

William deLeftwich Dodge's daughter, Sara Dodge Kimbrough, was the model for the armed female figure in the center of the murals. Named the "Goddess of Harmony" or "Spirit of New York", she symbolizes both war and peace.



WILLIAM DELEFTWICH DODGE

Like many other painters of his generation, William deLeftwich Dodge (1867-1935) studied art in Paris. He entered the studio of academic artist and professor Jean-Leon Gerome at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in 1885. Dodge cultivated his ability to work on a large scale and meticulously depict the human figure.

Dodge returned to the United States, where he was commissioned to create a mural for the Columbian Exposition held in Chicago. Following this success, Dodge was invited to take part in one of the decade's most important decorative projects—the Pavilion of Art and Science in The Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.

The Library of Congress mural brought Dodge national acclaim and recognition as a leading American artist.

During the first two decades of the twentieth century, Dodge created numerous murals for civic buildings, private homes, theaters and hotels. His works include the murals in the Buffalo City Hall and the Onondaga County Courthouse in Syracuse.

In 1920, Dodge was awarded the prestigious commission to paint the flag room murals for the New York State Capitol.

The murals consist of 25 paintings on canvas attached to plaster, four decorated areas of paint directly on plaster, and coordinated moldings and plaster ornaments.



Four sections of the mural (detail shown here depicts submarine warfare during World War II) were rendered in a technique called "grisaille" which uses varying shades of gray. Grisaille is used for decoration or to express relief and can also be found in stained glass.



Theodore "Teddy" Roosevelt was governor of New York State and the 26th President of the United States. When the Spanish-American War erupted in 1898, Roosevelt accepted a position as lieutenant-colonel of the First Volunteer Cavalry, the famous "Rough Riders" who played an important role in the American victory at San Juan Hill.

The artist's daughter, Sara Dodge Kimbrough, posed for the large figure in the center, whom Dodge called the Goddess of Harmony and the Spirit of New York. Fanning out from this central image are panels which tell the story of New York's governing sovereigns, Native American and European. Ringing these panels are wall murals which chronicle New York's military history from colonial times to World War I.

The Albany murals were the last great commission of Dodge's illustrious career and represent one of the last triumphs of the turn-of-the-century mural painting renaissance.

Stylistically, the Dodge mural panels are dynamic figure compositions entwined by melodramatic lighting. This combination results in a highly cinematic form of narrative painting.

