

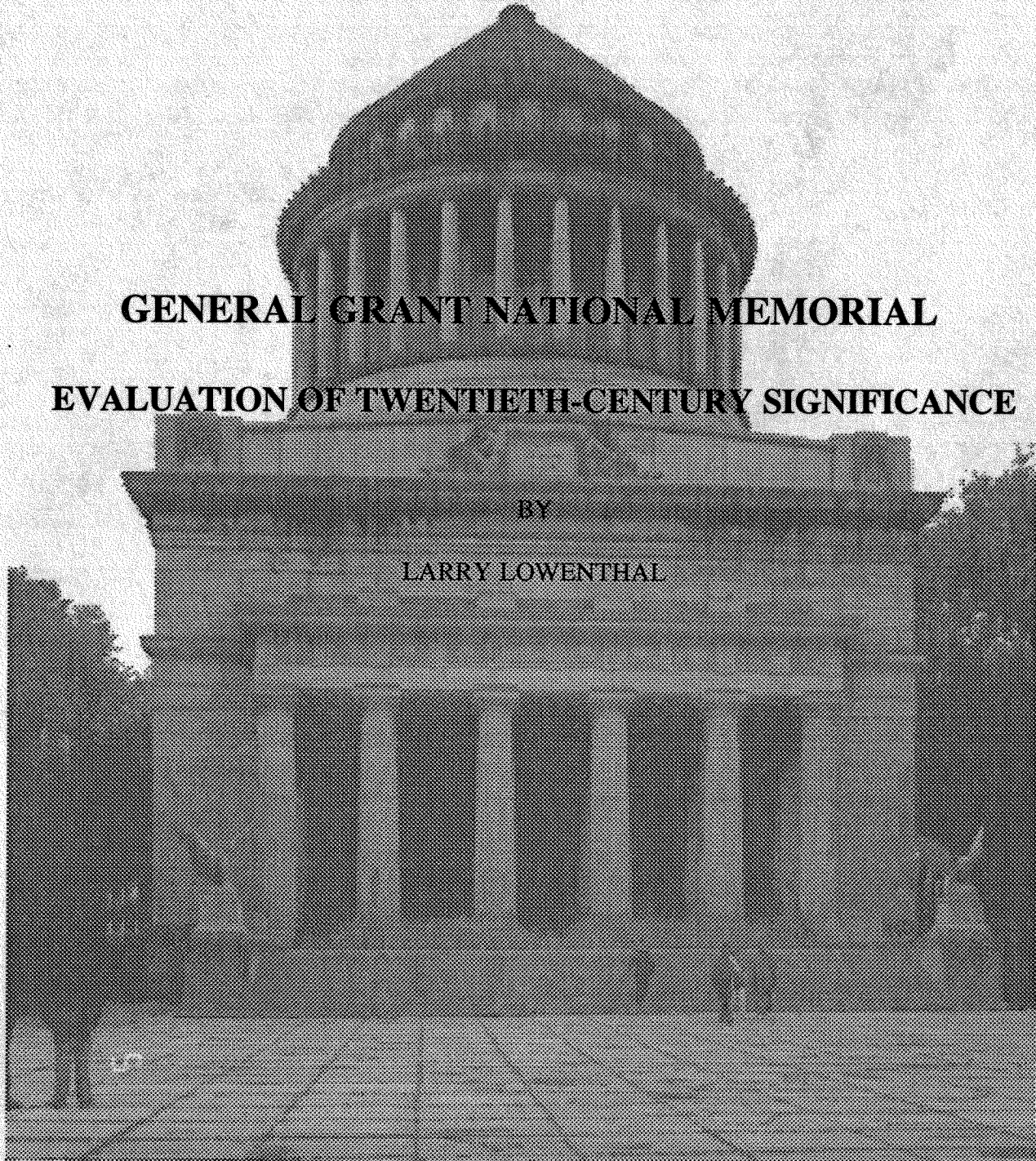
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# REVIEW DRAFT

## **GENERAL GRANT NATIONAL MEMORIAL EVALUATION OF TWENTIETH-CENTURY SIGNIFICANCE**

BY

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# GENERAL GRANT NATIONAL MEMORIAL EVALUATION OF TWENTIETH-CENTURY SIGNIFICANCE

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## PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS

This report focuses on the history and significance of the physical changes to the building and surrounding landscape of General Grant National Memorial since its formal dedication and opening to the public in 1897. This study arises from the need to reevaluate the memorial's period of significance, currently given as 1800-1899, in order to adequately assess the effect that proposed changes will have on the historical character of the property.

The memorial was documented as an historic property for the National Register in 1976, but new areas of significance--especially landscape architecture--and a reconsideration of the relevant contexts and criteria for listing make an amendment to the existing documentation necessary.

With respect to the period of significance beyond 1899, the study concludes that *the memorial is significant under Criteria Consideration F and Criteria A through 1939*. It represents the sustained effort by the Civil War generation to commemorate General Grant and his cause through monumentation. The memorial, although dedicated in 1897, was never "completed" and for nearly four decades, the Grant Monument Association (GMA) remained dedicated to accomplishing this task. The membership of the association changed slowly, with the architect, in particular, continuing as building manager through 1929. While, after 1928, significant attempts at embellishing the monument departed in spirit from the original monumental and funereal concept, they were carefully limited measures that paid homage to the original intent. The involvement and influence of such leading figures as architect John R. Pope and, tangentially, landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. reflects the continuing vitality of the GMA through 1939.

The memorial is significant under Criterion C as a contributing resource of Riverside Park and Drive, a property listed on the National Register in 1983 (after Grant Memorial was documented) and significant for its 1934-37 modifications as well as for its original design in the area of landscape architecture. Work done at the site during the Works Progress Administration (WPA)-era--both the building work and the landscaping, was accomplished jointly under Robert Moses, New York City Parks Commissioner, as part of his relandscaping and refurbishment of Riverside Park as a whole, and the GMA as part of its revived effort to complete the memorial utilizing John R. Pope's 1928 plan in 1938-39. The work was accomplished soon after the Moses plan for the expansion of Riverside Park and Drive was completed. For the first time, the landscaping intentionally envisioned the memorial as an element of the park and took park visitors into account.

Grant Memorial's rededication in 1939, nearly seventy-five years after the end of the Civil War, was the effective end of the period of significance. No further work was accomplished at the property until after the National Park Service assumed administration of the site in 1959. The GMA grew increasingly moribund and disbanded in 1965. The memorial does not have exceptional importance within the last fifty years.

## **SCOPE OF REPORT**

This report focuses on the history and significance of the physical changes to the interior and exterior of the Grant monument and to its surrounding landscape since its formal dedication and opening to the public in 1897. (These changes are listed in the accompanying Chronology.) It does not attempt to revisit topics relating primarily to the design and construction of the monument. Although some aspects of that subject might benefit from additional analysis in the light of recent scholarship, it is covered more than adequately for present purposes in the Historical Resource Study by David M. Kahn, prepared in 1980.<sup>1</sup> Kahn also covers, though less exhaustively, the post-1897 alterations and makes some comments on their appropriateness, but does not attempt to evaluate them in terms of the National Register criteria.

## **NATIONAL REGISTER STATUS**

General Grant National Memorial (alternate name Grant's Tomb) was listed on the National Register in 1966 under the Historic Preservation Act, but was not documented until 1976. The territory occupied by the monument is also included in a nomination covering Riverside Park and Drive, listed September 1983. The descriptive portions of the Grant Memorial nomination are typical of the sketchy nominations of the 1970s. Of more immediate concern, the building's period of significance is checked off as 1800-1899 only. Therefore, changes to the memorial made in the twentieth century are not considered character-defining or part of the historic fabric.

## **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND THROUGH 1897**

Gen. Ulysses S. Grant, Commander of federal forces in the closing years of the Civil

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<sup>1</sup>David M. Kahn, Curator, Manhattan Sites, NPS, "General Grant National Memorial Historical Resource Study," 1980 (hereafter, Kahn, HRS). This report was apparently not finalized or published. Kahn's original proposal had been for a "Historical Data Section, General Grant Historic Structures Report (Kahn to Supt., Manhattan Sites, Dec. 11, 1978, NARC Waltham Regional Center, RG 79, Acc. 88-0002, Folder H-30, MASI, General Grant). A number of subsequent books place the monument in a social or architectural context and discuss parallels to other memorials or commemorative efforts. See Recommendations for Further Study.

War and 18th president of the United States (1869-1877), died of cancer July 23, 1885. At the time of his death he was immensely popular--"surely America's greatest hero" in the words of the historian who has conducted the most comprehensive study of Grant's Tomb.<sup>2</sup> Grant's agonizing final illness and his impressive funeral stimulated a massive outpouring of apparently sincere popular sympathy.

Almost immediately after Grant's death vigorous movements arose to erect a suitable monument to his memory. These proposals were quickly absorbed in the debate over the old commander's burial place. New York City, where Grant had spent the final years of his life, competed actively for the honor and was eventually chosen. Spontaneous efforts to raise funds for a monument were formalized by the incorporation of the Grant Monument Association (GMA) in February 1886.

Many aspects of building the monument proved controversial. The selection of New York City as Grant's resting place was extremely unpopular in the rest of the country; as a result almost no support was received beyond New York and Brooklyn (then a separate city). The GMA allowed its initial momentum to slip away and thereafter had to scale back its fund-raising objectives from the \$1 million originally proposed. Selection of an architectural design proved to be a muddled and frequently disappointing process. Initial hopes to locate the monument in Central Park were found impractical, so Riverside Park was selected as the site.<sup>3</sup>

Despite various delays, fumbblings and disagreements, a design for the monument was finally selected in September 1890. The winning architect was John H. Duncan (1854-1929).<sup>4</sup> The cornerstone for the monument was laid on Grant's birthday, April 27, 1892, and the monument was dedicated exactly five years later. On both occasions the president of the United States officiated. The cost of the structure cannot be precisely calculated, but was in excess of \$600,000. This constituted the largest fund-raising effort ever achieved in the U.S.

On the day the monument was dedicated the GMA officially turned it over to New York City, but under a contract finalized a few months later the Association retained responsibility for management. It was given an annual appropriation not to exceed \$7000 by the city for this purpose. The contract was renewed in 1908 and 1934, both times for a term of 21 years, with the \$7000 figure remaining unchanged.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 1.

<sup>3</sup>These issues are described in Kahn, HRS, Chaps. 5-7.

<sup>4</sup>Some of the influences on Duncan's design are discussed in David M. Kahn, "The Grant Monument," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, Vol. XLI, No.3, Oct. 1982. Kahn focuses on specific models, rather than examining broad architectural influences and trends. These more theoretical aspects are discussed in Peggy McDowell and Richard E. Meyer, *The Revival Styles in American Memorial Art* (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State Univ. Popular Press, 1994) and Richard A. Etlin, *Symbolic Space: French Enlightenment Architecture and Its Legacy* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago, 1994), as well as several studies dealing with the subject of historical commemoration.

<sup>5</sup>Grant Monument Association records, housed at Federal Hall National Memorial (hereafter, GMA). GMA records, MASI. Although the 1908 contract expired in 1929,

## **POST-1897 PHYSICAL CHANGES**

The following are the major alterations to the monument since 1897.

### **Interior**

- colored glass in windows: installed, 1913 and replaced, 1938-39
- display cases and items displayed in reliquary rooms changed; bronze flag cases demolished, 1969
- five busts of Civil War generals by WPA artists placed in crypt.
- murals painted on walls of reliquary rooms, 1938-39; painted over, 1969-70; restored, 1995-present
- three didactic mosaic murals installed in lunettes on upper walls, 1966

### **Exterior and Grounds**

- two granite eagles placed on side of front steps, 1938-39
- two flagpoles placed flanking front entrance, 1938-39
- changes in grade and plantings, 1938-39
- mosaic benches placed on grounds 1972-74

In terms of the overall scale of the monument, the changes are physically inconsequential. Nevertheless, the alterations are noticeable and problematic. The windows, for example, would seem unimportant since the space occupied by glass comprises so small a part of the whole structure; yet the tone of light they pass has an obvious influence on a visitor's perception.

The post-1897 changes can be placed in several categories: those made to improve the comfort and convenience of staff and visitors; those made with the intention of completing the monument; those described as completing the monument but more accurately constituting efforts to improve or embellish the monument; those intended to improve the appearance of the monument or to serve some other purpose, without reference to completion. The following section describes the historical development of these changes; subsequent sections will examine them within potential National Register contexts.

## **Historical Summary**

### **Early Efforts to Complete the Monument**

The changes and the problems associated with them arise from the fact that the monument was not considered complete at the time of its dedication. This situation was intentional and expected. Due to the uncertainties of fundraising, the GMA had specifically requested a plan that could be completed in stages. One of the main reasons for adopting Duncan's design may have been that it lent itself to phased execution.

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apparently no one noticed for several years.



As it turned out, the fundraising campaign was so successful that it became possible to finish the main structure of the monument. All that remained undone were various decorative items, or embellishments--sculpture and statuary that were needed to tone down the stark bareness of the structure and conform to its classical models and Beaux Arts ideals. Duncan's plan had also called for a dock on the Hudson River and a grandiose approach from that direction, but these features were considered to be the responsibility of the Parks Department and the association never concerned itself with them.<sup>6</sup>

To some degree the unfinished state of the monument remained a persistent concern of the GMA during its more than sixty years' administration of the structure. The issue recurs repeatedly but episodically in the annals of the association. Only on two occasions can it be said that a sustained campaign to resolve the problem was waged.

The structure of the GMA contributed to this pattern. Under its charter it was allowed a membership of 100 trustees, four of them ex-officio members (the governor of New York, the mayors of New York and Brooklyn, and the city Parks Commissioner). Many of the memberships can be considered honorific, especially famous military figures. (Generals John J. Pershing, Omar N. Bradley and Douglas MacArthur were trustees, but there is no evidence they participated in Association activities.) Many references can be found in GMA archives to the fact that the duties of a trustee were not arduous. In most years only the annual meeting was held, with 10 constituting a quorum. Even then attendance was usually limited to 15-20 members. The by-laws provided for an Executive Committee of 13 members, with only three necessary for a quorum.

