

GENERAL GRANT NATIONAL MEMORIAL: BUILDING GRANT'S TOMB

George Tonkin: More people visited Grant's Tomb than the Statue of Liberty at one time. In 1897 when it opens, they would be averaging between 500,000- 600,000 visitors a year. Why was he <GRANT> so popular? Because he ended the bloodiest war America ever fought in. Over 600,000 Americans lost their lives during the Civil War.

Ulysses Grant Dietz: The tomb really represents an era when people thought heroes needed to be lionized and celebrated. The fundraising for the tomb was really a grassroots event spearheaded by an African-American graduate of Harvard who credited Grant with his advancement. They raised pennies and dimes and built up the amount of money, which seems ridiculously small now, but was vast then, to build this tomb.

George Tonkin: Ninety thousand individuals donated about \$600,000. In 1891, they laid the first cornerstone. And by 1897, they completed it.

Steve Laise: The first people who came were Civil War veterans and their children. Some of the disabled veterans had to be carried up the steps. Originally there were guards at the Tomb, in uniform, and part of their role was to assist disabled veterans to get up all those steps and into the Tomb.

Ulysses Grant Dietz: It was intended to be very Greek, bleak and empty, this sort of rocky outcrop at the top of Manhattan, with the winds whistling in off the River. That was a very visual intent of the design and sighting of the Tomb. And it's the opposite of that now.

Steve Laise: The monument seems to have an enduring presence that people really connect with.

George Tonkin: Today, some individuals come just to make a prayer to the General, or people just leave items behind. We will find flags and bibles lying around. July 23rd of this year, someone sent the thing of flowers- that's the day he died.

Ulysses Grant Dietz: The Civil War was the one moment in our history when we were about to collapse. The Tomb really represents the triumph of American democracy and the survival of the Union after the Civil War.