

World War II Memorial Opens on the National Mall

For those who took part in one of the greatest struggles of the 20th century, this spring brings a momentous event: the opening of the National World War II Memorial in Washington, DC. Now, a generation can see their sacrifice honored in a prominent place on the Mall.

By virtue of its setting on the long, open plain considered the ceremonial heart of Washington, the memorial pays homage to the gravity and ideals of the conflict. Architect Friedrich St. Florian, whose design was selected in a national competition, says the memorial intends to express “jubilation, celebrating the victory of democracy over tyranny.”

Its visual anchors are a pair of 40-foot-tall pavilions representing the theaters of war. Arrayed in twin arcs are granite columns with bronze wreaths, one for each state and territory, sculpted by Ray Kaskey, whose work plays a focal role. The centerpiece is a 300-foot-wide sunken plaza with two fountains and a Kaskey sculpture, *Light of Freedom*, in a pool at the center. Visitors enter on granite ramps that bring them past the arches and a series of bas-relief panels honoring those who served overseas and at home, also by Kaskey. A wall is covered with 4,000 gold stars, each representing 100 Americans who died. St. Florian describes the goal as “continuity and timelessness.”

The memorial touched off a debate between those who believed it overdue and those who felt it would spoil the sight line between the Lincoln Memorial and the Washington Monument. “The site selection went through a very arduous journey,” says Steve Lorenzetti, an official with the National Capital Region of the National Park Service. Legislation authorized a memorial in 1993. The American Battle Monuments Commission, the agency responsible for military cemeteries and memorials around the world, was tasked with finding a location.



The plan had to be approved by the National Capital Planning Commission, which provides guidance to the Federal Government on building and land use; the Commission of Fine Arts, an independent body advising on matters affecting the appearance of the capital; and the Secretary of the Interior. They all “felt a memorial of this importance required a site of equal importance, and that this would contribute to the stature of the National Mall,” says Lorenzetti.

The memorial also survived a lawsuit by the National Coalition to Save Our Mall, which, though favoring a memorial, opposed obstructing the sight lines of what many believe to be a finished landscape.

The cost was \$140 million, most raised through private donations (the government provided \$16 million). Former senator and war veteran Bob Dole teamed with actor Tom Hanks to help the monuments commission raise over \$193 million, with the surplus held for future repairs.

A website registry of Americans who served in World War II is accessible at the memorial or online (www.wwiimemorial.com). Any U.S. citizen, whether they served in combat or worked on an assembly line, is eligible.

For more information, contact the National World War II Memorial, 2300 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 501, Arlington, VA 22201, (800) 639-4WW2, e-mail custsvc@wwiimemorial.com.

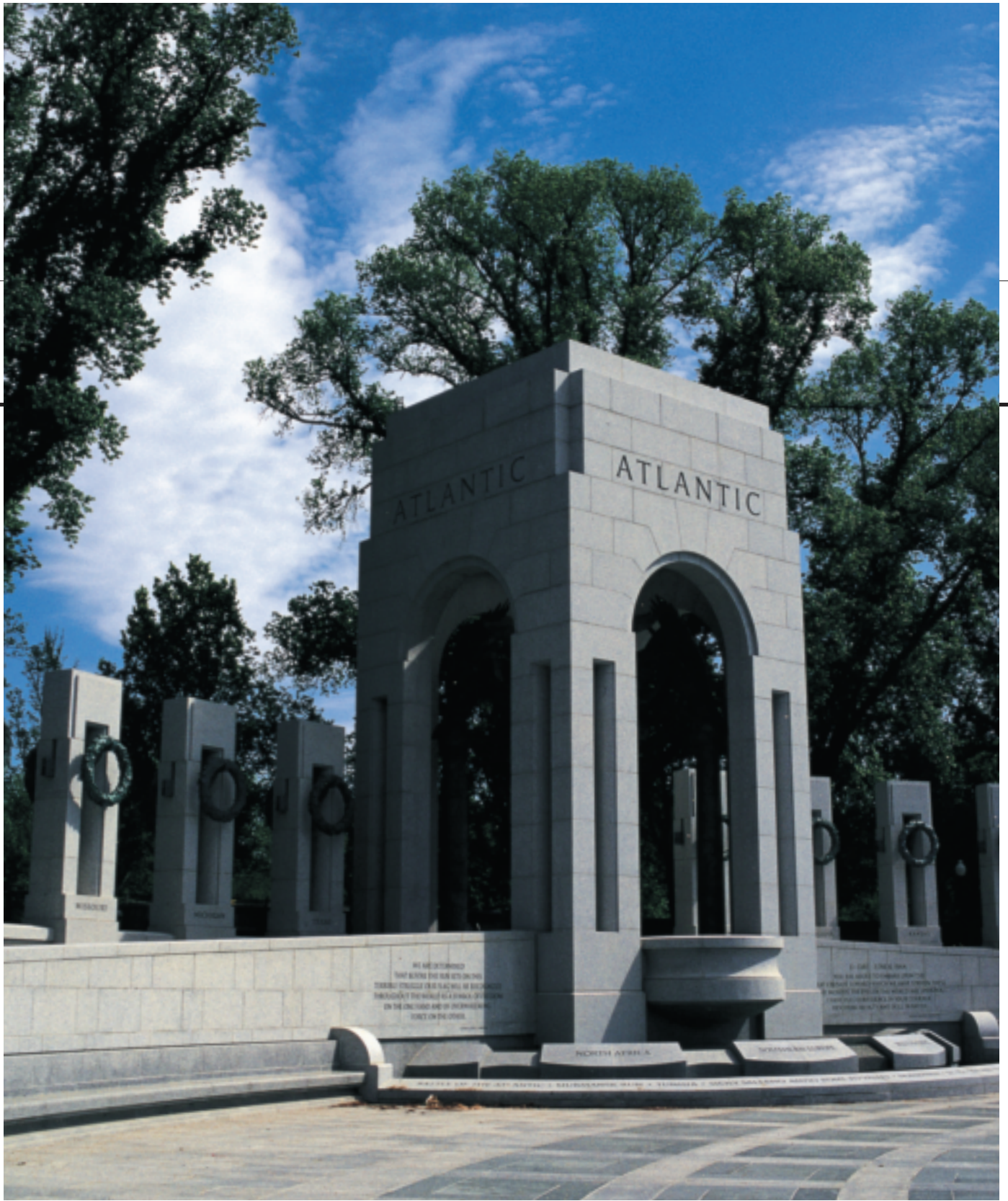
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STUDY EXAMINES
HOME FRONT

