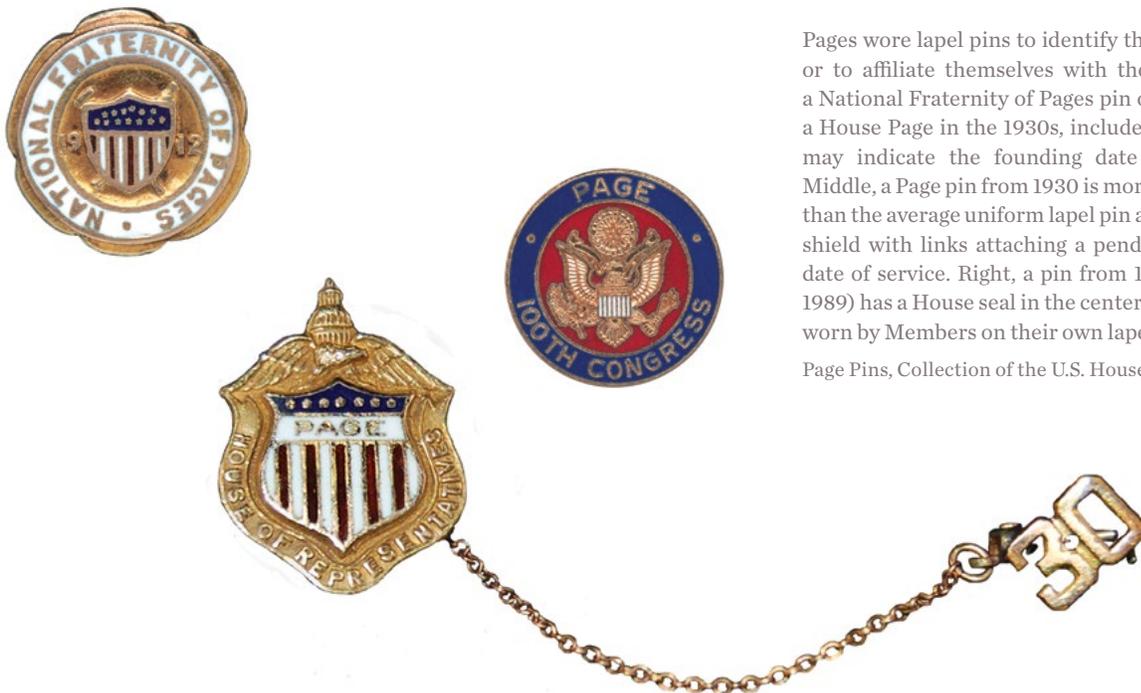




HISTORY OF THE HOUSE PAGE PROGRAM

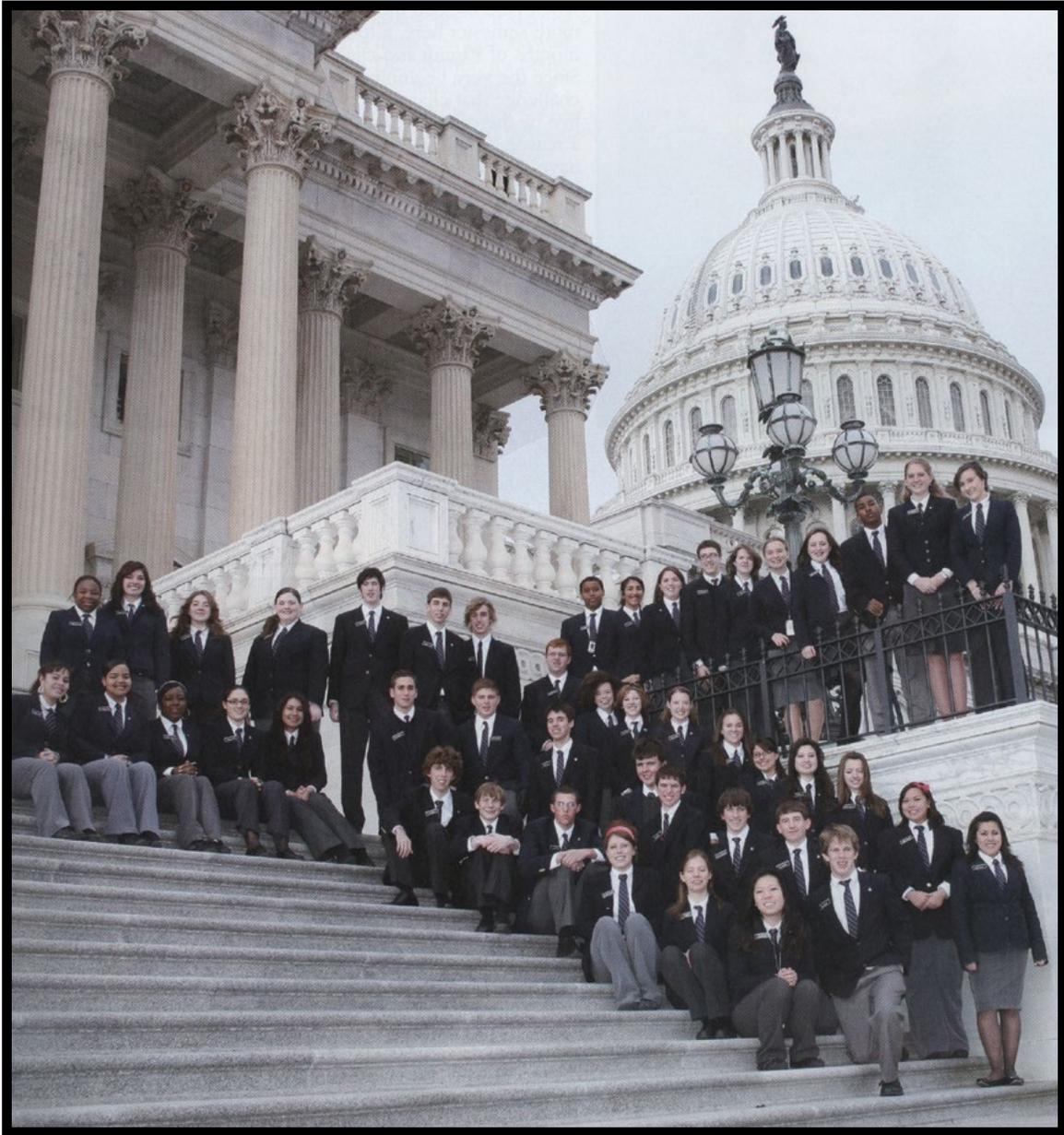
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Pages wore lapel pins to identify themselves during work or to affiliate themselves with the Page program. Left, a National Fraternity of Pages pin owned by Glenn Rupp, a House Page in the 1930s, includes the date 1912, which may indicate the founding date of the organization. Middle, a Page pin from 1930 is more elaborately designed than the average uniform lapel pin and features an enamel shield with links attaching a pendant that indicates the date of service. Right, a pin from 100th Congress (1987–1989) has a House seal in the center and is similar to those worn by Members on their own lapels.

Page Pins, Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives



House Pages pose for a class photo on the East Front of the Capitol.

Class Photo from *The Congressional Eagle* Yearbook, 2007, Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives

For more than two centuries, young people served as Pages in the U.S. House of Representatives and enjoyed an unparalleled opportunity to observe and participate in the legislative process in “the People’s House.”

Despite the frequent and colossal changes to America’s national fabric over that period, the expectations and experiences of House Pages, regardless of when they served, have been linked by certain commonalities—witnessing history, interacting with Representatives, and taking away lifelong inspiration to participate in civic life. Changing institutional needs and broader civil rights reforms transformed the composition of the Page ranks over time. And the methods Pages employed to do their work changed as successive generations adjusted to revolutionary advancements in technology: from the telegraph to the television; from horseback to air travel; from faxes to e-mails and smart phones. Nevertheless, paging provided generations of young people the “chance to see Congress as it really is,” recalled one participant who served in the 1930s. Paging was a direct experience with democratic government—not as told by pundits, political commentators, or history texts, but an immediate and participatory opportunity to understand “the actual, picturesque, human side of Congress.”¹

PAGE ORIGINS

The word “page” originated in English usage in the fifteenth century to denote attendants or courtiers, boys who waited on persons of nobility or social rank. *The Oxford English Dictionary* suggests that the term was not applied to legislative messengers until it came into common usage in North America in the mid- to late-nineteenth century. Unlike many other elements of American legislative tradition, Pages were not inherited from English parliamentary precedent. In Britain, military veterans or pensioners performed tasks associated with Page work. Employing boys to serve as legislative messengers and errand runners was a development described by author Bill Severn as “uniquely American.”²

The use of messengers in legislative bodies in North America dates at least to the Continental Congress. Just three days after the First Continental Congress convened in September 1774 in Philadelphia, in response to Britain’s sanctions

against the colonies, the body appointed two messengers (who would also serve as doorkeepers).³ From that point forward, America’s earliest national legislative bodies employed messengers: the Second Continental Congress, the Confederation Congresses, and, by one account, the Constitutional Convention in 1787.⁴ Messengers were also appointed in the very first session of the First Federal Congress that convened in New York City in April 1789. Though historians do not know with certainty, messengers in this era were all likely adults.

The practice of using legislative messengers evolved over the better part of half a century, from America’s War for Independence until the late 1820s when, according to official House records, a Page corps employing young boys and teenagers began to take shape in the U.S. House of Representatives. But in the unsettled economic environment following the Panic of 1837, a House panel responsible for the institution’s expenditures, the Committee on Accounts, delved into the practice and associated

This scene illustrates the contentious House on the eve of the Civil War. In the foreground, a Page bearing papers wears an expression of consternation as he looks toward the man lunging forward with a sweeping gesture. In popular journals, artists used Pages to comment on the proceedings, in this case echoing the article’s disapproval of the lack of propriety in the House Chamber.

A Scene in the Hall of Representatives, Washington, The Illustrated London News, April 6, 1861, Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives





This 1881 image depicts the rounding-up of Members, most likely for an evening vote or quorum call. Pages dash in and out of the chamber, dodging the incoming procession of delinquent Members being brought back by the Sergeant at Arms, who wields the House Mace.

Washington, D.C.—The National Legislature—The Sergeant-at-Arms Bringing in Absentee Members, Joseph Becker, Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, March 5, 1881, Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives

costs of employing both adult messengers and Pages; the House had never set a formal number, budget, or guidelines to administer the program.⁵ The committee's report provides the first snapshot of paging's origins, which are difficult to pinpoint.