Under these conditions, it was easy for one or two decisive individuals to determine the direction of the association. In its history the Association produced two or three powerful presidents who exercised this role. The first was General Horace Porter (1837-1921), president of the GMA until 1919. He had been a close aide to General Grant during and after the Civil War and was largely responsible for providing the impetus that made it possible to build the tomb. His dedication to Grant and the monument, his forceful personality and his powerful political connections allowed him to guide the policies of the GMA during its formative period. It was also possible for a strong secretary with experience and connections to exercise considerable influence, since it was they who largely maintained the continuity of the organization in the intervals between annual meetings.

Another factor that had a distinct impact on the later history of the monument was the continued involvement of the architect John H. Duncan. He maintained an office in New York city until his death in 1929. During that period he remained actively concerned with the monument, his most prestigious work. He became a member of the GMA and for many years served as a vice-president of the organization. He functioned in effect as a building manager, taking responsibility for maintenance of the monument. With the passing of the phase of his career during which he executed important designs, he occupied himself with mundane plumbing repairs and hardware replacements at the monument.

The continued presence of Duncan may have had a mixed influence on developments at the tomb. His detailed knowledge of the building and its needs was obviously invaluable. At the same time, deference to his reputation kept anyone in the Association from attempting

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<sup>6</sup>Although in late 1896, with the monument approaching completion, Duncan still strongly advocated construction of this feature, believing it was essential to the stability of the monument itself (Duncan to Horace Porter, Dec. 15, 1896; GMA, Box 10, Folder 9).

a major reevaluation of the monument during his lifetime. Duncan, meanwhile, became absorbed with the preservation of the building, mainly by controlling roof leaks and preventing further settlement due to faulty drainage of the plaza surrounding the structure. This preoccupation with maintenance details may have hindered the architect from making a broad review of the monument's needs and purpose.

A third factor which exerted a large influence on the course of events at the tomb was the GMA's financial limitations. Under its contract with the city it was given no more than \$7000 annually to operate the monument. In 1912 the GMA decided to devote \$2000 of that amount to build a fund for providing sculpture. Later another fund was set up to provide stained glass windows. General Porter made a bequest of \$10,000 to be used at the discretion of the trustees. Meanwhile, however, efforts by the GMA to increase the city appropriation were unsuccessful. As time passed the effects of inflation and the normal aging of the building made the appropriation barely adequate for routine maintenance, while the small dedicated funds could never hope to overtake the increasing cost of art work. Conversely, the existence of the municipal appropriation seemed to prevent the growth of a tradition among the trustees of making personal donations to the GMA. although many of them had ample capability to do so.

As early as 1903 the question of completing the tomb was raised at the annual meeting of the GMA, and the president was authorized to appoint a committee to raise the \$150,000 thought to be needed. This produced an important early definition of the features considered necessary, which were listed as "an equestrian figure of General Grant to be placed in front of the tomb; four allegorical figures for the corners, and a figure of 'Victory' to surmount the tomb."<sup>7</sup>

GMA records for the period after 1897 were destroyed in a fire on January 9, 1912, so there is no definite confirmation that the committee was formed or what it accomplished. The lack of visible progress suggests that little was achieved. In 1912, when the GMA records resume, the subject was reopened as if little had occurred in the interim. Responding to an inquiry from Porter, Duncan replied on February 21, 1912 that "the equestrian portrait statue of Gen. Grant, placed directly in the centre of the lower line of steps of the approach...is, in my judgment, the most important part of the design wanting." He added that if funds remained "the placing of the four non-portrait equestrian guardian statues, in the typical uniforms of the period, over the four central columns of entrance" was important, but beyond these no further statuary was required.<sup>8</sup>

General Porter's enormous prestige enabled him to define the character of the monument and the GMA; however, while he acknowledged the need to complete the monument, it never seemed to be an urgent priority for him. On the other hand, his position made it difficult for anyone else to take the lead on the subject. His request to Duncan did not seem to result in further action; later the World War intervened and turned attention to more pressing matters.

Porter, meanwhile, was occupied making another change that had a considerable effect on the appearance of the monument. In early 1913, after experimenting with various shades of glass, he ordered nine purple glass windows for the ground floor from Tiffany.

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<sup>7</sup>*New York Times*, Feb. 27, 1903.

<sup>8</sup>GMA, Box 25, Folder 5.



These replaced purple silk curtains over clear glass that had been put in place when the tomb was constructed. Porter had strong views about the impression the tomb should create, and he observed that the new windows produced "the proper tone of color."<sup>9</sup> There is no known authorization in Duncan's plan for this change; it was entirely a matter of Porter's personal taste, although he was careful to secure the architect's approval. Porter acknowledged that changes in the monument required the approval of the trustees and of the Park Commissioner but wrote that "I do not think it is a very formal matter in the present case."<sup>10</sup> While physically small, this change, as Porter recognized, has a perceptible influence on the mood created in the tomb.

After the close of World War I, in what proved to be Porter's last year as GMA president, a Building Committee was directed to consider "what statuary, embellishments and improvements should be made to the Tomb...."<sup>11</sup> At this meeting Duncan, already a member of the Building Committee, was elected a vice president of the Association. This motivated the architect to again consider what features were required for completion. At this time he opined that "The portion of the work, in my estimation, that is most important to perfect the original design of the Tomb, are the four equestrian sentinel statues coming over the columns of the entrance." The portrait statue of Grant was termed "next most desirable."<sup>12</sup> In subsequent years Duncan contacted sculptors to solicit estimates on the remaining work, but again without definite results.

Kahn places part of the blame for the lack of progress on Duncan, stating that "the architect himself regularly changed his mind in regard to what was required..."<sup>13</sup> This is true to a degree, but perhaps somewhat unfair. Aspects of Duncan's opinion changed over time, but his larger conception remained consistent: the most important additions were always considered to be the four statues over the entrance and the portrait statue of Grant. The changes were matters of artistic detail, such as moving from the original proposal for figures of four of Grant's generals to allegorical figures (partly for reasons of cost). It appears that Duncan shifted priority from the portrait statue to the four entrance figures, but this can be explained in part by the fact that he considered the portrait statue "really not part of the structure."<sup>14</sup>

Another change that evolved gradually was the steady decline in emphasis for a statue at the apex of the tomb. This was an inescapable consequence of the reduction in scale of Duncan's initial plan, in which the dimensions of the tomb were reduced from a 100-foot square to 90 feet. Subsequently Duncan seemed unable to settle on an appropriate design for the apex. Various unsatisfactory suggestions, including a pine cone, were made. Duncan felt

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<sup>9</sup>GMA Annual Report, Feb. 26, 1913.

<sup>10</sup>Porter to Duncan[?], June 20, 1912; GMA Box 22, Folder 22.

<sup>11</sup>GMA Annual Meeting, Mar. 28, 1919.

<sup>12</sup>Duncan to Porter, May 15, 1919; John H. Duncan Papers, Avery Library, Columbia Univ., Folder, Grant's Tomb H-Z.

<sup>13</sup>Kahn, HRS, 152.

<sup>14</sup>Duncan to Thomas Denny, Nov. 10, 1925; GMA Box 25, Folder 6.

no real enthusiasm for this feature: in 1919 he observed that "The figure of Victory on top, while it may be very prominent, it is, in my judgment, more likely to turn out unsatisfactorily and invite criticism than the others suggested."<sup>15</sup> With this partial exception, the architect and the GMA remained quite consistent over a period of some 30 years about the essential requirements for completing the monument. It is also noteworthy that no interior work or embellishment was ever mentioned.

#### MINOR MODIFICATIONS

In his role of consulting architect Duncan generally seemed accepting of minor changes for comfort and convenience. Initially he had spoken of avoiding any "resemblance to a habitable dwelling" in the tomb. This seems to have extended to proposing not to glaze window openings. As the experience of operating the monument demonstrated the impracticality of such extreme austerity, Duncan retreated and apparently installed a wooden storm door soon after the monument was opened.<sup>16</sup> Responding to complaints by the custodians, he designed a shelter for them in 1915. Two years later, after an embarrassing incident in which Marshal Joffre of France had to climb over a railing to place a wreath on General Grant's sarcophagus, wooden steps were built to reach the parapet on the floor of the crypt. In 1923 Duncan supervised the installation of electric wiring to replace gas lighting and made improvements to the gas system. He was also concerned with providing better heating for the benefit of staff and visitors.

Other decorative and display changes, relatively minor compared with the scale of the monument, gradually defined its image. Probably around 1900 a collection of Civil War battle flags were displayed in cases in the reliquary rooms. These "impressive bronze and glass airtight cases" may have been designed by Duncan.<sup>17</sup> After the death and interment of Mrs. Grant, her son Col. Fred C. Grant turned over a collection of commemorative letters and testimonials dating to the final illness of General Grant. Many of these were mounted and displayed on the walls of the reliquary rooms.

A comfort station in a pavilion across the western arm of Riverside Drive from the tomb was constructed by the city in 1909.

#### Late 1920s Campaign and the Pope Report

Given the great disparity between the cost of sculpture and the GMA's financial resources, the flurry of interest in completing the monument in the early 1920s stalled. In 1924 Henry Whiting Hayden, who had been secretary of the GMA under Porter and had succeeded him as president, died. This marked the passing of the old guard. Duncan had continued to explore options for acquiring statuary at a reasonable cost, and under new GMA President Gen. James G. Harbord interest in completing the monument revived. In December 1925 GMA Secretary Thomas Denny sent a circular letter to all trustees in which he solicited suggestions on how to raise money to complete the monument. One respondent, expressing

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<sup>15</sup>Duncan to Porter, May 15, 1919; Avery Library, Folder Grant's Tomb, H-Z.

<sup>16</sup>Kahn, HRS, 149.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 150.

what was then a minority view, proposed having the federal government provide the funds.<sup>18</sup>

It was only the introduction of a forceful new participant, William Rhinelander Stewart, that gave promise of breaking the chronic stalemate. Stewart, one of the most prominent upper-class New Yorkers of the time, had earlier been instrumental in pushing through the construction of Washington Arch and providing statuary for it. He soon took charge of the Grant monument situation and launched a fund-raising drive in February 1929. Under his lead, GMA trustees for the first time were pressured to reach into their own pockets to provide the core of the funding.

Stewart's efforts went well beyond merely raising money, resulting in a fundamental reevaluation of the building. He contacted William R. Mead of the noted architectural firm of McKim, Mead & White, who recommended John Russell Pope, one of the most successful public architects of the period, as "the best qualified in the country to undertake the difficult task of completing and enriching a building already designed and erected."<sup>19</sup> Every effort was made to be tactful to Duncan, who was still living. For example Pope, in his report, was careful to attribute the problems of the monument to the lack of embellishment and to "a faulty handling of its setting and inadequate treatment of the parking space surrounding it"--factors which could not be blamed on the original architect. If Duncan was at all offended by bringing in another architect, he was careful not to reveal it. He expressed "gratification at the prospect of the near completion of the Monument" and later placed his original drawings at Pope's disposal.<sup>20</sup>

Pope's report, presented in late 1928, nevertheless proposed a substantial revision in the monument's appearance. Possibly he would have gone further if Duncan had not still been on the scene. The plan attempted to add interest by incorporating sculpture and statuary at various points on and around the exterior. Beyond that, Pope was in essence trying, without fundamental alteration of the structure, to modify its proportions by enhancing the horizontal dimension. To this end he proposed "subduing" the apex of the monument and, more importantly, making major changes in the surrounding plaza and landscaping. He also called for considerable planting of trees in front of the monument to soften the outline and "increase the mass value of the composition." The total cost of the plan was estimated at \$400,000.<sup>21</sup>

The proposed plantings represented a fundamental, if unacknowledged, departure from the concepts of General Porter. In March 1912 he had expressed strong opposition to a suggestion to plant Japanese cherry trees in the vicinity of the tomb. Porter was somewhat concerned about the hardiness of this species, but his main objection was to blocking the view of the monument. He stated his feelings emphatically and explicitly:

This structure occupies an elevated position on an elbow in the river and can be seen

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<sup>18</sup>Joseph G. Butler, Jr., Youngstown, OH, to Thomas Denny, Jan. 12, 1926; GMA Box 25, Folder 9.

<sup>19</sup>Report of Special Committee, Dec. 10, 1928; GMA Handbook, Jan. 1929.

<sup>20</sup>Report of Meeting of Special Committee, Oct. 28, 1928; GMA Minute Books.

<sup>21</sup>Report of John Russell Pope, Dec. 4, 1928; GMA Box 25, Folder 12.

from the ships in the harbor and from thirty miles up the river in its entire proportions without being masked or obscured by structures or trees and is thus one of the most important and admired landmarks on the Hudson. In approaching it from the south through the vista formed by the arching trees along Riverside Drive, the architecture of the Tomb comes suddenly in view in the clear and produces a very happy effect.<sup>22</sup>

According to Porter, Duncan had concurred in his opinion at that time. By 1928 a significant if unheralded change had taken place in the conception of the monument and its purpose. Pope now spoke of the shade trees as "providing shelter for the many now making park use of the site." By advocating Lindens, he knowingly planned on large trees. This showed a concern to integrate the monument with the surrounding park, which had been incompletely developed at the time the monument was designed. A related consideration is that a marked decrease in the sweep and character of the view available from the tomb made its obscuring by trees less disturbing. When the monument was under construction its surrounding area had not been built up, and it was said to be possible even from ground level to see far up and down the Hudson and all the way across Manhattan to Long Island Sound. Since then the area had developed rapidly, seeming to confirm the suspicions of people in other parts of the country who viewed the placing of the Grant monument in New York City as a scheme to increase adjacent real estate values. By the late 1920s the nearby street grid had been filled in, and the monument was hemmed in by other buildings.

