of the efforts taken by those wanting change..

Jim Oliver, a House Page in the late 1960s and who later ran a boarding house for Pages, remembers that “we knew that the accreditation of the school was tentative, particularly after ’64 and whatever was in the Green Committee. We knew there were an effort to do something about the housing for Pages, and it was not really going very far. There came a point in 1968 where they decided everybody had to move into the Douglas Tourist Home at 625 East Capital.”¹⁶⁵ However, this effort

only put all Pages together instead of having them dispersed around Capitol Hill which may have done more harm than good.

The Page system continued on as it always had, employing high school Pages, who lived on their own, who went to school in the early mornings in the Library and worked in the Capitol, even though many people thought that the Page system was an “unconscionable waste of taxpayers’ money. [A school/residence] would only serve to compound an already unwieldy situation and perpetuate an out-moded, unnecessary, archaic, and unjustified system,” said one reform-minded Senator.¹⁶⁶ Others thought that having grown men or college students answering hand claps and fingers snaps would not be as efficient and that the “dignity and decorum of the Senate would not be enhanced by having grown men sit on the rostrum and mill around the Chamber.”¹⁶⁷ Pages just never received top priority; obviously, they did not need to since the system continued as it always had without bringing too much attention upon itself. The one thing that was voted on and passed in the Senate in October 1970 was to keep the minimum age of its Pages at 14 instead of raising it to 16.¹⁶⁸

THE PERIOD OF INERTIA CONTINUES, 1970 TO 1975

Two events in 1970, when reform was a common buzzword in Congress, are especially salient, as they represent potential drastic changes to the Page system, although neither of them ended up actually occurring either.¹⁶⁹ In March 1970, the Page residence was scrapped from the House version of the 1970 Legislative Reorganization Act and in a “last-minute decision during executive session, members of the Subcommittee voted to do away with the Page School completely” and replace

high school Pages with college students.¹⁷⁰ However, when it went to the full Rules Committee, this provision was dropped.

There also was a vote one time in the House to make the change to college age Pages in September 1970. The bill actually went to the Floor to be voted on, but former Page and current Congressman John Dingell offered an amendment, supported by former Page and current Congressman David Pryor, to require Pages to be 16 to 18 years old. Despite strong vocal opposition, the amendment was agreed to, and again, nothing changed.¹⁷¹ Donn Anderson provides a possible explanation for why Pages were always high school students: “Members have always been disenchanted by the idea of having college students looking over their shoulders; they didn’t want to be surrounded by activists.”¹⁷²

In October 1970, in the biggest victory so far for those wanting change, Congress passed the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970, which mandated Senate Pages to be 14 to 17 years old and House Pages to be 16 to 18. More importantly, it allowed for a brand new John McCormack Page Residential School to be built.¹⁷³ The Page system was going to add a major component to its tradition-rich history. The Supplemental Appropriations Act of 1971 allocated \$50,000 for the Architect of the Capitol to make plans for the school/residence.¹⁷⁴ In 1972, the Senate voted itself money to purchase, among other things, a small plot of land where Providence Hospital used to be, bounded by 2nd Street, 3rd Street, D. Street and E. Street, SE, for \$1.4 million to be used to build a Page residence.¹⁷⁵ The Supplemental Appropriations Act of 1973 allocated \$1.45 million to purchase the land, which was acquired on April 16, 1973.¹⁷⁶ The House Office Building Commission approved the

plans, but the Senate Office Building Commission did not; regardless, there were still no funds for the actual construction of the building, as inertia starting to creep back into the change process.¹⁷⁷

However, through debate and amendments, the relevant parts of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970 transformed into something else altogether as inertia was able to infiltrate the process. In June 1973, because there was widespread unhappiness with spending so much money, the Senate Democratic Caucus directed Senate Rules Committee Chairman Howard Cannon to draft a bill raising the minimum age of all Pages from 14 to 18, making the school unnecessary and saving \$15 million.¹⁷⁸ A month later, in July 1973, when the Senate Rules and Administration Committee reported favorably on the latest version of the bill (S. 2067) and recommended that the bill pass the Senate, Pages were to be aged 18 to 21, and Page School was to be discontinued by the end of June 1975.¹⁷⁹ This passed the Senate in July 1973, but it never passed the House, a narrow miss which would have gotten rid of Page School altogether.¹⁸⁰ The House never would approve it with the help of Doorkeeper of the House, Fishbait Miller, who went to Rules Committee Chairman Ray Madden and told him to make sure that the bill got tangled up in committee. Fishbait thought that Page work was too much beneath a college student to do and did not want to deal with them, whereas a 14 or 15 year-old would be proud to do it.¹⁸¹ By 1977, the Providence Hospital site was scheduled to be a parking lot, and by late 1978, it was slated to be a small park.¹⁸² Today it remains a park on Capitol Hill, a favorite dog-walking spot among neighborhood residents, owned and maintained by the Congress.

Things were so confusing now with so many different bills all related to the same issue that even Congressmen were confused. When Congressman John Moakley introduced H. R. 16322 in August 1974 to authorize purchasing the Willard Hotel and transforming it into a school/residence for Pages, he found out that it would have superseded the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970, showing that even Congressmen could not stay up-to-date on the status of the Page system. At this point, even the Capitol Hill community was getting involved: Jim Archibald, a minister at a Capitol Hill Methodist church, convinced the Kresge Corporation to donate \$500,000 to build a residence for Pages as long as Congress would agree not to build the McCormack school/residence for a few years. The Congress would not agree to that, even though it was common knowledge that Pages were living in a red-light district where heavy crime took place, so Kresge withdrew its offer.¹⁸³

Additionally, the local Young Women's Christian Home began to house Pages in 1974 in an area separate from the girls staying there, but the boys did too much damage to the building and Congress refused to reimburse the YWCH for it, and so the YWCH was planning to end the arrangement with Pages.¹⁸⁴ However, a local Jaycees organization paid the \$7,000 for repairs and also paid for a proctor at the YWCH to supervise the boys. Even so, the boys were making so much noise that the YWCH then wanted Congress to pay for soundproofing that section of the building so that they did not disturb the females who were staying there, which Congress again declined to do, so Pages had to move out after a short time anyway.¹⁸⁵ Doug Lapin, who was living at the YWCH at the time, remembers that "it was very bizarre; we were all on our own. I think the genesis of the problem was that one guy

was playing loud music, and he wasn't even in his room, and I remember the door was open. I went in and turned it off, and then he was furious that I had done that.”¹⁸⁶

So, even with the possibility of three different stable places to live, the McCormack school, the Kresge building and the YWCH, the Congress was either opposed to everything that would benefit Pages or just was not paying attention and did not care. Regardless, Pages still had no place to live other than whatever they found on their own. Pages certainly were not concerned with their living arrangements; on the contrary, they liked living on their own in a big city with no supervision. Lapin remembers a time when “a girl from West Virginia came on a short-term appointment and I think she was there less than a month. And I think three boys came down with gonorrhea at the time. I mean, it was wild!”¹⁸⁷

The experiential nature of the Page system is illustrated here. A boarding school with no boarding facilities encourages boys to rent rooms in a Christian Home for women where the boys subsequently misbehave and wear out their welcome. Congress will not accept any responsibility for the boys and so they were free to find places to live on their own. This represents an almost archaic mindset on the part of Congress, especially because it had already pushed specifically for a residence. To treat the Pages in the mid-1970s the same as it did in the 1940s is shameful. Congress simply did not know how to handle them and so it continued to do the easiest thing: keep it as it always had been.

By mid-1975, Pages also had a public relations problem to a degree not seen in the past. There were stories in newspapers about their wild lifestyles, drinking habits and their pursuit of women, all of which was confirmed in the interviews I

conducted. Although Doorkeeper Jim Molloy said that it was not really a bad problem, he must have been concerned because he had asked several area bars to stop serving Pages. There were Pages arrested for drunkenness, disturbing the peace and theft. With Pages now making \$9,000 a year, they were quickly becoming a problem that needed immediate attention, more so than at any time in the past.¹⁸⁸ Congress could no longer simply ignore the problems and pretend they did not exist, cross their fingers, and hope that nothing too terribly bad would happen. However, that is exactly what Congress did; there was little, if any, continued interest from either party or from either side of the Capitol in improving the living situation for Pages.

FOCUS TURNS TO PAGE SCHOOL, 1976 TO 1978

Pages were dissatisfied not only with their living situation but also with the school. Congressman William Lehman decided to do something about it in the spring of 1976, and he made a visit to the school with five of his staff members. The Page system had been under scrutiny for many years; now the Page School itself was under siege.

Principal John Hoffman, who had been appointed in April 1969 after DeKeyser retired in January, later recalled that when Lehman and his staff “came over, [they] walked the halls, asked questions of me, and button-holed students. The faculty reported that not even one classroom observation was made.”¹⁸⁹ Lehman gave students a school survey and gave teachers a separate survey about their satisfaction with the school. Hoffman thought this was very unprofessional, especially since the school had withstood an evaluation team from Middle States in March 1974, and had a School Assessment Team from DCBOE evaluate the school

just a few months before. In a statement reminiscent of Ernest Kendall's refusal to get the student essays typed for Committee review, Hoffman conceded that his school certainly was a failure if its "mission [was] to solely keep every student contented."¹⁹⁰

When the results of the survey came back, Lehman found that the school was much worse off than previous versions of the school. Students graded the school poorly on just about every category on the survey while teachers graded it positively on just about every category, and Lehman thought that the discrepancy was problematic. Lehman's solution was to do something that had been done several times already: introduce a bill to create a Select Joint Committee on Capitol Page School to conduct a complete investigation and to see if the school was even necessary.¹⁹¹

No history of Capitol Page School can be complete if it does not mention the quality of education in the 1970s under principal John Hoffman. When Hoffman became principal in April 1969, Page School had enjoyed a two-decade run of solid



Photo 58 Principal John Hoffman.
1971 Congressional.

instruction under strong leadership. Paul Kanjorski, a Page in 1954, and a current Congressman provides a good summary of the type of school it was from 1940 to 1970: "I thought that the school provided the education mechanism that was necessary and right for the type of students the school had. . . . In a way, they were self-educated. The students that I went to Page School with did not need a formal setting of education in order to learn. They were natural learners. They

were bright and they were precocious. They had curiosity way beyond normal students. All they needed was some structure to move them along and I thought the school did more than adequate delivery of that system.”¹⁹²

Hoffman changed the profile of Page School, not only by his own leadership style but also by the people he hired to teach at the school. One of the teachers who worked at the school for many years when Hoffman was hired said, “He had taught in black schools a long, long time, and this assignment at Page School was just going to be a vacation for him. So that's the way he treated it. He was a veteran who had been shot up badly and they felt sorry for him. That's the way it works in the District; if you were a veteran, you got first priority. He was a Good Time Charlie, a very nice person but there was no discipline; absolutely none.”¹⁹³ A student in the mid-1970s backs up the lack of discipline at the school: “I don’t think anyone who was in the situation where they would have been worried about being disciplined was particularly worried about Mr. Hoffman. They would have gone on doing whatever [they were doing] regardless of him. I heard he used to run a bookie operation out of the Page School. I can’t imagine him ever having an academic discussion with any of the students there. He just wasn’t a very distinguished principal.”¹⁹⁴ Beyond his own personal flaws, he also hired weak teachers. Ulmer said that he brought teachers with him to Page School “who were a bit shaky.”¹⁹⁵

A student who attended Page School in the mid-1970s said of his experience, “I do recall the quality of education being horrible, and having little or no respect for Mr. Hoffman, who I viewed as a guy who had a cushy job, and who was just trying

not to make waves and keep his cushy job and really not caring about the kids. It was horrendous.”¹⁹⁶

It is worth examining these teachers, as the quality of education in the 1970s under Hoffman is one of the reasons the school came under such intense scrutiny. Lou Steely started teaching math at Page School in 1955 and was regarded in a positive way for many years; however, by the time Hoffman was principal, Steely was ending his career and maybe had stayed in the profession too long. Students in the 1970s were not so forgiving of Steely’s shortcomings as the students in the 1950s or 1960s were. One student said, “I don’t even think he knew the material. He was never able to teach. He’d turn to write on the [board] and the whole class would get up and walk out the door. I never went on further in math, and I always attribute it to him.”¹⁹⁷ Another student said, “Steely taught us if he had time to teach us but there wasn’t a whole lot of educating going on.”¹⁹⁸ Even always-optimist Donn Anderson, who was managing the Democratic Cloakroom at the time of Hoffman’s principalship said, “Mr. Steely had a tendency to use profanity lavishly in his classroom and to humiliate those who offended against his regime.”¹⁹⁹ Steely retired after 16 years at Page School in 1972, and Hoffman replaced him with a man named Willard King.

King elicited several strong comments from students too. One former student got agitated at the mention of his name, even 25 years later, and said, “Mr. King?! A joke!”²⁰⁰ Another said, “Mr. King just didn’t care. We’d do the test and he’d give me 100, or whatever grade. He was a really nice guy, but also incompetent (in addition to some of the other teachers). He seemed like he was in outer space. His attitude was, ‘I’m showing up, giving my lecture, then I’m going home.’”²⁰¹

The combination of poor classroom management skills and poor teaching strategies was enough to elicit several comments about the English teacher, Alva Rimmer. One student said, “She had trouble governing her class. There was a surprising level of disrespect to her in that class and she was sometimes a little unfocused. One time, she let the class vote on what book we would read, because there was a lot of dissension. And she would give us assignments like, ‘Write something creative,’ and we’d all have a blank look on our faces, like, ‘What do you mean?’ and she would say, ‘Well, you know, *creative*.’ She was kind of unfocused.”²⁰²

Another student also remembers convincing Rimmer to let the students read on their own. “We came up with a suggestion of us being able to simply read in class individually, what we wanted to read; kind of like a self-selective reading kind of



Photo 59 Mrs. Block reviewing French verbs. Note the student working in his checkbook during the lesson. Tom Davis, current Congressman from Virginia, is raising his hand. *1961 Congressional*.

thing. And we made that proposal to her, and she did that with us as a class, us seniors, for several weeks. I think that that was our response to the fact that she was really an outstandingly poor teacher.”²⁰³ Another student remembered a specific story that is also not too

flattering of Rimmer’s skills. “Mrs. Rimmer was clearly incompetent. She was

horrible. I remember my parents coming in and speaking with her and she said something really off the wall. We were reading “Animal Farm,” which is an allegory and I knew this because my mother was an English teacher. So I put that on a test and she marked it wrong, and my mother says, ‘Well, isn’t it?’ and Rimmer says, “Oh, no, no, no, it’s just a story about animals.”²⁰⁴

Clare Godfrey, a business teacher, also is remembered in a less than positive light. One student remembers that “the woman was *crazy*. One teacher was worse than the next. I mean, really, it was a cushy job. You worked 6:00 to 9:00, and shorter, so they’d have to get up a little early but they’re home by 9:30 or 10:00, they have a whole day free, they get another job for all they want. It was just sort of like, ‘I just have to show up a few hours, get my paycheck, get my pension, whatever, my benefits, and you know, I’m home by 9:30.’ It was great for them. I just chalked all the poor education up to that this was an inner city public school, and we had inner city public school teachers, as opposed to any sort of personal malfeasance or misfeasance by Hoffman or anyone else.”²⁰⁵

Although veteran teachers Florence Block, Naomi Ulmer and Fred Hilton, all of whom are remembered fondly as good, solid teachers, were still teaching at Capitol Page School and winding down their careers, they were not enough of a positive influence to overcome the weak leadership and poor instruction of the rest of the faculty. One student said, “The assignment to teach at Capitol Page School was regarded as a real plum. And that was kind of known to us. I thought the teachers were kind of going through the motions. And cynically I would say that now they’ve gotten this plum assignment and so now they can kind of sit back and relax and no

one's going to take this plum assignment away from them. The transient nature of the student body is not going to mount a complaint. Work was our first priority and school was, 'Well, yeah, we're teenagers and we have to go to school.'"²⁰⁶ Another student who went to the school in the mid-1970s told me, "You wouldn't have wanted me as a student! Most of the time, I was either drunk or on drugs, and I wasn't, I have busy having sex, so school was a concern for me."

Another thing that influenced the quality of education in the 1970s was the schedule of the Senate. At least in the 1971-72 school year, "school began at 6:15 in the morning. And school ended at 7:15 in the morning because Robert Byrd was the Majority Whip and he made sure that the Senate started to work at 9:00 in the morning," says Paulette Desell. "That meant that Pages were at work at 8:00 in the morning. So, most of my classes my senior year in high school we walked in and we received the answers to the previous day's homework and we received the next assignment. At this point, the House Pages went back to sleep which of course was an enormous waste of time for kids in the House and the Court because they just sat around, because the House rarely went in before noon. Was the education good? No, it wasn't good education! Poor educational conditions? You bet!"²⁰⁷

Two other things contributed to the poor quality of education at Page School during the 1970s. One, "there were some Senators that appointed kids for very short terms and so you have these youngsters zipping in and out, and those students may or may not have been invested in learning. They may or may not have been good students. That makes for a pretty unruly group of kids if you are not skilled at behavior management and differentiated education" in the classroom.²⁰⁸ Two, "the

facilities of the school up there in the attic were just the most appalling that I've ever experienced in my education. I think there were five classrooms and just a pathetic library. The space was not cleaned; everything about it was kind of dusty, and the furniture that we sat on for chairs were the old-fashioned ones. Our literature books in our English class were published the year I was born!"²⁰⁹ Donn Anderson said, "I always had the impression that the people at the Administration Building [at the DCBOE] were oblivious to the fact that the school was even there."²¹⁰

However, the biggest issue the school faced was trying to figure out its mission because it was being controlled by two different entities: the District of Columbia Board of Education and Congress. As time passed, the school, and in particular, Hoffman, "had a tendency to view themselves somewhat more independent of the Congress as educators who just happened to run a school that was



Photo 60 President Nixon in the Rose Garden with John Hoffman at microphone; Naomi Ulmer behind student. *Jim Oliver.*

populated by employees of the House and Senate, as opposed to having a connection, an obligation to those institutions. The quality of the teachers was declining and there had been no innovation whatsoever in the curriculum; our students on the other hand were becoming brighter, more

eager with higher expectations which simply weren't being satisfied. And we found that we were locking horns more and more on policies that were becoming increasingly acute to us."²¹¹ Hoffman, according to Anderson, "certainly was not

forthcoming with any spirit of cooperation in trying to address our needs, considering that we were the sole customers. He had his own ideas about what his authority was, which was extensive, and felt that he could rule with impunity, which he largely did” without interference from the Board.²¹²

The combination of the survey given by Lehman and Hoffman’s poor educational leadership led to another hearing by a House committee in July and September 1976. Because the business, government, English and math classes had received especially poor marks in the survey, those teachers were invited to testify before the Committee. Most of the hearing was the requisite review of the Page system, but Lehman went one step further this time. After inquiring where the teachers had heard of the job openings, he summarized what he had heard by saying



Photo 61 President Ford greets Pages. *Jim Oliver.*

that the whole hiring process was “a closed-circuit kind of in-bred organization, where those inside take care of themselves” since teaching jobs at Page School, unlike jobs at all other schools, were not advertised throughout the D. C. school system; they were filled

simply through word-of-mouth recommendations.²¹³ He also questioned Mr. McGrath, the social studies teacher, in a condescending and patronizing manner, asking about what he had written his thesis on, and asking him questions to assess McGrath’s knowledge of the subject he taught.