To commemorate the effort on the home front, the National Park Service has launched a study to encourage nomination of landmarks that figured prominently in this often overlooked part of the story. The World War II National Historic Landmark Theme Study is being conducted in cooperation with the Organization of American Historians.

As a first step, the National Park Service has commissioned a series of essays on themes such as the integrated work force and civil rights, migration and resettlement in response to mobilization, technological advances, and architectural innovations.

The study—which sets up a framework for nominating sites as national historic landmarks or for listing in the National Register of Historic Places—was mandated by the legislation that established California’s Rosie the Riveter World War II Home Front National Historical Park.

For more information, contact John H. Sprinkle, Jr., National Park Service National Historic Landmarks Survey, 1849 C St., NW (2265), Washington, DC 20240, e-mail john_sprinkle@nps.gov.



ALL PHOTOS: DAVID ANDREWS/NPS



Taking Measure of a Movement

Scholarship and Preservation Enrich *Brown v. Board* Anniversary

Sharp periods of self-reckoning loomed for America at the onset of the 1950s; among the most difficult was confronting a history of discrimination. The move to desegregate public schools—one of the era’s major changes—has renewed resonance with the 50th anniversary of the Supreme Court decision *Brown v. Board of Education*.

As the nation is reminded of the epic struggle, scholars and preservationists continue a protracted (and often unnoticed) quest to ensure that this history is commemorated for generations to come. The mission has yielded results. A 2000 National Park Service study of places associated with racial desegregation has led to the creation of five new national historic landmarks, the highest honor given a property for its connections to the past (see sidebar, right). Another five sites are in varying stages of the designation process.

Racial Desegregation in Public Education in the United States is one of a series of national historic landmark theme studies that examine places connected to a historic theme or event, determining their significance and integrity.

Landmarks designated as a result of the desegregation study are all related to events of the 1950s and 1960s. They illustrate the NAACP’s involvement and the contributions of influential figures such as Thurgood Marshall and Charles Hamilton Houston. They also recall defining Supreme Court decisions and individual acts of conscience.

The study was mandated by 1998 legislation that created Central

High School National Historic Site. “To have Congress say, ‘do this’ was wonderful, because it gave us a chance to put all of desegregation into context,” says Sandra Washington of the National Park Service, the study’s coordinator.

While the civil rights movement came to a head in the 1960s, the study shows desegregation as a long narrative with origins in the 19th century. Often associated with African Americans, the struggle included Latin, Asian, and Native Americans as well. The study also examined places that reveal what Chicana historian Vicki Ruiz calls “tapestries of resistance.”

The new *Brown v. Board of Education* National Historic Site opened for the first time on May 17, the 50th anniversary of the Supreme Court decision. The event was marked with choirs, bands, speakers, and other observances.

To read the desegregation theme study, go to www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/nhl/school.htm. The National Register of Historic Places offers an online travel itinerary that includes many of the historic sites associated with desegregation (www.cr.nps.gov/nr/travel/civilrights/index.htm). For more information, contact John H. Sprinkle, Jr., National Park Service, National Historic Landmarks Survey, 1849 C St., NW (2265), Washington, DC 20240, (202) 354-2228, john_sprinkle@nps.gov.



LANDMARKS OF AN ERA

DAISY BATES HOUSE This modest residence in Little Rock served as an impromptu command center for local activists during the Central High crisis of 1957, which culminated in President Eisenhower's calling out federal troops.