Changing tastes in the nearly four decades since the monument had been designed had reduced its appeal considerably, although there had always been some who considered it unattractive. One newspaper, commenting on Pope's plan, said it would "be able to convert the massive tomb from a structure which has been termed an eye sore to a wholly suitable, artistic, and dignified memorial tomb." Another referred to it as "possessing too cumbrous and gloomy an effect." The *New York Times* noted that "the rather grimly plain facade" would be enriched.<sup>23</sup>

These criticisms, which may have been restrained out of deference to the aged Duncan, endorsed the views of some prominent GMA members, encouraging them further. One such trustee, Herbert Livingston Satterlee, had remarked as early as 1925 that adding statuary would "turn the present unfinished looking pile into a beautiful edifice."<sup>24</sup> After the existence of the Pope plan had given him greater license, he became blunter, describing the monument as "long unfinished and ugly" and saying that the proposal "will result in transforming within three years, the unsightly building which has long occupied one of the most beautiful sites in the world, into a beautiful public monument of which both the city and the nation will have cause to be proud." (This was contained in a personal appeal for a donation to Mrs. Moses Taylor, the widow of a wealthy New York investor.)<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>Porter to NYC Parks Commissioner, Mar. 19, 1912; GMA Box 22, Folder 2.

<sup>23</sup>*New York Sun*, Feb. 16, 1929; *New York Herald-Tribune*, Feb. 17, 1929; *New York Times*, Mar. 17, 1929.

<sup>24</sup>Satterlee to Denny, Feb. 26, 1925; GMA Box 22, Folder 7.

<sup>25</sup>June 13, 1929; GMA Box 25, Folder 9.

Stewart was a powerful, persuasive individual, and he had received editorial endorsements from the city's newspapers and men of influence. For a heady period in 1929 money flowed in, and there seemed to be no remaining obstacle to completing the monument. On June 11 the GMA signed contracts with Pope and with sculptor Paul Manship, who was to execute the equestrian statue of Grant. Then two devastating blows completely changed the outlook: Stewart died on September 4, 1929, and a month later the stock market crash heralded the Great Depression. Duncan's death on October 18 of the same year added to the sense of an era ending.

Stewart's campaign had raised over \$122,000 even though some pledges could not be fulfilled due to the economic collapse. Although many costs were now lower, this amount was not nearly enough to complete the monument, and there was no realistic hope of raising more money. Gen. William Barclay Parsons, a forceful engineer who earlier in the century had been in charge of building the first New York City subway, replaced Stewart on the special committee for completing the monument in March 1930.<sup>26</sup> He apparently had hopes of enlisting the support of John D. Rockefeller, Jr., who was involved in nearby projects. When Rockefeller effectively refused to come to the support of the Grant monument by declining nomination as a GMA trustee in 1931, it was a devastating blow.<sup>27</sup> Two years later Cornelius Vanderbilt, chairman of the special committee, conceded the hopelessness of completing the monument: "owing to the present conditions it was impracticable to make any attempt to raise more funds for the improvement of the tomb, and that the only possible thing to do at the present time was to keep the funds invested and accumulate the interest."<sup>28</sup>

### **Late 1930s Campaign and the WPA**

The next drive to finish the monument arose in the late 1930s under unforeseen and much different circumstances, made possible by the Depression-era agency the WPA (Works Progress Administration and its predecessor, PWA). This effort produced the greatest physical changes in the monument since its initial construction, but also reflected a subtle shift of emphasis that tried to give the monument an altered image. The work began as renovation in December 1935, cleaning and repairing marble elements, and in 1937 was extended to cover all interior marble. During 1938 additional aspects were added, including repairs to the roof, improvements in lighting and heating and thorough cleaning of interior plaster domes and arches.

It is not entirely clear how work by the Parks Department, using WPA funded-labor, was initiated at the Tomb.<sup>29</sup> Robert Moses, the forceful Parks Commissioner, apparently

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<sup>26</sup>GMA Annual Report, Mar. 10, 1930.

<sup>27</sup>Rockefeller's response was attributed to the advice of his doctors, who "insisted on his greatly reducing the current commitments of his time..." (James M. Warfield, [Rockefeller's secretary] to W.G. Bates, May 8, 1931; GMA Box 23, Folder 1).

<sup>28</sup>Report at Annual Meeting, Feb. 9, 1933; GMA Minutes. The Vanderbilt signature on this concession must have added to the feeling of hopelessness.

<sup>29</sup>WPA records might provide additional information, but it was not possible to consult them within the limits of this report.

initiated the work on his own, with only minimal consultation with the GMA. This was altogether in keeping with Moses's method of operation as described by his most comprehensive biographer<sup>30</sup> and was permissible because the city retained ownership of the site. The first formal mention of this work in GMA records seems to have been an acknowledgement at the Feb. 27, 1936 annual meeting, at which Secy. Bates reported that Moses "has had rather elaborate plans for doing a large amount of work at the Tomb." A large program of cleaning both the exterior and interior, as well as repairs such as repointing the roof was outlined. This was one minor element in Moses's grandiose plans for park renovation. A news release dated Jan. 10, 1936 announced that "Riverside Park will be properly developed and landscaped from end to end. The plans include playgrounds, tennis courts, wading pools, walks and overlooks, landscaped areas and boat basins." (Grant's Tomb was not specifically mentioned.)<sup>31</sup>

Almost concurrently, Herbert L. Satterlee moved into the presidency of the GMA at its annual meeting in February 1936. He had long been interested in the association, having first become a trustee in 1903. Although he had held the post of assistant secretary for a time, he had turned down offers for higher office due to the pressure of other activities.<sup>32</sup> By February 1936 he was 72 years old and probably had more time to devote to this interest. Few people in New York City were in a better position to carry out this task or had better connections. The contacts developed in a prominent law practice were enhanced immeasurably by marriage to a daughter of J.P. Morgan. The powerful financier had been a trustee of the GMA until his death in 1913 and was followed by his son, who remained on the board when Satterlee became president. There are indications in association files that Satterlee wielded considerable influence on the GMA even when he did not hold office. Henry W. Hayden, long-time secretary and president, had been a member of Satterlee's law firm. Satterlee, who had written a popular apologetic biography of his father-in-law, had a command of history and an intense interest in it that gave him an advantage over many of the other trustees.

GMA records make it abundantly clear that Satterlee was firmly in charge. He nominated trustees and named members to GMA working committees. In these measures he had the full support and assistance of long-time Association Secretary Gen. William G. Bates, who had held that office since 1928. They were aided by William M. Mather, an architect who provided vigorous and competent leadership of the Special Committee on Repairs. The memorial resolution passed on Bates's death was undoubtedly justified in asserting that "During the period that the public showed little interest in the statues in our parks or in what was always referred to as 'Grant's Tomb' and few of the Trustees visited it,

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<sup>30</sup>Robert A. Caro, *The Power Broker* (NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974). As a condition of accepting the position, Moses had been made the first city-wide commissioner of parks.

<sup>31</sup>New York City Department of Parks & Recreation archives, Old Arsenal, Central Park, Folder M71.

<sup>32</sup>Satterlee to Thomas Denny, Feb. 26, 1925; GMA Box 22, Folder 7.



General Bates's zeal did not flag."<sup>33</sup> Nor was there exaggerated effusiveness in the eulogy of Satterlee, of whom it was said "All of the improvements made during recent years to the building covering the tomb are due to his vision and accomplishment."<sup>34</sup>

Satterlee was never troubled by the identification of his tastes with the interests of the GMA. In one striking instance he said he was "trying to get new designs for those dreadful looking catafalques that they wanted to put in place on the urns of the terrace." (Pope's design called for stone urns to flank the front steps; it is not clear what Satterlee meant by catafalques, and perhaps he was using the term incorrectly.) In the course of the project, a pair of symbolic stone eagles that had been salvaged from a demolished post office had become available for use at Grant's tomb. In referring to them as "splendid eagles" Satterlee effectively guaranteed their acceptance for a prominent position in place of the urns.<sup>35</sup>

The initial renovation by the WPA or the Parks Department had begun before Satterlee fortuitously acceded to the association presidency; but it was presumably due largely to his efforts that the work was continued and its scope enlarged. Although Satterlee, like most members of the GMA, belonged to a class not noted for its sympathy toward New Deal innovations, he did not hesitate to use the WPA for the benefit of the monument. With Bates and Mather, he immediately perceived and grasped the possibility of accomplishing work that was desperately needed but would otherwise have been unobtainable. By November 1936 Bates was already telling Moses "It was with extreme pleasure and gratification that Mr. Mather...and myself examined the work that your Department has been doing at the Tomb." He added that "It is most satisfactory in every respect" and pleaded for additional cleaning of marble on the main floor.<sup>36</sup> Later a formal resolution to this effect was passed. Moses, despite a reputation for being unsympathetic toward historic preservation concerns, seemed to have a fondness for the Grant monument and acceded to the trustees' request. Later he became a GMA trustee himself, although there is no evidence he attended or participated in its activities. Its membership was drawn from an element of society with which he increasingly identified and felt comfortable.

Satterlee was motivated to a considerable degree by invidious comparisons to other noted buildings--or at least was willing to use such comparisons to advantage. As early as 1925 he had observed that "the tremendous interest shown in building the [Riverside] Cathedral is an evidence of the awakened interest in things spiritual and artistic." He then proceeded to the obvious conclusion that "The turn of the Grant monument should come next."<sup>37</sup> In 1936 the direction of his thinking was revealed in his remark that "It seemed to me that it would be a dreadful thing to have the Monument look as it does now when the World's Fair is held here when there will be hundreds of thousands of visitors coming to this

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<sup>33</sup>Satterlee to Mrs. William G. Bates, Mar. 1, 1945; GMA Box 23, Folder 9.  
Stylistically this resolution shows signs of having been written personally by Satterlee.

<sup>34</sup>GMA resolution, Feb. 18, 1948; Box 23, Folder 12.

<sup>35</sup>Satterlee to Bates, Jan. 9, 1939; GMA Box 23, Folder 3.

<sup>36</sup>Bates to Moses, Nov. 2, 1936; GMA Box 25, Folder 19.

<sup>37</sup>Satterlee to Thomas Denny, Feb. 26, 1925; GMA Box 22, Folder 7.

City and a great many of them will visit the Monument, and the grounds, pavement etc. look very badly."<sup>38</sup>

Under arrangements worked out among the GMA, the WPA and the Parks Department, the Association used funds remaining from the 1929 drive to purchase materials, and the other two organizations provided labor. A resolution approved by the GMA; undated but probably February 1938, authorized the sale of securities held by the organization for this purpose. In early 1938 negotiations between Mather and the WPA laid out work procedures. This was necessary largely because of the regulations which required the GMA to provide materials; however the WPA had already performed a great deal of work that did not require new materials with only informal arrangements. In the end the Association furnished about \$93,000 and the WPA spent about \$275,000 in wages.<sup>39</sup>

### **Rededication and Redefinition**

At the conclusion of the renovation projects a formal rededication of the monument was held on Grant's birthday, April 27, 1939. A news report was probably correct in saying that the monument gleamed "with an exterior brighter and cleaner than it has had in forty years."<sup>40</sup> In the enthusiasm of the moment no one seemed to notice that, under the rubric of cleaning and completing the monument, Satterlee had been able to redirect its focus. In remarks at the rededication he acknowledged that there had been "certain artistic embellishments," but did not elaborate on the work which evoked the Civil War and made it more receptive to visitors; i.e. map murals, bronze busts placed in the crypt, new display and flag cases, and amber instead of purple glass.

Although the design of the monument and the mandate of the association allowed some latitude in applying decorative touches, or embellishments, the alterations of the late 1930s seem to have been largely expressions of Satterlee's taste. There is no evidence that they were specifically called for in the Duncan or Pope plans or that they were approved in detail by the GMA membership. The work initiated by the Parks Department had consisted of cleaning, refurbishing and deferred maintenance. Although Moses had little regard for historical integrity, there is no evidence that his agency intended to make fundamental alterations to the monument, whether to carry out Pope's plan or for any other reason. It appears that any such changes were initiated by Satterlee and that participation by the Parks Department was at the GMA's request and after the Association agreed to provide materials.

Satterlee was responding to the esthetic attitudes of his time, under which many aspects of the monument were regarded with disfavor. One article noted that the tomb "had long been the target of aesthetic criticism" and referred specifically to its "dank and gloomy interior."<sup>41</sup> It is quite likely that a reciprocal process was occurring in which Satterlee, with

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<sup>38</sup>Satterlee draft to John R. Pope, May \_\_, 1936; GMA Box 25, Folder 23.

<sup>39</sup>The GMA had spent \$81,888 as of Oct. 18, 1938 (Satterlee to Col. Brehon Somervell, Administrator, U.S. WPA; GMA Box 25, Folder 23; GMA Annual Report for 1938.

<sup>40</sup>*New York Herald Tribune*, Apr. 8, 1939.

<sup>41</sup>*New York Times*, Aug. 17, 1938.

his influential contacts, was not only responding to press criticism, but influencing and directing this commentary.

In general, Satterlee was attempting to introduce color into the monument, although for obvious reasons he could not acknowledge openly that he was seeking to alter the mood and purpose of the structure. On one occasion, referring to the introduction of state flags inside the tomb he allowed himself to admit that they would "add a little color to the scene."<sup>42</sup> Again, the changes were individually small in proportion to the scale of the building, but collectively they had a considerable impact.

As early as 1936 Satterlee had advocated finishing the walls of the trophy rooms with murals.<sup>43</sup> Until then the walls and ceilings had remained in their natural white plaster finish, although they had probably become dirty. In 1938 the GMA commissioned [William] Dean Fausett (1913-) to paint mural maps in both rooms. (He is sometimes referred to as a WPA artist, but this commission was funded by the GMA and not performed under auspices of WPA.) In conjunction with this the walls and domes of the rooms were painted for the first time. Satterlee's concern with harmonizing colors and adding warmth may be visible here as well. Artist Lynn Fausett, who had been invited to submit a proposal in competition with his brother said that he had "tried to arrive at a color that would best set off the famous old flags."<sup>44</sup>

Probably the most visible interior change was the substitution of amber window glass for what had been described as "purplish pink."<sup>45</sup> As Satterlee expressed it, "My personal feeling is to find a glass that is strong and that will shed a golden light on the marble interior of the Tomb."<sup>46</sup> This again seems to have been an action taken by the president entirely on his own accord, although a special subcommittee selected the actual glass and the opinion of an art professor at Princeton was solicited.<sup>47</sup> The installation was barely completed by the April 27, 1939 rededication. Here too a mutually beneficial interaction with the press may be visible, for a *Times* article had opportunely spoken of "the dank and gloomy interior" into which "a faint bluish light glimmers eerily through purple stained glass windows."<sup>48</sup>

The overall brightening of the monument as a result of its thorough cleaning masked to some extent the innovations Satterlee had introduced. Yet, much as it became difficult to distinguish individual alterations from the general brightening of appearance, Satterlee was careful to cover his changes under the loose cloak of completing the monument. In his

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<sup>42</sup>To Bates, Mar. 14, 1938; GMA Box 23, Folder 3.