Interviewing "old and experienced" officers of the House, the Committee on Accounts determined that their predecessors first employed boy Pages when Congress convened in the permanent seat of the federal government in the District of Columbia in November 1800.⁶ Some of the earliest Pages may have been the two young sons and nephew of the longtime House Doorkeeper Thomas Claxton. Starting in the 1820s, House expense reports began to list boys being paid as "runners" or "attendants."⁷

In the nineteenth century, Page boys in both the House and Senate were as young as eight and perhaps as old as 16.⁸ Employing young boys, rather than adults or older teenagers, to perform mundane, often menial, tasks had several advantages. Young boys would be compliant and less likely than older teens to be obtrusive or truculent when given direction. And, according to the committee, in the cramped hall of the House, there was an advantage to employing small, fleet-footed boys who could easily dart among the labyrinth of Members' desks.⁹ During his first term in the House, former U.S. President John Quincy Adams of Massachusetts even jotted in his diary that Pages were often akin to "tripping Mercuries who bear the resolutions and amendments between the members and the chair."¹⁰

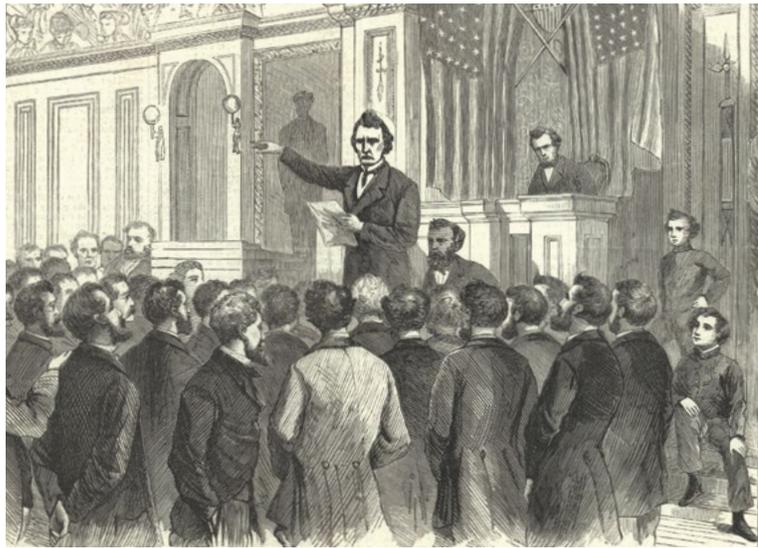
It was during Adams's House career (1831–1848) that the use of Pages expanded in the chamber. The number remained modest for years, with no more than three Pages serving through the 20th Congress

(1827–1829). But the ranks grew and in 1838, when the committee produced its report, 18 Pages were on the House payroll. The Page corps' expansion paralleled the House's growth, which swelled from 106 Representatives in 1800 to 242 by 1838. Some of the increase, too, was attributed to longer House sessions and the growing paper demands of the institution following the development of a formal standing committee system in the decades after the War of 1812. Pages carried out laborious, repetitive work that required folding and preparing the mailing of innumerable speeches, reports, and copies of other official documents, often until late into the night and long after the House had adjourned for the day.¹¹ The economic crisis in 1837 may have been a primary engine for the growth of the Page ranks, as Representatives sought to provide income for the needy. "Most of this increase," observed the Accounts Committee, "has been effected by members of the House, in their desire to serve deserving and sometimes destitute orphan boys."¹²

The committee recommended that no more than 12 Pages be employed by the Clerk of the House at the princely salary of \$1.50 per day. The report also recommended giving the Clerk oversight of the appointment and removal of Pages—a change from the longstanding, tacit arrangement in which the Doorkeeper managed both older messengers and Page boys.¹³ On April 4, 1838, after lengthy debate, the House agreed to cap the number of Pages at 12 in the 26th Congress (1839–1841), setting the age range from 10 to 16. And despite the earlier recommendation, the appointment and supervision powers stayed with the Doorkeeper, "with the approbation of the Speaker."¹⁴

Representative Thaddeus Stevens of Pennsylvania delivers his closing remarks on the impeachment of President Andrew Johnson. In a commonly used pictorial device, the Pages in this image model the desired response of the audience, listening with rapt attention to what is regarded as the last speech of the leader of the impeachment forces.

The Last Speech on Impeachment—Thaddeus Stevens Closing the Debate in the House (detail), Theodore Russell Davis, *Harper's Weekly*, March 21, 1868, Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives



Just three years later, in June 1841, the House created the Select Committee on Contingent Expenses to examine the House budget.¹⁵ As a cost-cutting measure, the committee recommended, and the House approved in early 1842, reducing the number of Pages to eight, which when combined with the 12 older messengers on the Doorkeeper's payroll, could be done without "inconvenience to members of the House or detriment to the public service."¹⁶ In subsequent years the Page ranks resumed their growth.

From its beginning, political patronage dominated the Page appointment process.¹⁷ In the nineteenth century, House Pages were overwhelmingly local boys. Influential Representatives or House officials prevailed upon the Doorkeeper to select their sons or those of their friends, political acquaintances, supporters, and key constituents. Many Pages also were the children of Senators, Capitol Police officers, or executive branch officials. Persistent individuals, with no Capitol Hill connections, who persuaded a Member or the House Doorkeeper to admit them into the Page ranks were equally common. Also common in the 1800s was the appointment of boys who came from heartbreaking circumstances for whom the income would be vital. This practice took hold almost from the beginning, as the 1842 report noted with disapproval: "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 ... 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."¹⁸ Until the turn of the twentieth century, regardless of social rank, House Page boys tended to be from Washington, D.C., and its environs.

Page appointments could last for two, three, or four years, and in some cases, even longer. The majority party controlled most of the appointments, and periods of one-party rule meant remarkably stable employment. But party turnover in a patronage culture meant that turning-point elections sometimes made a clean sweep of the Page ranks. For instance, when Democrats lost nearly 125 seats in the cataclysmic 1894 elections, 32 of the 33 Pages then serving (having been appointed by Democratic Representatives) reportedly lost their jobs.¹⁹

Patronage lasted into the twentieth century, when formal Democratic and Republican party committees assumed control over most political appointments. But that process changed in the program's latter decades as the majority of Pages were drawn from congressional districts across the country. As the program gained a national reputation, Pages tended to secure appointments based on their academic achievement, civic engagement, or other qualities which made them stand out as likely candidates.

By nineteenth-century standards, paging proved a lucrative enterprise. In the 1830s, Members often awarded Pages a bonus of as much as \$250 at the end of each Congress—in addition to their daily wage of \$1.50. "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," observed the 1842 committee



The dress of House Pages evolved over the years. Left, the navy blazer, grey trousers, white shirt, and red, white, and blue striped tie that were worn by Marshall Wills in 2005 represent the Page look that was standardized around the 1980s. Right, a blue wool Page uniform, which was inspired by military styles of the period and includes a mandarin collar jacket (with “Page” emblazoned on the collar), full-length trousers, and suspenders, belonged to Roy Tasco Davis, Jr., who served in 1907.

Page Uniform, 2005, Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives, Gift of Marshall Wills

Page Uniform, 1907, and detail, Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives, Gift of Todd Lowe, Roger Lowe, and Nancy Lowe, Grandchildren of R. T. Davis, Sr.

report on Pages, “it is difficult to resist the eloquent, though sometimes silent appeals of our obliging attendants; and ... the practice has grown up of making an extra appropriation.” Looking to save money where it could, the House adopted the committee recommendation that “compensation should be fixed and firm,” strongly discouraging the bonuses while boosting Page pay to \$2 per day.²⁰

Pages could live comfortably in Washington on that salary, but many supplemented it or even multiplied it by several factors with side work. Before the House banned the practice in the late 1800s, Pages would fill booklets with Representatives’ autographs on the floor and sell them to visitors for a handsome profit. Pages even made money by providing House Members with copies of their speeches and those of their colleagues. Often a Representative designated a Page to circulate

a subscription sheet for his speech among other Members. The Page earned a commission based on the total orders gathered: rousing oratory meant more money. “The boys were able to estimate the value of a measure as it was introduced,” recalled Augustus Thomas, who paged in 1871, “and by knowing the chairman of the committee to which it would be referred to get far in advance the promise of speeches that would be forthcoming. There was a kind of real political sagacity about it.”²¹ One news account noted that a Page made \$400 providing copies of a particularly stirring address on the Tariff of 1890 by Ways and Means Chairman and future President William McKinley of Ohio. “Every big tariff speech is money in the pocket of one or more of the pages, and recent debate on federal elections has been a perfect gold mine for the boys,” opined the *Aberdeen (SD) Daily News*.²²



This illustration from the satirical magazine *Puck* presents a miserable-looking Page, with a glass and pitcher, fulfilling his floor duties by attending to an expostulating Member. Meanwhile, other Members do everything but listen to the proceedings, while the official reporters furiously scribble at the rostrum.

A Speech in the House of Representatives. A Sample Session in These Days of Legislation in Committee Room. Just a Little Side-show for the Gallery, Albert Levering, *Puck*, May 13, 1908, Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives

The rate of official pay remained relatively constant for many decades. By the turn of the twentieth century, Pages were paid \$2.50 per day. By the 1920s, the daily rate was \$3.30, which was raised in 1929 to \$4 per day, where it remained into the 1940s. By the latter part of the twentieth century, as boarding and schooling costs rose, Pages were paid at an annual rate: in the mid-1960s, roughly \$5,000 per year; by 1984, \$9,500; and by early in the twenty-first century, just more than \$20,000.²³

PAGE RESPONSIBILITIES

Page duties changed greatly over the course of two centuries—sometimes expanding, other times contracting, to adapt to new technologies. In the nineteenth century, Pages engaged in a broad array of activities because so few support staff were employed on the floor and by individual Members or House committees. But as the House professionalized in the twentieth century, the Page program adjusted and became more routinized. Regardless of the tasks involved, the underlying goal—as for all House Floor staff—was to assist in the smooth functioning of the legislative process.

In the nineteenth century, before the boom in staff and office space, each Member’s individual desk on the House Floor was his “Washington office.” The floor was a beehive of activity and nearly the exclusive focus of the typical Page’s daily routine. Newspaper correspondent Frank Carpenter recorded the scene in 1886 (during the 49th Congress) as he watched House Pages, identifiable by numbered silver buttons affixed to their lapels, responding to the summons—usually by hand clap—of Members: “[T]hey run in and out of the halls, now darting through the aisles under the very nose of a member who is making a great speech, now carrying great armfuls of books to one Congressman, and now taking a letter to post for another, or bringing a glass of water to the man who is speaking.”²⁴

Aside from the ever-present task of running messages and paperwork to and from Members’ desks, Pages performed a litany of other housekeeping

chores: providing snuff for Members; lighting candles, lamps, and, often, Members’ cigars; preparing the Representatives’ correspondence for mailing; filling ink wells; and sharpening quill pens. In the decades before an electronic bell and signal system was installed in the House, Pages roamed the Capitol corridors shouting summons to the floor for pending votes. Often, the House Doorkeeper dispatched them to Members’ private residences to rouse and retrieve them for late night votes or an unexpected quorum call. During winters, Pages routinely hauled wood into the Old Hall of the House to tend to its four fireplaces. And before the Capitol Guide Service was created, Pages gave innumerable tours to Capitol visitors into every conceivable nook and cranny of the building—as one recalled, “from dome to crypt.”²⁵

As they did well into the twentieth century, many Pages worked long hours in the document folding room in the Capitol basement when the House was out of session. When a telegraph system was introduced in the Capitol in the mid-nineteenth century, a handful of Pages were designated as “telegraph Pages,” tasked with running messages back and forth from the office (located just off the House Floor) to awaiting Representatives and House officers. A similarly small distinguished group, dubbed “riding Pages,” delivered messages across town to other government agencies on horseback or in horse-drawn buggies—and were the envy of Pages left in the chamber.²⁶ William Tyler Page (who would go on to serve as one of the House’s most revered Clerks) first won an appointment as a Page in 1881. He recalled more than a half century later, “Riding pages were equipped with ponies and mail pouches. Telephones had not yet been invented and communications with Executive Departments was [sic] by mail, sometimes a slow method. Consequently riding Pages were employed more promptly to dispatch letters of an urgent nature to the departments.”²⁷ Yet technology—in the form of an enhanced telegraph system and later telephones—would transform this method of communication, too.

Pages stand in the back of the House Chamber during a Joint Meeting Address by Prime Minister John Howard of Australia. The chance to shake hands with a foreign leader after a Joint Meeting was an opportunity at which many Pages leapt during their time in the Capitol.