The students who testified at the hearing admitted that there was rampant cheating at the school, to the point where answers were shouted across the room and tests were taken with open textbooks on their desks.²¹⁴ Another student maintained that teachers could not communicate their knowledge of their subjects to students, and another student testified that there was “a general lack of discipline, motivation, and accountability, a lack which causes an air of nonchalance among the faculty” in addition to no enforcement of the rules.²¹⁵ This student also said that there was a serious problem of indiscriminate drug use among Pages, a problem that adults at work were aware of, but the students said that they were told just to ignore it.²¹⁶ Still another student said that Pages were “like stepchildren. They are pushed aside by everybody. The Congress doesn’t really take responsibility for the school. The school doesn’t take responsibility.”²¹⁷ All of the students were concerned about attending Page School because they had heard that college admissions offices thought the school was not challenging academically, so you needed excellent grades from Page School for them to mean anything.²¹⁸ Congressman George Miller punctuated the poor review of the school saying, “I really think the Page School is kidding itself that it is providing some kind of unique educational opportunity.”²¹⁹ This hearing was more than enough to provide needed ammunition for demanding change in Page School.

Only a week later in October 1976, the Senate released a report agreeing with this assessment, saying that Capitol Page School was inferior. The recommendation of this report was either to use a paid messenger service to replace Pages, or to make Pages merit-based jobs and dramatically increase their supervision. The Senate

seemed to be eager to close Page School and take the money used to run it to pay full-time adults to do the same job, which would dramatically alter the Page system.²²⁰

In an effort to protect his job, his teachers and his school, Principal Hoffman gave his own survey to students and he found that he was “fairly satisfied” with the results. Of course, he then relayed the results to Speaker Albert to calm any concerns that the Speaker might have had about the school.²²¹

More ammunition for change came in June 1977, when the House subcommittee on Education and Labor released a draft report which stated that Page School should be improved so that Congress had a model private school, instead of a school where the quality of instruction was a constant concern, and also advocated for a residence. Because Senate Pages were 14 to 18 years old and House Pages were 16 to 18 years old, it meant that instructional resources at school were being wasted because sometimes only one ninth-grader would be in a class by himself.²²² Most people would think that this part was not worth the money being spent.

This draft report, which was not adopted by the full Committee, blasted the school, saying that “[i]n every way imaginable, this school is tainted by a lack of



Photo 62 President Carter welcoming Pages to the White House. *Jim Oliver.*

concern, motivation, and integrity on the part of the administration, the faculty, and the students.”²²³

The report offered an explanation for the alleged apathy by saying that the “school’s problems may arise from its efforts to deal with

unusual forces in a traditional way” but that those forces were difficult to grasp because there was a “complex arrangement of officials and organizations which have various shades of jurisdiction over the school.”²²⁴ Supervision for the school was spread so thin that it was uncertain who had jurisdiction over anything the school did. The school was forced to operate in a unique milieu, constrained by the very reasons it existed and functioning as both an adjunct to Congress and as a private school under the supervision of a public School Board. The report recommended a specialized school that stressed government and politics, or a school where the city became the classroom but it also recommended as an alternative that Pages be college students. This reform-themed report caused little reaction, not only because it was never approved by the full Committee but also because there was simply a lack of interest from most people, with no single person now acting as the leader of trying to make improvements in the Page system.

In November 1977, Doorkeeper Molloy calculated the rent that Pages were paying and realized that they were spending over \$10,000 every month, and he implored the Architect of the Capitol to do everything he could to secure housing for Pages.²²⁵ Any type of Congressional-sanctioned housing simply would not cost as much as they were already spending. As much as the Page system needed supervision and housing, the Pages themselves still were not helping themselves, with stories of their exploits repeatedly in the press. In July 1977, one writer thought that the lessons in politics that Pages were learning were nothing compared to the lessons in life they learned, as bars looked the other way when Pages came in, and let them stay late every night. Pages were well-known not only for innocent mischief like

wheelchair races in the Rotunda, but also for sexual experimentation and excessive alcohol use.²²⁶ The stories in the press about the school were no better, claiming that the school gave a lackluster education, and that in a typical social studies class, 1/3 of the students slept, 1/3 read magazines and the other 1/3 talked among themselves. Principal Hoffman could only defend his school by saying that the school tried to do the best it could under the difficult circumstances it was forced to operate in.²²⁷

Members eventually began to question the poor reputation of the school directly in Floor speeches. Because there was little correlation between Pages' work and what they learned in school, and with classes ranging anywhere from seven to forty-five minutes, and the host of other problems the school had, there was widespread belief that there now were grave flaws in the manner in which the Page system was supervised, a poorly administered school, poor working conditions and undisciplined young people living wild lives.²²⁸ Even the basketball team was allowed to drift, not practicing, with no emphasis placed on success; it existed just to allow those few boys who wanted a chance to play.²²⁹ The Page system was in dire need to change.

Because all of the Page system's problems were converging simultaneously in the late 1970s, there were several times where there was a renewed call for reform, and various Members wanted investigations conducted into the state of Page School, or the Page system as a whole, repeating the process from earlier years.²³⁰ In June 1978, the two chairmen of the Subcommittees on Legislative Committees on Appropriations were still concerned with the quality of education at Page School, and both wanted still another investigation, requesting that the Office of the Comptroller

General complete a full review.²³¹ There seemed to be little agreement on who exactly was running Page School or what should be done to improve it.

Doorkeeper Molloy seemed to want to help Pages as much as he could and wrote a report on what he thought should happen within the Page system to improve things. He recommended a Congressional board to oversee the school, not DCBOE; a change in the curriculum, so that work was relevant to their schoolwork; raising the age of Senate Pages; a one-year maximum for each Page, and organized housing with breakfast and lunch provided for them.²³² According to Molloy, the “patent lack of action” over the years, especially since the 1976 recommendations, was critical and those changes should be followed up on. He wanted control of the Page system to shift to Congress because he contended that DCBOE had proven that it was not “equipped to provide the very unique direction and assistance required by the nature of the school” and that it was “not reasonable to expect the D. C. School System to respond to such an individual [school’s] need.”²³³

The report from the Comptroller General’s office was kind to Page School and found that it was providing an “adequate education, especially under difficult circumstances” but recommended better management and oversight of the school, and several other minor changes.²³⁴ Again, this report elicited little response and ultimately no action.

Part Five: Key Players Look Back and Comment On the Page System

As the 1980s began, after funds had been given for the site selection of the McCormack School, the design of the building and even the purchase of the land, there still were no funds for the actual construction of a building.²³⁵ As far as the

Page system was concerned, there was no good news to be found, and none in the foreseeable future. The struggle for control of the Page system continued and the inertia that had had a stranglehold on Pages for the past 40 years showed no signs of loosening. The one bright spot was the 1979-1980 basketball team which ended its season 19-2, although there was constant turnover of players and the team ran out of money to rent a gym for its practices halfway through its season.²³⁶

For all appearances, Congress wanted to continue to have Pages; or at least, nobody wanted to be responsible for getting rid of them altogether. Privately however, the feeling on Capitol Hill may have been different. Three major players in the Page system recalled their feelings after they retired. Francis Valeo, Secretary of the Senate from 1966 to 1977 said in 1985 that he “never believed in the Page system. I thought it was one of those things . . . which you didn’t really need to keep for its historical curiosity value. I really think the system is bad and I think it’s bad for the kids and I think it’s bad for the Senate.”²³⁷ He said that the only reason the Page system was kept around was because “it was too much ingrained and it was too much of a perk that had some meaning back in the [Senators’ home] states.”²³⁸

F. Nordy Hoffman, Senate Sergeant at Arms from 1975 to 1981, agreed with Valeo in an interview in 1988. He thought that Pages needed better supervision and a “place for them to stay when they’re here working, but then the taxpayer’s going to be raising the devil, because [they would say] ‘Why are you paying for these kids to come in and my kid can’t get in there?’”²³⁹ Pages were a problem in his estimation because no Senator wanted to accept responsibility for them since it was too low of a

priority and there was too much risk involved for their political careers if something went wrong.

Lastly, in 1977, Fishbait Miller, Doorkeeper of the House for over 25 years, was of a similar mind. He thought it was too difficult to supervise Pages when they were away from work. He knew that some of them were making the rounds to every bar on the Hill after work each day, picking up girls along the way but there was only so much he could do.²⁴⁰ He summarized the entire 200-year history of the Page system when he said, “With over 300 people to supervise, I had my hands too full to concentrate on Pages.”²⁴¹

Since the early 1940s, a few individuals supported the Page system in trying to secure housing for them and improve their lives while they were in Washington and reform the system. It seemed to be the popular viewpoint of advocates for change to think that Congress owed it to Pages to provide housing for them, if for no other reason than the alternative, allowing them to live on their own with no supervision, was not palatable. Though many committee reports were written, many hearings were held and lots of time and energy went into reforming the Page system, it remained remarkably unchanged. The inability of Congress to do anything in terms of providing supervision for Pages would catch up with them in the early 1980s, and those events are covered in the Chapter Seven.

Part Six: Pages in the News, 1957

There is one news item that is worthy mentioning because a Capitol Page School student was featured prominently in a news story that made headlines for a brief time. It occurred in June 1957, when Huw Williams, a 17 year old working in

the Senate, and Christina Wennerstrom, the 16 year-old daughter of a high-ranking Swedish diplomat, who had been reported to be “madly in love” with each other, both were missing.²⁴² Wennerstrom was scheduled to return to Sweden in a week, and the couple was believed to have eloped so that she could remain in America. Police all over the east coast were notified to watch for them.²⁴³ Williams had taken his two weeks of leave from the Senate, so the fact that he was not at work was not an issue.²⁴⁴

However, when his leave had expired and he still had not shown up for work, Williams was dropped from the Senate payroll, after the rest of the Pages signed a pledge of support and offered to help raise money for the couple, in case they did get married.²⁴⁵ After being gone for 18 days, the pair was stopped for speeding in Pennsylvania and recognized as the couple that had been reported missing, and they were returned to Washington where the details of their absence were revealed.²⁴⁶ They eloped one night when they were in Christina’s bedroom and lowered items one at a time by a rope outside the window to escape in the middle of the night. Although Williams’s mother knew their plan, she did not try to stop them. Driving to West Virginia, they attempted to get married, but could not do so because of their ages. They then went on a casual vacation as far north as Toronto and back.²⁴⁷

Although Christina had to return to Stockholm with her family upon her arrival in Washington, which was devastating to Williams, her parents at first wanted nothing to do with him, but after a couple days, they changed their attitude and had no objection to him, as long as he proved to be a responsible young man.²⁴⁸ In true American style, two record company executives wanted to see if Williams could sing,

even just a little, because his story would endear him to teenagers all over the country and they wanted to capitalize on the publicity of the story.²⁴⁹ However, no record deal ever happened.

Three months later, Williams allegedly stole six tires from a store in Virginia and he was arrested for grand larceny.²⁵⁰ His whereabouts today are unknown. Ken Smith, Speaker's Page in the mid-1950s remembers that "everybody just thought it was really funny; it was something for everybody to laugh about because there were daily radio announcements with respect to where they had been or where they might be. He didn't make much of a mark until he did that."²⁵¹

Part Seven: Accreditation At a Boarding School With No Boarding Facilities, 1949 to 1974

Ernest Kendall never followed through with an accreditation of the school in the mid-1940s, even though Senator Burton urged him to do so, as explained in Chapter Three. After Kendall was dismissed from his position by DCBOE in June 1947, Orson Trueworthy took over, and one of the first things he knew he had to do was attain accreditation for the school from Middle States.

Sometime in late 1949 or early 1950, the school was given its first accreditation from Middle States with an inferior rating for the science department, and a recommendation for a re-evaluation in 1954, in part because one teacher taught both math and science to the detriment of both departments.²⁵² The report also requested "special reports on Development of Curriculum, Improvements in the Library, Extension of the Guidance Program, Changes in Physical Facilities and Supervision of Instruction."²⁵³

This initial accreditation was supposed to be valid for ten years, until the end of 1961, but with the concerns from the Commission, there were intervening updates. In January 1952, Middle States gave the school a two-year accreditation, and in January 1954 another one-year accreditation.²⁵⁴ This latter action also required a school self-evaluation and “was taken in view of the re-evaluation to take place during the [1953-1954] school year at the request of the school.”²⁵⁵ In March 1954, a team of eight educators visited the school to make an assessment, and the team commended the school on many things and commented positively on the “friendly spirit of school” and granted its accreditation.²⁵⁶

In January 1955, Middle States granted a five-year accreditation, and in January 1960 another five-year accreditation, with the requirement of a visit from an evaluation team in 1964.²⁵⁷ Not helping the school’s tenuous position with Middle States, when the Senate Public Works Subcommittee held a hearing concerning the Page residence in 1963, it was sure to point out that the school had a small and insufficient faculty, makeshift equipment, a lack of safeguards for the boys and a lack of supervision that good boarding schools have.²⁵⁸ There were national news stories about how bad the school was, pointing out that “almost without exception, Pages report that their school work suffers when they come to Washington” although they did not seem to mind because of what they learned at work and the totality of the experience.²⁵⁹ The general public was subject to stories about Pages saying that their work always took precedence over their schooling, and that some boarding houses refused Pages because the wear and tear on their rooms was not worth the rent they paid.²⁶⁰

On March 17 and 18, 1964, Page School was evaluated by a team from Middle States and the school was given only a one-year temporary accreditation because although the evaluating team was satisfied with the school's academic program, it was disturbed by the lack of housing and supervision that a boarding school should have had.²⁶¹ Other recommendations from the evaluation team included the addition of a chemistry class, fourth year French, a private office for the principal and a better attendance tracking system.²⁶² In January 1965, the Commission gave a one-year accreditation because it thought that the school needed more frequent Progress Reports so that it could better assess the school's development. The Commission took special action and warned, "In future consideration of the extension of accreditation of this school, it will be expected to meet the standards which are applied to boarding schools," meaning that the Page system would need to add housing.²⁶³

In January 1966, another one-year accreditation was given, but Middle States was beginning to lose its patience with the school when it wrote to principal DeKeyser, "WARNING: Accreditation will not be extended beyond December 31, 1966 unless the school meets the standards applied to boarding schools."²⁶⁴ We have already seen that no boarding facilities were ever provided for the boys, so it is ponderous how the accreditation continued. However, in January 1967 still another one-year accreditation was given. The Commission considered all of the extenuating factors surrounding the school and concluded that the one-year period was acceptable because the decision was based "on the assumption that the Capitol Page School will be phased out sometime during the year 1967" because of a change to college-age

Pages, and continued, “we understand that there is every likelihood that the school will soon be discontinued by an act of Congress. This being the case, it is only fair that the accreditation be extended to such a time. If, however, the plans are changed and the school is allowed to continue as it now exists, accreditation will not be extended beyond December 31, 1967.”²⁶⁵

However, DeKeyser was able to placate the Commission during 1967 with a Code of Conduct he wrote for Pages, and with the plans for a residence that were now closer to fruition, so the Commission extended the accreditation for another year in December 1967, armed with the knowledge that either the school was going to be discontinued in 1968 or a residence was going to be built.²⁶⁶ The Commission notified Speaker McCormack and principal DeKeyser that if the school still existed in the fall of 1968, then it would again need a thorough evaluation, and the school would be held to the standards used for boarding schools.²⁶⁷

In January 1968, Page School was able to earn another one-year accreditation by having all Pages move into one of two boarding houses, consolidating them so at least they were closer together; however, the supervision that they received was still negligible.²⁶⁸ The report from Middle States was looking forward to a report from the school concerning housing and future legislation regarding the school.²⁶⁹ In January 1969, yet another one-year accreditation was granted, the sixth consecutive one-year accreditation, with a request for principal DeKeyser to visit the offices of the Commission in Philadelphia.²⁷⁰ Whether DeKeyser made that visit is questionable, but in December 1969, the Commission granted a two-year accreditation.²⁷¹

From 1968 through 1971, the school was accredited “only because of the necessary intervention of the Speaker” since it still did not meet the requirements for a true accreditation due to the continued lack of housing and supervision.²⁷² Congress and DCBOE were running a boarding school with no officially recognized residence, and each evaluating committee saw that as a problem, yet accreditation continued as funding for the McCormack school was getting closer to being realized.

In the early 1970s, when talk of appointing girls became an issue, the school’s program was questioned extensively as part of the overall review of the system, yet the school was still “able to retain its accreditation in spite of recognized educational inadequacies.”²⁷³ In December 1971, a three-year accreditation was given, and in November 1974, the school received its next accreditation, good for ten years, again with the urging that a residence be provided for its students.²⁷⁴ According to a 1976 report, Capitol Page School received accreditation in 1950, 1964 and 1974, so the one-year extensions may have simply been strong recommendations and not necessarily mandates, although they could have been and then subsequently relaxed when the Speaker intervened.²⁷⁵ Regardless, the integrity of Middle States has to be questioned as it continued to grant temporary accreditation to a boarding school with no place for its students to live.

Although the school was officially accredited, the Page system was operating in a time when illegal drugs were readily available and Pages were still living on their own with minimal supervision. Pages were no longer the innocent young men that they were in the early 1900s or even the 1950s; on the contrary, they were young men and women who knew that the freedom they had in living on their own and working

in the most powerful city in the world was something to take advantage of. Custis Meade, a House Page in the 1920s illustrated this difference when he wrote in 1982, “Many of us were not saintly . . . [s]ome of us smoked cigarettes, told dirty stories, and were generally obnoxious with our self-importance, but we didn’t know about drugs and I never heard a hint of any Congressman being involved” with Pages in anything inappropriate like what was about to be uncovered within the Page system.²⁷⁶

As the 1970s were ending, many people did not regard the Page system in a positive light. The pressure from all the warnings that had come in the previous 30 years was building up. Pages got to see the “obvious drinking problems of high-ranking Senators and House members; and [they] saw their often Machiavellian use of power.”²⁷⁷ In 1979, one Page was arrested for selling marijuana to an undercover police officer, and one Page was arrested for assault with a deadly weapon “after allegedly fracturing the skull of a Congressional intern with a two-by-four, breaking his nose and lacerating his forehead.”²⁷⁸ The Page system had a reputation of operating on “illogical, sacred quirks and whims, contacts and taboos, and hasn’t changed too much . . . except to include women and blacks, to expand, and apparently to get more self-conscious and elitist.”²⁷⁹ The school fared no better since there was a common perception that “their schooling is haphazard because no one feels responsible for making it better,” plus there was no clear delineation even of who had jurisdiction and oversight of Capitol Page School.²⁸⁰

Even into the summer of 1980, there were calls to establish a control board to regulate the Page system and recommend improvements.²⁸¹ After thousands of hours

of people's time and testimony and recommendations, the Page system in 1981 was not that different than it was in 1950, other than the addition of girls in 1971. However, society had changed a great deal as the Page system remained relatively stagnant in those 30 years. The failure of Congress to heed the warning signs of the potential time-bomb that was the Page system was about to catch up to them. With young Pages living in a major American city at a time when drugs were increasingly commonplace, it was only a matter of time before something happened like what so many in Congress had been warning about for decades. That keg of dynamite that several Members had testified about had its fuse already lit and it was going to ignite at any moment. The events in the summer of 1982 thrust change upon Capitol Page School to the point where the school was forced to dissolve.