<sup>43</sup>Bates to George D. Burnside, Dec. 4, 1936; GMA Box 25, Folder 4; GMA Minute Books, Feb. 10, 1937.

<sup>44</sup>Mrs. Lynn (Helen) Fausett to Satterlee, May 5, 1937; courtesy Brigid Sullivan. (Mrs. Fausett was writing on behalf of her husband in his absence.)

<sup>45</sup>Satterlee[?] to Norman S. Dike, Oct. 25, 1938; GMA Box 25, Folder 22.

<sup>46</sup>Satterlee to Pittsburgh Plate Glass Co., Oct. 3, 1938; GMA Box 25, Folder 22.

<sup>47</sup>A.M. Friend to William M. Mather, Feb. 9, 1939; GMA Box 25, Folder 23.

<sup>48</sup>Aug. 17, 1938.

remarks at the rededication he noted that "our Association undertook to carry out Mr. Pope's plans as far as its means would allow." There was a legal basis for this, as the resolution that authorized the sale of GMA securities to fund the purchase of materials referred in its preamble to the need "to carry out the plans and specifications of John Russell Pope."

In some instances Satterlee may have fallen back on earlier plans and precedents to suppress proposals he did not favor. The most clear example of this occurs in reference to flagpoles, of which Satterlee wrote "I have been reluctant to entertain the idea of flag poles because I do not know of any in connection with the Lincoln Memorial, or the tomb of Washington at Mount Vernon, or of any of the other tombs or memorials which I happen to have seen, and neither our Executive Committee nor the late John Russell Pope in his plans for the Tomb adopted the idea."<sup>49</sup>

There was actually precedent for a flagpole. Although his plans did not seem to address the issue one way or another and the idea was not originated by him, Duncan had been willing to accept flagpoles when the issue was raised in the early 1920s. It had been proposed to place a flagpole on the apex of the monument, which Duncan strongly rejected, but, with his usual desire to appear accommodating, he acceded to placing flag poles flanking the front entrance.<sup>50</sup> Somewhat later the architect even conceded that a stand of flags inside the building "would show to a good advantage and somewhat brighten up the interior," although he expressed a preference for a single stand instead of the four that had been suggested.<sup>51</sup>

One reason for Satterlee's effectiveness was that he held a coherent concept of what the monument should be and pursued this vision with consistency. Because this conception differed to some degree from the traditions of the GMA and the notions of many of its members, he had to be cautious in expressing it. It was only in early 1939, when a major phase of the work was clearly coming to an end, that he allowed himself to be even briefly explicit:

The structure is not only a Monument but it is also a Tomb and it is sometimes referred to by one name and sometimes by the other. It is suggested that a much more appropriate designation is the word "Memorial."<sup>52</sup>

This guiding concept explains many of the actions Satterlee initiated that went beyond either renovation or completion according to a pre-existing plan. In essence he was trying subtly to alter the public image of the monument. While he acknowledged that the structure was and would continue to function as a tomb, he undoubtedly shared the feelings of the *New*

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<sup>49</sup>Satterlee to Mather, Nov. 21, 1938; GMA Box 23, Folder 3.

<sup>50</sup>Duncan to Horace Quinby, June 9, 1921; Avery Library, Grant's Tomb Folder G; GMA Minutes June 10, 1921; Duncan to Quinby, Feb. 23, 1922; Avery Library, Grant's Tomb Folder A-F. Duncan expressed opposition to a single pole centered on the front entrance (to Henry W. Hayden, Jan. 19, 1922; Avery Library, Grant's Tomb Folder G.)

<sup>51</sup>Duncan to Quinby, Feb. 23, 1922; Avery Library, Grant's Tomb Folder A-F.

<sup>52</sup>GMA Annual Report for 1938.

*York Times* writer who referred to "The sepulchral atmosphere of Grant's Tomb, one of New York's most famous landmarks and yet in the past one of its gloomiest structures...."<sup>53</sup> Thus, in addition to the cosmetic cleaning that is a normal maintenance requirement and is especially demanding in a structure like Grant's Tomb, he sought to brighten it further by measures such as replacing the windows, painting the reliquary rooms and installing exterior floodlights. The latter, which would literally increase the structure's visibility, was important to Satterlee: "The more I think of it, the more I am impressed with the idea of illuminating the Tomb on the evening of General Grant's birthday and letting the people of New York get accustomed to that function so that they would go up to the Tomb in numbers and remember General Grant and his unique service to the United States."<sup>54</sup> Satterlee recognized at some level that attitudes had changed, that to younger generations veneration of Grant was not automatic; they would no longer respond to the monument and the GMA on its own terms. If the monument were to maintain its original purpose of exalting Grant's place in history it would have to make an effort to become more appealing.

Conceiving of the building as a memorial enlarged its function and explains Satterlee's expansions on the decorative details proposed in Pope's revised plan. To his way of thinking, a tomb or mausoleum is essentially passive, whereas the term memorial demands a more active effort to engage the visitor. This accounts for Satterlee's measures to add interest and liveliness, which were justified in part by the upbeat atmosphere being generated for the World's Fair. The lack of explicit directions for interior "embellishment" in both the Duncan and Pope plans gave Satterlee the latitude to take advantage of spaces which seemed to have been designed for some form of decoration. Thus he initiated the creation of the Fausett murals. Moving the testimonials out of the cases in the reliquary rooms allowed them to be displayed in new racks in the center hall, creating another point of interest. Satterlee's attitude is evident in details such as the installation of bronze markers for the historic flags, another effort to create a more receptive atmosphere. Pope's plan had called for ornamentation at the side of the front steps. Satterlee provided this, though not precisely in the form the architect had specified, but went beyond this on the interior by commissioning five bronze busts of Civil War generals associated with Grant.

Other actions sought to make the monument more inviting. New lighting and improvements to the heating system made the building more comfortable for staff and visitors. In another minor but revealing touch, a brass lectern was emplaced. This represented a limited reversion to the initial intention to create a central meeting hall, but seemed to depart subtly but unmistakably from the austere sensibilities of Duncan and Porter. In this regard, of course, the most conspicuous departure was the planting of trees and shrubs in the plaza.

### **The Memorial's Evolving Relationship to Riverside Park**

Benches, fountains and flagpoles integrated the monument more adequately into the surrounding park and made the area more welcoming. In so doing they conveyed a significant change in the monument's image and its relationship to the public. As with other aspects of Satterlee's redefinition of the monument's presentation, these changes represented

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<sup>53</sup>April 28, 1939.

<sup>54</sup>Satterlee to Somervell, Oct. 19, 1938; GMA Box 25, Folder 23.

a tactical departure from the restrained concepts of Duncan and Porter.

After the city offered to provide a place for the monument, it was assumed that the site would be in a park. The particular site was selected and laid out by employees of the Parks Department who are today revered in their profession--Landscape Architect Calvert Vaux and "Superintendent of Planting" Samuel Parsons, Jr. Vaux had earlier (1882) sketched plans for proposed new drives and walks at the northern end of the park, around the Claremont Inn.<sup>55</sup> After Grant's death Parsons accompanied the family in an examination of possible sites, leading to the choice of the location in Riverside Park.<sup>56</sup> This park, established by legislation in 1867, was designed by Frederick Law Olmsted in 1874. At the time of Grant's death it remained incompletely developed, especially in the northern end.

Responding to criticism which originated with Olmsted that a "burial spot is not well placed in a pleasure ground," Vaux and Parsons selected a site "with the desire to meet this objection fairly, but without sacrificing any of the essential requirements of a suitable site for this grand public monument."<sup>57</sup> Elaborating a year later in a letter to GMA Secretary Richard Greener, Vaux emphasized the main requirements of "privacy," "isolation from the park pleasure grounds" and "the other equally important idea, that of 'publicity'."<sup>58</sup> The latter goal, he felt, was achieved by allowing a total frontage of 120 feet. It is evident that Porter's later emphasis on the dignity and solemnity of the monument represented attitudes that prevailed even before he became a dominant force in the Association.

When Duncan's winning design was publicized, noted architectural critic Marianna G. Van Rensselaer observed that "no adequate thought was given to the surroundings of the monument" and pleaded for greater integration of the building and its "environment." Her criticism was heeded, and later in 1891 Vaux and Parsons were requested to draw plans for the landscape around the tomb, including grading.<sup>59</sup>

After construction was underway, Duncan apparently had some problems with the grades planned by Vaux and Parsons. Some of the park commissioners were reluctant to make any changes in the Vaux plan, so careful diplomacy became necessary. Parsons

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<sup>55</sup>Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site, Plans and Drawings Collection, Job #505 (hereafter, FRLO).

<sup>56</sup>Caption from exhibit "Samuel Parsons, Jr., the Art of Landscape Architecture," curated by Charles A. Birnbaum, FASLA; sponsored by the Catalog of Landscape Records, Wave Hill, Bronx, New York; Project Director: Catha Grace Rambusch.

<sup>57</sup>Report of Vaux and Parsons to John D. Crimmins, President, Dept. of Public Parks, Sep. 3, 1885; GMA Box 5, Folder 5. Olmsted had opined that "It is a very fine site for a monument. But it will be extremely unfortunate if...the remains of the dead are brought into close association with the gayety of the Promenade at this culminating point " (quoted in Elizabeth Stevenson, *Park Maker: A Life of Frederick Law Olmsted* [NY: Macmillan, 1977], 372).

<sup>58</sup>Vaux to Greener, Oct. 16, 1886; GMA Box 5, Folder 5.

<sup>59</sup>Captions for Samuel Parsons, Jr., exhibit, Wave Hill.



apparently facilitated the negotiating process.<sup>60</sup> As a result City Engineer M.A. Kellogg prepared a detailed landscape plan, showing walks, steps and other improvements around the tomb. Kellogg's drawing seemed to follow closely the less detailed exposition of Vaux and Parsons, with some changes in the shape of the plaza and walkways south of the tomb. Also a proposed roadway immediately north of the tomb, which would have resulted in placing it on a smaller island, was apparently deleted.<sup>61</sup>

Later, when the monument was approaching completion, the GMA took a strong initiative to ensure additional "privacy." In 1895 or 1896 it passed a resolution to add an area across Riverside Drive from the tomb to the city-owned park. Legislation to this effect was introduced in the New York State Senate in March 1896 and approved. However, other portions of the GMA resolution pertaining to rearranging city streets to provide a grand approach from the east were not carried out. (These changes were the responsibility of the city and could not be implemented by the legislature.)

The area added in 1896 is present Sakura Park. This was not the only impact the GMA had on the adjacent parkland. A later brochure acknowledged that the dedication of the tomb "gave a powerful impetus to the previous movements to preserve and beautify Riverside Park, which resulted in the planting of trees and shrubbery along the Drive in 1900 and 1901."<sup>62</sup> The area immediately around the tomb was not planted, in accord with the thinking of Porter and his associates.

This situation largely prevailed until the 1930s. In the period 1930-31 Olmsted Brothers was preparing a landscape design for Sakura Park, then still known as Claremont Park, with John D. Rockefeller, Jr., as their client. Rockefeller had financed the construction of adjacent Riverside Church, which may explain why some in the GMA looked to him as a promising source of aid in completing the monument. Pope had made the initial contact with the Olmsted firm in 1928, when he requested estimates on planting. In reply the Olmsted company observed "It would doubtless be a good thing for the neighborhood if your plans and our plans could be coordinated."<sup>63</sup>

The suggested coordination of the two projects was carried out in subsequent years, leading to an unusual situation in which the Olmsted firm exerted considerable influence on the landscape around the tomb and assigned it a project number, without having a contract or

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<sup>60</sup>Duncan to Porter, July 2, 1896; GMA Box 10, Folder 9.

<sup>61</sup>Captions and drawings in Samuel Parsons, Jr., exhibit, Wave Hill.

<sup>62</sup>Brochure, "West Side Improvement," Oct. 12, 1937, in FRLO Photograph Album Collection, Job #505.

<sup>63</sup>Olmsted Bros. to J.R. Pope, Nov. 8, 1929; Library of Congress, Manuscripts Div., Olmsted Papers, Job File 537. The estimate included figures for 66 lindens. A drawing in the FRLO Plans & Drawings Collection (Job 537-1, Sheet 1), listed as received Oct. 30, 1928, is a view of the monument from the west (although apparently labelled "south elevation"). Although Pope in his letter of Oct. 27, 1928 asked for an estimate on lindens, the drawing depicts trees with a columnar, tapering form; the species is not given, but they resemble Lombardy poplars or cedars. Someone has pencilled in the phrase "linden trees" pointing to a sketch of a tree with characteristic linden shape.

a client and apparently without being paid. Much of this cooperation came about because of persistent pressure by Barclay Parsons. After a pointed suggestion to this effect, Pope transmitted his plans to Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., in March 1930, and in June Olmsted visited the site. Since Olmsted was not under contract he attempted to present his views diplomatically, but he was clearly displeased by several aspects of Pope's design. He felt that the Pope plan showed too much pavement and not enough grass in the plaza south of the tomb. He also recommended introducing two tree masses in the corners of the plaza and suggested "using much higher-stemmed trees of looser foliage so as not to make a massive interruption of the view toward the statue and the entrance of the Tomb for those approaching from the south along the Drive, yet giving a little support for, and sense of enclosure to, the platform of the statue...."<sup>64</sup>

Pope accepted most of the changes proposed by Olmsted, even agreeing to move the equestrian statue 2' 4 1/4". Olmsted was concerned with maintaining a sight line from the Butterfield statue in Claremont Park to the proposed Grant statue; since the park path had already been laid out, it was easier to move the statue location.<sup>65</sup> Nevertheless, Olmsted remained dissatisfied with some aspects of the Pope plan, feeling that the plaza needed further "shrinking."<sup>66</sup> Olmsted was thus reluctant to sign a statement, as Parsons wished, that he and Pope were in complete harmony. Parsons insisted on this in the belief that it would make it easier to raise funds. Even though by this time John D. Rockefeller had declined to become a GMA trustee, Parsons may have clung to the hope that he could be brought around. Parsons was a man accustomed to having his way, and after further concessions by Pope, the architect and Olmsted sent a joint letter to Parsons stating "in the opinion of each of us, the purpose of our collaboration for bringing the two designs into harmony...has been accomplished...in a way that satisfies both of us."<sup>67</sup> The result of this curious episode was that the Olmsted firm had considerable influence on the landscape design for the Grant monument but, contrary to Parsons's strategy, no discernible effect on raising the money needed to complete the plan.