Joint Meeting Address of John Howard, Prime Minister of Australia, June 12, 2002, Image courtesy of the House Photography Office, U.S. House of Representatives



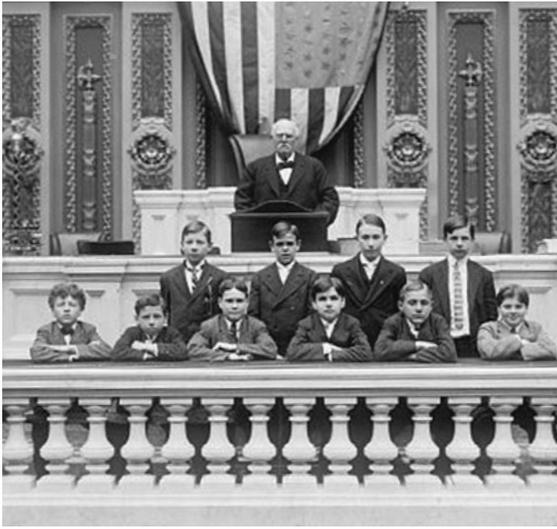
By the late nineteenth century, underground cables were laid to connect the Capitol with the White House and other government departments, making communications nearly instantaneous and greatly reducing the need to dispatch Pages down to the far ends of Pennsylvania or Independence Avenues.²⁸

In the nineteenth century, Pages typically arrived for duty in the House Chamber at 10 a.m. to prepare for the legislative session which, on normal days, gavelled to order at noon. Routine business generally ended by 5 or 6 p.m., but sometimes important measures—or more frequently, Members’ desire to speak on the floor for the *Congressional Record*—kept Pages at their posts until the wee hours of the morning. “Night sessions were pretty hard on the boys,” recalled Augustus Thomas, a 14-year-old Page in the 41st Congress (1869–1871). “We had come from school and home life, where thoughtful mothers would shepherd us at bedtime, and the night session, with its droning monotony of soporific drivel intended only for print, would sometimes lag on until two in the morning.” Pages dozed on the marble steps of the Speaker’s Rostrum, taking turns standing sentry, but when attendance was particularly thin, a late-night orator might make a point by demanding a call of the House. Pages then fanned across the nighttime city, clutching lists of Member home addresses, while the House briefly recessed as “these process servers moved through the city hunting the delinquents.”²⁹

The House is an institution that operates under carefully constructed rules and procedures. Each staff member who assists in the legislative process knows his or her role. As the House modernized

in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the work of Pages in the chamber became much more regimented and defined. First among equals, however, was the Speaker’s Page, an individual who attended solely to the needs of the Speaker both on and off the floor of the House; often, the Speaker’s Page appointment lasted for an entire year. One of his or her duties was to escort the Speaker onto the House Floor to preside, issue a ruling, or cast a vote.³⁰ When the House adjourned or stood in recess, the Page would work directly in the Speaker’s Office.

The vast majority of Pages were assigned as “bench Pages,” sometimes simply referred to as “errand runners.” These Pages were responsible each morning for placing copies of the *Congressional Record* on shelves under Members’ seats, delivering messages and documents to Members on the floor and, beginning in the early twentieth century, to the new House office buildings. Pages were managed by the Page Overseer, who was chosen from among the Pages by seniority. Both the Democratic and Republican side of the chamber had a desk in the rear corner of the chamber, and from these posts the overseers assigned Pages to attend to Members on the floor as messages came in or when Members requested a Page by pressing an electronic call button on the arm of their seat. Before cable or internet news, some individuals were designated as “newspaper Pages,” and racked hundreds of daily papers from around the country on tall, A-frame easels spread throughout the Speaker’s Lobby. For Members’ convenience, the Pages arranged them by region and state.³¹



Turn-of-the-century House Pages gather on the rostrum in the House Chamber. Young Pages were not uncommon in the nineteenth century, when boys as young as eight served. As the House became more crowded over the years, small boys were considered best able to dart among the desks to respond to Members' calls.

Image courtesy of the Library of Congress

Below, First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt attends the 1944 Capitol Page School graduation ceremony held in the House Ways and Means Committee Room.

Image courtesy of the Library of Congress



A series of oral histories with Pages from the mid-twentieth century suggests that bench Page service proved a training ground for advancement in the Page ranks.³² Joe Bartlett of West Virginia, who started as a bench Page in 1941, was promoted to Page Overseer, and then held the post of Republican Chief of Pages from 1945 to 1953, directing the work of several dozen House Pages. Bartlett later served as a longtime House reading clerk. As a Page on the floor, Bartlett innovated the method of “skeletonizing”—or stripping duplicate copies of speeches from extra copies of the *Record*, a service that the Representatives found indispensable: “This was before duplication printing. And so to be able to give a Member 50 copies of a choice item, he was very appreciative. This is why they knew my name.”³³

Glenn Rupp, an Ohio native, paged nearly a decade earlier, from 1932 to 1936. After a year of yeoman’s work on the House Floor, he won a choice assignment as one of two Pages who worked with the House Doorkeeper’s Office to man the entrances into the House Chamber off the Speaker’s Lobby. During a career that included attending Franklin D. Roosevelt’s 1933 Inaugural Address at the Capitol and running errands for Speaker John Nance Garner of Texas, Rupp had perhaps his most memorable experience instructing new House staff assigned to the lobby door, one of whom was a young Texan, and future U.S. President, named Lyndon B. Johnson. Rupp recalled, “[I]t was the most busy place of them all and you had to really know every Congressman by sight, by name, by party, and his

various idiosyncrasies—what committee he was on, and all that sort of thing.” With hundreds of accredited reporters in the press galleries seeking out Members on the floor, the job required a photographic memory. “I’d never use a pencil,” Rupp said, “I never wrote down a name or anything, of anyone; I just heard it once, and I seemed to remember it. And that’s the reason I was out there.”³⁴ Later, in the twentieth century, as security tightened in the chamber, Pages no longer worked the entrances to the chamber. Instead, door duty became simply ceremonial: Pages attended the lobby door through which the Speaker processed to the rostrum at the beginning of each legislative day.

“Documentarian Pages,” though less numerous, were usually more senior Pages who were tasked with greater responsibilities and worked directly with staff in attending to legislative business on the House Floor. These individuals assisted with pending legislative documents by distributing copies of bills, hearings, and committee reports. Each morning during a legislative day, a pair of documentarian Pages also raised the American flag over the House side of the Capitol to signal that the legislative body was gathered in session. Documentarian Pages, in cooperation with Clerk staff and Parliamentarian staff, also operated the electronic bell and signal system that alerted House Members about pending votes and other floor activities.

Finally, the “cloakroom Pages” (often referred to as “telephone Pages”) worked in the party cloakrooms in the rear corners of the chamber. They tended to have photographic memories of names and faces, and often served as a source of information for Members and staff who would call the cloakrooms for an update on House proceedings, particularly in the days before gavel-to-gavel television coverage. They answered calls and delivered messages to Representatives on the floor or placed calls at their request.³⁵ Pages sometimes assisted party Whips and other

leaders by placing calls to Members and advising them that a vote was nearing and that their presence was required on the House Floor.³⁶ The introduction of electronic pagers in the 1970s and, later, cell phones obviated the need for Page help in “whipping” votes.



House Pages assigned to the Democratic Cloakroom pose for this 1953 photo. As a “cloakroom Page,” Bill Goodwin (second from left) answered the telephones and ran errands for Members.

Image courtesy of Bill Goodwin, provided by the Office of the Historian, U.S. House of Representatives

REPRESENTATIVES AS ROLE MODELS AND MENTORS

Across the House Page program’s two centuries, many individuals have noted a strong relationship between Page service and a person’s decision to be civically engaged or to pursue a life in public service.

Pages often enjoyed a strong bond with the Representatives they served, many of whom they looked to as role models or patrons. The House Floor was a nexus for their interactions. Joe Bartlett described the experience as something of a living civics course. “I knew every Member, certainly every Member on our [Republican] side of the House. And the great thing was that virtually every Member knew me, by name ... the friendships I made were priceless,” Bartlett noted. “And, you know, when



Surrounded by smiling House Pages, Speaker of the House William B. Bankhead of Alabama waves to House Members as the House adjourns on November 3, 1939, after passing the Neutrality Bill repealing the arms embargo shortly after the outbreak of war in Europe. The close of a congressional session triggered not only smiles but an explosion of confetti from Pages, who traditionally tossed papers into the air after all the Members left the Chamber.

Image courtesy of the Library of Congress

you see any Member who was here at the time, representing something like, I guess, 350,000 constituents, and he had been elected to be their Representative in Congress, there's something about that person worth knowing, and worth studying.... So it's a very rich experience, just to be in the presence, in the company, of such a group of chosen representatives of the people."³⁷

Glenn Rupp recalled a seemingly ever-present bowl of hardboiled eggs placed on a round metal table in the Democratic Cloakroom in the 1930s that drew Pages and Members seeking snacks during long legislative sessions. One time while Rupp was seated at the table, Speaker William Bankhead of Alabama strode up, pulled up a chair, and talked with Rupp over a hardboiled egg.³⁸ In the days before electronic voting and television, recalled Donald Anderson, the House Chamber bustled with activity and was a forum in which to socialize. Anderson, whose Page service in the early 1960s established career-long connections within the institution, rose to the post of Democratic Cloakroom manager and, eventually, Clerk of the House (1987–1995). "Members would often spend hours in the afternoon sitting on the House Floor, not necessarily following debate but socializing with each other, visiting, sitting in the cloakroom telling jokes and stories," recalled Anderson, who was appointed by his Congressman, John Moss of California. "And so there was a lot of exposure to the Members. We actually got to see them up close and personal."³⁹

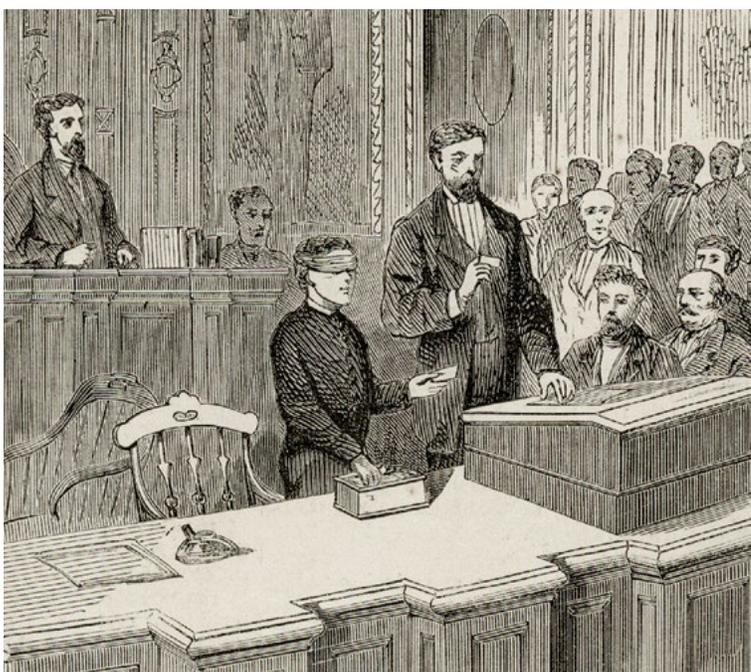
As they had in the nineteenth century, Members took a familial interest in the welfare of Pages. In the 1930s, Representative Joseph B. Shannon of Missouri hosted an annual dinner banquet for House Pages at the swanky Mayflower Hotel in Washington, D.C. This yearly event featured prodigious amounts of food, raucous speeches, music, and, quite often, celebrations for the triumph of the House Page baseball team over its Senate counterpart.⁴⁰ House Members also continued to make appointments based on the economic needs of some of their constituents. Bill Goodwin, who served as a Page in the 1950s, received an appointment from Michigan Representative George Dondero in part because he had lost his father at age 8. "He wanted somebody who would qualify if—not so much academically, but from a personal character standpoint..." Goodwin recalled. "But he also wanted somebody appointed that could benefit financially, because in those days, Pages were paid pretty decent, and considerably more than any other 15-year-old boy who had a paper route, or worked at a local grocery store.... And, so, because Mom was a widow ... that was a major consideration in me being selected also."⁴¹

Representative John D. Dingell, Jr., of Michigan, who served as a House Page in the late 1930s and early 1940s, and went on to become the longest-serving Member of Congress (1955 to present), described paging in this way: "I think the Congress is one of the greatest educational institutions

in the world. And a bunch of kids had the chance to participate in that.” Appointed by his father, Representative John Dingell, Sr., of Michigan, the younger Dingell served as a Page from 1938 to 1943 and would eventually succeed his late father as a Member. Pages, the younger Dingell added, “had a chance to learn and see. And it had a life and a meaning to it that you don’t see if you’re just taking this in a course.... Something you don’t get out of looking at a book.”⁴²

PAGE TRADITIONS

Many of the House traditions that developed over more than two centuries included the Pages. As the Page program grew with the House over the course of the institution’s history, this was inevitable.