Notes

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2. Nancy Benco, "Food Service in the Library of Congress: 1897 to Present," *Library of Congress Information Bulletin*, 20 July 1973 and 27 July 1973, 269.
3. Verner Clapp, "Memo to the Librarian re: Fire Hazards," Records of the Library of Congress, Central File, MacLeish-Evans, Buildings and Grounds Collection, Box 697, *Folder 4-3*, Manuscript Reading Room, Library of Congress, Washington, 19 December 1942.
4. Archibald MacLeish, "Letter to Calvin Lauber, Fire Marshal," Records of the Library of Congress, Central File, MacLeish-Evans, Buildings and Grounds Collection, Box 697, *Folder 4-3*, Manuscript Reading Room, Library of Congress, Washington, 5 January 1943.
5. Calvin Lauber, "Letter to Archibald MacLeish," Records of the Library of Congress, Central File, MacLeish-Evans, Buildings and Grounds Collection, Manuscript Reading Room, Library of Congress, Washington, Box 697, *Folder 4-3*, 13 January 1943; Benco, 269.
6. *1945 Telephone Directory*, Records of the Library of Congress, Central File, MacLeish-Evans, Buildings and Grounds Collection, Box 406, *Folder Admin 3*, Manuscript Reading Room, Library of Congress, Washington.
7. Verner Clapp, "Letter to Personnel Office," Records of the Library of Congress, Central File, MacLeish-Evans, Buildings and Grounds Collection, Box 407, *Folder Admin 3-10; Meetings*, Manuscript Reading Room, Library of Congress, Washington, 7 April 1943; Luther Evans, "Letter to the Acting Director of Personnel," Records of the Library of Congress, Central File, MacLeish-Evans, Buildings and Grounds Collection, Box 407, *Folder Admin 3-10; Meetings*, Manuscript Reading Room, Library of Congress, Washington, 8 December 1943.
8. Sherwood Stanley, "Letter to John Andreassen," Records of the Library of Congress, Central File, MacLeish-Evans, Buildings and Grounds Collection, Box 406, *Folder Admin 3; Meetings*, Manuscript Reading Room, Library of Congress, Washington, 13 October 1947.
9. Luther Evans, "Letter to The Members of the Staff," Records of the Library of Congress, Manuscript Reading Room, Library of Congress, Washington, Central

File, MacLeish-Evans, Buildings and Grounds Collection, Box 407, Folder *Admin 3-9*; *Allocation of Spaces*, 4 February 1949.

10. Orson Trueworthy, "Letter to David Lynn," Office of the Curator of the Architect of the Capitol, Record Group 43, Series 43.2, Art and Reference Subject Files, "Capitol Building, 1881-1986," Box 5, Folder 8, *Pages School; Capitol*, 10 December 1947; "Bigger School for Capitol Pages Ready in Library of Congress," *Washington Evening Star*, 8 September 1949, B2.

11. Orson Trueworthy, "Letter to David Lynn," Records of the Library of Congress, Central File, MacLeish-Evans, Buildings and Grounds Collection, Manuscript Reading Room, Library of Congress, Washington, Box 697, *Folder 4-3*, 2 July 1948.

12. Luther Evans, *Library of Congress Information Bulletin*, Library of Congress Archive, Manuscript Reading Room, Library of Congress, 12 September 1949, 16; "Page School in New Home," *Washington Times Herald*, 9 September 1949; "Page Boys to Have Roomier Quarters," *Washington Post*, 11 September 1949, L1; John Cole, *For Congress and the Nation*, (Washington: Library of Congress, 1979); NOTE: I could find no record and virtually nothing written about how this move came about. One newspaper article had one reference to the Senate Rules Committee having responsibility for the move but when I checked that Committee's original hand-written meeting minutes at the National Archives, I could find no mention of discussion about Page School's move.

13. John Andreassen, "Letter to Louise Grover," Records of the Library of Congress, Manuscript Reading Room, Library of Congress, Washington, Central File, MacLeish-Evans, Buildings and Grounds Collection, Box 407, Folder *Admin 3-10*; *Meetings*, 13 September 1950.

14. Gordon Brown, "Safari Stalks Congressional Library As Serpent Gives Savants Shivers," *Washington Post and Times Herald*, 9 November 1955, 1.

15. "Washington Eyes Space For New Senate Building," *Christian Science Monitor*, 9 August 1948, 3.

16. "Additional Senate Office Building," *Senate Document 143*, 83rd Cong., 2nd Sess., 16 July 1954, 34; Hobart Corning, "Letter to George Stewart," Office of the Curator of the Architect of the Capitol, Record Group 43, Series 43.2, Art and Reference Subject Files, Capitol Building, 1881-1986, Box 5, Folder 9, *Pages School: John McCormack Residential School*, 8 December 1954; "Progress on the Construction Front," *Washington Post and Times Herald*, 20 October 1956, B2.

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67. Bob Gandel, Interview with author, 5; Mike Revell said that from September to January, maybe 20 students were at the school (page 5).

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69. Several interviewees said that they thought the teachers were the best that the system had to offer, and that teaching at Page School was considered a "political plum." See the following interviews: Borsari, 5, 7; Karp, 6-7; Hays, 15; Bauman, 6. For teachers' other jobs, see Oliver II, 8. The direct quote is Karp, 6.

70. Tom Davis, Interview with author, 6.

71. Vance Morrison, Interview with author, 16.

72. Vance Morrison, Interview with author, 28.

73. Vance Morrison, interview with author, 14.

74. Mike Revell, Interview with author, 23; Tom Davis, Interview with author, 4.

75. The first sentence is Ken Smith, Interview with author, 17; the other two sentences are from Vance Morrison, Interview with author, 10. In addition to this type of behavior in the school, Hilton also sometimes would sign students' report cards in the space for Principal Signature.

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77. Mike Revell, Interview with author, 24.
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200. This student wishes to remain anonymous.
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I urge the appointment of girl Pages not only because I believe in the principle of equal opportunity and non-discrimination due to sex, but also because for the Senate-- and for me in particular-- to take any other position would be to put the Congress "above the law" and immune to those principles of fairness which apply to the rest of the nation. . . . It is simply a question of fundamental human fairness, a question of whether half the population shall be deprived of an opportunity without a substantial reason and on a basis which would be a federal offense if committed by anyone else."

~Senator Jacob Javits, *Hearing Before the Ad Hoc Subcommittee to Consider the Appointment of Female Pages of the Committee on Rules and Administration*, 92nd Cong., 1st Sess., 4 March 1971, 5.

CHAPTER SIX: MARGINALIZED GROUPS WITHIN THE PAGE SYSTEM

INTRODUCTION

This chapter will report on the histories of three marginalized groups within the Page system. The histories of these three groups are important in the overall evolution of Capitol Page School, and they deserve their own chapter. It starts with the attempts by females to obtain Page appointments, beginning in 1935 and finally ending in 1971, in a story that again is rife with attempts for change meeting up with institutional inertia inside Congress. It then looks at how African-Americans were able to break the ranks of the Page corps immediately after the Supreme Court's *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. Finally, it discusses how Supreme Court Pages were treated compared to their Congressional colleagues, especially in terms of study time and formal education.

Part One: Congress Wrestles With Allowing Female Pages, 1935 to 1971

THE "FIRST" FEMALE PAGE, 1939

The earliest reference to a girl wanting to be a Page is in 1917, when Jeanette Rankin, the first woman elected to the House, announced that she was trying to obtain a Page position for a 15 year-old girl named Cecelia Martin who had appeared in her office, asking for such an appointment.¹ Congressman Clyde Kelley also supported the girl's request but the request got nowhere in an early test of the "boys only" rule within the Page system. In July 1935, an 11 year-old girl from Alabama called her Senator's office and said that she wanted to become a Page, reasoning that she could do the job just as well as the boy Pages. Senator Robinson simply replied that he was sorry, but hiring girls to be Pages was just was not being done at that time. He

apologized to her, admitting that “Congress has never employed a girl Page and probably never will.”²

However, “never” came less than four years later, in January 1939, when 13 year-old Gene Cox, the daughter of Representative Edward Eugene "Goober" Cox, worked for about two and a half hours on the first day of that session. Although the Doorkeeper protested, thinking it might “get into the papers” and start a flood of applications from girls, she was sworn in as a Page.³ She earned four dollars for the errands she ran, saying that she “had the time of her life” even though “they didn’t let me do much . . . but they didn’t mind that I was there.”⁴ Of course the adolescent boys did not mind that a pretty 13 year-old girl was around them either, even if it was only for a few hours.

She may have earned four dollars, and maybe the Pages did not mind that she was there, but other people did mind, and she earned the full consternation of the House. “At the suggestion that girl Pages as a regular thing might brighten up Congress, Doorkeeper Sinnott, thinking of [inappropriate] Cloakroom conversations he has heard, threw up his hands, and exclaimed, ‘It just wouldn't work out!’”⁵ While one may think that Gene Cox’s one-day stint as a Page made it easier for girls to become Pages, in reality, it would take almost 40 more years until girls were officially appointed as Pages.

GIRLS TEST THE PAGE SYSTEM, 1939 TO 1954

Gene Cox was officially the first girl Page in 1939 but it was during a time when girls were not being appointed to Page positions. She served only a half day and was able to do that only because her father was a Congressman, so she can hardly

be credited with breaking the gender barrier in any real sense. Girls had always been eligible to be Pages; there was no law that said a Page had to be a boy but with the passage of the Civil Rights Act in 1964, prohibiting discrimination in employment based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin, girls were explicitly eligible to be Pages. However, the window that Gene Cox snuck through in 1939 had been closed tightly and it was difficult to open because the long-standing tradition of having only boy Pages trumped even the Civil Rights Act. The attitudes of Members and the mores of Congress were difficult to change.

In January 1954, Margaret Alden from Rochester, New York, put her Congressman on the spot, asking him for a Page position. Other Pages were all for it because it “would raise morale of the Page School” but no Member wanted to appoint a girl.⁶ Her Congressman, Kenneth Keating, asked Patronage Committee chairman Leo Allen if half of the Pages could be girls. Allen replied that their schooling would be a problem because they would have to wake up before dawn like the boys did, and he said unenthusiastically that he would talk to the other members of the Patronage Committee. “The Committee listened politely then laid its collective ear to the ground. Were many complaints pouring in? When they heard no great hue and cry, they decided there need be no rush about changing a tradition of the past 165 years.”⁷ Congresswomen Katharine St. George and Ruth Thompson only half-supported the idea of having girl Pages, saying that they did not want to take responsibility for supervising them outside of work. Not helping their cause, Congresswoman Leonor Sullivan was only half-hearted about having girls serve as Pages, and questioned the fashion wisdom of the Page uniform, doubting whether girls could look good in navy

blue pants.⁸ These women who had the chance to put pressure on the Page system, instead bowed their heads before the power of tradition and social pressure, or possibly agreed with it.

Six months later, several high school girls expressed interest in becoming Pages, and Allen was able to stall them in July 1954 by saying that there were “sufficient obstacles along the way to prevent a decision” for many months.⁹ One of the obstacles was the backlog of applications from boys, which of course had to be processed first, he said; another was that the majority party could change at the start of a new Congress and the process would be changed. Allen admitted that it was not easy to supervise the boys, and supervising girls would be even tougher, and he remained concerned about the early start time for school and finding housing where someone could keep an eye on the girls (although we have seen that nobody was keeping an eye on the boys). Another problem was that Pages were paid only when Congress was in session, and when Congress adjourned they found odd jobs around Members’ offices, which was not a problem for the boys but, Allen lamented, what kinds of jobs could a girl possibly do? In opposition to Allen, St. George and Thompson again gave only their tepid support for appointing girls.¹⁰

In the summer of 1954, when the four Pages were arrested for shooting out the streetlights, there was tongue-in-cheek talk a few months later about replacing Pages with girls “but nothing came of it, thank heaven,” went the traditional thinking.¹¹ In 1956, a delegation of girls came to Washington to see Congresswoman Margaret Chase Smith about sponsoring a female Page but she flat out refused the request.¹² These few first requests from girls to become Pages were all stalled successfully, yet

there were many other attempts by girls to get appointments as Pages.¹³ All of them together caused barely a ripple in the Congressional legislative ocean as inertia continued to keep things as they always had been. Nobody, not even female Members, were willing to fight the fight it would take to break the long-standing tradition of the Page system.

SENATORS JAVITS AND PERCY FORCE THE ISSUE, 1970 TO 1971

Soon after the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was passed, and it empowered females everywhere, many girls felt comfortable complaining about the lack of Page jobs for

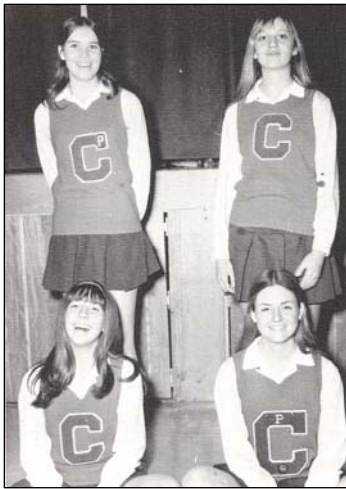


Photo 63 CPS cheerleading squad, 1971. *1971 Congressional.*

them.¹⁴ A typical reason that no girl could be named a Page any time soon was that “Washington [was] no place to turn a teenage girl loose on her own.”¹⁵ In 1970, when there was lots of talk about using college students as Pages, both male and female college students were included in those talks, and the inclusion of females may have contributed to all that legislation getting stuck in committee. Although a girl could not be appointed as a

Page, in 1970, the Page School boys basketball team had a four-girl cheerleading squad, comprised of girls from area high schools, illustrating how females were marginalized.¹⁶

In October 1970, when the McCormack school/residence was approved, it included a provision for girl Pages. Soon after it was approved, freshman Senator Charles Percy announced that he would be appointing a girl that coming January, and veteran Senator Jacob Javits, who had made a reputation for himself as an advocate

for equal rights, immediately followed suit.¹⁷ Both men would leave their legacy with the Page system as people who were able to overcome institutional inertia and make changes within the system.

Everett Jordan, the powerful Chair of the Rules Committee, claimed that he did not “detect any significant enthusiasm” for having girl Pages in 1970.¹⁸ To him, to have “young women sitting around on the steps of the Senate chamber waiting to be dispatched” to run errands seemed to lack dignity. Javits did not want to wait for



Photo 64 Paulette Desell. 1972 Congressional.

the Rules Committee to make a decision, so on December 10, 1970, he introduced Paulette Desell to the nation on NBC’s “Today Show” and announced that she was going to be the first girl appointed to a Page position.¹⁹ The next day, Desell and Javits held a press conference, saying that the rule about the Page uniform would have to be modified for her but Javits

did not think the Rules Committee would have a problem with Desell’s appointment, although it had not created a rule providing for it yet. While Desell was being used as sort of a civil rights poster girl, she wanted to prove nothing in terms of the women’s liberation movement; she simply wanted the job.²⁰ Soon after this in January 1971, Senator Percy named the second female Page, Ellen McConnell.²¹ Senator Fred Harris had also appointed a girl named Julie Price.

When Percy’s Page, Ellen McConnell, was to be sworn in, she remembers that “Senator Percy’s administrative aide walked me and my parents to Senate Sergeant at

Arms Robert Dunphy's office fully expecting to be sworn in. And Dunphy said, 'Well, I can't do that. I don't have the power to swear in the first girl Page for the Senate.' And we were dumbfounded. We had been warned in a very casual way that it might not happen, and I think the wording from the letter was something like, 'There's a chance, albeit slim, that you won't be sworn in.' It was something like that. And, so we were quite surprised when he refused."²² Dunphy would not accept an appointment of a girl without approval of the Senate Rules Committee, and in classic rhetoric, he said that he was "unable to change the long-standing policies and precedents of the Senate without specific direction from the [Rules] Committee."²³

By the end of January 1971, all three girls were in Washington, waiting for the Rules Committee to pass judgment on their appointments. However, the members of



Photo 65 Senators Percy and Javits with Ellen McConnell and Paulette Desell, May 1971. *Jim Oliver.*

the Rules Committee seemed to be in no hurry to do that, having failed to reach a quorum at the two meetings it had scheduled since November. There was a question whether the girls needed the Rules Committee's decision because the law stated that the Sergeant at Arms had all authority in issues regarding Pages;

however, Sergeant at Arms Dunphy was

steadfast in not swearing in the girls until he received direction to change the long-standing tradition, saying that he "did not feel that as an employee of the Senate [he] could assume the responsibility to change the uninterrupted precedents and policies of

over 150 years with respect to the employment of Pages.”²⁴ Without a rule from Jordan’s Committee, the Page system was not going to be tampered with.

Finally, on February 4, 1971, when it had finally reached a quorum, the Rules Committee met in a closed session and could not decide whether to give permission for girl Pages in the Senate but in typical manner, it did decide that if girls were going to be Pages at some point, they were positively going to wear the same uniform as the male Pages.²⁵ Since the Committee could not decide what to do, it did what we have seen done so many times when a Congressional body cannot make a decision: it appointed a subcommittee to study the question further.²⁶

Two weeks later in February 1971, Rules Committee Chairman Jordan reiterated his desire for girl Pages to wear the same uniform as boy Pages, even though the Rules Committee had been treated to a fashion show of female Page uniforms by a clothing consultant, which of course brought on the derision of the public, claiming that the Committee was wasting taxpayer money.²⁷

When the Rules Subcommittee met to consider girl Pages in the first week of March 1971, it concluded that there was a “quickened interest in the Capitol Page system” because of the pressure that the girls were applying, although the Subcommittee wanted to point out that the entire Page system needed to be overhauled, including their pay and regulating the eligible ages.²⁸ Senator Javits was incredulous that half the world was being excluded from Page positions even though the Civil Rights Act said that girls should be eligible. Directing his argument at Sergeant at Arms Dunphy, he said that the entire situation was happening not because of the weight of the packages that Pages carried; not because of the girls’ lack of

strength; not because of the long hours they had to work; not due to the fact that girls could not run errands for men; not because the girls could not handle the early school hours-- it was about keeping a tradition, but, he said, "There comes a time when it is apparent that we should break with certain tradition."²⁹ Javits was holding nothing back in his attempts to change the Page system by adding girls.

Soon after the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946, a law was passed making all minor employees of Congress eligible to attend Page School; however, in an extreme move, Ellen McConnell, Senator Percy's Page, was still denied admission to the school, even though Dunphy had certified that she was a Senate employee, working in Percy's office.³⁰ She had to get her assignments from the boys who brought them to her from school. She remembers that she had to get "the book from a boy in the hallway of the Senate Office Building. I would meet him, like Deep Throat kind of and get the assignments" since Dunphy would not break precedent of the Senate.³¹

Javits appeared on the Floor of the Senate in early March 1971, proclaiming that the Senate was being hypocritical and he said that it was "high time we practiced what we preach."³² There was no statutory reason not to appoint girl Pages, and Javits said that lots of people were making lots of excuses to block the appointment of girl Pages. Javits reasoned that if Capitol Hill was not safe, then it was not safe for boys or girls, and Congress should have better protections for them, but it certainly should not continue to perpetuate the discrimination of girls. To ease the transition, Javits had purposely selected Desell, who was already 17 and who was going to live with her parents locally.