Shortly afterward, Riverside Park was comprehensively redesigned and remodelled as part of the West Side Improvement conceived by Robert Moses. In the immediate vicinity of the tomb, alteration of the landscape was described as carrying out Pope's design, and in general seems to have done so.<sup>68</sup> This was the only portion of the Pope plan that was

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<sup>64</sup>Memorandum of Visit to Grant's Tomb, June 11, 1930; Memorandum from F.L. Olmsted, Jr., ("Typed from Mr. Olmsted's manuscript and signed in his absence") to John Russell Pope, June 23, 1930; L/C Job File 537.

<sup>65</sup>(Office of) John Russell Pope to Olmsted Brothers, July 9, 1930; L/C Job File 537.

<sup>66</sup>L.H. Zach, Olmsted Bros., memo of visit to Pope's office, July 14, 1931; L/C Job File 537.

<sup>67</sup>F.L. Olmsted and John Russell Pope to Gen. William Barclay Parsons, Oct. 9, 1931; L/C Job File 537.

<sup>68</sup>A feature-by-feature comparison between Pope's plan and existing conditions has not been undertaken.

substantially executed. If it had not been for this plan, and its continued support by the GMA, changes in the landscape around the tomb, if they occurred at all, presumably might have taken a different form. The planting of large trees, which represents the most drastic alteration of the Duncan/Porter concept and which today is the most obvious of the 1930s changes, was deliberate. As noted, Pope's 1928 plan called for the planting of lindens flanking each side of the front approach to the monument and on both sides. Although the species is different than that present today, their size was clearly foreseen and considered desirable. Aware of Satterlee and Mather's desire for large trees, Parks Department Landscape Architect Francis Cormier was careful to note, in transmitting plans, that "the trees are shown at the size they will be when first planted."<sup>69</sup> If any doubt remained as the time for planting approached, Satterlee specifically requested "the variety that survives the fumes from motor cars and the largest size available."<sup>70</sup> These trees represent the sharpest departure from previous policy, the most obvious attempt to integrate the monument plot into the surrounding park, and the most visible result of the effort to redefine the monument's impression in order to carry out more effectively its original purpose.

### **Final Years of the Grant Monument Association**

The distractions of another world war, with the accompanying discontinuance of Depression-era agencies such as the WPA, brought an end to the period of renewed activity at the Grant monument. In many essential respects, the situation at the rededication in 1939 had returned to that which prevailed at the original dedication 42 years earlier. The renewed structure gleamed in 1939 as it had in 1897, creating a bright and inspiring appearance. Alterations which went beyond mere refurbishing were absorbed in the pervasive aura of brilliant satisfaction.

In 1939 as in 1897 the monument remained unfinished. Although Satterlee had begun with at least the tacit intention to complete the monument, the large and costly renovation program had left the items which Duncan had regularly listed as essential to complete the monument undone. A foundation had been installed for an equestrian statue, but efforts to obtain one by a variety of means had been fruitless. Neither Duncan's allegorical statues nor the pediment which Pope had substituted had been created. Pope's major structural alteration, the lowering of the apex, had not been attempted. There was no longer much discussion of that feature and even less of the grand approach from the Hudson that Duncan had originally conceived. The most visible achievement of Pope's design was the exterior terracing and planting, the latter, in Kahn's phrase, "totally at odds with the original plan for the site."<sup>71</sup>

GMA reports during the war years continued to acknowledge the desire to complete the monument, but there was no realistic possibility of moving in that direction. Satterlee died in 1947 and was replaced by Gen. Cornelius W. Wickersham, a man of similar background--a prominent Wall Street lawyer and the son of a former U.S. attorney general. Bates, Satterlee's valued associate, had died in 1944.

Wickersham began his tenure with the intention of conducting an activist presidency

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<sup>69</sup>Cormier to Mather, March 24, 1938; GMA Box 25, Folder 23.

<sup>70</sup>Satterlee to Col. Brehon Somervell, Oct. 19, 1938; GMA Box 25, Folder 23.

<sup>71</sup>Kahn, HRS, 158.

and revitalizing the association. In the GMA annual report of October 30, 1947 he reiterated the importance of completing the monument, even endorsing the proposal to decrease the height of the capstone. Subsequent lack of support and progress for this initiative may have been disillusioning. In his report for 1949 Wickersham conceded that "Our attempt to give greater publicity to the Grant monument was not particularly successful," and under these conditions the drive to complete the monument seemed to lose urgency. In the 1950s it became increasingly evident that the GMA was growing moribund, its membership aging and less representative of New York City, to the point where it was becoming difficult to recruit new trustees. Gradually efforts to transfer the monument to the federal government gained in strength, culminating in the designation of the site as the General Grant National Memorial. The National Park Service assumed responsibility for the site on May 1, 1959.

### **National Park Service Administration**

As was customary, the NPS evaluated the site prior to recommending its addition to the National Park System. This survey concluded that "The monument now gives the definite impression that it is only a tomb. There should be additional development to give the visitor a more pointed feeling that this structure is a memorial."<sup>72</sup> This created a dichotomy of function which, while possibly artificial, would prove troublesome. Satterlee had made a similar distinction in 1939, but he had been willing to accept the two definitions as compatible and did not feel it necessary to choose one over the other.

After the monument became part of the National Park System, Thomas Pitkin, a supervising historian who was responsible for research and planning at the site, followed the lead of the earlier NPS report to recommend a sweeping reevaluation and redirection in administering the monument. Pitkin conducted the first serious historical study of the monument and its administration by the GMA, but he went far beyond that to become a vigorous advocate of development actions. He also became actively involved with the fading GMA and seemed to emerge as something of a spokesman for it.

Pitkin expanded on the categorical distinction between the "mortuary" and the "interpretive" purposes of the monument. Without citing Satterlee, he seemed to be moving in the same direction; but he was prepared to go considerably further. Satterlee clearly had been formulating a revised conception of the monument's purpose, but it was in the nature of an adjustment or rebalancing. In essence, he was adding another function, rather than substituting one for another.

Pitkin was able to wield considerable influence on developments at the monument. Some of his proposals involved improvements for comfort or convenience or to facilitate operation of the building. In this category were items such as installation of a telephone, installation of a toilet, construction of new storm doors, providing a new heating plant, and creation of storage space in the basement, as well as various small repairs, maintenance and renovation.<sup>73</sup> Although the original plan called for extending a staircase to the basement storage space, this was later changed to provide access by cutting a doorway at crypt level. This entailed more damage to historic fabric than had been customary, but there were ample

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<sup>72</sup>Cited in Kahn, HRS, 177.

<sup>73</sup>National Park Service, Historic Structure Report, Administrative and Historical Data Section, 1965, p.2.

precedents for this sort of change, and Duncan himself had usually tried to be flexible in responding to expressed needs. These changes can be seen as part of a continuing process of making the structure more like a "habitable dwelling," departing from Duncan's pure but impractical approach.

Pitkin advocated and prepared rough estimates for the three main elements, including the reduction of the apex, that had been identified as necessary to complete the monument in 1939 and later. As Satterlee had taken advantage of the 1939-40 Worlds Fair, Pitkin sought to capitalize on the conjunction of the Civil War centennial and another Worlds Fair in New York City. Like his predecessors, he focused on the statue of Grant, but proved unable to generate mass support for the project. This left the realization of the other two features even less likely.

Other changes promoted by Pitkin were more problematic. Like Satterlee, but much more explicitly, he sought to introduce color. Without regard to the architectural design or the context from which it had emerged, he declared that the monument "needs to be offset by contrasting brightness, to moderate the prevailing atmosphere of a tomb."<sup>74</sup> One of the most important consequences of this line of reasoning was Pitkin's advocacy of installing mosaics in the lunettes of the rotunda. He cited what Kahn accurately terms "flimsy evidence" to make it appear that Duncan had favored this action. In fact, there seems to be no surviving evidence of Duncan's intentions, except insofar as the existence of the lunettes by implication calls for decorative treatment.

The GMA had maintained its existence for several years after the outset of NPS administration, not terminating its existence until 1965. Having ingratiated himself with the surviving members, Pitkin persuaded the Association to donate some of its residual funds to pay for murals in two lunettes. The NPS funded the third. These mosaics, designed by Allen Cox and executed by the Venetian Art Mosaics Studio in 1965-1966, depict scenes from Grant's military career. They were dedicated May 26, 1966.

Pitkin's strong advocacy of adding color extended to other actions. He argued for massed flags, expanding on the GMA's earlier acceptance of two state flags. "This helps, but is not enough," he opined. With regard to the reliquary rooms, he determined that "the mural map idea is an attractive one, but it could be carried out much more colorfully than is done at present."<sup>75</sup> This argument provided the intellectual basis for the painting over of the 1939 murals that was conducted in 1969-70. Other miscellaneous interpretive and display improvements suggested by Pitkin were carried out during the 1969-70 program. At that time the bronze flag cases, "in all probability designed by Duncan"<sup>76</sup> were destroyed. The exhibit panels containing historic testimonials, which Satterlee had been instrumental in creating in the late 1930s, were removed. Some were damaged in the process.

In Kahn's phrase, many of these alterations were "totally modern and out of keeping with the design of the building." As he postulates, they were considered permissible due to a

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<sup>74</sup>Thomas M. Pitkin, "General Grant National Memorial: Its History and Possible Development," NPS, Nov. 1959, 75.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid., 76.

<sup>76</sup>Kahn, HRS, 190.

pervasive disdain for the architectural style embodied in Grant's Tomb.<sup>77</sup> Pitkin's policies were formulated at a time when the canon of historical preservation had not been codified and adopted by the NPS. While he cannot be judged by present standards, his disregard for historic integrity and preservation still seems astonishing. To his way of thinking the drive to alter the function of the structure to make it a memorial overrode all other considerations. His stated intention was to hold the interest of visitors for at least 15 minutes (with the unspoken assumption that passive contemplation or enjoyment of the architecture would not be capable of detaining them for that length of time). Pitkin recognized that there were limits: "Beyond this point of development we would be operating a museum."<sup>78</sup> In sum, he was guided by a consistent and well developed policy, which was to alter the structure so that it became a memorial instead of a tomb, but did not go so far as to become a museum. His strong and persistent advocacy of a clearly defined course of action enabled him to accomplish much of what he sought.

To Pitkin's way of thinking, everything was in play. The NPS was free to make significant changes on grounds of esthetics or convenience without regard to historic integrity. He was willing to accept many other changes that were not ultimately carried out largely for accidental reasons. He had no fundamental objection to removing the WPA busts, which probably survived primarily through inattention. He advocated more cases, benches, and massed flags. On the other hand, he defended the amber windows despite the admitted objections of some visitors on the esthetic grounds that they "were put in to replace funereal purple glass, and mark an effort away from the atmosphere of a tomb, pure and simple."<sup>79</sup> He was even willing to countenance the opening of the crypt to the public, as that "would add another point of interest for the average visitor." In this instance, however, he conceded that "There should be compelling reasons for breaking a tradition of 60 years' standing."

The final major alteration to the monument, which in a sense perpetuated Pitkin's idea that the site was inherently flexible and could be altered to satisfy current needs, occurred in 1972-1974, when Pedro Silva and Cityarts Workshop created around the tomb an undulating mosaic bench with brightly colored tiles irregularly embedded in concrete. It would be difficult to conceive of a feature which clashed more completely with the architecture and purpose of the tomb. Ostensibly intended to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Grant's signing of the legislation that designated Yellowstone the first national park, the bench also was supposed to serve social and public relations purposes in the neighborhood, as part of larger NPS urban initiatives.<sup>80</sup>

## EVALUATION UNDER NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA

Although General Grant National Memorial is listed on the National Register as an

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<sup>77</sup>Ibid., 188, 194.

<sup>78</sup>Pitkin, "General Grant National Memorial," 1959, 80.

<sup>79</sup>Ibid., 75.

<sup>80</sup>John Bodnar, *Remaking America* (Princeton Univ. Press, 1992), 200.



historic area of the National Park Service, the existing documentation does not rigorously apply National Register criteria nor take into account the significance of the memorial as a resource of Riverside Park and Drive. The following analysis incorporates existing documentation in the discussion as appropriate.

The memorial is both a grave (tomb or mausoleum) and a "property primarily commemorative" in National Register terms. Both categories are generally ineligible for listing on the Register unless they qualify under one or more of the criteria considerations, which provide a mechanism for recognizing certain historic values in properties that would otherwise be excluded.

#### **CRITERIA CONSIDERATION C: BIRTHPLACES OR GRAVES**

"A birthplace or grave of a historical figure is eligible if the person is of outstanding importance and if there is no other appropriate site or building directly associated with his or her productive life."<sup>81</sup>

#### **DISCUSSION**

Although General Grant is clearly a "historical figure...of outstanding importance" by any reasonable definition, the monument does not literally satisfy the demands of this Criteria Consideration because it is not the only appropriate site or building associated with his productive life. In addition to the White House and numerous Civil War battlefields, Grant's home is preserved at Galena, IL. In New York City, the residence of Grant's final years was demolished in 1926. It was in this house (3 E. 66th St.) that he did most of the work on his memoirs. However this phase of his life is recognized and preserved at the cottage in the Adirondacks where Grant completed the memoirs and died. In addition, although the memoirs is an influential work, it is in a fundamental sense derivative, drawing its importance from Grant's earlier military and political achievements.