This print accompanies a newspaper article explaining how business was conducted in the Congress. The seat assignment lottery, with a blindfolded Page drawing the names of Members who came forward to choose their seat in the House Chamber, was part of the excitement of a new Congress.

Methods of Voting in the United States Congress (detail), James E. Taylor, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, March 27, 1869, Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives

Drawing of Seats on House Floor

Before the installation of the theater-style bench seats in the modern House Chamber, Representatives sat at individual desks on the House Floor. When the House first occupied its current chamber in December 1857, the Members already were sitting in party blocs—with Democrats to the Speaker’s right and Republicans to his left. But individual desks were chosen by lottery. At the opening of each Congress, the Speaker requested Members to clear the contents of their desks and retire behind the back rail of the chamber. From there, they were spectators to the seat selection lottery.

Sometime in the years after the Civil War—no source definitively records when—Pages gained a starring role in the seat assignment ritual on Opening Day. By some accounts, the Chief Page was placed at the Clerk’s desk and blindfolded. He then drew numbered marbles from a box that corresponded to an alphabetical list of Members maintained by the Clerk of the House. As each ball was drawn, the Clerk announced the result, and the Member chose his seat. “The results of this grand lottery are the best proofs of the absolute democracy of the House,” a correspondent for the *Chicago Daily Tribune* explained in 1897. “Frequently members longest in service are obliged to take the poorest seats and some unknown greenhorn from a back county is pushed into prominence by mere luck.”⁴³ This practice ended in the early twentieth century when the House had reached its current number of 435 voting Representatives and the individual desks were removed in favor of the unassigned, modern benches.

With the need for more space, the first House Office Building (now named the Cannon House Office Building) was built and opened in 1908, further reducing the need for Members to have individual desks on the House Floor. But here, too, House Pages played a role in assigning space. On January 8, 1908, in preparation for the opening of the office building at the conclusion of legislative proceedings in the chamber, a blindfolded House Page once again drew numbered marbles (each



In this image from the late 1930s, Page John Jurgensen (right) delivers a bill from the House Floor to Chief Bill Clerk William McDermott, who will number the bill and prepare it for delivery to the Government Printing Office. Running official documents from the floor to various offices around the Capitol complex was a primary task of the Pages.

Image courtesy of the Library of Congress

corresponding to a Member) and in succession each Representative was allowed to choose his office from a floor plan of the building. Claude Kitchin of North Carolina won the “lottery” as the first Member chosen, and picked his office, which was then Room 430 of the building.⁴⁴

Initially, the expansion of office space increased the workload for Pages, who wore their shoe leather thin hiking from the House Chamber across the expanding Capitol campus. Member and committee offices crammed into the Cannon Building at first were later spread to the Longworth Building (opened in 1933 as the “New House Office Building”) and the Rayburn Building (opened in 1965). But over time, particularly after the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970, Member staff sizes increased considerably. By the latter twentieth century, many of the jobs Pages once performed were gradually assumed by junior staff or even college interns.

Mock Sessions of the House

Well into the twentieth century, House Pages held mock legislative sessions in the empty chamber during recesses and wrestled with surprisingly complex policy and procedure, often with “delight in aping their congressional masters,” quipped one observer.⁴⁵

Although such miniature Congresses went by different names over the years, they were an enduring aspect of Page life. Page Augustus Thomas recalled that in the early 1870s, Pages would gather impromptu in the chamber when the House was out of session. “One boy would get Mr. [Speaker James G.] Blaine’s gavel and smartly call for order, and the

rest would scamper each to the seat where he felt sure of making the greatest hit” in imitating the most amusing orators of the day: General Benjamin F. Butler of Massachusetts; Samuel “Sunset” Cox of New York; or Judiciary Committee Chairman John A. Bingham of Ohio.⁴⁶ In the 51st Congress (1889–1891), when Speaker Thomas Brackett Reed of Maine empowered the majority to move long-stalled legislation with new House rules, Pages formed the “Junior House of Representatives” and adopted “Reed’s Rules” for their own mock floor sessions.⁴⁷ Whimsical debates often ensued over the appropriation of generous salary increases and perquisites for the Page corps. In one instance, a Page approached the chair to gain recognition, waving a dollar note: “Mr. Speaker,” he deadpanned, “I wish to introduce the following bill.”⁴⁸ In the 1930s Pages convened the “Itsey-Bitsey Congress,” which debated such contemporary issues as selling war materials to foreign countries and the merits of a proposed Fair Labor Standards Act.⁴⁹ About that time, for a \$2 initiation fee, Pages also could participate in the Little Congress Club. This staff group (which was a forerunner to the Congressional Secretaries’ Club) also included secretaries, legislative support staff, amateur policy experts, and political aspirants, who “debated” bills regarding the top issues of the day (often before they came to the House or Senate for consideration) in the Cannon Building.⁵⁰

Some observant Pages were more attuned to parliamentary maneuvering than the legislators they served. One such example was precocious Thaddeus Morrice of Washington, D.C., first appointed a Page

In 1944, the Capitol Page School awarded House Page Joe Bartlett, whose career as a House staffer eventually spanned 38 years, a varsity letter in basketball. Pages attended school in the early morning; worked as messengers in the Capitol during the day; and, as with Bartlett, a few played basketball in the evening.

Page School Varsity Letter, 1944, Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives, Gift of Brigadier General Joe Bartlett



in the late 1840s. In the days before a formal Parliamentarian’s Office existed, the youthful Morrice graduated from the Page ranks to serve as the “Clerk at the Speaker’s Table.” Always standing at the presiding officer’s side when the House was in session, Morrice prompted him, *sotto voce*, on rulings. Beginning with Speaker Nathaniel Banks of Massachusetts (1855–1857) and extending into the Speakership of Schuyler Colfax of Indiana during the Civil War, this parliamentary prodigy was the chamber’s “recognized authority” on procedural questions and precedent.⁵¹

Sporting Events

Sports constituted a staple of the Pages’ Capitol Hill experiences. Decades before congressional Democrats and Republicans competed on the baseball greensward, the chamber’s Pages played baseball games against one another (divided by political party), and against local sporting teams, Senate Pages, and even older House staff. The earliest reference to a Page baseball team dates to the late 1870s.⁵² By the turn of the twentieth century, local papers often featured box scores and at least one *Washington Post* article recorded a House Page team victory, 9 to 5, over the chamber’s adult employees.⁵³ Eventually, a baseball rivalry grew between Senate and House Pages and persisted until it was interrupted by World War II. Speakers of the House were often on hand to throw out ceremonial first pitches. According to one source, the House had a perennial advantage over the Senate because its Page boys tended to be older and bigger.⁵⁴

Even as baseball reigned as the preferred sport for many decades, yearbooks and newspaper accounts record House Pages participating in other forms of organized competition: boxing, swimming, football, and basketball. In the post-World War II years, with the growth of the Capitol Page School, basketball supplanted all others as the lone school sport—with a team composed of House and Senate Pages that played Washington-area high schools.

Pickup games and less organized extracurricular “sporting” activities also remained popular pastimes. Nineteenth-century Pages played marbles behind the Speaker’s Rostrum when the House stood in recess, and even as late as the mid-twentieth century some Pages hunted—with pellet guns and terriers—the large and unusually bold pack of rats that populated the labyrinthine basement of the Capitol. “Darn things were about as big as housecats,” Representative John D. Dingell, Jr., recalled many decades later.⁵⁵

Initiation Rituals

From the nineteenth century forward, numerous accounts relate traditional jokes and pranks that senior Pages played on their recently-arrived colleagues. Newcomers might be asked to fetch a “*Congressional Record* player,” procure pigeon’s milk for a thirsty congressman, or acquire polish for the Capitol Dome. “If we had a green Page,” recalled Glenn Rupp, “... we might send him for a check stretcher, or a sky hook, and keep a straight face.” The Page would be dispatched to the Clerk’s Office or the House Document Room, “scratching



House Minority Leader Joe Martin of Massachusetts, left, and Speaker of the House William B. Bankhead of Alabama pose with the House Page baseball team in 1939.

Image courtesy of the Library of Congress

his head all the way over there to figure out how he was going to ask for such a silly thing.”⁵⁶ Bill Goodwin likewise remembered that one typical request grew out of the notion that as bills were debated and amended, the original bill would need to be “stretched” to fit new text crafted by legislators’ handiwork. “Go down to the House document room and get a bill stretcher,” Goodwin recalled instructing a new Page. “Congressman Jones wants a bill stretcher over in his office.”⁵⁷

Given that many of the Pages were teen boys, nineteenth-century accounts suggest that such hijinks and a general lack of supervision away from work sometimes created a world of “bumptiousness and disaster.” One news correspondent from the 1890s noted, “A majority of [Pages] live away from home, and enjoying pretty good incomes for boys, their habits are not always of the best. Pages as a rule imitate the men whom they serve in chewing tobacco, smoking cigars and cigarettes, playing the races, and drinking beer.” Occasionally, unacceptable behavior

prompted the Doorkeeper to relieve a Page of his duties and to send him packing back to his family.⁵⁸

Singing in the Chamber

Some traditions—such as singing in the well of the House—helped to pass time or to celebrate special events. Pages and Members often sang in the chamber while the House stood in recess. One evening in the 1950s, recalled Bill Goodwin, while the House was waiting for the Senate to complete its business, Michigan Congressman Louis Rabaut (known among colleagues for his habit of spontaneously breaking into song) asked the young Page to come into the well of the House. “Bill, I understand you sing,” Rabaut said. “Yes, sir, I do,” Goodwin replied. “Well, several Members of the House have told me they heard you sing at the [Page] graduation, so I would like for you to sing that same song here.” Before a jam-packed chamber, Goodwin performed “The Lord’s Prayer.” Goodwin and Congresswoman Coya Knutson of Minnesota then sang a duet for Members in the chamber.⁵⁹

Former athlete Representative Hamilton Fish of New York coaches the 1927 House basketball team.

Image courtesy of the Library of Congress





Frank Mitchell, the first African American appointed to the House Page program in the modern era, is shown with (left to right) Illinois Representatives Paul Findley and Leslie Arends, and Minority Leader Gerald Ford of Michigan. Congressman Findley, who represented Mitchell's home district in Springfield, Illinois, made the historic appointment.

Frank Mitchell with Republican Leadership, 1965, Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives

Thirteen-year-old Gene Cox, the daughter of Representative Edward Cox of Georgia, served one day as her father's Page in 1939.

Image courtesy of the Library of Congress



BREAKING DOWN RACIAL AND GENDER BARRIERS

The Reconstruction Era changed the face of Congress as African Americans—some of them former slaves—were elected to the U.S. House. Other freedmen were appointed or hired to serve as staff.⁶⁰ Fourteen-year-old Alfred Q. Powell of Manchester, Virginia, is the earliest known Black American appointed as a House Page. His chief sponsor was Representative Charles Howell Porter of Virginia, who had moved to Virginia from New York after the Civil War and represented a Richmond-centered district. He secured Powell's appointment on April 1, 1871, and Powell served during most of the 42nd Congress (1871–1873).⁶¹

Powell's first day as a Page in the Republican-controlled House coincided with a contentious debate on the eve of the first Ku Klux Klan Act, as notable African-American Members such as South Carolinians Robert Elliott and Joseph Rainey delivered speeches on the floor attesting

to violations against the 14th Amendment rights of their constituents.⁶² A *New-York Tribune* correspondent wrote, "Except [for] some practical jokes which have been put upon [Powell] by some of the older pages, he got started very creditably."⁶³ Records indicate that Powell served until late 1872, just months before the close of the 42nd Congress.⁶⁴ An African-American Page (appointed by the Radical Republican Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts) had served as a Senate riding Page nearly a year and a half before Powell started in the House.⁶⁵ It is unclear if there were any other black Pages who served in the years immediately after Powell left the chamber. The "Jim Crow" laws and customs that followed had, by the 1890s, made that improbable. By the turn of the twentieth century, Powell's milestone was forgotten.