Desell remembers that she was told explicitly that there might be a problem with her appointment getting through the Rules Committee. “They anticipated that within three or four weeks it would happen. But at the same time, the Senator knew he was pushing the envelope. And, so he made that very clear up front that it might not all be pleasant.”³³

Even though the three girls were not working as Pages, they were getting a good look at how the Congress worked: “slow, resistant to change and not without some male chauvinism.”³⁴ Senator Allen got agitated enough to ask the upstart Percy incredulously where he was going to stop; did he think that women were appropriate to fill positions even as police officers and elevator operators?!³⁵ Because the Senate Subcommittee that the Rules Committee appointed was actually an ad hoc subcommittee, and since it could not decide what to do, it appointed a subcommittee of its own to study the question of girl Pages, dragging out the process even further. By the end of March 1971, McConnell had seen enough of Washington and had become impatient, and she went back home while the Rules Committee decided what to do, figuring she could not postpone her education any longer.³⁶ She remembers that “my parents wrote Percy a letter saying, ‘Enough is enough; don’t give up, but she’s got to come home. She’s missing school. This living in limbo is ridiculous.’”³⁷

Instead of waiting for the Rules Committee to make its decision, the three Senators decided to push the hand of the entire Senate itself. On May 3, 1971, Javits introduced a bill that authorized the appointment of Pages without regard to sex.³⁸ One week later, the Senate Subcommittee released its report regarding girl Pages. The Rules Committee had run out of excuses and it recommended passing the

legislation to have girl Pages, although they were going to have to wear traditional black pantsuits and not something more feminine.³⁹ It also urged the building of a school/residence and asked for a review of Pages' salaries since they were now making an astronomical \$7,400 a year.⁴⁰

The bill to allow girls, S. Res. 112, passed the Senate on May 13, 1971, even though some Senators wanted girl Pages dismissed at 6:00 PM and some wanted



Photo 66 Deborah Gelin, far right, and other Supreme Court Pages walking to work. *1972 Congressional*.

nothing to do with girl Pages.⁴¹ The bill passed with the provision that the appointing Senator had to write a letter to the Sergeant at Arms saying that the Senator would be responsible for the girl between the time she left work and the time she got home, and would further be responsible for her safety at

home, at least until the McCormack School was built. Additionally, McConnell remembers that she had “to ultimately, according to their conditions, sign a very explicit kind of a code of behavior that I would agree to follow. For instance, I was not-- *absolutely* not-- to walk to school by myself. And so, I'd stand in the lobby of my dorm and wait until a white shirt walked by, which would be another Page. And I'd run out and walk with him to school. And it was almost always the same boy I think, but I think the boy was probably a freshman. And here I was, you know, three or four years older and yet I had to walk with him.”⁴²

The day after S. Res. 112 passed, on May 14, 1971, Javits escorted Desell into the Senate Chamber, and when Senator Mike Gravel asked Desell to fetch a glass of

water for the presiding officer, Senator Alan Cranston, she officially ended the all-male domination of the Page corps.⁴³ Desell remembers this historic moment as all eyes were on her, and explains, “You can just imagine, I didn’t know how to do anything. Everybody’s watching, and I’m sent to get a glass of water. Well, I *don’t know* where the water’s at, I don’t know what to *do*. So, one of the boys showed me what to do, and I got it, and he told me where to put it. And I didn’t trip, and all was well with the world!”⁴⁴

The two other girls were on the job soon after this, and the three of them remained in the news for some time, if only to point out that they still were not allowed in certain rooms.⁴⁵ After all, not everything could



Photo 67 How things changed over time. 1972 Congressional.

be conceded all at once. The Page system was slow to change, and girls could not have everything from the start. McConnell remembers that “there was quite a bit of talk about the Cloakroom because the Senators would say, ‘Well, that’s where you go in and you belch and you fart,’ you know, and ‘you loosen your pants. You know, it’s kind of like a locker room and girls probably don’t belong in there.’”⁴⁶

As a side note, just days later when Julie Price found out that she was taller than Senator Cranston, some Pages thought it was a terrible thing to upstage a Senator like that and they let her know not to stand too close to him, although the taller boys had no restrictions.⁴⁷

The Supreme Court was next to appoint a girl Page. Deborah Gelin, a 14 year-old from Rockville, Maryland, was appointed as a Supreme Court Page and began work on September 25, 1972.⁴⁸ In the House, after a few false starts, including



Photo 68 Page School basketball team. Note the girl, far left, on the boys team. *1983 Congressional*

Congressman Edward Koch's intent to appoint a female Page in February 1972, although he could not do so because he did not have enough seniority, and Congressman Richard Shoup's nomination of Kathi Dayton that was not acted on, Speaker

Carl Albert appointed the House's first Page, Felda Looper, who began work on May 21, 1973.⁴⁹ Looper remembers that not only did the job look "like a lot of fun, but also it just wasn't right that there weren't any females. And my mother is the first feminist I ever knew, she was encouraging in this, and I was writing Speaker Albert on a continual basis to get his attention. And I would get responses, so I would continue to write."⁵⁰

In July 1973, the House hired Charlotte King, an 18 year-old black female as a Page but even into the fall of 1973, while girl Pages were allowed to do things like change the Speaker's water, they were still forbidden to go into certain rooms where boys were allowed to go.⁵¹ By 1977, Page School was able to field its first girls basketball team, although it was not much of a team, and a couple years later in 1979, Senator William Proxmire led the debate to delete the provision that Senators had to

sign a letter saying that they would be responsible for a girl Page.⁵² In uncharacteristic innovative fashion, in December 1979, Donna McNeily, a House



Photo 69 The girls basketball team practiced only four times and used the boys' rugby team shirts and masking tape for its uniforms. Their first game started late because the House session was later than expected (and uniforms were still being made with masking tape). 1977 *Congressional*.

Page, made history when she became the first girl in the Washington area to play in a boys basketball game.⁵³ The part of the armor that forbade girl Pages for decades had finally been chinked

away enough to make it ineffective. Because of the efforts of Senators Javits and Percy, and

Part Two: The Differences in the Supreme Court Pages

Because Supreme Court Pages were treated a bit differently than House and Senate Pages, especially the way they were treated when it came to their school studies, they deserve a short section of their own. We have already seen that Supreme Court Pages had firm guidelines to qualify for a job. "Boys are supposed to be shorter than the littlest justice . . . and not taller than the back of a justice's chair."⁵⁴ In the mid-1950s, Marshal of the Court Thomas Waggaman, a Page when he was younger, had a mark on his door and when a Page began growing taller and got higher than the mark, then it was time for him to look for another job. Officially, the Court gave preference to boys who had promise and whose families had a need for the income.⁵⁵ Also, they were hired by the Marshal of the Court, not by the

Justices, so the process to become a Supreme Court Page was different too. They had to apply and interview, not just simply be appointed like Congressional Pages. Additionally, since there were only four Supreme Court Pages at any one time, the position was considered “one of most-sought after [jobs] by secondary school boys” in the country and therefore the Marshal could hire higher quality boys than the Congress was hiring.⁵⁶

The Court considered its Pages much more dignified than the others, and generally, other Pages were envious of them because they had steady hours and a less strenuous schedule. One time in 1954, that dignity was compromised when there was a special session of the Court and the regular Pages were out of town. The Marshal got four ex-Pages who still worked in the building to serve again and they wore their regular everyday suits, not the Page uniform.⁵⁷ A similar incident occurred in the Senate in 1957. In late August, with several Pages already at college, the Senate was left shorthanded, so the Senate had to suspend the rules and Senator Case got a friend’s son to serve. The fact that the boy was supposed to be at least fourteen, but was only ten at the time was unimportant since the Senate felt that it could not be too fussy about his age in time of emergency.⁵⁸ Although the Court may have considered its Pages more dignified, even into the 1950s, the boys were still having fun, rubbing their feet on the carpet so that they gave shocks to the Justices when they handed them notes, and Justices were sometimes still preoccupied during sessions with having Pages find out scores to baseball games and other triviality.⁵⁹

Even though they may have had the better jobs, Supreme Court Pages did not like wearing knickers, something they did well into the 1960s, much longer than

either of the other groups, although they could wear long pants for their Saturday conference duty and for duties when the Court was not in session.⁶⁰ Maybe their dissatisfaction with their uniforms caused one observer to describe the boys as going about their business “quickly, quietly and without a smile.”⁶¹

As early as the late 1930s, Supreme Court Pages had ample time to do schoolwork, as explained by George Hutchinson. He says that when the Court was in session they normally could do their schoolwork from 9:00 until noon. When the Court was in recess, then they could do it almost all day depending upon the errands they had to run. “As I remember, we had plenty of time to study.”⁶²

By 1957, Supreme Court Pages were under strict orders to regulate their study time, even at work. Every day, each Page was supposed to have a study break from 12:30 to 1:00 “if he can be spared from bench duties.”⁶³ On conference days, two Pages were supposed to do schoolwork and the other two were to “work the conference room door,” rotating every hour.⁶⁴ Additionally, every other Saturday, two Pages would work from 9:00 to noon to help deliver messages for the Marshal’s Office, but they were always supposed to bring three hours worth of work in case they had time to do any of it. Also, the Marshal and the principal had a consistent communication regarding Pages, keeping track not only of their grades, but also their marks in department.⁶⁵ One Page in 1958 said that “you have to spend so much time on studies, you have to-- or should-- spend most of the weekend resting,” so there was not much time for anything else.⁶⁶ So, the Supreme Court version of the Page system recognized the importance of schoolwork more than the Congressional version did.

In 1959, when it came to the attention of Chief Justice Warren that Pages were not getting enough time to complete their studies, he ordered an internal Court investigation to determine how much time they had each day to do schoolwork. When compared to Congressional Pages, he found that Supreme Court Pages did in fact have a less strenuous work schedule. House and Senate Pages did not have a chance at all to do schoolwork while they were working and they also had to work some evenings and Saturdays. Supreme Court Pages each got at least an hour a day for schoolwork, and that increased to three hours when the Court was not in session. Additionally, they had to work only every fourth Saturday and rarely, if ever, past late afternoon.⁶⁷

After taking a year to think about it, Warren made a new rule for Supreme Court Pages in the fall of 1960, where the Marshal was to regulate their hours so that each of the four Pages would work the same number of hours, rotate jobs and have regulated lunch times, and they were not to run errands any further than the Library of Congress. Most importantly, Warren thought that each boy should have a quiet time to do schoolwork for two and a half hours each day on the third floor of the building, off the library, where not even radios would be allowed.⁶⁸ Members frequently required Pages to work well into the evenings, with no time to do homework, yet Court Pages had mandated quiet time at work to complete schoolwork.

Court Crier George Hutchinson, a former Page, met with principal DeKeyser in 1960 to have him send reports on all four Pages each month and to have him make a phone call to him to talk about their progress, even if it was simply to let him know when a Page was dropping a class.⁶⁹ Eventually, DeKeyser was sending over regular

reports to the Marshal, assessing the four Pages on Seriousness of Purpose, Initiative, Industry, Responsibility, Concern for Others, Emotional Stability and Work Experience, in addition to their school grades.⁷⁰

Paul Hays, a Court Page at the time, remembers that “if the Court was not in session, two of us would be assigned to sit in the outer lobby of the Marshal’s office just to be messengers and the other two were expected to be down in the Page room doing their studying. So, they paid us to do our homework, in effect.”⁷¹

Not only did Supreme Court Pages have more time to do their schoolwork, they also got a different view of government than their colleagues did in the Capitol. Supreme Court Pages could study two things: the backs of Justices’ heads and the judicial branch of the federal government, instead of the legislative branch.⁷² They were better behaved outside of work too since they were required to live with friends or family in Washington in contrast to Congressional Pages. The Court also supervised their paychecks, encouraging each boy to put every other check into a savings account that the Court set up for them.⁷³ Paul Hays remembers it as more than simple encouragement however:

One of the conditions of employment, which was basically a contract between me and Earl Warren, said that I allowed him to take every other paycheck and put it in the bank for me, and that he would keep my bank book until I graduated from high school. The Justices wanted us to grow up the way they thought kids ought to grow up. They wanted us brought up right. And they wanted to be in contact with our parents, and let the parents know if they thought there was something wrong with the way the kids were acting, and let the kids know that they were there in lieu of our parents, and the Chief Justice would say, “I’m your father for all purposes. I’m not going to take my belt off and whip you. But I’m your father here, and you will obey my rules in my house.”⁷⁴

By late 1961, Hutchinson had a consistent flow of information between his office and the school. Because of the Court's new schedule during this time, Pages



Photo 70 The original caption reads, "No wonder they switched. Melvin [Paul] Hays in the old uniform." *1964 Congressional.*

had two hours of uninterrupted time at the end of each day's session to do schoolwork, and his monitoring of Page behavior continued, shown by a comment he wrote about one of his boys at the time: Paul Hays got a poor grade in Department because of his "overzealous approach to his conversations with his section teacher who felt constrained to give him this rating as a form of demerit" but he also noted that he had gotten better since.⁷⁵ Chief Justice

Earl Warren wrote letters in the early 1960s to parents of Pages who were not doing well

academically that the boy was under pressure to

raise his grade or he "should make arrangements to attend some other school" and frowned upon Department grades of B or lower.⁷⁶

While the Supreme Court was relatively progressive in some aspects, it was rather traditional in what it made its Pages wear, taking 12 years to change its policy about wearing knickers after the Senate did. In the mid-1960s, the Court decided that its Pages had suffered in knickers long enough and finally changed its policy, allowing the boys to wear long pants, announcing in a press release that the Court Pages' uniforms of knickers, black stockings and a double-breasted jacket that had been worn since the first Page in 1867 would be replaced with suit pants and a single-

breasted jacket after almost 100 years of wearing knickers.⁷⁷ In 1963, Hays said, “It used to be that when we walked down the halls, we’d get snickers-- or wolf whistles,” saying that “people would stop dead in their tracks” when they saw young men scurrying about wearing knickers.⁷⁸ That was not something new, as Frank Lyman, the Supreme Court Page in the 1920s even faced embarrassment from the knickers and stockings: “We didn’t want to be seen in short pants running around. I had to hide from the girls because I didn’t want them seeing me in stockings! We were embarrassed to have to wear the stockings.”⁷⁹

When I asked Hays about it in 2007, he gave a more detailed explanation of the Court’s decision to switch from knickers:

By 1962 or 1963, the Chief Justice was in a marble hallway in the Court building, and he heard a loud commotion; it was a whistle, a wolf whistle. And he thought, “What in the world is that? Why is anyone doing something like that in these staid Chambers”and all. There was a policeman on duty standing not far away, and the Chief Justice asked the policeman what it was. And the policeman went down to the end of the corridor and looked around the corner and saw me walking at some distance in my knickers and beckoned the Chief Justice over and said, “You see young Melvin down there in his knickers, whenever he’s out in the public part of the building, if there is a tour that involves high school students, that happens, whenever any of the Pages are in their knickers and they are in the presence of a tour of high school students.” And there were dozens of such tours everyday. The kids would react with wolf whistles or hoots or whatever because it looked so stupid. And the Chief Justice said, “You know, he’s pretty tall to be wearing short pants.” I was probably 6’ 1” by then. And a few weeks later, the Marshal called the four Pages into his office and said that as we were approaching the end of the Court session he thought he would let us know that we were being given an option at the beginning of the next October term of the Court to switch to long pants, and that we would be required to wear a three-piece suit with a vest or a double-breasted jacket because they didn’t want a lot of flashy white

shirt showing, but that we would no longer be required to buy these knickers and wear them.⁸⁰

In 1974, the Court began phasing out its use of Pages when it replaced one of them with a night law student. The Court did the same in 1975 when it announced that it would be ending its 108-year tradition of using Pages. Starting with the October 1975 session, its “court attendants” were required to be high school graduates, thereby ending the Supreme Court Page system.⁸¹

Part Three: Negro Pages, 1954 to 1965

NOTE: the language in this section reflects the language used in the primary documents that were employed to write this section of the history. The author realizes that in 2008, it is not appropriate to use the words “Negro” and “black,” but they are used to reflect the language at the time the events occurred.

Just as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was the precipitating event to secure the appointment of girl Pages, the Supreme Court’s *Brown v. Board of Education* decision in May 1954 was the impetus to appoint a Negro Page. Although there were already at least two “first” black Pages appointed, Andrew Foote Slade in 1869, and Thomas Thornton in 1947, the most recognition as the first Negro Page is given to Charles Bush probably because of the timing of his appointment, and the fact that he was a Supreme Court Page.⁸² The details of his appointment are worthy to note.

After the *Brown* case in the spring of 1954, the Supreme Court did not take long to appoint its first Negro Page. Chief Justice Earl Warren wanted a Negro Page to serve the Court in “the first implementation of the court’s ruling that segregation is unconstitutional.”⁸³ So, on July 23, 1954, 14 year-old Charles Vernon Bush was announced as the Court’s first black Page, and the first Negro to attend Capitol Page School.⁸⁴ He was set to begin school on September 13, and to begin work on

September 27, thereby making Capitol Page School one of the first desegregated schools in the country, and more importantly the first (and only) desegregated school after the *Brown* decision that was desegregated through the direct intervention of the Chief Justice.⁸⁵ Bush remembers that Warren's "intent was to demonstrate to the world that the Supreme Court was indeed serious about the school integration decision. He decided he wanted to tangibly demonstrate to the world the seriousness of the decision."⁸⁶

Bush recalled his appointment and the advice his parents had given him too. His parents told him how to act once he started because the spotlight was going to be on him, and he was going to be representing an entire race of people. He found that other Pages treated him with great respect, and adults suddenly had to treat him differently not only because he was a Page but because he was a Negro Page, and nobody was going to say anything about it because that is what the Chief Justice wanted.⁸⁷

The treatment he received may not have been so nice, from at least one other person's perspective. On Bush's first day of work, he was working with Vance Morrison, the head Court Page.⁸⁸ Morrison remembers that

We were all a bunch of southern boys. He was not warmly received by anybody that I know of. And he was an amazing guy. He carried himself with so much dignity. He made no attempt to inject himself into anything or against anybody. He didn't complain. He did his work. And he was a good student. And he did his work at the Court. And the Justices treated him well. And he gradually gained all our respect, just through the force of his own personality. He was shunned, and snide remarks were made, and he just brushed it off. He never attempted to counter it or argue or anything. Not that he wasn't manly about it or anything. You just looked at him and thought he was almost saintly. How can he do this? And after

a while you'd leave him alone. Then after a while you became friends.⁸⁹

After leaving his Page service, Bush eventually entered the Air Force Academy, where he was “one of the first Negro appointees.”⁹⁰

The next fall, it was widely reported that Frederick Jerome Saunders, whose father had died eight years earlier, was selected to serve the Court as a Page, and began school on September 12 and began work on September 19 at an annual salary of \$3,200.⁹¹ However, Saunders, although he attended Page School, was not a Page but a minor employee in the Supreme Court Library with the title of “under library assistant.”