#### **CRITERIA CONSIDERATION F: COMMEMORATIVE PROPERTIES**

"A property primarily commemorative in intent can be eligible if design, age, tradition, or symbolic value has invested it with its own exceptional importance."<sup>82</sup>

#### **DISCUSSION**

As a monument Grant's Tomb is "a property primarily commemorative" and falls within the definition of a property that *must* satisfy the requirements of this consideration in order to be eligible. The elaboration of this consideration in Bulletin 15 applies directly to the monument and provides a basis for eligibility. Although the monument is not "directly associated...with the person's productive life," it can qualify as "evidence of a later generation's assessment of the past." It is within the category of commemorative properties whose "significance comes from their value as cultural expressions at the date of their

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<sup>81</sup>National Register Bulletin 15, p.32.

<sup>82</sup>Ibid., p.39.

creation." It is important to note that Consideration F is carefully defined: a building is not eligible if its only value "lay in its association with the individual, and has not come to symbolize values, ideas, or contributions valued by the generation that erected the monument." Thus, the emphasis must not be on Grant's life or later reassessments of that life, but on the monument and its purposes. In accord with this line of reasoning, this consideration also allows for eligibility on the basis of architectural, artistic, or design qualities of its period--values that undeniably apply to the Grant monument.

#### **EVALUATION UNDER SPECIFIC NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA**

Determining the monument eligible under Criteria Consideration F allows the analysis to proceed to the next step: evaluation under three of the four National Register criteria (Criterion D: Information Potential, is not applicable).

##### **CRITERION A**

The Grant monument is significant under this criterion as representing a sustained effort by the Civil War generation to perpetuate its memory, attitudes, ideals and values. It expresses the veneration of its builders and their immediate successors for General Grant and his accomplishments. The monument is one of the most conspicuous manifestations of a national compulsion to commemorate a pivotal event in American history and define a legacy to be transmitted to the future. Virtually every town in the states existing in 1865, both North and South, displays some example of this impulse toward memorialization. The most prominent veterans' organizations in both sections made a deliberate decision not to enlarge their membership beyond the Civil War generation. They chose instead to perpetuate their memory through monumentation.

Bulletin 41 ("Guidelines for Evaluating and Registering Cemeteries and Burial Places") provides an example that seems directly applicable to the Grant monument. Referring to the Lincoln Tomb in Springfield, Illinois, it notes that "While not all other properties associated with President Lincoln's productive life are lost, the tomb also is important, in part, under Criterion A as the focal point of a broadly based commemorative effort begun shortly after he was slain in 1865". (Note: While this discussion is presented under Criterion B relating to the significance of the person buried, the particular case for importance is formulated in terms of Criterion A.)

##### **CRITERION B**

Language in the Statement of Significance of the existing documentation form suggests an intent to consider the Grant monument significant under Criterion B: "it is only in the Memorial of[sic] Riverside Drive that one may review his career as a whole." The subsequent discussion forms a substantial part of the three-paragraph narrative. The wording resembles that of Criteria Consideration C: "There is no other appropriate site or building directly associated with his or her productive life." As noted previously, this Consideration is not directly applicable in the case of the Grant monument.

It is probably true that there is no single location at which one can review the career of General Grant as a whole. Grant, in short, has no Monticello, Mount Vernon, Home of Franklin Delano Roosevelt at Hyde Park, or Edison's Glenmont. However, it is a dubious proposition to state that one can acquire an overview of the General's life at his tomb. As a monument it is, by definition, not associated with his productive life. It is possible at the

monument to contemplate Grant's life, but one can learn detailed information about it only insofar as materials pertaining to his life are displayed--in other words, as the building departs from its intended purpose as a mausoleum or monument and becomes a museum or visitor center.

#### CRITERION C

As the monument expresses the attitudes of the Civil War generation in its veneration of General Grant and the cause he served, its physical form conveys their sense of the architecture that was appropriate for this lofty purpose. The adoption of classical forms makes an explicit connection with the traditions of western civilization and expresses the belief that the American conflict was comparable to the grandest episodes of history and deserved a similarly impressive memorial. In the phraseology of Criteria Consideration F, it is "significant for the architectural, artistic, or other design qualities of its own period..."

One phrase in the existing nomination relates to this criterion: "Several styles and motifs of classical architecture are combined in the monument...." Although this wording stops short of stating that the building is architecturally significant, architecture is listed as an "Area of Significance."

#### CONCLUSION

General Grant National Memorial is significant under Criteria A and C. An argument for Criterion B seems forced, and is unnecessary in the presence of stronger arguments. The existing documentation does not explicitly discuss significance in terms of National Register criteria.

#### POST-1897 SIGNIFICANCE

The existing documentation gives 1800-1899 as the period of significance. The following discussion explores whether period of significance should be extended beyond the 19th Century.

#### CRITERION A

In the terminology of Criteria Consideration F, the monument is within the category of commemorative properties whose "significance comes from their value as cultural expressions at the date of their creation." Consideration F also refers to a monument's serving as "evidence of a later generation's assessment of the past." In the case of the Grant monument the issue is blurred because the building was erected by the generation of Grant's contemporaries. However, the values that were expressed in the creation of the monument persisted for a considerable time afterward because of the characteristics of the GMA, as well as of the monument itself. Again, Criteria Consideration F allows for this phenomenon under the provision stating that "A building erected as a monument...will qualify if through the passage of time the property itself has come to symbolize the value placed upon the individual and is widely recognized as a reminder of enduring principles or contributions valued by the generation that erected the monument." This provision clearly allows for an extension of the period of significance beyond the initial date of construction and the particular development history of the Grant monument supports such an extension in this case.

One of the criteria in the original design competition was that the plan should be

capable of being carried out in stages. Duncan's winning design lent itself to this kind of sequencing. It was acknowledged from the outset that the monument, as dedicated in 1897, was incomplete; and steps to finish it can be traced to at least 1903, if not earlier. Essentially the same elements were regularly identified as being necessary to achieve completion.

Although the admittedly unfinished state of the monument gave the GMA considerable license for change, the values of the generation that erected the Grant monument were honored by their descendants. Under its agreements with the Parks Commissioners, the GMA was authorized to "furnish the reliquaries and provide additional sculpture and statuary" in order to remove the perceived deficiency. The persistent efforts by the later administrators of the site to carry out portions of the plan that had been left unfinished in 1897 and to take other measures to deepen and perpetuate the veneration of Grant provide unmistakable testimony that they shared the spiritual and esthetic values that the original builders of the monument were seeking to express. Satterlee voiced powerful evidence of the persistence of this attitude in 1938 when advocating the occasional use of floodlights on the monument. "So many destructive forces are engaged at present in trying to pull down our national heroes," he wrote, that "anything we can do to preserve them is worth doing." In a ringing conclusion he declared "A nation without heroes cannot long survive."<sup>83</sup> Whatever their differences in taste, Horace Porter would have agreed completely.

There is abundant evidence of continuity of purpose and perception within the administering entity, the GMA. Given its large membership and indefinite terms, turnover of membership in the association was slow. Officers and committee heads were invariably drawn from the membership, rather than being brought in from outside. Furthermore, because membership was by nomination, in practice nomination by the president and/or secretary, trustees were drawn from a very narrow stratum of society. As far as can be determined, the trustees were white males, most commonly from old established families.<sup>84</sup> Almost all were residents of New York City--even when another address appeared, the individual's origins and associations generally traced to New York. Most of these men were prominent in law or business, again generally "old line" firms. Military titles were favored, although, except for several honorific memberships, the holders were not usually professional military men. In short, the membership resembled the type of exclusive male social club to which many trustees actually belonged. One reason Herbert Satterlee performed so effectively (in addition to a willingness to devote considerable energy to the subject) was the fact that he was a prototypical trustee.

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<sup>83</sup>Satterlee to Col. Somervell, Oct. 19, 1938; GMA Box 25, Folder 23.

<sup>84</sup>A prominent African-American, Richard T. Greener, was the first secretary of the GMA. As a paid employee of the Association he was probably its most visible representative in its early years. However he declined re-election after the upheaval that brought Horace Porter to the presidency in 1892 and was thus not active during the period of vigorous fund-raising, construction and administration of the monument. GMA President Henry Hayden wrote in 1922 that Greener, who was the sole surviving incorporator of the GMA, "is a negro, and was made an incorporator as a representative of the Negro race." (Hayden to Duncan, Mar. 22, 1922; Avery Library, Grant's Tomb Folder A-F). This was Hayden's view in the 1920s, when Duncan was compiling a chronology of the monument, and may reflect his or Porter's retroactive opinion rather than the realities of the 1880s.

This membership structure fostered a policy of gradualism. A membership drawn overwhelmingly from the traditionally conservative elements of society was unlikely to make radical departures from precedent. While the operation of the Association, with its infrequent, poorly-attended meetings, allowed considerable latitude for an activist president or secretary, it discouraged bold new initiatives. There is nothing in the history of the GMA that can be considered a marked break in continuity, much less a revolutionary shift. Pope's revisions and Satterlee's subtle redirection represent carefully limited measures to adapt to changing conditions in order to carry out the intentions of the monument's builders.

Finally, the involvement of descendants of General Grant provided another conservative factor. Participation by descendants was important to the Association, and in 1932 Secretary Bates pleaded with the General's grandson, Lt. Col. U.S. Grant, 3d, to become a trustee.<sup>85</sup> Once on the board, although there was no legal basis in the GMA by-laws or elsewhere, Grant's descendants exercised a disproportionate influence when they chose to do so. By custom they were given veto power over changes in the monument. This was especially true of U.S. Grant, 3d. He specifically approved many of the changes made in the late 1930s. The power of his opinion is revealed most strikingly in his rejection of a model for an equestrian statue of his distinguished ancestor. Again in 1966 he placed his stamp of approval on the touches of color provided by the mosaic murals in the lunettes.<sup>86</sup>

New phases of development emerged from previous ones. The Pope plan of 1928 was carefully presented as an enhancement of Duncan's work, and considerable effort was made to secure Duncan's endorsement. The revised plan can thus be embraced within the larger context of GMA administration and within the objective of completing the monument although it entailed subtle changes in the artistic and social perception of the monument's appearance and purpose.

As has been described in considerable detail, Satterlee's tenure marks a noticeable departure from earlier concepts. One of the factors contributing to evolutionary change was the influence of changing tastes as expressed in the public media. As members of the mainstream, the GMA trustees were subject to prevailing attitudes. As Bogart describes, there was a breakdown after 1920 in the consensus about the significance and value of public sculpture. Although referring specifically to sculpture, Bogart's statement that "The production of these large civic projects was the outcome of a particular set of social, economic, political, and aesthetic forces that converged around 1900" is applicable to the Grant monument.<sup>87</sup> The founders of the GMA and successors such as Satterlee seem to have been imbued with the ideals of the Beaux Arts and City Beautiful movements. Although these phenomena enjoyed a relatively brief period of dominance, the breakdown of the consensus they represented brought confusion. In addition, the depression of the 1930s shook the confidence of the upper class. In retrospect, it is not surprising that a man like Satterlee was

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<sup>85</sup>Bates to Grant, Feb. 18, 1932; GMA Box 23, Folder 1. In his effort to persuade Grant, Bates acknowledged that "the necessity of your attending a meeting is not very urgent."

<sup>86</sup>*New York Times*, May 27, 1966.

<sup>87</sup>Michele H. Bogart, *Public Sculpture and the Civic Ideal in New York City, 1890-1930* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1989), 293.

motivated to revise his thinking about certain aspects of the monument; what may be more noteworthy is the carefully limited scope of these revisions.

While Satterlee's tenure has characteristics of a distinct period, however, any differences seem to be outweighed by the enormous forces of continuity in the organization. It would be difficult to argue that his accession marks a clear point of demarcation. Any attempt to impose this sort of division is intellectually questionable and creates an awkward or inconsistent situation with respect to physical integrity.

Given the broad latitude under which the GMA operated, it is difficult to separate the work specifically described as completion from improvements or embellishments. The term completion is often taken to refer to the specific elements Duncan (and later Pope) had depicted but had been unable to provide; but this definition may be unnecessarily narrow, and the GMA contract with the city did not attempt to make this distinction. Compounding the difficulty is the tendency for officers such as Satterlee to categorize changes under the heading of completion because this probably seemed more expedient. Even Pitkin selectively cited precedent to justify his proposed actions. In terms of National Register evaluation, debates over whether any particular action constituted an effort to "complete" the monument are less important than the continuity of thinking and policy of the GMA, as it sought to express the "enduring principles or contributions valued by the generation that erected the monument" (Criteria Consideration F).

#### *End Date of the Period of Significance*

A remarkable conjunction of events mark 1929 as the close of an era. In that year Duncan died, as did Rhinelander Stewart. Also, the GAR held its last service at the monument, and after forty-five years gave way to the Sons of Veterans.<sup>88</sup> Collectively these events can be seen as the passing of the founding generation. In the early 1930s, as the effects of the Depression were felt, visitation fell precipitously, in one year dropping below 100,000.

However, considering the narrower thesis of the GMA's efforts to carry on the ideals of the founding generation, 1939 is a more appropriate end date for the period of significance. That year brought a close to a period of renewed activity, followed by a lull which lasted through the remainder of GMA management. Although Satterlee remained in office several more years and the GMA did not change fundamentally in its goals and operations in subsequent years, the perception of closure was recognized by the staging of a formal rededication ceremony. Developments during this period are associated with Satterlee and Bates, who had passed from the scene by the time the next stirring of activity began. Furthermore, it coincides with the final appearance of Civil War veterans on the national scene. Although a handful of veterans lived into the 1950s, their organized presence concluded around this time, most notably at the 75th anniversary of the battle of Gettysburg (1938). Similarly, a few veterans were in attendance at the rededication of the Grant monument.