It was not until 1965, at the zenith of the civil rights movement and on the centennial of Abraham Lincoln's death, that the House welcomed another African-American Page: Frank Mitchell

of Springfield, Illinois. Congressman Paul Findley, who represented the district that encompassed Lincoln’s hometown, and Republican Leader Gerald R. Ford of Michigan pushed for the appointment, which symbolized a marriage of the past and present. Like Alfred Q. Powell nearly a century earlier, Mitchell paged during a civil rights revolution as he witnessed debate about the 1965 Voting Rights Act during his service in Washington. The March on Selma, Alabama, had occurred just weeks before his appointment. “I don’t think I broke any barriers for anybody,” recalled Mitchell, whose principal job during his several months of service was to answer phones in the Republican Cloakroom. “But what I did do was carry myself with dignity and respect, and I hope I made it easier for the next guy or woman coming along, so that there wouldn’t be any hesitation.”⁶⁶

The first female Page was 13-year-old Gene Cox—appointed on January 3, 1939, by her father,

Representative Edward Eugene Cox of Georgia, to serve symbolically on the opening day of the 76th Congress (1939–1941). Sworn in by Doorkeeper Joseph Sinnott, Cox logged just three hours on the job, collected autographs from Members, posed for the national press on the Speaker’s rostrum wielding a gavel, and earned \$4 for her work.⁶⁷

Sinnott fretted that the Cox story might “get into the papers” (it did) and produce an immediate avalanche of applications from girls (it did not).⁶⁸ Over the next several decades, whenever the issue of girls serving as Pages was raised by the occasional advocate on or off Capitol Hill, the response from House leaders mirrored American society’s prevailing assumptions. Girls could do the work, but because Pages lived independently in an urban setting, the overriding consideration in denying gender equality in the Page ranks was that living conditions were unsafe for unsupervised teenage girls.

Such attitudes prevailed into the 1960s but began to change as more women Members of Congress advocated for introducing girls into the Page ranks and as pressure for equality grew with the women’s rights movement during that decade. In 1973, more than 30 years after Gene Cox served for a day, Speaker of the House Carl Albert of Oklahoma made the historic first appointment of a female Page—Felda Looper of Heavener, Oklahoma. Speaker Albert’s decision was based in part on Looper’s persistent letter-writing campaign to gain girls admittance to the Page program. “It was the first time in my life I ever felt discriminated against as a woman, and it made me furious,” Looper recalled about her reaction upon learning about the “unspoken rule” barring girls from serving as Pages.

Looper began her tenure on May 21, 1973, amid widespread media coverage.⁶⁹ But as a bench Page, she quickly settled into a summer of performing the same tasks as her male counterparts—primarily running errands for Members of Congress. “This was a life-changing experience for me,” Looper recalled, noting that the mounting Watergate Crisis was a topic that occupied much of the summer.



Felda Looper, the first full-time female House Page, was appointed by Speaker of the House Carl Albert of Oklahoma in 1973.

Image courtesy of Felda Looper, provided by the Office of the Historian, U.S. House of Representatives



Doorkeeper Bert Kennedy and Clerk of the House William Tyler Page, pictured here in 1919, served as Pages during their youth and continued to work at the Capitol throughout their lives. Featured left to right: Postmaster Frank Collier, Kennedy, Sergeant at Arms Joseph Rogers, and Page.

Image courtesy of the Library of Congress

“This was the first time I ever saw kids fighting over a newspaper and really knowing what was going on in the world, or certainly in our little world.”⁷⁰ Within several years girls were being appointed House Pages in numbers commensurate with their male counterparts. And, in the 97th Congress (1981–1983), because of her superior academic performance, Polly Padden was selected from among the Pages to become the first female to be the Speaker’s Page.⁷¹

PAGES AND PUBLICITY

As with Looper and Mitchell, Pages occasionally emerged from their largely anonymous roles to occupy national attention. On March 1, 1954, Puerto Rican nationalists armed with handguns opened fire onto the House Floor from the southwest gallery. With Speaker Joe Martin of Massachusetts presiding, numerous Representatives, staff, and Pages were present for an upcoming vote. In the fusillade, five Representatives were struck—Alvin Bentley of Michigan, Ben Jensen of Iowa, Clifford Davis of Tennessee, George Fallon of Maryland, and Kenneth Roberts of Alabama. All five survived, although Bentley was critically wounded.

Future Representatives Bill Emerson of Missouri and Paul Kanjorski of Pennsylvania, were among the Pages working on the House Floor that day. Bill Goodwin recalled the experience: “To this day, I can still hear those bullets going *phht-dut, phht-dut* alongside of me, those two bullets that one landed above Bill Emerson, and one alongside Bill Emerson, which was just eight feet away from me, to my right. I can still hear those bullets hitting that mahogany

wall. *Phht-dut*, you know? What a sound. And the thing is, I saw that it was a gun, you know? I saw it right from the start of it. Saw the guy stand up.” Pages sprang into action when the shooting stopped. “I was aware that there were Members shot, so I got up immediately and went down to check on who was the most serious,” Kanjorski recalled. “I alerted my other fellow Pages that we needed stretchers, and we actually—funny enough ... we sort of took over, ordering the stretchers and getting people put together.”⁷² A group of a half dozen Pages helped to evacuate wounded Members to waiting ambulances on the East Front Plaza. In an iconic photograph that ran in hundreds of newspapers around the world, Kanjorski, Emerson, and Goodwin are seen descending the East Front steps, bearing a wounded Representative on a stretcher.

Other House Pages went on to fame and success in their post-Page years. Among the many Page alumni who went on to illustrious careers were William B. Cushing, the Civil War naval hero; Bill Gates (1972), who founded Microsoft; and Benjamin Jealous (1989), a president of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. More than two dozen U.S. Representatives first served in the Capitol as congressional Pages. One of the earliest was Richard W. Townshend, born in Prince George’s County on the outskirts of Washington, D.C. Townshend served as a Page in the 1850s before moving to Illinois, where he earned a law degree, became involved in Democratic politics, and eventually represented a district in that state in the U.S. House from 1877 to 1889.⁷³



This image, which appeared in newspapers across the country, shows House Page Bill Goodwin (left) carrying Representative Alvin Bentley of Michigan to an ambulance on the East Front of the Capitol, following the 1954 House Chamber shooting. Pages Paul Kanjorski of Pennsylvania and Bill Emerson of Missouri (located in the center of the image and the right, respectively), later served as U.S. Representatives.

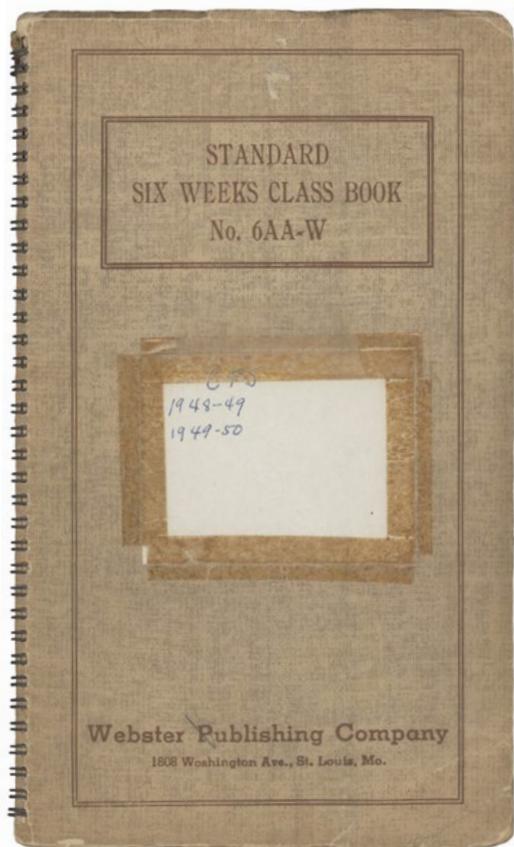
Image courtesy of Bill Goodwin, provided by the Office of the Historian, U.S. House of Representatives

SCHOOLS, DORMS, AND REFORMS

Schooling for Pages reflected the development of a national educational system in the United States. No formal provisions were made to provide nineteenth-century congressional Pages with an education, and those with prior formal schooling tended to be exceptions to the general rule. Quite often they were sons of sitting Members of Congress who were enrolled in a private prep school.⁷⁴ Well into the twentieth century, advocates for the status quo argued that what Pages lacked in formal education was more than compensated for in practical experience. Reformers, however, believed that while Pages might get a statesman's education and know intimately the rhythms and contours of the legislative process, and so be "fully equipped for the position

of Senator or Representative," that they were "deficient in almost all other useful knowledge."⁷⁵

Progressive era reforms aimed at improving life for the nation's children elsewhere were instituted at a glacial pace on Capitol Hill. In April 1906, the House debated and passed child labor legislation for the District of Columbia (H.R. 17838), which specifically prohibited the House and Senate from employing any child under the age of 14 (but another provision restricting nighttime work effectively pushed the minimum age limit to 16).⁷⁶ The *Washington Post* enthusiastically crowed that with the "Pages dethroned," Members of Congress would have to "do their own chores" or pay their personal secretaries to do it for them.⁷⁷ But the Senate, where traditions die hard and



Ernest Kendall, founder of the Capitol Page School, tutors a Page in one of the early Capitol classrooms.

Image courtesy of the Library of Congress

This grade book from the Capitol Page School documents the progress of the students in the 1948 to 1950 school years. The organization of the Capitol Page School in 1931 allowed students from around the country to serve as Pages without interrupting their education.

Grade Book of the Capitol Page School, 1948–1950, Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives

which consistently preferred that pre-teen boys be employed on the floor, killed the bill.

Two years later, Congress passed S. 4812, largely crafted by the Senate Committee on Education and Labor, that began to regulate child labor in the nation's capital. Although it established a minimum employment age of 14 years, it specifically exempted from this provision "children employed in the service of the Senate."⁷⁸ The law applied to the House but in practice that chamber also continued to employ Pages under the age of 14, as it had done for a century.⁷⁹ Although Congress passed another child labor measure for the District of Columbia in May 1928 that struck the Senate exception, lawmakers continued to appoint boys under the minimum age for another two decades.⁸⁰

It was not until 1926 and the passage of the Compulsory School Attendance Law that the House finally began educating its Pages. Page parents acted first. They created a school association and hired a tutor to instruct the children. A space was set up in the basement of the Capitol and a limited number of Pages began to attend classes at the private, tuition-based facility. After several short-lived predecessors, the privately-operated Capitol Page School was established by Ernest Kendall for both House and Senate Pages in 1931. Kendall was

a "straight-laced" disciplinarian who ran a "tight ship," one of his students recalled.⁸¹ By the early 1940s, the Capitol Page School became more formalized with a modest staff, tuition of \$19 per month, and a range of academic courses not unlike a normal high school curriculum.

Still, it was far from a typical school experience as its curriculum was shoe-horned entirely into a schedule that met the legislative needs of Congress. Classes were compressed, and met as early as 6 a.m.—with Senate and House Pages arriving in shifts. Instruction generally ended in the late morning, when both chambers moved toward legislative business, and Pages went to work on the floor, and picked up again in the late afternoon when floor business ended. Moreover, the school's location was less than ideal. Joe Bartlett recalled the "dank" environs in the bowels of the Capitol as a "forsaken" place: "Nobody went down there without a reason." The classrooms were across the hall from the Capitol's massive electricity generators that whined constantly. And the rooms often flooded, so much so that "they had to put down planks so we could reach our seats," Bartlett remembered. "We'd walk in on the planks, take our seats, hold our feet up, and study Latin. It was unreal."⁸²

After several false starts, the Capitol Page School was established in 1931 as a privately operated school, allowing for the development of clubs, school sports, and scholastic awards. This embroidered "C" was one of the Capitol Page School's first varsity letters for scholastics.