While the Supreme Court was relatively progressive in its appointment of a Negro Page, the Senate and the House did not rush into anything. In fact, the House faced an embarrassing situation at the end of January 1959 when it refused to allow its first black Page to begin work in a small part of the evolution of the Page system that went awry. Jimmy Johnson, who had accepted his appointment from Congressman Barratt O'Hara, arrived in Washington to begin work. However, when he showed up for his first day, Fishbait Miller knew nothing of Johnson's appointment.⁹² It seemed that the Patronage Committee had gotten two Congressmen from Chicago mixed up: Congressman O'Hara, who was not due for a patronage appointment, and Congressman Thomas O'Brien, who was due for a patronage appointment. When it was determined that the appointment belonged to O'Brien, he appointed his Page, leaving Johnson with no job.⁹³

There was plenty of blame being passed around but nobody wanted to take responsibility for anything. The Patronage Committee blamed O'Hara; O'Hara said

that the Patronage Committee had made a mistake thinking that he and O'Brien were nominating the same boy; Johnson blamed it on the Southern Democrats who seemed to be saying that they did not want him to have the job. However, there was little doubt that Johnson had received an invitation to accept a job that did not exist when he was told that he would be sworn in on February 2.⁹⁴

It would seem that because of the mix-up, the Patronage Committee could allow him to be a Page anyway, but there was considerable jockeying before a resolution was found. O'Hara and Congressman James Roosevelt, son of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, tried to create a special Page position for him, and Senator Paul Douglas tried to find him a job in the Senate or the Supreme Court so that at least he would be eligible to attend Page School.⁹⁵ The Patronage Committee Chairman would not allow him to become a Page, since there were 14 other positions to be filled before his on the waiting list, and one of the other members of the three-man Committee, Congressman Henry Sheppard, doubted that there was enough work to create that many new positions.⁹⁶ Sheppard was one of the people who did not believe in the Page system and had never appointed one in his 23 years in Congress, so it was going to be difficult to find an ally in him. He contended that the supervision of Pages was too much of a problem to take a risk in appointing one, and he stood firm in his opposition to add an additional position.⁹⁷

Congressman William Ayres offered Johnson a job in his office, thereby making him eligible to enroll at Page School, and Congressman Walter confirmed that all Johnson had to do was accept the position.⁹⁸ That did not stop O'Hara from submitting a resolution to change the rules so that one more Page could be hired,

especially since he counted 30 Congressmen supporting him to. After all, he reasoned, the Patronage Committee did approve his nomination on January 22, and it was acting improperly now in denying him the job.⁹⁹

At some point, Congressman Walter contradicted himself, and said that the Patronage Committee had no authority to permit Johnson to enter Page School. He contended that Roosevelt and Ayres “had played politics” in the ordeal, but Roosevelt and Ayres simply said that they offered to employ Johnson if it made him eligible to attend Page School.¹⁰⁰ After his initial disappointment in having the job taken away from him, “he was advised to be a good sport and leave” as some Members simply shook their heads in disgust at him, and others nodded their heads in support.¹⁰¹

Nothing had been resolved by mid-February, and Johnson was forced to enroll in a Washington public school, as he waited for the Congressmen to come to an agreement.¹⁰² A few days later, one Republican Congressman and four Democrats pooled their resources and hired Johnson to do odd jobs around their offices, although he could not go on the Floor since he was not a Page, but at least now he was eligible to attend Page School.¹⁰³ He was put on the payroll March 1, 1959, and he started work the next day.¹⁰⁴

Not only did Johnson’s appointment cause a small rift between some Congressmen, it also caused one of the new Pages to quit his job in March 1959. After two days at school, a Page named Ludson Hudgins quit because there were three Negroes at Page School. He said, “I have nothing against the Negro race, but I don’t think it’s right to go to school with Negroes or mix with them socially.”¹⁰⁵ His

sponsor, Virginia Congressman Watkins Abbitt, said that he thought the children of his district were “setting a wonderful example” by boycotting integrated schools.¹⁰⁶

That spring, Johnson was one of only 14 students who were able to make the Honor Roll at Page School.¹⁰⁷ A year later, Johnson was the subject of a feature story in the *New York Times*, which reported that he awoke at 3:00 AM every day to do his homework, not only so that the homework would be turned in on time but also so that he would not oversleep. Although he thought that the standards at the school were higher than what most Pages were used to, the failure rate was also lower than average.¹⁰⁸

In January 1960, even though he tried, Johnson again was turned down for a Page position, possibly prompting Congressman William Broomfield to write a letter to the Rules Committee, calling not only for hiring more Negroes in the House but also for no discrimination of any kind, the elimination of patronage from Page positions and a new residence for them.¹⁰⁹ All this commotion took its toll on Johnson, the “most scorned boy ever to climb the marble steps of the Capitol,” to the point where he was taking sedatives to calm himself down. He often had to eat by himself and found it lonely working in Washington because the resentment toward him was so significant, although the other Negro students at Page School supported him.¹¹⁰ Although Roosevelt and Ayres employed Johnson the entire time he worked for Congress, the three other Congressmen changed from time to time, and in June 1961, Johnson graduated from Capitol Page School.¹¹¹

Eleven years after the Supreme Court appointed its first Negro Page, the Senate finally decided to do the same, and it changed its version of the Page system

too. On April 13, 1965, Senator Javits left his coat in the Cloakroom, and Lawrence Bradford, who went on to attend Columbia University, returned it to his office in the first official act by a Negro Senate Page.¹¹² Not to be outdone, the next day, the House saw its first black Page on the Floor, Frank Mitchell, appointed by Illinois Congressman Paul Findley, who was from Springfield, Illinois, Abraham Lincoln's hometown.¹¹³ Another traditional stronghold had been broken down in the on-going Page evolution of the Page system.

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21. Jacqueling Trescott, "Sen. Percy Names Second Girl Page," *Washington Evening Star*, 15 January 1971, C6.

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The difference a few years make:

The duties being light, there was ample scope for the development of any natural taste for affairs of state. We had time to pay attention to the discussions of the principles of the Constitution and those important questions of public policy that claimed the consideration of the people's representatives in that golden era of American intellect and American eloquence.

~Baker Jamison, "Some Great Senators; How They Looked to the Lads Who Were Their Pages," *Boston Sunday Globe*, 5 February 1893.

I have felt ever since I have been in Congress that we as Congressmen are shirking our duty and our responsibility in bringing Pages to Washington and putting them at the mercy of all the temptations that Washington offers. Many of them come here that have never received salaries before, and they get a check and know little about how to handle it. I think it is almost miraculous that we have not had a real serious incident in connection with the Page service. We have had some that have been serious that have not gotten into the papers . . . but fortunately these incidents were not called to the attention of the public. But sooner or later something will happen of a serious nature, and when that comes to the attention of the public, Congress will be censured and censured properly for bringing young men into Washington and throwing them to the mercy of all the temptations that are here.

~The Honorable J. Arthur Younger, "Proposed Legislation To Provide a Residence For Pages," Subcommittee on Accounts of the Committee on House Administration, *House Unpublished Hearings Collection*, 6 May 1957, 17.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CAPITOL PAGE SCHOOL IS CLOSED, 1982 TO 1983

INTRODUCTION

The lack of support from Congress to provide adequate supervision for the teenagers they employed at a time in American history when drugs were easily available culminated in a series of devastating events for Page School. The pressure that had been building for 40 years came to the ultimate flash point in the summer of 1982. These events within the Page system were injurious enough to terminate the school. Pages were on the front pages of almost every newspaper and magazine in the country and the Page system was the lead story on the national news, and must have been the subject of endless water cooler conversations. The reams of information from these events and the resulting fallout are worthy of a dissertation of their own but they will be covered only very briefly here. The goal of this chapter is to report on the end of Capitol Page School, and to describe what happened immediately afterward, relying largely on oral histories from the people directly involved.

Because of the antipathy toward change and better supervision and a Page residence, and because of a society in the early 1980s where drugs were common, the Page system ran into trouble. A group of teenagers living on their own with plenty of spending money in a big city during this time were bound to cause trouble. The warnings from so many people during the previous 40 years finally were realized, and it caused embarrassment to the Congress, especially to the House. Because of the level of scrutiny the House endured, the Speaker had to do something not only to save face but also to make substantive changes for Pages. One of those changes was to

dismantle Capitol Page School and to reconfigure the education component of the Page system.

Part One: Pages Embarrass Congress With Accusations, June 1982

At the end of June 1982, two House Pages made allegations about things taking place within the Page system and in Congress, saying that some Congressmen had solicited sex with Pages and were taking drugs with Pages present.¹ Donn Anderson, who was the manager of the Democratic Cloakroom at the time remembered

I was told by a couple Pages that Jeffrey [Opp] and Leroy [Williams] were going to the FBI and to the Washington media with allegations of drugs and sex involving their colleagues. I frankly kind of dismissed it. It was so far-fetched that I couldn't imagine there being any truth in it at all. But then a few days later, I found out that they actually were doing that. They had approached the press and the FBI about their allegations. Of course, the press seized on it with back-lighted interviews with the two kids so they couldn't be identified and a distortion of their voices so we couldn't recognize who they were, although we knew.² That launched a feeding frenzy in the media. . . . [They said those things in an] effort to reform the Page Program and remove iniquities which they perceived to exist. . . . The scenario of sex, Congress, drugs and minors was irresistible to the news establishment.³

Specifically, Leroy Williams alleged that he had had sex with three Members of Congress and that he had arranged male prostitutes and had organized homosexual liaisons for others.⁴ Both Williams and another Page, Jeff Opp, appeared on the CBS Evening News in anonymous interviews talking about their accusations. Soon after that, the House Ethics Committee began a probe into the allegations.⁵ Because these allegations brought embarrassment to the House and to the Page system, tighter rules were proposed and quickly approved.⁶

Although Congress reacted to this news quickly, mostly because the Pages had gone straight to the press with their stories, it was probably not the first time things like this had happened, either real or imagined. A Page in 1954 and current Congressman Paul Kanjorski admitted that even then, there were lots of things going on with Pages: “All of us had our first exposures to alcohol, to women and sex, and it has not changed through the ages, I can assure you. . . . Nothing has really changed. Someone used the expression ‘nothing has changed under the sun’-- bet your life it hasn’t; we have generational appreciation of the difference, but let's not be maniacs and try and change and deny our own histories. With that I say I got drunk in Washington as a Page; it did not kill me. I could give unusual experiences of sex in Washington as a Page, but I won't.”⁷ Regardless, the pressure that had been building inside the keg of dynamite was ultimately released in 1982.

To Jim Oliver, who was running a boarding house for Pages at the time, Williams’ actions were not surprising, although he could not have predicted them. “Leroy was a tenant of mine, although he did not stay very long. He comported himself well at work, and I thought I was doing a poor black kid from Arkansas a favor by making him an overseer and giving him more responsibility at work. In the meantime, it was clear to me from the mail he was receiving at my house that he was bouncing checks all over town. So, although Leroy seemed to be a pretty decent, articulate guy, it seems like that was all a façade.”⁸

A special Congressional Commission was formed to look into the allegations that Williams made, and it made recommendations to improve the Page system, including having Pages be at least juniors in high school, and converting the

Congressional Hotel into a residence hall where Pages would be required to live.⁹

Subsequently, during the investigation into the allegations, Williams admitted under



Photo 71 Vice President Bush with Pages. *Jim Oliver.*

oath that his claims about sexual misconduct and drug use were not true.¹⁰ Regardless, Speaker of the House Thomas O'Neill hired Joseph Califano, former Secretary of Health and Human Services, to conduct a

special investigation to find out what exactly had happened. Califano spent

\$2 million over the course of a year investigating, finding the initial allegations to be baseless, but since he decided to open a 10-year window, beginning in 1982, “and interviewing as many people associated with the Page Program as possible, they *did* uncover some actual scenarios of sex between Members of Congress and Pages, both gay and straight, as well as an employee who was involved in the selling of drugs and another employee who had consensual straight sex with a Page.”¹¹ The validity of the entire Page system was being questioned since O'Neill viewed it as “something of an anachronism in the late 20th century.”¹²

More specifically, Congressman Daniel Crane admitted to having sexual relations with a 17 year-old female Page in 1980, and Congressman Gerry Studds admitted his relationship with a 16 year-old male Page in 1973.¹³ Congress and the Page system were embarrassed further since the committee found that it was clear

that during the 1981-82 academic year, some Pages behaved irresponsibly after working hours. There is

abundant and convincing evidence, in the case of some Pages, of excessive use of alcohol, all-night parties, some drug use and a variety of other activities that no responsible parent would tolerate.¹⁴

When Califano's initial investigation was through, there was a question about what to do with all of the other potentially damaging information he had uncovered about so many people during his 200-plus interviews, including allegations involving about 50 Congressmen and many other staffers. The rules of the House Ethics Committee said that the interviews could not be destroyed, but Califano and others reasoned that there was no rule about the interviews becoming lost.¹⁵ Even after an inquiry to Califano's office today, some 25 years later, those interviews remain "lost."

While Califano headed an investigation into what had happened, there was also a commission formed to examine the entire Page system, headed by Congressman Bill Alexander, a former college professor. Anderson recalled the final recommendations from this commission included the decision to keep the Page system essentially as it was but also to house them and to end the relationship with DCBOE. Also, Donn Anderson remembers that

there was a concern that over the years the school's faculty had gone stale, that there was no innovation.¹⁶ So we decided that we would get back in the education business, and we informed the District school system that at the conclusion of the 1982-83 academic year, we would be terminating our relationship. I was appointed as a member of the Education Task Force, also made up of three nationally-respected educators who were chairs of education professional organizations here in Washington, to give us the kind of advice we needed, since none of us were educators.¹⁷

Part Two: The Task Force Recommends Changes

The Task Force was formed in late 1982 or very early 1983 and met for a few months before submitting its final report. In its report dated 1 June 1983, the Task



Photo 72 Vice President Quayle with Pages.
Official White House photo.

Force made several recommendations for changing Page School: curriculum offerings at the new school, the quality of students and staff that the Program should expect, the organization of the day and other logistical and practical concerns.¹⁸ Because the Task Force

had only a couple short months to create a school by the beginning of the fall semester, it had to act fast, but the Task Force also had direct orders from Speaker O'Neill. Anderson was told that

[o]ur job was to work with the professional educators to devise a new scheme for the education of our Pages, which looked at everything. Mr. O'Neill [basically said], "Fix it so I don't have to deal with this any more. I don't need this level of aggravation. You know, get it fixed and keep it fixed." He made the statement that if it happens again, it's history; Pages are gone.¹⁹ He would've then shifted from nervous indifference to open hostility. And if the Speaker says they're gone, they're gone; you can depend on it.²⁰

Anderson doubted that the school could be created in such a short time and wanted to stay with the DCBOE for at least one more year because he did not think that the logistics could be worked out in such a short time. He said, "I felt that [the teachers] should not be dumped [but] we rather unceremoniously dumped our faculty which then became part of the Senate [Page] Program. The Senate did not feel the

need at the time to change much. The Senate had not been touched by the scandal; it was essentially a House matter, though I know there were a few [nervous] Senators breathing heavily during the course of the investigation.”²¹

The charge of the Task Force was to make recommendations for making the Page system run more smoothly. Once it was decided that the House was going to



Photo 73 Principal Robert Knautz.
1987 Congressional Eagle.

create its own school for its Pages, separate from Capitol Page School, the Task Force had to decide where the school would be located. The obvious place for it was in the Attic of the Jefferson Building, since there was already a school there that Pages attended. However, the Senate school, or more accurately, the leftovers (both personnel and equipment) from Capitol Page School were still there. Anderson explains how they were able to

simply place an additional school in the same space

We sort of did it first by invitation. We said to the Senate school, “This is what we are going to do, will you join us?” Once they said, “No, we’re quite happy with the status quo,” then it was, “Well, we are doing this and we are now going to subdivide the rooms in the [Attic] of the Library of Congress. You take the faculty and the property of the D.C. Public School System,” which is everything we had, “and we’ll buy new stuff, hire new teachers and be on our way. It’s been nice but the dance is over.” Plus we did get a couple extra rooms out of the Library in the process which helped. So, we were off and running and the Senate was quite content to continue the way they had been.²²

Part Three: Senate Page School Remains a Public-Private School Under DCBOE and House Page School Becomes an Independent School

After they negotiated the space allocation with the Senate school, the next step was to hire a leader for the House school, a principal who would make it an elite private school. However, even though school was supposed to begin in September, the Task Force did not advertise for a principal until the middle of the summer of 1983.²³ Anderson explained that they had decided to offer only the basics at school, with no electives, and for only high school juniors. After creating a job description for the principal, they advertised in national education journals and narrowed down the candidates to about 15, but only six of them showed interest in interviewing.²⁴

Even though the position was advertised in national publications, some of which an Illinois high school principal named Robert Knautz read regularly, he saw the advertisement in a newsletter from his college placement office. He explained

I saw this job, it said to write to Gordon Cawelti, Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development, a name I certainly knew, to deal with 100 Pages, 6:00 AM to 12:00 PM. I said, “Well . . .” After *all*, I was a political science guy . . . So I applied.²⁵ I thought that would be interesting. I didn’t have any real hope of getting it.²⁶

The school was scheduled to open in September of 1983 and by the time Knautz applied for the job, it was already mid-July and since he had not heard anything back, he had forgotten about it and had gone on vacation. He explained

I had looked at several jobs and had interviewed but nothing came through by July 1, which is typically the date that you are sort of committed for the next year, especially as an administrator. I mean I was set. I was on vacation in Minnesota when I was called for the interview. I had forgotten about [the job]. And then I was called about the 22-23-24-25 of July. [I called] a guy named Jim Kutcher. He was Mr. Minish’s staff person under the Police and

Personnel Subcommittee. He was doing the interviewing. He said that “we would like to interview you for this position, can you come to Washington? Book your flight, we’ll put you up in a hotel and pay for your flight.” I’m [on vacation] in northern Minnesota, I have a baby that’s less than a month old, so my wife stayed behind but we had to go back home to Illinois. She took me to the airport and off I went. I think I was interviewed on either the 27th or 28th of July.²⁷

Admittedly, it was late to be hiring a staff to start a new school in September, even with the space already secured. Knautz offered one explanation of how the House could wait so long and still be successful in doing what it needed to do. He felt that O’Neill had given Joe Minish the power to do what he needed to fix the Page system, and Minish transferred that power to Jim Kutcher to get the job done.²⁸

Knautz really did not think he had a chance to get the job. His thoughts about going to Washington revolved more around a free trip and a chance to visit the tourist attractions; however, when he arrived at the interview, he learned that only a couple other people were being interviewed; based on that alone, his chances of landing the job were actually relatively good. He found out who his competition was and realized that only two other people were interviewing. He explained

I was told that they were going to interview five. I met one other guy. A small-school superintendent from Michigan. I was told the third person was a priest perhaps connected to Gonzaga High School, I’m not sure, but that’s what I seem to remember and the other two decided not to come for the interview. So they were going to pull in only three. But they had planned on interviewing five. See, these people have no concept of how the education world works. They figure they’re going to hire people and all of a sudden they’re going to fall over themselves taking the job and . . . well, as it turns out, I did (*laughs*).²⁹

Having to send his application materials to Gordon Cawelti, a national education leader, was impressive but

Then I discovered that Scott Thompson, who was Executive Director of NASSP [was involved in the process], a name, of course, that I knew because I was an NASSP member as principal. But my first thought was “Gee, I’m running with the big guys.” You know, big name people and I was kind of impressed.³⁰

That feeling continued on the day of the interview, scheduled for 10:00 AM on 28 July 1983 in Annex I.³¹ After showing up promptly at 9:50, he was directed to a sixth-floor office near Jim Kutcher’s office to sit and wait. He waited for about 30 minutes and then Kutcher escorted him to the interview. Knautz explained

I go [to the interview] and there are two police officers standing outside the door. Capitol Police. And my comment was to Jim Kutcher, “Wow. What’s this all about?” “Oh, this is for *you*. To protect the security of the interviews.” You see the whole business with the Page Program being changed, it was *a big deal* for these folks on the Hill. They were very sensitive to the embarrassment caused by the scandal. So he had police officers there to make sure that nobody would come in, no public I’m sure, no press would come in to disrupt the interview. I mean that was the first indication I had that this thing was bigger than I imagined. I mean, police officers standing outside the door to protect the interview process!³²

Knautz’s recollections of the interview are not specific enough to mention, i.e. he does not remember specific questions they asked. However, he did say that

In that Task Force Report, they had proscribed what courses we were going to offer. I think what they wanted to do was to get a sense that the person that they hired could, in fact, implement them. I did not know going in that we were going to literally create a school. And I’m not sure when I discovered that. . . But I pointed out that, coming from a small school, I understood what a small school was all about and that in this particular setting, we had to strike a balance between the academics and the rest

of the students' lives; that, in fact, it can't all be school. We have to give them something else to make them feel comfortable.³³

Anderson remembered the interview from the other side of the table, and he remembers quite clearly how Knautz impressed the Task Force. He said

[Knautz] was the last one we interviewed. . . . When Dr. Knautz came in and he delivered a not-overly long, very concise and totally focused expression of his view of the position and his philosophy of education, frankly, he left us all kind of speechless. He answered all of our questions. We really didn't have any more important questions to ask and we're all kind of looking at each other hoping someone will ask a question so that we don't look like a bunch of ninnies. So we asked him to excuse himself and we all kind of sat around the table and (*lifts eyebrows and points repeatedly at an empty chair*), "I think that's our guy. Now, will he want to work for us?" We asked him back at 1:30.³⁴

Knautz remembered that at the end of the interview, he agreed to come back for an afternoon interview and he was turned over to Republican Page Supervisor Jim Oliver to have lunch and take a look at the school.³⁵ Anderson remembers that Knautz struggled with the idea of accepting the job so quickly

[Knautz] was keenly interested. He said he had problems with his wife not being all that interested in relocating and he had a good job at a decent size high school.³⁶ They liked living in a small community, even though they were both natives of Chicago which is a big place. He said, "I have to call my wife and see if I can convince her." So we kind of broke for lunch and held our breath.³⁷

On the way to the Jefferson Building from Annex I, Knautz was becoming overwhelmed with how the day was unfolding, and he remembered what he was feeling, especially when he got a look at the school

At this point, I'm a little bit overwhelmed. I was thinking, "Wow, what's going on here?" And we took the elevator

up to the Attic and walked in. When I saw what the facility was, I was just amazed. I mean, it was an absolute mess. It was *terrible*. The place was a dump. There were tile floors; it was dingy. [The one room] was considered a library. It had bookcases, dusty old books and was filled with maybe 30 chairs and study desks and each one was different from the other, just like old rejected junk. The science room consisted of a sand table, piled to the ceiling with crap. I mean, there was just stuff *all over*. It wasn't a lab in any form. The room that turned out to be the office was their emergency room. It had a white hospital bed in it with the white frame and was piled high with stuff. . . . I can't remember what was in there but I do remember some time after I came on board sweeping the floor with Jim Kutcher with a dustpan, cleaning up so that we could move furniture in.³⁸ The old principal's office was bad too. He used to smoke up there. The floors were tiled, the paint was old, the walls were dirty, it was dusty; they were given so many weeks to get out, they hadn't gotten *anything* out. It was just filled with old furniture.³⁹

One of the founding teachers had similar recollections of the poor condition of the Attic

There were bookcases in the hall just piled with everything from the rooms. The Senate school had to empty these rooms to make room for us to move in. There were no boards, no desks, no tables, nothing in the rooms. So, essentially, we started from nothing.⁴⁰

After seeing the space that the school would be housed in, Knautz and Oliver went to lunch before returning to the interview committee. After lunch, Oliver escorted Knautz back to the interview committee so that the Task Force could formally offer him the job. Knautz explained that Whitehurst made the offer and they talked about the details of the offer.