Although 1959 and 1966 are also important dividing lines because they mark the transfer of the site to the NPS (1959) and the end of the GMA's existence (1965)--the last works accomplished with its funds and with its approval were completed in 1966--these dates

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<sup>88</sup>*New York Times*, May 31, 1929.



fall within the fifty year categorical exclusion (at this time beginning with 1946), and there is no evidence that any activities of the GMA between 1946 and 1959 or later merit application of Criteria Consideration (G).

### *Grant Monument as a Cultural Icon*

The significance of GMA activities under Criterion A as described above is limited to its work in perpetuating the values of the monument's builders. This report also considered the proposition that the commemorative effort could be broadened beyond the GMA, possibly that the monument became a broadly-based cultural icon with symbolic importance transcending its original purpose.

Given the high regard in which Grant was held during his lifetime and the prominence of the monument, did his memorial take on, and retain, at least for a time, such profound symbolic importance that it became not only a structure but an object of pilgrimage, a popular icon with instantly recognizable associations and widely accepted meaning? Probably the Statue of Liberty is the most familiar example of the type, but other monuments such as the Washington Monument and Lincoln Memorial also qualify. Examples of places that have become shrines or pilgrim destinations include Gettysburg Battlefield, Plymouth Rock, and, at least for a time, the Franklin D. Roosevelt home.

The question of whether the monument has been able to acquire a symbolic importance beyond its physical dimensions is related to the question of whether General Grant himself has been able to transcend his position as a historical figure to enter into the realm of myth--in other words, whether he has been apotheosized.

There is little doubt Grant was a popular and revered figure at his death and for some time afterwards. This is demonstrated by the outpouring of expressions of sympathy during his final illness and by the massive attendance at his funeral and at memorial services throughout the country. Most of this appears to have been spontaneous, although a certain amount of partisan drumbeating has to be factored in. Grant was intimately associated with the GAR, which furnished the bedrock of Republican strength, and Grant's reputation had extended the party's hold on power for one or two terms.

The continued high regard in which Grant was held was demonstrated by the large amount of money raised for his monument in New York City, as well as for those in other cities. At Grant's Tomb his popularity and importance was shown by the high visitation it received. In the first years of its existence more than half a million people visited the monument annually, peaking at nearly 600,000 in 1906.<sup>89</sup> Given the smaller population of the country and the fact that mass tourism was still in a relatively early stage of development, these numbers are impressive. Comparable figures for other attractions are not readily available, but it has been widely observed that these numbers far exceeded visitation at the Statue of Liberty. Thus, there is little doubt that the commemorative movement focused on the Grant monument was "broadly-based" at the outset and for several years afterward.

There is equally little doubt that veneration of Grant did not transfer beyond the generation that was acquainted with him personally. Bodnar summarizes the matter succinctly, stating that "New generations of Americans did not share the deep attachments to

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<sup>89</sup>GMA visitation records.

Grant that many of his contemporaries did."<sup>90</sup> By the 1960s the public attitude toward the monument "had degenerated to apathy and indifference."<sup>91</sup> This corresponds to the period in which the GMA dissolved. Its failure to maintain its existence represented the final passing of the generations that knew Grant, erected his monument, sought to perpetuate the plans and ideas of the GMA founders, or, finally, felt some personal obligation to their predecessors.

There is some evidence that the Grant monument was an object of pilgrimage at least for Civil War veterans. This is suggested by the substantial quantity of visitation and the fact that Sunday was normally the day of heaviest visitation, indicating that people were traveling to the monument on their own time and of their own volition, rather than as part of an organized function. The long-standing practice of veterans' groups holding commemorative ceremonies at the site provides further testimony to the importance they attached to it.

However great his reputation in his own time, Grant did not make the leap into apotheosis to become an eternally towering and inspirational figure in American history. This is not altogether surprising; very few individuals--perhaps only Washington and Lincoln, but ironically also Robert E. Lee--have attained such deification.<sup>92</sup> As Piehler concludes "Grant remained in the popular imagination, both in life and after death, not a demigod, but a too-human hero who triumphed in war but in little else."<sup>93</sup>

Military heroes such as Gen. Winfield Scott, Admiral George Dewey, Gen. John J. Pershing and a galaxy of Civil War leaders received great adulation in their time but have retreated to become merely historical personages, not objects of veneration. The same is true of those such as Andrew Jackson and Zachary Taylor who also became presidents. In more recent times the death of John F. Kennedy elicited an enormous emotional outpouring, but these feelings seem to have lost their intensity, and his place in history is being assessed more dispassionately. As with Grant, and with President Garfield on a somewhat smaller scale, expressions of grief and homage, however sincere, seem to lose their immediacy for succeeding generations. There was no great tendency to name towns, roads and public buildings for Grant, unlike Washington, Lincoln and even Kennedy in the period immediately after his assassination. Historical passions are difficult to transmit unless the issues themselves remain unresolved. Piehler cites an appropriate illustration, noting that the Spanish-American War, including the tragic loss of the *Maine*, "no longer arouses intense emotion."<sup>94</sup>

As Grant was not able to make the leap into the pantheon of American immortals, his monument failed to take on the symbolic associations that would allow it to become an historically important symbol independent of Grant. The strongest--perhaps the only--argument for its importance as a memorial is the high visitation it received in its early years.

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<sup>90</sup>Bodnar, *Remaking America*, 193.

<sup>91</sup>*Ibid.*, 247.

<sup>92</sup>*Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>93</sup>G. Kurt Piehler, *Remembering War the American Way* (Washington: Smithsonian, 1995), 55. Piehler adds that Lincoln, rather than Grant, came to personify the Civil War.

<sup>94</sup>*Ibid.*, 153.

Although relying on negative inference, which is never entirely satisfactory, there is a notable lack of evidence that the monument ever assumed iconic proportions. A search of periodical literature and the *New York Times* index showed virtually no references other than routine news stories. The monument is listed in the numerous travel guides to New York City, but there is no evidence that it was given special prominence. Similarly, no evidence was found that it was used as a symbol in advertising, promotional or political ephemera. One of the strongest evidences of its failure to seize the popular imagination is that, even to this day and despite having a distinctive form, it has not been featured to a noticeable extent in the souvenir market.

A minor but interesting illustration of the monument's status came in 1929, when a Merchant's Association sponsored a survey to identify New York City's "Seven Wonders." A panel of architects, engineers, college professors, city officials and others gave five or more votes to the Catskill water supply, the Woolworth Tower, the subways, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Grand Central Terminal, the view of Lower Manhattan from the Harbor, Holland Tunnel, and Riverside Drive; the Statue of Liberty received four votes and Grant's Tomb one.<sup>95</sup>

To some degree the monument's failure to assume iconic proportions was the result of a deliberate policy of the GMA under Gen. Porter. Assigning paramount emphasis to the building's mortuary function, Porter demanded restraint and dignity in its use. GMA records during his tenure show a sustained policy of limiting public events to ceremonies on Memorial Day and Grant's birthday. On some occasions events were permitted on July 4, as in 1914, when a patriotic song rally was held at the tomb. But in other years even this was not permitted; in 1916 Secretary Hayden declined a request to hold a July 4 celebration at the tomb. In the previous year Porter had explicitly stated that GMA policy "prohibits any public meeting or demonstration of any kind in and around the national mausoleum," with the exception of the annual GAR ceremony.<sup>96</sup>

In this instance Porter was expressing opposition to a proposed woman's suffrage rally, but his policy was not guided by the nature of the activity, as he also refused permission for patriotic events with which he would have been expected to be sympathetic. In 1918 Hayden complained vigorously about the placement of patriotic posters on the tomb.<sup>97</sup> Duncan supported the restrictive policy of Porter and Hayden. In 1914 he opposed a request by William R. Hearst to place an illuminated scroll at the tomb as part of the peace movement. On that occasion Duncan wrote that he was against "using the Tomb for any other purpose than what it was intended."<sup>98</sup> Some of the concern was attributed to the fear of damage to the building and grounds, but the dominant factor was the need to preserve the decorum appropriate to a mausoleum.

There are hints that under a less restrictive policy the monument could have

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<sup>95</sup>*New York World*, July 8, 1929.

<sup>96</sup>Porter to Cabot Ward, Commissioner of Parks, May 28, 1915; GMA Box 22, Folder 3.

<sup>97</sup>Hayden to YMCA, July 11, 1918; GMA Box 22, Folder 5.

<sup>98</sup>Duncan to Porter, Sep. 25, 1914; GMA Box 25, Folder 5.

developed a different and more appealing image. Early photographs show crowds of bicyclists on Riverside Drive in the vicinity of the Tomb, and some bicycle races seem to have terminated there. As late as 1922 Memorial Day observances were accompanied by a salute fired from a US Navy vessel. This could have developed into a popular spectacle under different circumstances, but the prevailing emphasis on preserving the atmosphere of a tomb discouraged any thoughts of making the site accommodating or inviting as a tourist attraction. In one minor but revealing example, it was not until 1919 that a visitor's register was placed in the monument, and at that time it was regarded as a notable innovation.<sup>99</sup> In the 1920s, after the departure of Porter and Hayden, some loosening took place. A slight but still severely limited expansion of public activities was permitted, for example "Americanization" exercises sponsored by the VFW. By then, however, the close personal attachment to Grant was already fading, and the time when the monument might have developed a more compelling popular image seemed to have passed.

The early administrators of the GMA considered that taking measures to popularize the monument would have been altogether inappropriate. They went beyond that and actively discouraged private efforts to exploit or popularize it. In an obscure but revealing incident, Hayden wrote a letter objecting to a businessman's use of a picture of the tomb as a logo on his envelopes. Hayden considered this practice "hardly proper."<sup>100</sup> The businessman, Frank E. Campbell, replied sarcastically that "if it will relieve your distress of mind, we are very glad to state to you, that we consider our stationery very much out-of-date and that the new stationery that we have contracted for does not bear the picture of General Grant's Tomb...."

Other factors prevented the monument from attaining greater symbolic status. Kahn's summation (HRS, p.3) that "The mammoth and costly building in a very real sense symbolizes an entire generation's feelings not just about Grant, but about the Civil War and the role every foot soldier played in it" is exaggerated. One reason this claim is excessive was the construction, almost immediately after the opening of Grant's Tomb, of the Soldiers and Sailors Monument. There is evidence that a site close to Grant's Tomb was at first considered for the subsequent monument, but ultimately it was located elsewhere in Riverside Park.<sup>101</sup> At 89th Street it was far enough away to prevent a coherent grouping of Civil War shrines but close enough to be competitive. This structure, as intended, became the focus of activities commemorating New York's servicemen of the Civil War. While Grant was still recognized and revered by veterans, the nearby presence of the Soldiers & Sailors Monument, by creating a separate focus for memorial activities, engendered divided loyalties.

Due to the absence of GMA records for the period, there is no evidence of any efforts the GMA may have made to influence the location of the Soldiers and Sailors Monument. Given some of its later policies, it is conceivable that the association intervened to oppose

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<sup>99</sup>Hayden to Duncan, Nov. 26, 1919; Avery Library, Grant's Tomb Folder G.

<sup>100</sup>Hayden to Frank E. Campbell, Oct. 1, 1917; GMA Box 25, Folder 13.

<sup>101</sup>A committee representing the GAR and the Soldiers and Sailors Monument Commission presented a plan of a proposed site 1000 feet north of Grant's Tomb at a meeting in the mayor's office, Jan. 11, 1898 (NY *Tribune*, Jan. 12). This "Claremont site" was favored in a resolution by the GAR.

placing another monument nearby. Under its limited conception of its responsibility, the GMA concentrated on recognizing one man and did not encourage the monument to take on any wider symbolism as embodying feelings about the Civil War in general or its sacrifices. In this they were fully supported by members of the Grant family. The family did not allow their ancestor's monument to be "upstaged" by a statue of General Sherman, which was ultimately located in Central Park.<sup>102</sup> Later, U.S. Grant, 3d, insisted that "the site remain a 'memorialization to General and Mrs. Grant' rather than become a memorial to the Civil War."<sup>103</sup> These interventions, although as Bodnar points out not fully obeyed in the 1969-70 interpretive development, helped assure that the monument would remain narrowly focused and not evolve into a site with deeper spiritual significance.

Today that (substantial) part of the population who wish to encounter the Civil War or commune with its spirit seems to do so primarily at battlefields, notably Gettysburg. In making this choice they are expressing a preference to experience the conflict fairly directly, rather than having their impressions mediated through the architectural and artistic sensibilities of a bygone generation. In itself this development is not surprising. Piehler observes that "although monuments are built and dedicated with great enthusiasm, interest in them frequently diminishes rapidly."<sup>104</sup> Even in their own time raising funds for monuments was difficult and prolonged--often more so than in the case of the Grant monument.<sup>105</sup> That battlefields should become the repository of a nation's deepest feelings about war is also not surprising. Linenthal calls them the "holy places" of a nation, "centers of purity" set apart from everyday concerns.<sup>106</sup>

While sheer numbers of visitors in the early years are the monument's strongest argument for memorial significance, even this claim may be suspect. It is uncertain how the counting was done, especially at formal events. No statistical sampling was conducted and no one examined the motivations of visitors. Some of these problems have continued into modern times. After reaching a nadir in the early 1930s, attendance at the monument slowly recovered. However a large but uncertain portion of it seems to have been composed of school children whose participation is not entirely voluntary (although it could be argued that the choice of the monument as a destination gives it some continuing relevance in the education or acculturation process). A significant proportion of recent visitors come as part of organized bus tours in which the stop at Grant's Tomb seems not to be the primary objective.

During most of its history the GMA kept records of distinguished visitors. While some famous names are encountered, it is noteworthy how few they are over a long period of time. Low-level foreign officials and military men are frequently listed. By the 1920s

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<sup>102</sup>Bogart, *Public Sculpture*, 85.

<sup>103</sup>Bodnar, *Remaking America*, 193.

<sup>104</sup>Piehler, *Remembering War*, 5.

<sup>105</sup>Bodnar, *Remaking America*, 81.