Page School Scholastic Letter, 1946, Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives, Gift of Charles Hill Anderson





In 1949, the Library of Congress' Jefferson Building became home to the Capitol Page School. For the next six decades, House Pages made the early-morning trek to their classes on the third floor. Although small, the space was a marked improvement over the former quarters in the dank Capitol basement.

Image courtesy of the Architect of the Capitol

The spartan conditions of the Capitol Page School—with constant water leaks, giant rats, and whirring generators—shocked Senator Harold Burton of Ohio, who moved quickly in 1942 to improve the physical plant of Kendall's school. About that time, Representative Alfred J. Elliott of California introduced a bill calling for the creation of a Page dormitory managed by Congress, a proposal that Senator Burton backed. But that proposal ran into opposition from Members who did not support the looming costs. Burton also set his sights on raising the academic standards of the Capitol Page School, an effort that culminated in congressional hearings in 1945 on the state of Page academics. Under provisions of the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1946, the District of Columbia Board of Education assumed management of the Capitol Page School in 1947 and introduced, as historian Darryl Gonzalez points out, long-missing components of Pages' educational experience: a standardized curriculum and professionally accredited, full-time faculty, long the staple of the public education system.⁸³ Two years later, the school moved to the third-floor "attic" of the Jefferson Building of the Library of Congress. Although not commodious by any measure, it far exceeded the conditions in the Capitol basement. House Pages would be educated in this space for the next six decades.⁸⁴

From the end of World War II to the early 1980s, the Capitol Page School, which accepted House, Senate, and Supreme Court Pages, operated much like a public high school, with freshman through senior grade levels. At this point, Page appointments typically were for a year or two but could last up to four years. Classes, which opened with a prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance, convened at 6:10 a.m. and were usually finished by 10:30 a.m. The curriculum mirrored that of a typical high school and, with small classes and tenured faculty from local universities and schools, the education was strong. Still, the experience was unique. There were no field trips, only one school sport (basketball), and, with the exception of the annual winter and spring dances, very few extra-curricular activities or socials. However, the view from the third floor of the Jefferson Building, looking westward across the Capitol campus and down the National Mall made it, in the words of Donald Anderson, "clearly the most magnificent high school campus in the world."⁸⁵

Questions about the traditional unsupervised living arrangements for Pages, however, lingered for years. For many decades, out-of-town Pages lived in the numerous boardinghouses that dotted Capitol Hill. Boardinghouse supervision varied

considerably—from watchful and strict matronly owners to less diligent landlords.⁸⁶ After World War II, a long line of House Members pointed out the need for changes, especially as Washington grew from a sleepy southern town into a metropolis. Many Pages, now drawn from districts around the country, had no adult supervision during their stays in the capital. In the 1950s, Representatives Charles E. Bennett of Florida, Ruth Thompson of Michigan, and Abraham Multer of New York each introduced measures to create a supervised Page residence or academy. All came to naught.⁸⁷ Agitation for reform reached a crescendo again in the early 1960s after several widely publicized incidents involving crimes against Pages and the

misbehavior of certain Pages. Representative William R. Broomfield of Michigan testified before the House Administration Committee that unless a formal supervised Page dormitory was constructed that the House could “expect a real scandal”; he added, “We are really sitting on a keg of dynamite.”⁸⁸

More than anyone else, Representative Edith Green of Oregon pushed for major changes to the congressional Page system—in schooling, housing, work conditions, and qualifications in the performance of their jobs in both the House and Senate. Dubbed “Mrs. Education” and the “Mother of Higher Education” by her colleagues, Green shaped national education policy across two decades—from the National Defense Education



Known as the “Mother of Higher Education,” Representative Edith Green of Oregon, who served from 1955 to 1974, advocated improving the educational and living experiences of the House Pages.

Image courtesy of the Library of Congress

Pages from the First Session of 89th Congress erupt from the House Chamber on October 23, 1965, in celebration of an early adjournment.

Image courtesy of the Library of Congress



Act of 1958 to the Higher Education Act of 1965 and Title IX of the extension of that act in 1972.⁸⁹ In 1964, Green convinced House leaders to create a Select Committee on the Welfare and Education of Congressional Pages. The committee, which Green chaired, relied on an evaluation of the Capitol Page School by an independent school accreditation association, solicited information from college educators, and interviewed Capitol Page School staff, House officials, and Page supervisors.

In early 1965, Green's committee filed a report criticizing the incongruity of providing "these youngsters the great opportunity to be of direct service to their Government, and at the same time, depriv[ing] them of the basic protections to which they are entitled at this stage of their development." How, they asked, could a 14- or 15-year-old boy make independent adult decisions about his housing, nutrition, and "physical well being"?⁹⁰

The problem, as the Select Committee on the Welfare and Education of Congressional Pages saw it, was that the program no longer employed Pages from the immediate Washington area. A century earlier, virtually all congressional Pages lived with their families in or near the District of Columbia, but by the mid-twentieth century the situation was nearly reversed. Of the 98 boys who attended the Capitol Page School during 1964, only one third of them were from Washington, D.C., and its surroundings or lived with family members in the capital area. "The committee considers this to be a very serious and potentially explosive situation," the report warned, adding that the problem was made more combustible because away from school and the House Floor these teenage boys were left "virtually without supervision" and "with a considerable amount of spending money in their pockets."⁹¹

Green's committee reported to the full House two alternative courses of action to reform conditions. The first was to continue the existing system of appointing high school-aged Pages, with several modifications: admit only juniors

and seniors; select Pages on a nondiscriminatory basis without regard to race, religion, or sex; set minimum academic credentials for admittance and require enrollment in the Capitol Page School; and limit Page service to no more than one calendar year and no less than a typical school semester. Most significantly, the committee recommended that Congress build, maintain, and oversee a dual Page residence and school in which the Capitol Page School could be located.⁹² Construction costs alone, Green's panel acknowledged, would require an outlay of hundreds of thousands of dollars.

The committee's alternative solution, toward which Green herself was inclined, sought to make Page service available only to college-aged students over the age of 18, many drawn from local universities, thus sparing Congress the cost of constructing a Page residence and operating a Capitol Page School. Appointing college students would not only save money, but it would also defuse issues related to Congress's supervisory role.⁹³ Green's panel recommended the creation of a joint Senate–House committee to study the problem and to make recommendations in the 89th Congress (1965–1967), but neither body acted on this suggestion.

In the end, the Green committee's recommendations went largely unheeded. One obstacle was that as two distinct institutions the House and Senate chose not to coordinate Page policy. When Congress weighed reforms eventually incorporated into the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970, one proposal they considered would have required Pages to be college-aged students and to have graduated from high school but be younger than 21 years of age. That proposal was stripped from the final legislation in favor of a requirement that set the ages from 16 to 18, and stipulated that no Page could be appointed after his (later her) 18th birthday.⁹⁴

A devastating scandal a decade later forced the House to reform its Page system further. In June 1982, press reports surfaced that federal and local law enforcement officials were investigating

allegations of a D.C.-based drug ring that was reputed to have supplied congressional employees on Capitol Hill. And on June 30, the *CBS Evening News* broadcast additional allegations by two former House Pages that they had been the victims of sexual misconduct by Members of Congress. In this atmosphere, the House passed H. Res. 518 on July 13, 1982, by a vote of 407 to 1, directing the Committee on Standards of Official Conduct to investigate both issues. Joseph A. Califano, Jr., who had served as Special Assistant to President Lyndon B. Johnson and as Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare under President Jimmy Carter, was named Independent Special Counsel to lead the investigation.⁹⁵ After a wide-ranging, yearlong study, the committee found that the original sexual misconduct allegations by the two former Pages were spurious. But investigators uncovered several incidents of illicit drug sales and use by congressional staff, as well as two instances in which sitting House Members had engaged in sexual relationships with Pages over the course of the prior decade. On July 20, 1983, the House censured Daniel B. Crane of Illinois and Gerry E. Studds of Massachusetts for sexual misconduct with 17-year-old House Pages.⁹⁶

Concurrent with the Califano investigation, Speaker of the House Thomas P. “Tip” O’Neill of Massachusetts quickly appointed a commission to review the status of the House Page program. Comprised of Members, key staff, and former Pages, the commission eventually recommended significant changes. First, in rejecting proposals to use senior citizens or college students as Pages, it recommended that only high school juniors at least 16 years of age would qualify and that they would serve a single academic semester. The commission also called for the creation of a House Page Board comprised of Members, House Officers, and the Architect of the Capitol. The chamber approved the board on November 30, 1982. Under the commission proposal, Pages would be required to live in a proctored dormitory established and managed by the House. Finally, the commission

also recommended that the longstanding relationship with the District of Columbia Public Schools be terminated and that the House establish its own accredited private Page School.⁹⁷ The House adopted all of the commission’s recommendations, although some House Members asserted that the Page program had outlived its usefulness and ought to be abolished outright.⁹⁸

The Page Board continued to oversee the House program and the House Doorkeeper directly supervised the Pages on a daily basis. In 1995, when the House abolished the Office of the Doorkeeper and dispersed its responsibilities among the other elected Officers, the Clerk of the House, under the direction of the House Page Board, assumed responsibility for the entire Page program.

PAGES AND THE COMMUNICATIONS REVOLUTION

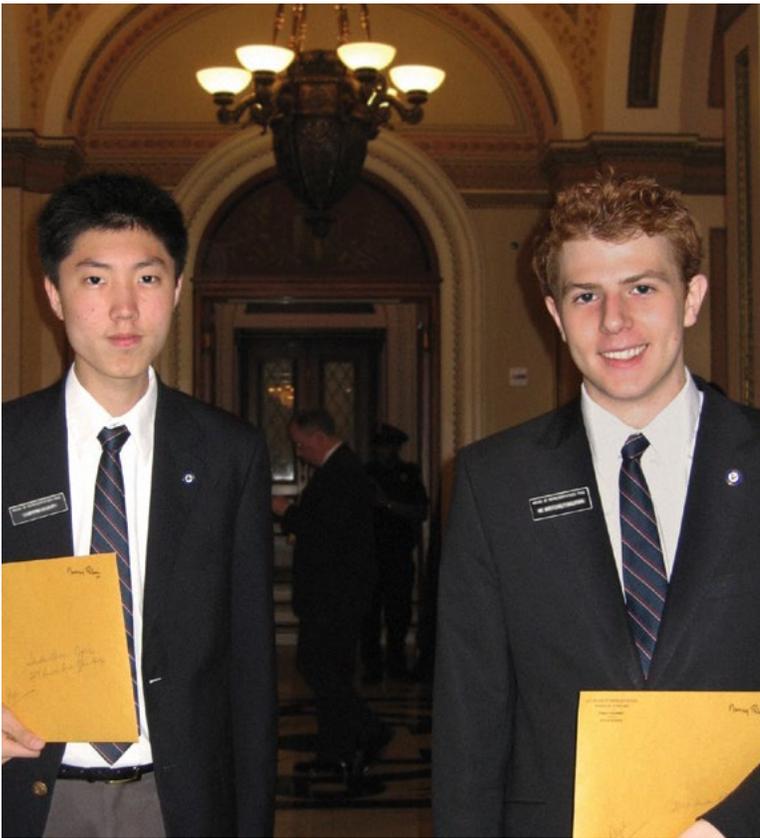
By the late twentieth century, the electronic communications revolution changed how the House conducted its legislative business. Eventually, these changes overtook and supplanted the vast majority of the duties long performed by Pages.⁹⁹

| U.S. House of Representatives PAGE CALL SYSTEM—REPUBLICAN SIDE | | |
|---|-----------------|----------------|
| 1—SPEAKER | 2—READING CLERK | 3—REPORTERS |
| 5 - 7 | 51 - 52 | 101 - 103 |
| 8 - 11 | 53 - 55 | 104 - 106 |
| | 56 - 58 | 107 - 110 |
| 12 | 59 - 61 | 111 - 114 |
| 15 - 16 | 62 | 115 - 119 |
| | 63 - 66 | 120 - 124 |
| 17 - 22 | 67 - 71 | 125 - 130 |
| 23 - 28 | 72 - 76 | 131 - 136 |
| 29 - 35 | 77 - 82 | |
| 36 - 43 | 83 - 87 | 4—DOORKEEPER |
| 44 - 46 | 88 - 91 | 150—CLOAK ROOM |
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Cards provided a guide for Pages to decode the Page Call System signals. While staffing the House Chamber, Pages waited to be summoned by Members for errands, which were indicated by lights on a switchboard near the Page bench.