I said, not being pushy about it, but they were talking about a salary of about \$35,000 or something like that, and I asked them about educational expenses, moving expenses, all typical things and Molloy would said, "No problem, no problem." But I got the impression that they weren't

[going to pay]. I must have expressed my disappointment; I don't know. They said something about salary and I don't know what I said or did, but I can picture it, Mrs. Blaunstein standing up, signaling to somebody, and they left the room and they came back and they raised the salary to \$39,500. I still hadn't given them a final answer. It was a \$10,000 increase for me at the time. I went from 29 [thousand] to 39 [thousand] and I thought I was rich. What I didn't [realize], of course, was that I was giving up my wife's job of \$21,000 and I was doubling my living expenses.⁴¹

Even with the increase in salary, Knautz was unsure whether accepting the position was the right move for him and his family. Knautz had until the 4:00 Committee meeting to decide, and his wife gave him her approval when they talked again. At 4:00 the Committee met and offered him the position.

They asked me a few questions. Then they had a motion that I be hired and they voted and that was it. . . . I was totally overwhelmed at that point. But I had committed myself, so I have this job. I was put on the payroll the next day.⁴²

Jim Oliver looks back and remembered that “we had three competent candidates. One of them seemed to be kind of peculiar for some reason. And another one seemed to be exceptionally confident, but when we asked if he could start the first of September he said there was no way he could do that. It is just luck that we got the right guy. We are very lucky that Dr. Knautz knew what he was doing more than probably anybody else in the room and was able to work as quickly as he did and long as he did to set up the school.”⁴³

Part Four: Robert Knautz Finds the New House Page School

Knautz stayed overnight in Washington on 28 July 1983 and met with Jim Kutcher early on the morning of the 29th. It was then that he realized the reality and

the immensity of the situation he had gotten himself into. Knautz remembered how it suddenly hit him that there was a great deal of immediacy involved in getting this new school started

I go to Kutcher's office and Jim Kutcher gets all excited, he says, "Well, let's design a letterhead. We have to have a letterhead. How do you want your name to appear? Do you want "Dr." or do you want "Ed.D." after it?" I said, "I don't know." He said, "I really enjoy designing letterheads and . . . Hey, when can you come back to work?" I said, "Well, I can come back on the 15th or the 16th of August. That will give me two weeks to go home; I've got to resign, I've got to prepare to move." [He said] "No, come back in a week. You have to hire a staff. You have to buy books. You have to get furniture." Holy crap! At that point, it was overwhelming! Kids were coming Labor Day weekend, so I had a month!⁴⁴

Anderson also knew that the job before Knautz was a daunting one. He said

he had to do everything. He [wrote] advertisements for the teaching positions, starting receiving applications, at the same time, coming up with a whole new structure for a school: ordering equipment, because we had nothing, just empty rooms. We had to get tables, chairs, teaching aids, everything that a school needs.⁴⁵

Knautz went back home to Illinois for one week to get his family ready to move, and then came back to Washington, arriving on 8 August 1983. The plan was for him to start reviewing teacher applications in Illinois. That plan was not realized because by the time the applications arrived in Illinois, he had already left again for Washington. So, all 400 applications had to be sent back to Washington.⁴⁶ Two of the founding teachers of the school had their applications lost and had to hand deliver their applications to Knautz.⁴⁷

The school had the space secured and its principal hired, now it needed teachers. For a week, Knautz read through applications and started making phone

calls to those he wanted to interview. There were only five or six applicants for the science position because the person needed experience in both chemistry and physics.

For science, I think I interviewed only one or two. I mean, I got those people, you know, first of all, we were offering them [only] \$23,000, no tenure, no job security and literally starting from scratch. There was nothing; no textbooks and in the science case, there was no laboratory. . . . I had to try to sell them on the opportunity to do something new and different and exciting.⁴⁸

Interviews continued for all positions. Knautz even flew to Chicago and held interviews in O'Hare airport with candidates from the Midwest, hired one of them, and then immediately flew back. However, some interviews had already taken place before Knautz was hired. One teacher remembered

I saw the ad and I called and actually was interviewed first by Gordon Cawelti. They had not hired Dr. K. yet at that point. And so [Gordon] interviewed me; at that point, I was leaving town for two weeks, but he said he would refer my name to the principal, once the principal was hired, which he did, and so when I came back into town, Dr. Knautz interviewed me.⁴⁹

The candidates who were offered the positions usually accepted the positions on the spot. The positions were attractive for a number of reasons, including the amount of autonomy that would be granted in the classroom. Ron Weitzel, the founding social studies teacher, says

Well, on the surface, it looked like, and I think this was borne out in reality, that it was an excellent teaching environment, that one did not have to contend with the same sort of onerous issues that you may have gotten in a public school: discipline, large classes; so the pay was good, the conditions in terms of the size of classes, the kinds of students you got and it looked like that was just the sort of job that I wanted.⁵⁰

Knautz spent all of August preparing the school for the first day of classes on September 6, including hiring the teachers and ordering textbooks and equipment. However, when the full resources of the House are put to use, an enormous job becomes possible

Through Molloy's office and with Kutcher's help, we had the House deliver furniture. They asked me what I needed in terms of office equipment and I said, "Well, I think we should have access to a typewriter." So they said, "Well, we'll get one for everybody." [Then I said] "I think we should have a Xerox machine" [and they said] "Well, maybe we should have two." So we got two Xerox machines and everybody had their own typewriter. When I was in Illinois, if I wanted an electric typewriter at my desk, as *principal of the school*, I waited to see how many students signed up for typing and if the enrollment in typing class was low enough, and there was an extra typewriter, I could have an electric typewriter. In this place, I had an electric typewriter for everybody. I had two Xerox machines. In Illinois, I had to go down to the Superintendent's office to use the Xerox machine, which was locked up so that people wouldn't use it. I was told that if I wanted anything, this was the time to get it. Money was not an issue. I could have anything I wanted as long as I could justify it. And being a conservative from Illinois, not having anything, I didn't want anything.⁵¹

Finally, Knautz put together his staff in mid-August of 1983. He had hired a secretary and seven teachers to teach the subjects that the Task Force recommended. Once the space for the school was cleaned, textbooks ordered and teachers hired, the school was ready to open for students on 6 September 1983. Anderson was thankful that

the House is basically a self-sustaining city. We had the resources and we sent our furniture people over here to survey the needs and we got the stuff on a priority basis. . . . All the stuff we needed came together. [Knautz] made staff recommendations to the Education Task Force, which we basically accepted without much [discussion], having put

our full faith and confidence in him. It turned out that except for one position, he had made very sound judgments. So, it all worked out.⁵²

Part Five: House Page School Opens, September 1983

Opening a school after only one month of preparation was not an easy thing to do. One of the founding teachers remembers that “we would have a lot of meetings trying to determine everything! You know, what’s the policy on absences, I mean, *every little detail*. He wanted the people that he hired to be responsible for everything that went on within their own department and he hired that type of personality and that type of initiative and assertiveness and he saw himself as a facilitator and left a lot of the academic stuff” to the teachers.⁵³

Regardless, and whether it was ready or not, school started September 6. Knautz had worked six day-weeks and 15 hour-days for over a month to get the school ready. Remembering September 6, Knautz says

You open the doors. And I remember the very first day with Neal [Cross] the Seminar Coordinator, walking down the hall, past the math room, hearing something about mathematics and Neal turns to me and says quietly, “We’ve got a school here. School is going on here.” And that was September 6 and it was all brand new.⁵⁴

The two schools shared space in the Attic until 1994 when the Senate built a residence hall/school for its Pages, and the House Page School was able to use the entire Attic of the Jefferson Building. After 18 years as principal of the House Page School, Dr. Knautz retired in June 2001.

When Capitol Page School was dissolved and two new schools were formed to replace it, Congress ended that version of its involvement in formal education.

Although the Senate continued with DCBOE for a number of years, the Page system

in 1983 was very different than it was in 1982. The institution of Capitol Page School ended; however, Congress remained in the business of providing an education to its Pages.

POSTSCRIPT

The House Page School continues to serve the educational needs of the Pages of the House in the Attic of the Jefferson Building. A new residence hall was built specifically for House Pages and opened in September 2001. The Senate Page School operates in Webster Hall, a combined residence hall/school on the Senate side of Capitol Hill.

Notes

1. Joe Pichirallo and Walter Pincus, "Sex, Drug Use by Congressmen, Pages Is Alleged," *Washington Post*, 1 July 1982, A2.
2. Both Opp and Williams appeared on the CBS Evening News on 30 June 1982 as anonymous informants, making the allegations.
3. The Honorable Donald K. Anderson, interview by author, 6 December 2003.
4. Courtland Milloy, "Ex-Page Recants to Hill Panel," *Washington Post*, 29 August 1982, A9.
5. Walter Pincus and Joe Pichirallo, "House Unit to Probe Page Sex Charges." *Washington Post*, 2 July 1982, A1.
6. Martin Tolchin, "Senate Panel Asks Changes In System of Capitol Pages," *New York Times*, 9 July 1982, A10.
7. Paul Kanjorski, Interview with author, 13 December 2007, 17.
8. Jim Oliver, Interview with author, 2 July 2007, 15.
9. Irvin Molotsky, "Panel Finds No Evidence of Misconduct by Pages," *New York Times*, 19 August 1982, A24.
10. There are several articles that this information appears in, among them, "Former Page Now Asserts He Lied In Telling of Sex With Lawmakers," *New York Times*, 28 August 1982, 1; Paul Taylor, "Ex-Page Recants Sex Story," *Washington Post*, 28 August 1982, A1; Kenneth Bredemeier, "Califano Finds 'No Merit' in Charges Made by Pages," *Washington Post*, 15 December 1982, A17.
11. Anderson, Interview with author, 2003, 2.
12. Ibid.
13. Eric Pianin, "Committee Recommends House Reprimand Two For Sexual Misconduct," *Washington Post*, 15 July 1983, A1.
14. House, *Investigation Pursuant to House Resolution 12 Concerning Alleged Illicit Use or Distribution of Drugs by Members, Officers, or Employees of the House*, Committee on Standards of Official Conduct of the House of Representatives, 98th Cong., 1st Sess., 17 November 1983, 260:73.
15. Joseph Califano, "Inside A Public and Private Life," (New York: Public Affairs, 2004), 411-412.

16. Anderson, 2003, 9.

17. The members of the Task Force were the Honorable William Whitehurst (R-VA), Chair; the Honorable James Molloy, Doorkeeper of the House; the Honorable Donald Anderson, Democratic Cloakroom Manager; Jim Oliver, Republican Chief Page; Dr. Scott Thompson, Executive Director, National Association of Secondary School Principals; Dr. Gordon Cawelti, Executive Director, Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development; Ms. Phyllis Blaunstein, Executive Director, National Association of State Boards of Education; Anderson, 2001.

18. *Recommendations for the House of Representatives Page Board, Capitol Page School*, 1 June 1983.

19. The quote was, "I don't think we should abolish the system. But I will say this: One more scandal and, bam! The Page system is through." Marjorie Hunter, "The Page System: Reformed, But Still Vulnerable," *New York Times*, 4 August 1983, B10.

20. Anderson, 2003, 8.

21. Ibid.

22. Ibid.

23. The classified ads in the *Washington Post* appeared on consecutive Sundays, 10 July 1983, page L37, and 17 July 1983, page M36.

24. Anderson, 2003, 11.

25. Robert Knautz, Interview with author, 26 September 2003, 1.

26. Knautz, Interview with author, 13 December 2003, 2.

27. Knautz, 13 December 2003, 4.

28. Ibid., 5.

29. Ibid., 6.

30. Ibid., 3.

31. Later called the O'Neill House Office Building.

32. Knautz interview, 13 December 2003, 8.
33. Ibid., 9.
34. Anderson interview, 2003, 12.
35. Knautz interview, 13 December 2003, 12.
36. He was working as principal at a high school with enrollment of 185.
37. Anderson interview, 2003, 12.
38. Knautz interview, 13 December 2003, 11.
39. Knautz interview, 26 September 2003, 4.
40. Anonymous Founding Teacher, interview by author, 29 November 2003,
2. This teacher wishes to remain anonymous, although she has agreed to release the transcript of the interview.
41. Knautz interview, 13 December 2003, 13.
42. Ibid., 14.
43. Jim Oliver, Interview with author, 2 July 2007, 19.
44. Knautz interview, 13 December 2003, 15
45. Anderson interview, 2003, 13.
46. Knautz interview, 13 December 2003, 15.
47. Ron Weitzel, Interview with author, 5 December 2003, 5; Robert Nelson,
Interview with author, 29 November 2003, 1.
48. Knautz interview, 13 December 2003, 18.
49. Anonymous Founding Teacher, 29 November 2003, 1.
50. Weitzel interview, 3.
51. Knautz interview, 13 December 2003, 20.
52. Anderson interview, 6 December 2003, 13.

53. Anonymous Founding Teacher interview, 5.

54. Knautz interview, 13 December 2003, 13.

CHAPTER EIGHT: DISCUSSION

This study has traced the evolution of Capitol Page School, and it has also told the story of the larger Page system in which the school operated. The history of Capitol Page School is rife with lessons about Congress, institutional change and the bureaucratization of a school, among other things. This concluding chapter will briefly discuss some of the things that can be gleaned from knowing the history of the school and it will review Congressional reaction and change within the Page system.

Part One: Changes and Inertia at Page School

The historical record reveals much about the pattern of Congressional support for the school. The school faced critical points over the course of time, and Congress had many chances to make significant changes, yet did not overcome the inertia needed to make those changes happen. There is a consistent pattern of Congressional awareness of problems without follow up actions to remedy them.

Starting from the very beginning when Congress first met in Washington in 1800 and going all the way to 1926, the Page system remained remarkably static. The tasks that Pages were responsible for, the method of appointing boys and the familiar relationship that Pages had with Members all stayed essentially the same. Formal schooling was not a Congressional concern during this time period when it was common for young boys all over America to be working instead of going to school, although most other boys were working on farms rather than the sterile hallways of Congress.

The lack of change during this time period in the Page system is understandable. The system was working well, and both Pages and Members

benefited from it and there was really very little reason to change. Pages lacked supervised housing but no one complained about it and it did not seem to be an issue that needed to be addressed. Apparently, the overall experience of working as a Page boy and having a close, mutually supportive relationship with Members overshadowed any deficiency in other areas. Additionally, Pages received substantial pay for light work and they were honored and privileged to have the appointment. Although it is not surprising that little changed over the 125 year period between 1800 and 1925, this period of stagnancy seemed to serve as a foundation for future inaction during the next five decades.

Beginning in 1908, when Congress passed child labor laws for the District of Columbia, and traditions of inactivity came under pressure, Congress must have realized that the laws it passed would affect the minors with whom they worked, yet Congress ignored the laws, instead preferring to keep the ages of the boys the same as they had been. Even when the laws were explicitly brought to the attention of Congress, instead of changing its tradition, Congress changed the law so that it was in compliance. In this early example, Congress actively wanted to keep things as they had been, and changed the law rather than the age of the boys.

Once the mandatory school attendance laws were passed for the District in 1925, Congress could have taken the opportunity to create a school. However, when the parents of Senate Pages hired a tutor, and then when Laupheimer set up his one room school in the basement of the Capitol, Congress seemed to be satisfied. When Laupheimer took over the school, Congress had no master plan, and Laupheimer happened to be in the right place at the right time when he met with Congressman

Butler and was serendipitous enough to have the chance to run the school.

Describing Congress as active and supportive may be less than accurate because of the casual and halfhearted attitude that was present. Congress was only passively supportive of the school, and as long as the school was not creating a problem, Congress was satisfied with it and did not intervene to make significant changes until it had to.

This scenario is repeated over the course of the next few years, when control of the school was transferred to Terry (and Devitt School) and finally to Kendall in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Both times, Congress was satisfied with delegating authority for the administration of the school, taking a “no news is good news” approach until Senator Burton became involved in 1942.

Congress may not have had too much cause for concern with the school after Kendall became principal because as students recalled, the school under Kendall’s leadership was a decent, but not great, educational experience, and this is corroborated in the written historical record. Kendall ran a functional and utilitarian school where students learned what they needed to, and although Kendall and his staff may not have been the best or most dynamic teachers, they did a respectable job of instructing the boys. Physical conditions at the school may not have been the best, but students understood that school was a necessary part of the total Page experience, and because the rest of the total experience was so rewarding, they were willing to forego some of the amenities that should have been present. It is important to note that for some students who grew up in modest circumstances, the school in the basement of the Capitol may have been an upgrade, even though it was dark, damp

and had sparse furniture. Under those circumstances, given the fact that an individual was running a private enterprise, Congress may have been satisfied with how the school was operating or alternatively, may not have cared.

Once Senator Burton became involved in 1942, things changed for the school. Because of the concern of an individual Senator, the school received much more attention and a higher standard of expectations. Burton managed to make changes in the school without much trouble, and his involvement represents how Congress became actively involved. Burton knew the right people to ask and knew how to get what he wanted; overcoming inertia was relatively easy for Burton, especially since what he wanted to accomplish was relatively modest.