<sup>106</sup>Edward Linenthal, *Sacred Ground: Americans and Their Battlefields* (Urbana, IL: Univ. of Illinois, 1991), conclusion.

custodians were resorting to listing visits by GMA trustees. Frequent and seemingly impressive appearances by a Russian princess were actually Gen. Grant's daughter, who had married a supposed Russian nobleman.

In sum, although the movement to perpetuate Grant's memory was originally broadly-based, it gradually became the province of a dwindling select group of "keepers of the flame." Unlike the GAR, they did not deliberately intend to become extinct, but they proved unable to transmit their values to subsequent generations sufficiently to maintain their viability.

#### CRITERION C

There is little doubt that, as dedicated in 1897, the Grant monument fulfills the eligibility requirement of Criterion C ("distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction" and possesses "high artistic values"). After 1897 a period of about forty years elapsed during which, with the minor exception of changing the color of some window glass, nothing beyond maintenance and repair was done to the building. Even though the GMA never lost sight during this period of the need to complete or enhance the monument, the absence of tangible progress argues against the proposition of a continuous period of construction.

The changes made in the late 1930s to structure itself do not justify a second period of significance. Viewed individually and in terms of the size of the monument, the changes were of little consequence. Although the work of outstanding individuals ("masters"), the work itself is not significant in the body of their work for the period after 1897:

- *John H. Duncan*, whose contributions are already recognized in the existing nomination, continued to participate actively in the management of the monument until his death, but this involvement after 1897 was essentially that of a caretaker. Although aspects of the 1930s work can be interpreted as completing Duncan's design, this does not represent any new creative effort.

- *John R. Pope* was one of the noted architects of his time, with a number of conspicuous works to his credit; but his work on the Grant monument was severely limited in scope and can hardly be considered distinguished. Of the four major alterations he advocated one (the equestrian statue) was part of the original plan and two (lowering the apex and substituting a pediment for individual statues) were not accomplished.

- *Dean Fausett* went on to become a well-known artist, recognized especially for his murals. His murals in the reliquary rooms represent his first important commission in that genre. However, while proficient, these didactic murals are not considered distinguished even within Fausett's output. Furthermore, even if some individual element of the 1930s could be considered significant, it might not extend to the monument as a whole--nor would it be advisable to consider any single feature of such a massive and coherent entity in isolation.

However, while the structural changes introduced in the late 1930s were individually small and, paradoxically, did not accomplish the work specifically identified as most critical for completing the monument, collectively they altered its appearance and the impression it creates. They reflect a noticeable shift of perception in the purpose of the monument, affected the treatment of the landscape, and need to be considered in the context of modifications to Riverside Park and Drive, a site listed on the National Register. The Riverside Park and Drive nomination recognizes 1934-37 as specific significant dates for the

alterations which Robert Moses planned and implemented. While the work at the memorial was not part of the Moses new plan to expand the park, accommodate automobile traffic, and add recreational facilities, he supported it soon after work on his overall park redesign was completed. (Riverside Park and Drive is significant in the area of landscape architecture and thus presumably meets Criterion C, although the nomination does not specifically state this.)

As with Criteria A, if the work of the 1930s comprises a second or continued period of significance, 1939 marks a distinct cutoff. The WPA, which was involved in much of the work, was nearing the end of its existence. This date also marks the conclusion of the remodeling of Riverside Park, which had been closely related to work at the Grant monument.

#### SUMMARY OF POST-1897 MODIFICATIONS

Despite continuing efforts to complete the monument, the fact remains that in 1929 it had changed scarcely at all from its condition in 1897, except for routine aging. The only noticeable change was the installation of purple window lights. Features dating to 1939 include amber window glass (which had replaced the earlier purple), the murals in the reliquary rooms, busts of the five Civil War generals, and most landscaping and exterior features including the decorative eagles and the flagpoles. Post-dating 1939 and not historic are the mosaics in the lunettes and the mosaic benches.

#### CONCLUSIONS

- The Monument is significant under Criterion A through 1929, and, as it has been argued here, through 1939.
- The monument is significant under Criterion C for the period 1938-1939 as part of the redesign of Riverside Park and Drive. These dates extend the currently recognized 1934-37 period for the latter historic site.
- A phase of renovation and improvement came to a distinct end in 1939 and was followed by a long period of relative inactivity. Thus there is no compelling reason to extend the period of significance beyond 1939. Evaluation of changes made after that date should be deferred until the appropriate time.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. With this report and Kahn's earlier HRS, the great bulk of the Historical Data section of an Historic Structures Report (HSR) has been effectively completed. It would be desirable to undertake the remaining work necessary to prepare a full HSR on the Grant Memorial. This would include architectural description, drawings and photographs to meet HSR standards. Such a report is long overdue and would serve as a benchmark for future work on the structure. In terms of the historical section, the only area which seems to need significant elaboration is to place the monument more fully within its architectural and cultural context. Kahn discusses specific buildings which might have served as models for the architect, but

this examination should be broadened in the light of subsequent scholarship (e.g., Peggy McDowell & Richard E. Meyer, *The Revival Styles in American Memorial Art*; Richard A. Etlin, *Symbolic Space: French Enlightenment Architecture and Its Legacy*, etc.), as well as recent works on commemorative aspects of history and historic remembrance (e.g., Kurt Piehler, *Remembering War the American Way*; John Bodnar, *Remaking America*, etc.).

2. Despite the small area encompassed by the Grant Memorial, the complexity of its landscape history merits a full Cultural Landscape Report. This should entail detailed measurements to determine the extent to which existing conditions carry out the Pope plan as modified by Olmsted Bros. A secondary emphasis would be to determine how closely the pre-1938 conditions conformed to the plan provided by M.A. Kellogg, and in turn how closely his plan corresponded to that of Vaux. It would be desirable to examine materials in the New York City archives that may relate to these questions, which it has not been feasible to do in previous studies.

3. While the NPS should not take the lead in this endeavor, it should encourage the preparation of a historical study of Riverside Park, leading to an amended National Register nomination. The landscape architecture aspect should be addressed more directly than has been done previously. In addition, such a study should devote more attention to the period between the two currently identified important periods to reassess the extent of continuity between these periods. This might lead to a fuller understanding of the historical development of the park. It would be desirable to address the historical relationship of the park to the major monuments it contains, notably the Grant Monument and the Soldiers & Sailors Monument.



## CHRONOLOGY

### 1885

- Jul 23 Gen. Grant dies at Mt. McGregor.  
Jul 28 New York City (NYC) Mayor William R. Grace calls meeting of leading citizens; committee appointed to initiate movement for erection of permanent monument.  
Jul 29 Grant Monument Committee (GMA) formed; ex-President Chester A. Arthur named chairman.  
Aug 8 Funeral procession brings remains to temporary vault, Riverside Park.

### 1886

- Feb 3 GMA formally incorporated under special New York State act.

### 1887

- Jun 9 GMA invites sketches or designs for monument or memorial building (October 31 deadline for submissions is later extended).

### 1888

- Jan GMA issues circular announcing competition for design (closing date extended to January 2, 1889).

### 1890

- Feb Winners of competition announced, but none deemed worthy (65 designs submitted).  
Apr 7 GMA solicits plans from recognized architects (September 1 deadline).  
Sep 9 GMA executive committee announces choice of design by John H. Duncan.

### 1891

- Apr 27 Ground broken for monument.  
Jun 29 Contract awarded for excavation and concrete foundation.

### 1892

- Feb 18 Gen. Horace Porter chosen new GMA president.  
Apr 27 President Harrison lays cornerstone (Grant's 70th birthday).  
May 30 Sum of \$350,000 secured for construction.

### 1897

- Apr 27 Monument dedicated; Gen. Porter turns over custody to NYC.  
Nov 5 GMA, under contract, begins administration of tomb, with NYC funding.

### 1898

- Jan 1 GMA appoints custodian.

**1902**  
Dec 14 Mrs Grant dies, is interred.

**1903**  
Dec 20 Question of providing statuary raised at GMA annual meeting.

**1909** Stained glass windows installed.

**1909 - 1910** Permanent outdoor restroom facility erected.

**1912**  
Feb 28 GMA sets aside \$2000 of its appropriation to purchase sculpture for the monument.  
May New York City Parks Commissioner seeks \$25,000 appropriation to repave plaza around tomb.

**1913**  
Jan 30 Tiffany installs 12 windows of yellow glass and 6 purple lights in doors (total cost \$550). Payment acknowledged March 25, 1914.  
Nine windows of purple glass ordered from Tiffany (cost \$975). Payment acknowledged February 14.

**1914**  
Apr 2 GMA seeks additional \$2000 annual appropriation for sculpture and statuary funds.  
May Engineer James P. Whiskeman presents report on condition of plaza around tomb (drainage problem).

**1915**  
Sep 28 Duncan draws plans for custodian's shelter.

**1916**  
Feb 29 Plans for relocation New York Central Railroad tracks near tomb cause concern.

**1917**  
May 14 GMA mortified when Marshal Joffre steps over railing to lay wreath. Incident leads to 1917 construction of wooden stile, or flight of steps, to reach parapet on floor of crypt.

**1919**  
Jul 17 Building Committee appointed "to consider what statuary, embellishments and improvements should be made to the Tomb." (Includes J.H. Duncan)

**1923** Gas piping for heaters replaced; electric lighting installed, including additional light in reliquary rooms (all gas lights replaced); electric outlets installed on circular cornice directly below gallery openings.

**c.1923** Reliquary rooms painted (previously they had been left natural plaster).

**1924** First substantial repointing of granite.

**1925** Movement within GMA to finish monument.

**1927** NYC appropriates \$30,000 for sidewalk repair, alleviating problem of drainage and settlement of building.

Feb 4 Custodian George D. Burnside proposes to begin selling postcards and booklets; one-third of profits to go to GMA.

**1928**

Jan 31 Duncan proposes placing porcelain light fixtures at back of niches near top of crypt to remedy problem caused by condensation.

Feb 27 Gen. William G. Bates becomes Secretary, GMA.

Jul 17 Contract let to point up granite joints in pyramidal top which had been damaged by lightning.

Dec 10 John R. Pope presents recommendations for completing and improving monument.

**1929**

Feb William Rhinelanders Stewart heads special committee to complete monument.

Jun 11 GMA signs agreements with Pope and sculptor Paul Manship.

Sep 4 William Rhinelanders Stewart dies.

Oct 19 John H. Duncan dies.

**1930**

Mar 10 Gen. William Barclay Parsons appointed member special committee in place of Wm R. Stewart.

**1931**

May 8 John D. Rockefeller, Jr. declines membership on GMA Board of Trustees.

Nov 3 Discoloration of marble floor around sarcophagus mentioned.

Dec 19 Repair work completed on front steps.

**1932**

Feb 1 \$122,516 subscribed as of this date for fund to complete monument.

Nov 14 Contract approved for painting walls and domes of trophy rooms and radiators and some repairs of interior marble.

**1935** WPA project for cleaning interior begins.

**1936**

Feb 27 Herbert L. Satterlee elected president, GMA.

**1937**

Jul 8 Contract awarded for lighting fixture above display cases.

## **1938**

Feb 2

Work completed during previous year includes: reconstruction of roof; rearrangement of testimonials; installation of wire screens; engineering survey for terrace and granite work; preliminary sketches and full size cartoon for murals in trophy rooms; rearrangement of indirect lighting in two flag rooms; application of canvas to walls of both trophy rooms. Cleaning of interior and exterior in progress.

Sep 27

Murals in flag rooms finished; rooms closed until changes made in flag cases.

Oct 18

WPA has spent \$81,188 on monument to date.

## **1939**

Jan

Trees and shrubs being planted in plaza.

Apr 27

GMA holds rededication ceremony. Work has included:

INTERIOR: Cleaned and broken stone replaced; murals completed; new protective railings around cases installed; flag cases bronzed and lighted; amber glass put in 9 windows and 4 transoms; heating and dehumidifying system installed; new display cases installed; custodian booth demolished and new office installed in southeast turret; heroic busts of 5 generals placed in crypt with suitable lighting; vault rebuilt with new trapdoor access; filing cabinet purchased for storing records and blueprints.

EXTERIOR repaired, waterproofed and cleaned; wire screens to repel pigeons installed; carved granite eagles placed at entrance; new gas, water and electric mains installed; two flagpoles placed; foundation for equestrian statue erected.

GROUNDS: Park widened and lengthened by taking 10 feet from both arms of Riverside Drive; terraces and approaches rebuilt with new paving; benches and drinking fountains installed; trees, shrubs, vines and sod planted. WPA expends total of \$275,000.

## **1940**

Oct 24

Renewed interest in moving Grant statue from Brooklyn.

## **1943**

Feb 1

Installation of 3 silk flags over stairway leading to crypt during previous year.

## **1944**

Feb 18

Custodian directed to remove Japanese resolutions and all other material related to Japan from tomb.

Jun 8

Brig. Gen. William Graves Bates, Secretary, GMA, since 1928, dies.

## **1947**

Jul 14

Herbert Livingston Satterlee, member GMA since February 26, 1903 and president since February 27, 1936, dies - Gen. Cornelius W. Wickersham succeeds him.

Oct 30

Wickersham renews question of completing tomb.

## **1950 - 1951**

Waxing of busts mentioned.

**1952 - 1953** Resurfacing upper and lower roofs mentioned.

**1954**  
Apr 27 GMA begins to discuss turning monument over to federal government.  
GMA complains about new parking restrictions near tomb.

**1955**  
Oct NPS representatives inspect site (report February 1956).

**1958**  
Aug 14 Act signed authorizing transfer to National Park Service (NPS).

**1959**  
May 1 NPS assumes jurisdiction.

**1961**  
Oct 25 GMA approves completion of equestrian statue.

**1963**  
Oct 30 GMA approves paying for two murals in lunettes; NPS to provide 3rd.

**1965**  
Apr 7 GMA formally dissolved.

**1965 - 1966** New storm door installed.

**1966**  
May 26 Three mosaic murals in lunettes dedicated.

**c. 1969** Murals painted over; flag cases demolished.

**1972 - 1974** Mosaic benches erected.

**1974** Dome and arches painted for first time.