U.S. House of Representatives Page Call System Card, 1989, Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives, Jim Oliver Collection



Two House Pages walk through the Capitol while delivering envelopes. The use of Pages as legislative messengers and errand runners dates back to the early 1800s.

Image courtesy of the Office of the Clerk, 2007, U.S. House of Representatives

Pages cram into a Capitol elevator for a yearbook photograph. As messengers for the House, Pages spent hours waiting for, riding in, and bursting from House elevators.

The Congressional Eagle Yearbook, 2008, Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives



In the wake of the Watergate Crisis, public demands for congressional accountability and openness led to major reforms in House procedures and practices. Among these was the introduction of live television coverage of House debate in March 1979. Television gradually changed the culture of the institution. One of its lasting effects was to change the floor proceedings: as debate became much more structured and routinized, the floor no longer served as the round-the-clock nexus for Members and staff.¹⁰⁰

More directly affecting Pages' primary role as messengers was the shift away from delivering written and phone messages. This transformation occurred throughout American society and in the House it began with the introduction of pagers and fax machines in the 1970s. It accelerated with the use of personal computers in the 1980s and cell phones and the Internet in the 1990s. By the turn of the twenty-first century, the ability to send entire documents or even books electronically or to retrieve such items directly off the Internet drastically reduced the need for messengers.

New security concerns further drove the transition to new technology. In the wake of the anthrax attacks on Capitol Hill in the fall of 2001—just weeks after the September 11 terrorist attacks—reliance on email skyrocketed as new screening procedures constricted postal mail service. This trend only grew as enhanced security measures virtually ended the use of external messengers who once seemed permanent fixtures of the Hill as they routinely biked onto the Capitol campus from federal departments and downtown offices. In 2005, by one estimate, the House received more than 88 million email messages annually. Meanwhile, the use of postal mail and telephone calls fell well below their historical norms.¹⁰¹

In the first years of the twenty-first century, the development of affordable smart phones that combined telecommunications, email, and Web access once again revolutionized how the House did business. In its rules for the 112th Congress (2011–2013) the House for the first time sanctioned the use of electronic devices such as tablet computers on the House Floor. With so many

methods of communication now at their disposal, Members and staff no longer relied on Pages to deliver messages or run errands by foot across the Capitol complex.

Technology had always played a role in changing Pages' duties but the communications revolution that unfolded with dramatic speed at the close of the twentieth century brought many associated with the House to the conclusion that the Pages' time had passed. Congressional staff noted the transformation that was occurring before their eyes. One described the "absolute sea change" in how information was exchanged between Member offices, committees, the leadership, support staff, and the outside world. "Pages criss-crossed the campus from morning until night in the early days of my career," recalled one senior staff member, who started working in the House in the 1970s. In those days, he, like many of his counterparts, had Pages run dozens of errands each week: "That's how you moved things around. They were absolutely essential." Nearly four decades later, few would contest the fact that the Page experience—to see and directly participate in the legislative process—remained vibrant and inspirational. But few could also argue that Pages remained critical to the orderly and efficient conduct of the House's business. Late in the program's existence, Pages frequently outnumbered the available tasks. Often, Page jobs were of a make-work nature: delivering flags flown over the Capitol to Member offices for distribution to constituents, or office filing duties that, increasingly, college-aged interns performed.¹⁰²

THE END OF THE HOUSE PAGE PROGRAM

On August 8, 2011, the House Page era came to a close. House Speaker John Boehner of Ohio and Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi of California jointly announced the decision to end the program, citing the manner in which technology had made paging

obsolete and the ongoing costs of maintaining the program. "We have great appreciation for the unique role that Pages have played in the history and traditions of the House of Representatives," Speaker Boehner and Leader Pelosi said. "This decision was not easy, but it is necessary due to the prohibitive cost of the program and advances in technology that have rendered most Page-provided services no longer essential to the smooth functioning of the House." They cited the findings of a report the House had commissioned to study the Page program: Pages' traditional support role had been "diminished" in recent years, even as the cost of maintaining the Page program exceeded tuition at elite boarding schools and the vast majority of colleges and universities.¹⁰³

Reaction to the closure of the House Page program varied. Former Pages, who valued its experiential component, publicly criticized the decision: How better to inspire a future generation of leaders than to continue to employ young people to assist with the legislative process? In announcing their decision, House Leaders had pledged to "work with Members of the House to carry on the tradition of engaging young people in the work of Congress," and one Member who had served as a Page introduced a resolution to start a modified program that might accomplish that goal. Many others seemed to accept the news as part and parcel of the significant belt-tightening occurring in Member and committee offices across Capitol Hill as the country slowly recovered from the steep economic recession of 2008 and 2009.

Despite the diversity of opinions about the program's end, though, it remained clear that in looking toward an uncertain future, the House might still find inspiration in the story of the young people—from all walks of life and all corners of the nation—who once ran its many hallways and contributed to the institution's rich heritage as "the People's House."



The practice of Pages raising and lowering the U.S. flag began as one of the jobs of the “documentarian Pages,” senior Pages given legislative responsibilities. When the House was in session, documentarian Pages raised the U.S. flag over the House side to indicate the body was in session.

Image courtesy of the Office of the Clerk, 2006, U.S. House of Representatives

NOTES

- 1 Albert C. Losche, *Washington Memoirs* (Indianapolis, IN: Indianapolis Printing Company, 1940): foreword.
- 2 Bill Severn, *Democracy's Messengers: The Capitol Pages* (New York: Hawthorn Books, Inc., 1975): 7. Somewhat remarkably, there have only ever been two book-length studies written on the history of Capitol Pages. Severn's book was published in 1975, and is geared toward juveniles. Darryl J. Gonzalez's *The Children Who Ran for Congress: A History of Congressional Pages* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2010), is the most comprehensive history available, especially in its discussions about the development of school programs for House and Senate Pages.
- 3 Gonzalez, *The Children Who Ran for Congress*: 10.
- 4 *Ibid.*, 10. For the original reference to the use of a messenger at the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia in 1787, see *Records of the Federal Convention of 1787 (Farrand's Records)*, 25 May 1787, Volume 1: 2.
- 5 Committee on Accounts, "Duties of Officers of House of Representatives," H. Rep. 750, 25th Cong., 2nd sess. (31 March 1838): 1–11.
- 6 "Duties of Officers of House of Representatives": 2.
- 7 Christian Hines, *Early Recollections of Washington City* (Washington, D.C.: N.P., 1866; reprinted by the Junior League of Washington, 1981): 76–77; see also Gonzalez, *The Children Who Ran for Congress*: 13–14. For more on the House Doorkeepers, see <http://history.house.gov/People/Office/Doorkeepers/>.
- 8 Numerous press accounts suggest some Pages served into their late teens or even early twenties, but it seems equally likely that correspondents sitting in the Press Gallery and recording this information may have confused young adult messengers, on the payroll as full-time employees, with teenage Pages.
- 9 Gonzalez, *The Children Who Ran for Congress*: 15–17; "Duties of Officers of House of Representatives": 2.
- 10 Allan Nevins, ed., *The Diary of John Quincy Adams, 1794–1845: American Diplomacy, and Political, Social, and Intellectual Life from Washington to Polk* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951): 430. The reference is contained in Adams's diary entry for 20 February 1832.
- 11 "Duties of Officers of House of Representatives": 3.
- 12 *Ibid.*, 2.
- 13 *Ibid.*, 4–5, 10.
- 14 *House Journal*, 25th Cong., 2nd sess. (4 April 1838): 701–703; *Congressional Globe*, 25th Cong., 2nd sess. (4 April 1838): 281.
- 15 Select Committee on Contingent Expenses of the House of Representatives, "Report on the Contingent Expenses of the House of Representatives," H. Rep. 30, 27th Cong., 2nd sess. (5 January 1842): 1–78; quotation on page 1.
- 16 *Ibid.*, 6. The report went on to note, "The ready transaction of the business of the House, the committee believe [sic], indispensably requires the services of such attendants; while, on the other hand, their number ought not be swollen beyond what necessity demands."
- 17 Gonzalez, *The Children Who Ran for Congress*: 17–19.
- 18 "Duties of Officers of House of Representatives": 7.
- 19 "Precocious Pages: Unhappy Young Democrats in Washington—The Pages of the House of Representatives Are in Despair," 2 December 1894, *Los Angeles Times*: 22.
- 20 "Report on the Contingent Expenses of the House of Representatives": 8.
- 21 Augustus Thomas, *The Print of My Remembrance* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1922): 45.
- 22 "How Congressional Pages Make Money," 18 September 1890, *Aberdeen Daily News* (South Dakota): n.p.
- 23 Mildred Lehmann Amer, "Pages of the United States Congress," 25 April 1984, Congressional Research Service (CRS) Report No. 84-73-GOV (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress): 10; see also "Study of the General Welfare and Education of Congressional Pages," U.S. House of Representatives, H. Rep. 1945, 88th Cong., 2nd sess. (2 January 1965).
- 24 Frank G. Carpenter, "Congressional Pages," reprinted from *Youth's Companion* in 22 May 1886 edition of the *San Francisco Bulletin*.
- 25 Thomas, *The Print of My Remembrance*: 44.
- 26 Carpenter, "Congressional Pages."
- 27 William Tyler Page, "Pages in the House of Representatives," *Page Yearbook, 1942*: n.p.
- 28 See "Electronic Technology in the House of Representatives," <http://history.house.gov/Exhibitions-and-Publications/Electronic-Technology/House-Technology/>.
- 29 Thomas, *The Print of My Remembrance*: 54.
- 30 Amer, "Pages of the United States Congress": 23.
- 31 Donald K. Anderson, Interview 1, 25 January 2006, Office of the Historian, U.S. House of Representatives: 11–12.
- 32 Joe Bartlett, Interview 1, 7 April 2006, Office of the Historian, U.S. House of Representatives: 6.
- 33 Bartlett, Interview 1: 25.
- 34 Glenn Rupp, Interview 1, 27 April 2005, Office of the Historian, U.S. House of Representatives: 10; 15–16.
- 35 See, for example, Anderson, Interview 1: 16.
- 36 Severn, *Democracy's Messengers*: 80–86.
- 37 Bartlett, Interview 1: 6–7.
- 38 Rupp, Interview 1: 27.
- 39 Anderson, Interview 1: 15.
- 40 See, for example, "House Page Boys Have Banquet as Guests of Rep. J.B. Shannon," 26 July 1937, *Washington Post*: 5.
- 41 Bill Goodwin Interview, 20 October 2005, Office of the Historian, U.S. House of Representatives: 2.