Although not supported in any historical record explicitly, it makes sense to suggest that Burton was responsible for having Kendall transitioned out of his job, and having Page School put under the control of the District of Columbia Board of Education with the provision in the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946. This is based on the series of events that occurred just prior to this: the letter written by Alice Tuohy explaining the poor conditions at the school and the boys' living situations and the subsequent article in the *Washington Post*, and the meetings with substitute teacher Mrs. Anderson where Burton started to question how Kendall was handling his responsibilities. It makes sense to theorize that Burton listened to Anderson and saw for himself how the school was being run and decided that change was needed. Thus, he supported a provision for the transfer of control of Page School to the District of Columbia Board of Education.

When control of Page School shifted from Kendall to the District of Columbia Board of Education, it represented a major shift of Congressional policy. Up to that point, Congress had been relatively inactive in running the school and had created no official policies. The concerns of one Senator, Burton, who had become the unofficial patron of the Page system, led to the termination of Kendall and the transfer of authority to the District's Board of Education. Creating policy that enabled the transfer of Page School and terminated Kendall was an easy solution for Burton. Through the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946, Congressional policy regarding Capitol Page School was formalized.

When plans for the New Senate Office Building were created in 1949, ample space for Page School was included. Because of delays and increased construction costs, these plans ultimately were deleted from the new building's plans-- perhaps not surprising in an environment where each chamber of Congress was territorial about its limited space. Since Page School would be occupied by boys from both chambers, the Senate may not have wanted to contaminate its space with students who worked for the House. At the time, there were about twice as many House Pages as Senate Pages, and the Senate may have resented the fact that it was going to be allocating space in its Office Building for House personnel to use. The answer to why change did not occur in this example may be not only institutional inertia, but also institutional rivalry.

The policy stating that the District of Columbia Board of Education was to run Capitol Page School controlled the school's evolution until 1983 when the school was dissolved. Although the Board of Education ran the school from 1947 to 1983, it did

so with varying degrees of effectiveness and the quality of instruction can be split into two time periods, 1947 to 1969, and 1969 to 1983. During the first time period, 1947 to 1969, under principals Trueworthy, McRae and DeKeyser, the quality of education was excellent. The school was stable and it delivered education to its students effectively. However, when principal Hoffman took over in 1969, the quality of instruction deteriorated rapidly.

This is important to bring up again, not so that Hoffman can be used as the lone scapegoat, although he is certainly partly to blame, but to show the progression of policy making. When the school began to receive negative attention with four different reports appearing from 1976 to 1979, Congress obviously knew there were problems. The combination of social factors, poor teaching and weak leadership at the school all contributed to the problem but Congress had ample time to make policy decisions. The school was allowed to remain under the control of the District's Board of Education, an organization now unable to meet the increasing demands of a more diverse, ambitious and worldly student body, and the Board could not make accommodations for a special school under its purview. It was unable to alter its program to meet the needs of Pages; instead, it tried to make the school fit into its pre-existing public school system with predictable disastrous results. Congress ignored chances to create policies that might improve the school, and it was not until the scandal in 1982 when it was forced to make long overdue changes that the school was transformed.

Part Two: Changes and Inertia Concerning a Residence

It is difficult to argue when the need for a residence first occurred but certainly by the time Burton entered the story, Pages had already lobbied for a recognized place to live. Burton reported discussing the boys' living arrangements with Kendall in September 1942. Kendall had been responsible for helping Pages find places to live for many years, an unofficial policy that was allowed to exist by the same passive Congress which allowed Kendall to manage the school. Conditions in the unsavory rooming houses on Capitol Hill were not suitable for Pages, yet Congress not only allowed the boys to live in them but encouraged them to live in the boarding houses for decades, going so far as providing lists to the boys upon their arrival in Washington.

Once Burton became involved, the need for a residence was officially recognized, yet Congress sponsored 40 more years of the Page system without one. One chance for Congress to take action occurred with the Tuohy letter and the subsequent *Post* article in 1943. This was a perfect chance for Congress to take action and advocate for its Pages. Instead, it did nothing with a residence even when changes to the school were made. By 1946, Pages finally acted on their own and rented a house together and hired a housemother to supervise them. The Pages showed remarkable levels of maturity when they did this. This group of young boys recognized the palpable need to do so at the same time Congress should have recognized the need but absolutely ignored it instead-- a remarkable series of events.

Once the Pages moved into their own house in February 1946, it took Congress only one month to recognize the need for an official residence, and a

Congressional committee recommended that something be done about the boys' living arrangements. It would have been simple for Burton (if in fact it was Burton) to include a provision for Congress to purchase and support a residence for Pages in the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946. However, only the school was included in the Act and the issue of a residence was not addressed. Again, we see how Congress could have made a change easily when the timing was right, yet it did nothing to improve the lives of their minor employees.

As documented in Chapter Five, the cycle of pointing out the obvious need for a residence and doing nothing about it is repeated time and again from the 1940s to 1982. Again, it is only because of the embarrassment that Congress endured in 1982 that it quickly required Pages to live in Congress-sponsored housing. The intervening years include some important events, and it is worthy to review them to illustrate how institutional inertia was too difficult to overcome.

Even though the 1946 committee examining the Page system recommended to Congress that a determination should be made whether to retain its Pages, and if so, then to provide adequate housing for them, Congress ignored the recommendations, made no provision for them in the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 and simply transferred control of the school to the District Board of Education.

It was not until the summer of 1954 when four Pages were mugged, and the press reported on Pages' wild living, that Congress decided to study the issue of a residence again, and only then a year and a half later, and only then by the House. The Senate did not examine the question of providing a residence until 1963. Even though there was significant testimony in both hearings about the need for a

residence, nothing was ever accomplished. It appears that the issue was never sufficiently important to address, notwithstanding student knowledge of their deeply riotous living. Congress maintained its reactive posture and did not become proactive.

Edith Green's involvement deserves special mention because of the mystery behind what happened. She was able to lead a team of Congressmen to look at the issue of a residence for Pages in 1964 and got as far as including it in the National Defense Education Act. This Act was ready to be voted on and passed, and it was a simple matter of bringing the vote to the Floor; however, right before the vote, Green offered an amendment to delete the residence provision from it, and it passed.

This is a bizarre set of circumstances. After chairing a committee and spending many hours examining the question of a residence, even making early morning surprise visits to the school and to the boys' boarding houses, Green willingly took it back right before a vote that promised to pass. We have to consider the possibility that Green made a deal with someone for something, maybe with Senator Milton Young, because the timing of a speech regarding a Page residence from Young in the Senate and the withdrawal of the residence provision by Green is simply too coincidental to dismiss as happenstance. In this example, change did not occur possibly because of an informal deal made between two decision makers, with Green watering down her request and ultimately only recommending another committee to re-examine the issue of a residence.

She chaired this second committee too, but Green's heartiness was replaced by apathy this time, and the end result was another report from the committee simply

recommending a residence for Pages. Why she abandoned the effort to sponsor a residence is only conjecture, but looking at the historical record makes it seem like she was so taken aback by whatever Senator Young had either offered to her or threatened her with, that she decided she was better off not pursuing the residence. Maybe the second committee existed only to save face and had no real substance; regardless, it seems that the powerful Young had some sort of control over Green.

There are also several incidents where Members introduced legislation to abolish the Page system and any number of variations to dramatically change the system. These many pieces of legislation received various levels of interest but as we know, the end result was that nothing changed. Again, there were always important, high-priority issues to deal with in Congress, and the reform of the Page system never seemed to be important enough or brought up at the right time. Congress, as an organization, did not care enough to do anything about it even though it was obvious that change was overdue.

When the McCormack Page Residential School was finally passed into law in 1970, it represented real change for Page School and for the Page system. However, even though authorization for the school was passed, money was never appropriated to build it. Although the sentiment from Congress was present, the policymakers who controlled the money chose not to appropriate the funds to have it built. We can see here institutional inertia running amok because all parts of the system were not in sync. If one component of the system does not work, then it affects all the other parts. It probably does not make too much sense for Congress to approve the idea but then not approve funds to realize it; however, the political process is complex and the

Appropriations Committee always had many competing interests to satisfy. In 1970, approving the funds for the Residential School was not a high enough priority.

Part Three: Changes and Inertia In Admitting Minorities

Change was slow in the Page system when it came to admitting girls and African Americans. Both examples need to be analyzed because while they share some characteristics, they are also vastly different.

In May 1971, when Paulette Desell was finally sworn in, she became the first female Page, and Ellen McConnell followed her soon after. Both girls suffered poor treatment from a traditional and sexist Congress. Desell's journey began in December with Senator Javits, and McConnell's odyssey began in January when Senator Percy wanted to appoint her but Sergeant at Arms Dunphy refused to swear the two girls in because he did not want to break the traditions of the Senate. This was a complex balancing act for Dunphy. On one hand, he had sole supervisory responsibility over Pages, and could swear in a girl if he chose to. On the other, he claimed he needed guidance from the Rules Committee. Both sides had a reasonable argument, and maybe Dunphy was simply doing his job and answering to his own supervisors, but the fact remains that change certainly did not come easily in terms of appointing female Pages. It probably should have, since the Civil Rights Act was passed in 1964, but it took seven years for the Senate to recognize the Act when applied to Pages, and it took the House an additional two years after that.

There was no reason to resist change and every reason to admit female Pages, but we can see it was extremely painful for the Senate to do. It is difficult to imagine that it can be explained because of an indifferent Congress-- the issue was too big to

ignore and too important to hope that it went away. There was an active and deliberate attempt to prevent change from occurring, and to preserve the traditions of the organization. The Senate finally had to break down and swear in Desell because the pressure was simply too great to deny her any longer.

Going back to May 1954 and the Supreme Court's *Brown* decision, we see an immediate appointment of Charles Bush, the first black Supreme Court Page. Again, this occurred through the deliberate intervention of Chief Justice Earl Warren who wanted to show the world that the Court was serious about segregation being unconstitutional. While the Court can be credited with making the change, it should be noted that it took a controversial landmark decision to compel the Court to act. It would not have been acceptable for the Court *not* to have a black Page after the *Brown* decision, but the Court forced itself into following its own decision, and that is why the racial barrier was broken.

In terms of making changes, breaking traditions and appointing female Pages, the Senate took an inordinate amount of time and stalled needlessly. The House and Supreme Court were no better, although for different reasons. In terms of appointing black Pages, the Supreme Court seems to be relatively contemporary for 1954, even if it was simply reacting to its own landmark decision. However, the House embarrassed itself with how it treated Jimmy Johnson in 1959, refusing to appoint him after he was told he had a job. Johnson should have been the first black House Page in 1959 but the House was so slow to change even after the Johnson fiasco that it did not hire its first black Page until 1965, with the Senate hiring its first black Page the next day. The Senate seemed to break the racial barrier only because the House

did, perhaps in another example of institutional rivalry. There were compelling reasons to give Johnson an appointment, and many Members tried to do just that, but they were not allowed to grant Johnson a position as Page, even though they hired him in a different capacity and he was able to attend Capitol Page School, as did other minor employees of Congress. Members who attempted to get Johnson an appointment as a Page ran into roadblocks constantly and were turned away in their efforts to help him. Congress obviously wanted to protect its traditions and maintain the status quo.

Part Four: Conclusion and Remaining Questions

There are several other junctures where Congress was slow to react, but it would be repetitive to go through each one and draw the same conclusion for each. The circumstances changed and the people making decisions changed but the end result was always the same: Congress could not overcome institutional inertia to make effective changes throughout the history of the school. Only when it was forced to make changes because of intense pressure did it finally make significant changes. Sometimes when the pressure was intense, Congress still did not make changes, but when it did make changes, it was always when there was no other choice.

As has been explained, the story of Congressional inaction is a major theme of this study. The study also reveals how informal decisions could be made and then unmade on the way to institutionalization. The decision-making process in Congress is not always how it is described in textbooks. The story of Page School is also a story of how formal education was attained under trying conditions; how Congress

acted (or did not act) *in loco parentis*; and it serves as a study in how Congress supported a unique childhood occupation. The history of Page School is a previously unknown story and tells how the school was transformed from an informal private enterprise to a formal institution.

This study was not able to answer every question connected to the Page system. It did describe how people interested in making changes in the Page system were not successful most of the time because of institutional inertia. However, the study does not answer why institutional inertia exists (other than briefly in this chapter), it only describes the attempts at change and how the attempts mostly failed. Because this study does not examine the Page system after 1983, it does not answer why Congress still employs teenage Pages or the events since 1983. It further does not answer questions concerning why the Page system was allowed to persevere for so long. There were some points where it not only made sense to make changes, but also to end the program. For example, in 1982, why did Speaker O'Neill appoint a special Task Force to make recommendations? It would have been reasonable in some people's minds for him to end the program but this study does not offer any explanations for that. Other things like why Green withdrew the Page residence provision at the last minute and who was responsible for including Page School in the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 are mysteries. It is my hope that future researchers look at these and dozens of other relevant questions.

Appendix One: List of Teachers, 1942

This comes from:

Harold Burton, "Page School: Memorandum of telephone conversation with Dr. Frank W. Ballou, Superintendent of Schools of the District of Columbia," Harold Burton Papers, Manuscript Reading Room, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C., Box 29, Folder 4, *General Correspondence*, 6 March 1942.

The information in parentheses after each name is taken from the *Washington City Directory* or the *Congressional Directory*, and from email with George Washington University Manuscripts Librarian, Jennifer King, and from employee record cards at the Senate Library.

Mr. Kendall lists his faculty as follows (there are no annual reports or summaries):

Ernest Kendall, principal. (He did not say what if any instruction he gave except to say in Physical Education he had charge of the boys on Thursdays in the House gym and on Saturday [he was in charge of them at the] YMCA and on Tuesday in the House gym. Rep. Gerald Landis (R-IND), a former athletic coach, volunteers his help.

Carl Kuether (2nd year; science): math and science H.S. Studying for Ph.D. at Geo. Wash. U. (later a Dr. living in Bethesda) (King: "I have found a listing in the University Bulletin degrees conferred section with a graduation listing for Carl Albert Kuether. This was June 2, 1943. The Library has copies of his dissertation *Studies of the tissue concentrations of ascorbic acid in the guinea pig at different levels of ascorbic acid intake*. The bulletin listed that Kuether received an AB in 1936 from Miami University and an MS in 1940 from Wayne University.")

Yeppa Lund (1st year): math and bookkeeping, commercial, except for typing. Studying for Ph.D. degree at Geo. Wash. U. (worked as elevator operator in Capitol) 138 C. St SE (Cath D) (King: I found a listing in the University Bulletin of registered students in 1943-44 for Yeppa Lund, but nothing after that, and it was not clear from the listing if he was a graduate student. It did mention that he received a B.S. in 1916 and an MS 1920 from Utah State Agricultural College.) (Senate Library Personnel Cards: Lund also worked at the Senate Library from 1943 to 1946 as a second assistant in the document room.)

James B. Minor (1st year): English and History (H.S.) Studying for masters degree at Geo. Wash. (elevator operator SOB; 128 B. St., NE) (King: I found James Beryll Minor Jr. listed in the University Bulletin degrees conferred section for a graduation on June 2, 1943 with a B.A. from Columbian College. I also found a listing in the 1978 alumni directory for Minor that also listed an LLB Law in 1945).

Leon Pousson (1st year): Languages (H.S.) French, Spanish, Latin. Working for ?? degree at Georgetown.

D. M. Perry (2nd year) grades 6, 7 and 8th

George Kendall (1st year): (not related to principal): English, typing, assists in history.

James M. Johnson (1st year): substituting as assistant in math. Working for his AB at Georgetown. (messenger acting as assistant doorkeeper)

Miss Capitola McCollum: sometimes volunteers help

Others interested in Pages: Gerald W. Landis (Ind); Knute Hill of Wash. (former school teacher) and Jerry Voorhis, Cal. (Senator Thomas of Utah has some ??? None in Senate.)

Appendix Two: Capitol Page School Teachers, 1942 to 1982

This information is taken from the entire series of Capitol Page School yearbooks. When a year is listed, it refers to the yearbook year, so "1957" means the 1956-57 school year.

	1942	1943	1944	1945	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957
E. Kendall	Pr	Pr	Pr	Pr	Pr	Pr	Pr	Pr	Pr	Pr	Pr	Pr	Pr	Pr	Pr	Pr
	Millsaps	Pr	Pr	Pr	Pr	Pr	Pr	Pr	Pr	Pr	Pr	Pr	Pr	Pr	Pr	Pr
	His	Cmrel														
Sullivan	His	SocSc	SocSc	SocSc	SocSc	SocSc	SocSc	SocSc	SocSc	SocSc	SocSc	SocSc	SocSc	SocSc	SocSc	SocSc
Minor	E/His	Eng/Lw	Eng/Lw	Eng/Lw	Eng/Lw	Eng/Lw	Eng/Lw	Eng/Lw	Eng/Lw	Eng/Lw	Eng/Lw	Eng/Lw	Eng/Lw	Eng/Lw	Eng/Lw	Eng/Lw
G. Kendall	E/His	Murphy	Eng/M	Eng/M	Eng/M	Eng/M	Eng/M	Eng/M	Eng/M	Eng/M	Eng/M	Eng/M	Eng/M	Eng/M	Eng/M	Eng/M
	Lewis	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
Lund	M	Sci	Sci/M	Sci/M	Sci/M	Sci/M	Sci/M	Sci/M	Sci/M	Sci/M	Sci/M	Sci/M	Sci/M	Sci/M	Sci/M	Sci/M
Johnson	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M
Kuether	Sc/M	Cooper	M/Sci	M/Sci	M/Sci	M/Sci	M/Sci	M/Sci	M/Sci	M/Sci	M/Sci	M/Sci	M/Sci	M/Sci	M/Sci	M/Sci
	Hoffman	M/Sci	M/Sci	M/Sci	M/Sci	M/Sci	M/Sci	M/Sci	M/Sci	M/Sci	M/Sci	M/Sci	M/Sci	M/Sci	M/Sci	M/Sci
Pousson	FL	FL	FL	FL	FL	FL	FL	FL	FL	FL	FL	FL	FL	FL	FL	FL
	Chase	Vail	Chase	Vail	Chase	Vail	Chase	Vail	Chase	Vail	Chase	Vail	Chase	Vail	Chase	Vail
Perry	Gr/His	Gr	Lat/Gr	Lat/M/His	Lat/M/Soc	Lat	Williams	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
	Skubitz	M	PubSpk/M/Law	Spch/Law	E/His	K. Fowler	E	Smith	Bus	Bus	Bus	Bus	Harper	Bus	Bus	Bus
	Wiggins	FL	FL	FL	FL	FL	Block	FL	FL	FL	FL	FL	FL	FL	FL	FL
	Kramer	SS														
Bradley	Sten	Sec	Sec	Sec	Sec	Sec	Sec	Sec	Sec	Sec	Sec	Sec	Sec	Sec	Sec	Sec
	Morrow	Sec	Sec	Sec	Sec	Sec	Sec	Sec	Sec	Sec	Sec	Sec	Sec	Sec	Sec	Sec
	Strickland	Sec	Sec	Sec	Sec	Sec	Sec	Sec	Sec	Sec	Sec	Sec	Sec	Sec	Sec	Sec
	Hillock	Coach	Davis	Coach	Venz	Sec	Sec	Sec	Sec	Sec	Sec	Sec	Sec	Sec	Sec	Sec
	Labukas	Coach	Hillock	Coach	Labukas	Coach	Coach	Coach	Coach	Coach	Coach	Coach	Coach	Coach	Coach	Coach
	Bungor	Sec	Coffren	Sec	Hess	Sec	Hess	Sec	Hess	Sec	Hess	Sec	Hess	Sec	Hess	Sec

Teachers With 15 Or More Years
At Capitol Page School

Hilton	26 (1949-75, not 1960)
Block	24 (1950-73)
Ulmer	22 (1955-78, not 1959, 1966)
Bungor	20 (1956-75*)
Godfrey	18 (1966-83)
Steely	17 (1956-72)
Lakukas	16 (1954-69)
Williams	16 (1949-67, not 1954-56)
DeKeyser	15 (1955-69)

* Bungor is not in the 1970 yearbook; however, no other person is listed as secretary, so I gave her credit for it.