BIZZEL LIBRARY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA The state's attempts to bar graduate student George McLaurin from the university inspired him to challenge the "separate but equal" doctrine. The library was the setting for the events that led to the 1950 Supreme Court decision *McLaurin v. Oklahoma*.

NEW KENT SCHOOL AND GEORGE W. WATKINS SCHOOL These two rural Virginia schools were the focus of the 1968 *Green v. New Kent County* Supreme Court decision, which defined the standards by which compliance with desegregation law would be judged.

ANDREW RANKIN MEMORIAL CHAPEL, FREDERICK DOUGLASS MEMORIAL HALL, AND FOUNDERS LIBRARY On the campus of Howard University in Washington, DC, these buildings have a long association with African American intelligentsia. The talent and ideas that developed here would prove instrumental when the struggle for civil rights moved to the legal arena.

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL Site of a dramatic episode of brinkmanship by activists in Washington, DC. African American students were turned away for the 1950 school year at all-white Sousa, prompting a legal challenge and resulting in the 1954 *Bolling v. Sharpe* decision, another blow to the "separate but equal" doctrine.

"I Won't Run from You"

On a fall day in 1957—when the controversy over school desegregation erupted in an unforgettable episode of violence (above)—photographer Will Counts was there. On assignment for the *Arkansas Democrat*, Counts was covering the arrival of a group of African American students at Little Rock's Central High School for the first day of court-ordered integration. The Little Rock Nine, as they became known, were jeered and assaulted. Then-governor Orval Faubus called out the National Guard to block the school's entrance. **Elizabeth Eckford** remained stoic during her ordeal, a resolve that still awed Counts decades later. **Alex Wilson**, a reporter for the *Chicago Daily Defender* and a veteran, told his attackers, "I fought for my country. I won't run from you." **The episode at Central High**—designated a national historic site in 1998—convinced President Eisenhower to call in troops from the 101st Airborne Division. It was the first time the Federal Government had stepped in with force on the desegregation issue. The showdown marked a new phase in the struggle for equal education in America. The indelible images of the day capture the pain of a nation whose ideals were at war with its reality.

BELOW: JET LOWE/NPS/HAER; RIGHT: KHALED BASSIM/NPS MUSEUM MANAGEMENT PROGRAM/GRANT-KOHR'S RANCH NATIONAL PARK

COMMON GROUND WINS AWARD

Common Ground has been selected from more than 8,000 entries worldwide to receive a design award from the Society for Publication Designers. In only its first year following a top-to-bottom re-engineering, the magazine has been honored with a bronze medal.

The society's annual show is one of the premier competitions for magazine design. Winners are typically a "who's who" of magazine publishing, including *TIME*, *Newsweek*, *Vanity Fair*, *Audubon*, *The New York Times Magazine*, and overseas periodicals like Spain's *Magazine El Mundo* and the *London Guardian*. This year's honorees were toasted at a May gala in New York.

"I could not be prouder of this important and richly deserved honor," says National Park Service Director Fran Mainella. "We all eagerly look forward to each issue of *Common Ground*. It is great reading and so beautifully designed. It is one of the Service's most impressive partnership tools. Congratulations to editors David Andrews and Joseph Flanagan, and to every contributor to this very impressive publication."

The show will be on exhibit at New York's Parsons School of Design, one of the country's foremost art schools, then travel to Copenhagen's Graphics Arts Institute. The honorees will also appear in a coffee table book published by the society in association with Rockport Publishers.

eBay Rescue

Statue of Liberty Ornament Returned

A decorative item taken from the balcony encircling the flame of the Statue of Liberty's torch was returned recently after a 19-year disappearance. The copper ornament depicting an ear of corn had been spotted on eBay by a Statue of Liberty enthusiast.

Brian Snyder, vice president of the Statue of Liberty Club, was immediately suspicious that the object looked like a stolen piece of the icon. The club is a group of hobbyists from around the world who collect statue-related memorabilia. The eBay posting called the item a "pre-restoration artifact," referring to the statue's extensive renovation in the 1980s. The ear of corn measured about four inches long by two inches wide. The starting bid was listed at \$1,000.

Snyder e-mailed the National Park Service, including a link to the eBay site. This started a chain of events that ended in the ornament's safe return. The seller, a Great Neck, New York, man, could have been charged with a crime for selling a cultural item stolen from federal property. According to David Tarler, an attorney with the National Park Service's Archeology and Ethnography Program who consulted on the case, authorities decided to approach the seller and request the item's return. The man cooperated, explaining that the piece had been in the possession of his father, an ironworker during the renovation, who had since passed away.

While eBay forbids posting stolen property, there has been criticism over sales of cultural items whose origins are sometimes questionable. Says Tarler, "The message should go out to heirs who have cultural property belonging to the United States that they can do the right thing and return it."



Left: The statue during renovation in the 1980s.
Below: The torch during restoration, flanked by ears of corn like the one that was stolen.