- 42 Hon. John D. Dingell, Jr., unpublished interview, 3 February 2012, Office of the Historian, U.S. House of Representatives: 23.
- 43 “For a Tariff Bill: Congress Responds to the Call of the President,” 16 March 1897, *Chicago Daily Tribune*: 1.
- 44 See “Lottery in the House Near,” 6 January 1908, *New York Tribune*: 3; “Congressmen Hold Lottery,” 10 January 1908, *Atlanta Constitution Journal*: 5; and *Congressional Record*, House, 60th Cong., 2nd sess. (9 January 1908): 567–569.
- 45 Carpenter, “Congressional Pages.”
- 46 Thomas, *The Print of My Remembrance*: 46.
- 47 “Precocious Pages”: 22.
- 48 John Elfreth Watkins, Jr., “The Ambitious Congressional Page: His Interesting Routine and Generous Pay,” 25 May 1902, *Detroit Free Press*: D4.
- 49 Losche, *Washington Memoirs*: 126–127.
- 50 Rupp, Interview 1: 16.
- 51 Walter Wellman, “Smart Boys Are They: Meaning the Pages at the National Capitol,” 20 September 1890, *Aberdeen Daily News* (SD); “Speaker’s Page,” 12 March 1860, *Lowell Daily Citizen and News*: n.p.; “Deaths,” 16 March 1864, *Daily National Intelligencer*: np; “Death of a Useful Congressional Officer,” 16 March 1864, *Baltimore Sun*: 1. For more on the development of the Parliamentarian’s Office see, <http://history.house.gov/People/Office/Parliamentarians/>.
- 52 See “Alexandria Annals,” 29 April 1878, *Washington Post*: 3; Gonzalez, *The Children Who Ran for Congress*: 26. For reference to Pages from the “east” side of the chamber playing those who worked the “west” side, see “Precocious Pages.”
- 53 “House Pages Defeat Their Elders,” 2 August 1914, *Washington Post*: S1.
- 54 Severn, *Democracy’s Messengers*: 42–43.
- 55 Bartlett, Interview 1: 10–11; Dingell, unpublished interview: 22.
- 56 Rupp, Interview 1: 46.
- 57 Goodwin Interview: 6. For more on the practice, see Gonzalez, *The Children Who Ran for Congress*: 51.
- 58 Wellman, “Smart Boys Are They: Meaning the Pages at the National Capitol.”
- 59 Goodwin Interview: 13.
- 60 See Office of History and Preservation, *Black Americans in Congress, 1870–2007* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2008); online at <http://history.house.gov/Exhibitions-and-Publications/BAIC/Black-Americans-in-Congress/>.
- 61 See “A Manchester Boy in Congress,” 3 April 1871, *Daily State Journal* (Richmond, VA): 1; “XLIID Congress—In Session: Continuation of the Ku Klux Klan Debate in the House,” 3 April 1871, *New-York Tribune*: 1; “Letter from Washington,” 3 April 1871, *Baltimore Sun*: 4; “Colored Page; Public Debt Statement,” 2 April 1871, *Chicago Tribune*: 2; “Dispatch to the Associated Press,” 2 April 1871, *New York Times*: 1. In addition to Porter, Representatives James H. Platt, Jr., and William H. H. Stowell, both also northern Reconstruction Republicans representing Virginia districts, were credited in some news articles with sponsoring Powell. Census records from 1860 indicate that Powell was born into a free black family in Manchester; his father was a wheelwright.
- 62 See, *Congressional Globe*, House, 42nd Cong., 1st sess. (1 April 1871): 376–397.
- 63 “XLIID Congress—In Session”: 1.
- 64 “Contingent Expenses of the House of Representatives,” Mis. Doc. No. 7, 42nd Cong., 2nd sess. (5 December 1871): 85; “Contingent Expenses of the House of Representatives,” Mis. Doc. No. 13, 42nd Cong., 3rd sess. (2 December 1872): 87–89.
- 65 The very first African-American Page to serve in Congress was Andrew Slade, who was appointed by the Senate Sergeant at Arms, likely at the behest of Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts. See “Senator Brownlow on the Rampage—Speech on the Spanish Gunboats—Colored Page in the Senate,” 16 December 1869, *Baltimore Sun*: 1. Slade also appears on the Senate payroll as a “riding page,” a Page who delivered documents on horseback to various executive departments in Washington, D.C. In 1913, the *New York Times* profiled an elderly African-American man named Eugene Patten, to whom the newspaper attributed the honor of having been the “first” to serve in Congress. The article offered no precise dates, but noted that Patten served in the House sometime in the 1870s, shortly after Democrats gained control of the chamber in the wake of the 1874 elections. Given the Members whom Patten recalled in the interview, he may have served in the period from 1875 to 1881; however, there is no record of Patten in any of the annual contingent expense reports of the House, in any paid position, during the period in question. See “Great Men as a Congress Page Has Seen Them: Only Negro Who Served in that Capacity Tells Stories of ‘Little Giant’ Stephens, ‘Sunset’ Cox and Others,” 21 September 1913, *New York Times*: SM2.
- 66 Frank Mitchell Interview, 6 August 2008, Office of the Historian, U.S. House of Representatives: 32.
- 67 “Girl, 13, House Page for a Day,” 4 January 1939, *New York Times*: 10; Gladstone Williams, “Gene Cox, 12, Has Big Time as Page ‘Boy,’” 4 January 1939, *Atlanta Constitution*: 9.

- 68 Gonzalez, *The Children Who Ran for Congress*: 196.
- 69 For more on Looper and her milestone, see Felda Looper Interview, 21 May 2007, Office of the Historian, U.S. House of Representatives.
- 70 Looper Interview: 10.
- 71 Amer, “Pages of the United States Congress”: 48. See also, Barbara Gamarekian, “Capitol Pages: Witness to History,” 31 May 1982, *New York Times*: A8.
- 72 Goodwin Interview: 25; Hon. Paul Kanjorski, unpublished interview, 26 October 2011, Office of the Historian, U.S. House of Representatives.
- 73 See Townshend’s entry in the *Biographical Directory of the U.S. Congress*: <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=T000339>.
- 74 Gonzalez, *The Children Who Ran for Congress*: 48–49.
- 75 Gonzalez cites this on page 50. The primary source is Office of the Curator of the U.S. Senate, Office Files, “Capitol Pages, 1903–1939,” n.d.
- 76 See House of Representatives, “Child Labor in the District of Columbia,” 59th Cong., 1st sess. (6 April 1906): 1–5. While the bill specifically forbade using children younger than 14 to perform most Page tasks, it also had another provision that prohibited children under 16 from working between the hours of 7 p.m. and 6 a.m. Considering the frequent nighttime sessions in both the House and Senate, this raised another potential barrier to using boys as Pages.
- 77 Josephine G. Tighe, “Stops Boys Working,” 10 April 1906, *Washington Post*: 2.
- 78 *Statutes at Large*, PL–149, 60th Cong., 1st sess., 35 Stat. 420 1902–1909.
- 79 See “Employment of Child Labor in the District of Columbia,” Senate Report No. 292, 60th Cong., 1st sess. (25 February 1908): 1–2; Gonzalez, *The Children Who Ran for Congress*: 59, 61–62.
- 80 *Statutes at Large*, PL–618, 70th Cong., 1st sess., 45 Stat. 998 1927–1929.
- 81 Bartlett, Interview 1: 10, 12.
- 82 *Ibid.*, 10–11.
- 83 Gonzalez, *The Children Who Ran for Congress*: 131.
- 84 Gonzalez dedicates an entire chapter to Senator Burton’s reform efforts. See *The Children Who Ran for Congress*: 99–141. Though the Capitol Page School was disbanded during the 1980s, and House and Senate Pages were then educated in separate programs, House Pages retained the classroom space in the library’s attic.
- 85 Anderson, Interview 1: 6–11.
- 86 See for example the Office of the Historian’s oral history interviews with Joe Bartlett, Donald Anderson, and Bill Goodwin.
- 87 Gonzalez, *The Children Who Ran for Congress*: 149–160.
- 88 “Single Home Proposed for Frolicking Page Boys,” 13 April 1961, *Washington Post*: B1.
- 89 See Green’s profile: Office of History and Preservation, *Women in Congress, 1917–2006* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2007): 352–357; online at <http://history.house.gov/Exhibition-and-Publications/WIC/Women-in-Congress/>.
- 90 “Study of the General Welfare and Education of Congressional Pages”: 1–23; quotation on page 1.
- 91 *Ibid.*, 2.
- 92 *Ibid.*, 6–8.
- 93 *Ibid.*, 9. As for the suggestion that college students could serve as Pages, the committee’s proposal was met with skepticism by many on Capitol Hill. Doorkeeper William Miller’s testimony before the panel represented a view widely held by advocates for the *status quo*, when he expressed apprehension “that we would have to do away with boys of the smaller size that we use to operate the floor right around the Speaker’s chair, around there, the documentarian, the Speaker’s page, who have to be ‘Jack be nimble, Jack be quick’; get out on the floor, get right in and right out; don’t go in front of a Member, all that—I don’t know that a college student would be able to fit in that category or not.” See “Hearing Before the Select Committee on the Welfare and Education of Congressional Pages,” U.S. House of Representatives, 88th Cong., 2nd sess. (17 December 1964): 29. Other Members pressed for the need to employ college-aged students. See William Springer, “Congressional Pages: Their Work and Schooling,” in James C. Cleveland et al., *We Propose a Modern Congress—Selected Proposals by the House Republican Task Force on Congressional Reform and Minority Staffing* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1966): 181–188.
- 94 Amer, “Pages in the United States Congress”: 12–13. See also, House Committee on Rules, “Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970: Report to Accompany H.R. 17654,” H. Rep. 91–1215, 91st Cong., 2nd sess. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1970): 128.
- 95 For more on the episode and the investigation see, House Committee on Standards of Official Conduct, H. Rep. 98–559, 98th Cong., 1st sess. (17 November 1983): 1–431. See also, “Two Members Censured,” *CQ Almanac, 1983* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, Inc., 1983): 580–583.
- 96 House Report 98-297 of 14 July 1983 had recommended only a “reprimand” for both Members but, in debate on the floor, the House increased the punishment to the more severe form of censure, which had been imposed in fewer than two dozen cases in the previous two centuries. See also, *Congressional Record*, House, 98th Cong., 1st sess. (20 July 1983): 20012–20037. For more

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- on the history of censure, see Jack Maskell, “Expulsion, Censure, Reprimand, and Fine: Legislative Discipline in the House of Representatives,” 9 August 2010, Congressional Research Service (CRS) Report No. RL31382 (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress).
- 97 House of Representatives Page Board, “Final Report to the Speaker,” 11 December 1984 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1985): 1–12; “Two Members Censured,” *CQ Almanac*, 1983: 580–583.
- 98 In the 98th Congress (1983–1985), Representative Bill Frenzel of Minnesota, Ranking Republican of the House Administration Committee, introduced H. Res. 291—a bill to abolish the House Page program. Twenty-one cosponsors from both parties—ranging from Patricia Schroeder of Colorado to Newt Gingrich of Georgia—signed on. It never came to a vote on the House Floor.
- 99 For an overview of the impact of electronic technology on the House and how the institution has adapted to it, see “Electronic Technology in the House of Representatives,” <http://history.house.gov/Exhibitions-and-Publications/Electronic-Technology/House-Technology/>.
- 100 For one study of the origins and impact of television in the House, see Ronald Garay, *Congressional Television: A Legislative History* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1984).
- 101 See, for example, “Electronic Technology in the House: Internet,” <http://history.house.gov/Exhibitions-and-Publications/Electronic-Technology/House-Technology/>.
- 102 See, for example, Emma Dumain, “A Year After the House Program Was Ended, Capitol Hill Denizens Notice the Difference,” 10 September 2012, *Roll Call*: n.p.
- 103 “Statement by Speaker Boehner and Democratic Leader Pelosi on the House Page Program,” 8 August 2011, <http://www.speaker.gov/press-release/statement-speaker-boehner-democratic-leader-pelosi-house-page-program> (accessed October 5, 2011); Sheryl Gay Stolberg, “House Shuts Down Its Page Program,” 8 August 2011, *New York Times*: 9; Molly K. Hooper, “House Leaders End Page Program,” 8 August 2011, *The Hill*: n.p.

House Pages, flanked by the Page School teachers, gather near the East Front of the Capitol for their official school photograph.

Page Class Photo, 1946, Collection of the U.S. House of Representatives



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