	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983
(Hoffman)	Pr	Pr	Pr	Pr	Pr	Pr	Pr	Pr	
(Ulmer)	Sci	Sci	Sci	Sci	Phy Sci	StLaw	M/Sci	M/Sci	M/Sci
(Hilton)	SS	SS	SS	SS	SS	SS	SS	SS	SS
(King)	M	M	M	M	M	M	M/Sci	Sci/M	Sci/M
(Rimmer)	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
(Godfrey)	Bus	Bus	Bus	Bus	Bus	Bus	Bus	Bus	Bus
(Nitkin)	FL	FL	FL	FL	FL	FL	Fr/Spn	FL	FL
(Bungor)	AA	AA	AA	AA	AA	AA	AA	Sec	Sec

APPENDIX THREE: List of Members Who Were Pages

I would like to thank Jim Oliver for first doing most of the research appearing in this Appendix. The names in italics are unsubstantiated claims; the source for each is listed and needs to be researched further. Some dates are approximate.

FN	LN	H/S/SC	Page Yrs	MOC Yrs	USS Yrs
William	Scott	House	1840-46	1885-89	
Arthur	Gorman	House	1852		1881-99
		Senate	1852-60		1903-06
Richard	Townshend	House	1852	1877-89	
Donald	McLean	Senate	1897-1902	1933-45	
Dixie	Gilmer	House	1911-19	1949-51	
Compton	White	House	1933	1963-67	
John	Dingell	House	1938-43	1955-	
Jed	Johnson	House	1956-57	1965-67	
William	Gunter	House	1952	1973-75	
David	Pryor	House	1951	1966-73	1979-97
Robert	Bauman	House	1953-55	1973-81	
Paul	Kanjorski	House	1953-55	1985-	
William	Emerson	House	1953-55	1981-96	
Jon	Hinson	House	1960	1979-81	
James	Kolbe	Senate	1958-60	1985-2006	
Bill	Grant	House	1959	1987-91	
Christopher	Dodd	Senate	1962	1975-81	1981-
Ander	Crenshaw	House	1961	2001-	
Douglas	Bosco	House	1963-64	1983-91	
Thomas	Davis	Senate	1963-67	1995-	
Roger	Wicker	House	1967	1995-	
Jim	Cooper	House	1970	1983-95	
Mark	Pryor	House	1982	2003-	
<i>Ollie</i>	<i>James</i>			St. Nicholas Jan 1915	
<i>George</i>	<i>Wise</i>			25 May 1902	
<i>William</i>	<i>Schley</i>			1 February 1914	
<i>Wallace</i>	<i>White</i>			9/10 June 1946	
<i>Stephen</i>	<i>Mallory</i>			11 April 1906	
<i>Addison</i>	<i>Smith</i>			26 July 1942	
<i>William</i>	<i>Franklin</i>				
<i>Fishbait</i>	<i>Miller</i>				
<i>Arthur</i>	<i>Vandenberg</i>			1955 Congressional, 7	
<i>William</i>	<i>Knowland</i>			1955 Congressional, 7	
<i>Sunset</i>	<i>Cox</i>	House		"Recollections of Vermonters in State and National Affairs" (Kinsley)	

Appendix Four: 1983 Interviews

Robert Knautz recorded how many people applied for the teaching positions in the summer of 1983. His notes are recorded below.

	Applicants	Called	Interviewed
English	116	8	6
Social Studies	167	8	7
Science	34	5	3
Math	33	8	5
Foreign Language	24	8	3
Seminar	1	1	0

He also interviewed three people from the Senate Page School, Blanche Williams, Leo Balducci and Howard White. All three declined interviews, instead keeping their jobs with the DCBOE.

Appendix Five: Timeline

September 1774	First Continental Congress in Philadelphia.
May 1775	Second Continental Congress in Philadelphia.
May 1787	Federal Convention of 1787 (Constitutional Convention).
April 1789	Senate and House attain quorum to transact business.
November 1800	Congress meets in Washington for first time.
December 1829	Grafton Hanson appointed as “first” Senate Page.
May 1862	Law passed to provide public education in the District of Columbia.
June 1864	School attendance law passes for the District stating those 8 to 14 must be in school.
May 1867	First Supreme Court Page appointed.
December 1869	Andrew Foote Slade, first colored Page (Senate) appointed.
April 1878	First Page baseball team.
Early 1880s	Captain White supervises Pages.
April 1906	House passes child labor bill; does not pass Senate.
June 1906	Content of June 1864 law passed again.
May 1908	Senate exempts Pages from newly passed child labor law; House Pages cannot be younger than 14.
December 1913	Vice President Marshall hosts first holiday dinner for Pages.
September 1917	Cecelia Martin, 15, first girl to pursue appointment as a Page.

February 1925	Compulsory School Attendance law passed for District, stating that those aged 7 to 16 must be in school; those who are at least 14 and have finished 8 th grade exempt.
December 1925	Minimum age for Pages set at 14.
January 1926	Mrs. Jones school is held in basement of Capitol for Senate Pages.
1927	David Laupheimer visits Congressman Butler.
December 5, 1927	Laupheimer's school opens in the basement of the Capitol; holds classes after each day's session.
January 4, 1928	Laupheimer begins classes before each day's session.
May 1928	New child labor law includes Senate Pages.
Spring 1929	Laupheimer leaves his position at Page School.
Fall 1929	Raymond Terry and Devitt School assume responsibility for Page education.
Spring 1931	Terry and Devitt end relationship with Page School.
June 1931	Ernest Kendall moves to Washington.
September 1931	Kendall meets with Congressman McClintic.
December 7, 1931	Kendall's Capitol Page School opens.
June 1932	First graduation at CPS.
January 1939	Gene Cox is appointed first female Page; works four hours.
January 1941	Burton begins serving in the Senate.
June 1941	Page School holds first graduation ceremony.
December 1941	Vice President Wallace discontinues holiday dinners for Pages.
March 5, 1942	Burton visits Page School and sees poor condition of rooms.

May 17, 1942	Kendall creates Sponsoring Committee for school.
May 11, 1942	H. R. 6802 is passed; includes money to make improvements to Page School.
September 1, 1942	Burton reads <i>The Congressional</i> , Page School's first yearbook.
September 3, 1942	Burton meets with Kendall to discuss Pages' living arrangements.
November 28, 1942	Fatal fire at the Cocoanut Grove Nightclub in Boston kills 492 people and injures hundreds more; fire codes are tightened across the country.
December 19, 1942	Verner Clapp warns Librarian Archibald MacLeish about dangerous situation on 3 rd floor cafeteria.
January 5, 1943	MacLeish requests fire inspection for third floor cafeteria.
Mid-January 1943	Fire marshal Calvin Lauber recommends closing third floor cafeteria because of poor egress.
January 1943	District of Columbia Fire Marshal orders Main Building's third floor cafeteria closed.
October 12, 1943	House Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds holds hearing, including Tuohy letter.
December 12, 1943	Article in <i>Washington Post</i> regarding Tuohy letter.
April 1945	President Roosevelt dies; Harry Truman becomes President.
May 15, 1945	Kendall and Anderson meet with Burton.
May 17, 1945	Anderson meets alone with Burton.
May 18, 1945	Student essays are delivered to Burton.
June 12, 1945	Joint Committee hears about poor conditions at school, the unsatisfactory living situation for Pages and stories of how much trouble Pages get into outside of work.

September 30, 1945	Burton resigns from Senate to become Associate Justice of Supreme Court.
December 1945	Pages lease a house to live in as a group.
February 1, 1946	Twenty boys move into 305 New Jersey Avenue, SE, in the first Page residence.
March 4, 1946	Committee calls on Congress to decide whether Pages are needed, and if so, to provide proper living arrangements for them.
August 2, 1946	Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946 directs Congress to get District of Columbia Board of Education (DCBOE) to be responsible for Page School.
January 2, 1947	DCBOE assumes control of Page School, with Kendall.
February 17, 1947	Carl Loeffler meets with Superintendent Corning.
March 22, 1947	Law passed making all minor employees of Congress eligible for Page School.
April 1, 1947	House Pages start to wear uniforms.
April 3, 1947	Kendall appointed principal by DCBOE.
June 25, 1947	Kendall dismissed from DCBOE employment.
September 16, 1947	School begins under DCBOE control, with DCBOE staff.
September 17, 1947	Orson Trueworthy appointed principal of Page School.
January 6, 1948	Senate Pages wear long pants instead of knickerbockers.
1949	Senate Office Building Commission approved plans for New Senate Office Building, including ample space for Page School.
April 4 and 5, 1949	Evaluating Committee visits Page School.
September 12, 1949	Capitol Page School moves to the 3 rd floor (Attic) of the Main Building (Jefferson Building) of the Library of Congress.

January 2, 1950	Page School receives first accreditation, although rated inferior in science.
September 1951	Ruth McRae becomes Page School principal.
January 1954	Margaret Alden puts pressure on Rules Committee to allow girl Pages.
March 1954	Middle States team visits school; grants standard ten year accreditation.
May 17, 1954	<i>Brown v. Board of Education</i> ruling.
June 29, 1954	Four Pages attacked by group of boys with knives.
July 1, 1954	Harold Henegar appointed as Page School principal.
July 23, 1954	Charles Vernon Bush announced as first black Page in Supreme Court; starts school on September 13 and work on September 27.
November 17, 1954	Henegar reassigned from Page School.
January 20, 1955	Henry DeKeyser appointed principal.
July 1955	DeKeyser put on probationary status.
January 16, 1956	House hearings on Page residence.
May 6, 1957	House hearings on Page residence.
June 1957	Page Huw Williams disappears.
June 19, 1957	DeKeyser's appointment made permanent.
April 29, 1958	Architect of the Capitol George Stewart directs that work on rooms of Page School in New Senate Office Building be stopped.
October 13, 1958	Burton retires from Supreme Court.
January 1959	Jimmy Johnson accepts appointment from Congressman Barrat O'Hara to become first black Page in House but is not allowed to start work.

January 1960	Johnson again turned down for Page position.
October 1963	Supreme Court Pages stop wearing knickers and switch to long pants.
November 19, 1963	Senate hearing on Page residence.
December 1-3, 1963	Three-part <i>Washington Post</i> series on Page system
February 6, 1964	Edith Green et al. make surprise visit to Page School.
February 7, 1964	Edith Green et al. make surprise visit to Page rooming houses.
March 17 and 18, 1964	Evaluation Team visits school; gives one-year accreditation because it found a boarding school with no boarding facilities.
July 2, 1964	Civil Rights Act passed; prohibits discrimination in employment due to sex.
July 28, 1964	Senate's Committee on Public Works reports favorably on S. 1847, to build a Page residence.
August 1964	Residence is deleted from National Defense Education Act.
December 17, 1964	Green chairs another hearing.
January 2, 1965	Green's report recommends changes in Page system.
April 13, 1965	Lawrence Bradford becomes first black Page in Senate.
April 14, 1965	Frank Mitchell becomes first black Page in House.
May 18, 1965	House hearings on Page residence.
July 19, 1965	Congressman Hull introduces the U. S. Capitol Page Act to abolish present Page system.
January 2, 1968	School is given one year accreditation after having all Pages move into one of two boarding houses.
January 15, 1969	DeKeyser retires.

April 29, 1969	John Hoffman appointed probationary, effective 1 May 1969.
December 10, 1970	Senator Jacob Javits announces that he will appoint a girl Page, Paulette Desell.
March 11, 1970	House subcommittee votes to abolish Page School.
September 16, 1970	John Dingell and David Pryor block vote to raise age of House Pages to 18.
October 26, 1970	McCormack Page Residential School passed into law.
January 15, 1971	Senator Percy appoints Ellen McConnell as Page.
February 4, 1971	Rules Committee appoints a Subcommittee to address problem of girl Pages.
March 4, 1971	Subcommittee meets to address girl Pages.
March 30, 1971	McConnell, fed up with situation, returns home.
May 3, 1971	Javits introduces bill to choose Pages without regard to sex.
May 10, 1971	Senate Subcommittee report recommends hiring girl Pages.
May 13, 1971	S. Res. 112 passes Senate, allowing girl Pages.
May 14, 1971	Paulette Desell becomes first girl Page in Senate.
July 1, 1972	Senate Rules and Administration Committee reports favorably on S. 2067, wherein Pages are to be aged 18 to 21, and Page School is to be discontinued by the end of June 1975.
September 25, 1972	Deborah Gelin becomes first girl Page in Supreme Court.
May 21, 1973	Felda Looper becomes first girl Page in House.
November 18, 1974	Page School receives another ten-year accreditation.
Spring 1976	Congressman William Lehman visits school to give student surveys.

July and September 1976	House hearings regarding quality of Page School.
October 1, 1976	Senate report criticizing quality of Page School released.
Winter 1976-1977	Page School has its first girls' basketball team.
June 17, 1977	House subcommittee on Education and Labor releases draft report criticizing Page School.
April 26, 1979	Comptroller General releases report regarding Page School.
June and July 1982	Allegations made by Pages involving Congressmen and Pages.
July 28, 1983	Robert Knautz interviews for and is offered House Page School principalship.

Appendix Six: Interviews Completed (Sorted by Last Name)

FN	LN	H/S/SC	TITLE	PAGE YRS	Time	Pages
Donnald	Anderson	House	Page, Other	1960	62	22
					77	21
McAlpin	Arnold	House	Page	1939-43	35	13
Joe	Bartlett	House	Page, Other	1942-44	116	36
Robert	Bauman	House	Page, Other	1952-55	58	17
Lewis	Biben	House	Page	1943	60	27
Bob	Borsari	Senate	Page	1957-58	56	25
Tom	Brown	Senate	Page	1949-51	75	36
Dracos	Burke	House	Page	1935	42	12
Charles	Bush	Sup Ct	Page	1954-57	76	30
Barnie	Collins	House	Page	1943-44	41	9
Tom	Davis	Senate	Page, Other	1963-67	17	10
Paulette	Desell-Lund	Sup Ct	Page	1971-72	60	24
James	Dingell	House	Page	1943-47	48	20
Ray	Felts	House	Folding Room	1943-44	56	14
Don	Fleger	House	Page	1943-47	71	35
Bob	Gandel	House	Page	1954-58	48	22
Myles	Garrigan	House	Page	1941-43	58	18
Paul	Hays	Sup Ct	Page	1960-64	112	37
George	Hutchinson	Sup Ct	Page, Other	1938-40	79	39
Norvill	Jones	Senate	Page	1945-47	56	32
Paul	Kanjorski	House	Page	1953-54	17	8
					55	19
Don	Karp	House	Page	1952-53	46	21
Robert	Knautz	School	Principal	1983-2001	38	10
					83	25
Richard	Kuhn	House	Page	1943-46	52	18
Doug	Lapin	House	Page	1974-76	39	12
Felda	Looper	Sup Ct	Page	1973	33	17
Frank	Lyman	Sup Ct	Page	1923-28	95	43
					18	9
					34	11
					52	18
Ellen	McConnell Blakeman	House	Page	1971-72	55	28
Custis (Gus)	Meade*	House	Page	1921-32		20
Kirby	Metz	Senate	Page	1939-42	49	25
Chester	Middlesworth	Senate	Page, Other	1943-45	63	28
Vance	Morrison	Sup Ct	Page	1952-56	56	31
Robert	Nelson	School	Teacher	1983-2002	38	11
Jim	Oliver	House	Page, Other	1967-68	45	10
					109	22
Mike	Revell	Senate	Page	1952-55	77	33
Glenn	Rupp	House	Page	1932-37	44	19
Terry	Scanlon	House	Page	1955-57	44	24

Frank	Slayton	House	Page	1950-51	24	9
Ken	Smith	House	Page	1955-57	75	22
James	Suma	House	Page	1947-48	71	26
Carmen	Trevitt	House	Page	1943-44	29	12
Naomi	Ulmer	School	Teacher	1954-78	11	7
Ronald	Weitzel	School	Teacher	1983-2005	58	14
Werth	Zuver	Senate, House	Page	1945-48	74	6
ANON		School	Teacher	1983-	39	12
ANON		Sup Ct	Page	1972-75	35	26

SUMMARY OF INTERVIEWS

Interviews: 53

Unique Interviewees: 46

Years Included: 1921 to 1983

Hours of Interviews: Over 47½

Pages of Transcripts: 1095

Words in Transcripts: 403,768

House Pages: 26

Senate Pages: 8**

Supreme Court Pages: 8

Teachers/Principal: 5

Current Members of Congress: 2

*I did not conduct the Gus Meade interview; I relied on a tape recording and a written transcript that were done in 1985.

**Werth Zuver worked in both the House and Senate and is counted twice.

Interviews Completed, Listed Chronologically By When They Served

FN	LN	H/S/SC	TITLE	PAGE YRS
Custis (Gus)	Meade*	House	Page	1921-32
Frank	Lyman	Sup Ct	Page	1923-28
Glenn	Rupp	House	Page	1932-37
Dracos	Burke	House	Page	1935
George	Hutchinson	Sup Ct	Page, Other	1938-40
Kirby	Metz	Senate	Page	1939-42
McAlpin	Arnold	House	Page	1939-43
Myles	Garrigan	House	Page	1941-43
Joe	Bartlett	House	Page, Other	1942-44
Lewis	Biben	House	Page	1943
Barnie	Collins	House	Page	1943-44
Ray	Felts	House	Folding Room	1943-44

Carmen	Trevitt	House	Page	1943-44
Chester	Middlesworth	Senate	Page, Other	1943-45
Richard	Kuhn	House	Page	1943-46
James	Dingell	House	Page	1943-47
Don	Fleger	House	Page	1943-47
Norvill	Jones	Senate	Page	1945-47
Werth	Zuver	Senate	Page	1945-48
James	Suma	House	Page	1947-48
Tom	Brown	Senate	Page	1949-51
Frank	Slayton	House	Page	1950-51
Don	Karp	House	Page	1952-53
Robert	Bauman	House	Page, Other	1952-55
Mike	Revell	Senate	Page	1952-55
Vance	Morrison	Sup Ct	Page	1952-56
Paul	Kanjorski	House	Page	1953-54
Charles	Bush	Sup Ct	Page	1954-57
Bob	Gandel	House	Page	1954-58
Naomi	Ulmer	NA	Teacher	1954-78
Terry	Scanlon	House	Page	1955-57
Ken	Smith	House	Page	1955-57
Bob	Borsari	Senate	Page	1957-58
Donnald	Anderson	House	Page, Other	1960
Paul	Hays	Sup Ct	Page	1960-64
Tom	Davis	Senate	Page, Other	1963-67
Jim	Oliver	House	Page, Other	1967-68
Paulette	Desell-Lund	Sup Ct	Page	1971-72
Ellen	McConnell Blakeman	House	Page	1971-72
ANON		Sup Ct	Page	1972-75
Felda	Looper	Sup Ct	Page	1973
Doug	Lapin	House	Page	1974-76
ANON		School	Teacher	1983-
Robert	Knautz	School	Principal	1983-2001
Robert	Nelson	School	Teacher	1983-2002
Ronald	Weitzel	School	Teacher	1983-2005

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