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U.S. Department of the Interior

National Mall and Memorial Parks
Washington, DC

Historic Resource Study

Events and Celebrations on the National Mall and President's Park South

Final Report November 2024

National Mall and Memorial Parks and The White House and President's Park

Historic Resource Study

Events and Celebrations on the National Mall and President's Park South

Washington, DC

Final ❖ November 2024

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As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally-owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering sound use of our land and water resources; protecting our fish, wildlife, and biological diversity; preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places; and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The Department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to ensure that their development is in the best interests of all our people by encouraging stewardship and citizen participation in their care. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in island territories under U.S. administration.

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Cover Photo: Aerial view of the crowds on the National Mall between the Lincoln Memorial and the Washington Monument during a demonstration. No date (NPS History Collection, HFCA 1607).

Title Page: View from stage at the National Cherry Blossom Festival in April 1961 (National Park Service, Interior Region 1 - National Capital Region, National Capital Region Public Affairs Collection, 1901–2000, Catalog Number NRCO 6; Abbie Rowe).

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List of Abbreviations

AOC	Architect of the Capitol
HRS	Historic Resource Study
JCCIC	Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies
NAMA	National Mall and Memorial Parks
NCPC	National Capital Planning Commission
NPS	National Park Service
NPS-NCR	National Park Service - National Capital Region
OPBG	Army Corps of Engineers' Office in Charge of Public Buildings and Grounds
PRPA	President's Park
SOM	Skidmore, Owings, & Merrill

Executive Summary

The National Mall, stretching from the foot of the United States Capitol to the Potomac River, is commonly known as both "America's Front Yard" and a "Stage of Democracy." For more than 200 years, the National Mall has symbolized our nation and its democratic values. Millions of people visit the National Mall each year. It is one of the most significant public spaces in the United States and represents a legacy of architecture, landscape architecture, fine art, and community development, a place of commemoration for national history, and the site of key historic events.

Historic Resource Study of Events and Celebrations on the National Mall and President's Park South documents the history and significance of national celebrations, events, and First Amendment demonstrations at National Mall and Memorial Parks and President's Park South. The Historic Resource Study also examines how the National Mall's role in iconic civil rights protests has influenced how it is perceived as a national public space.

This Historic Resource Study is thematically divided into separate chapters that explore the history of events that have taken place on the National Mall and President's Park South. **Chapter 1** provides an overview of the National Mall's evolution into a national public space and the ways in which its design and use impacted Americans' perceptions of its purpose. **Chapter 2** discusses the role the National Mall played in early presidential inaugurations and how it has evolved since 1981, when the swearing-in ceremony was first held on the West Front of the Capitol Building. **Chapter 3 e**xplores important singular and annually reoccurring events, celebrations, and festivals that have taken place on the Mall, representing its role as "America's front yard," and how these events have evolved and grown over time. **Chapter 4** examines how the National Mall has developed into an important space for social and political demonstrations, particularly related to civil rights, and how it has become one of America's most important gathering spaces for free speech.

While the themes identified in this report as well as organizations, individuals, and places associated with them are not exhaustive, this document forms the basis to identify and evaluate additional research topics. Ultimately, this Historic Resource Study provides park and regional managers critical baseline information to manage and interpret resources related to national celebrations and events.

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Introduction

Chapter title page: National Mall Bird's Eye View, Washington, DC 2007 (Carol M. Highsmith's America, Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division).

Introduction

On May 20, 2008, Superintendent of National Mall and Memorial Parks Margaret O'Dell spoke about the future of the National Mall in front of Congress's Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands and the House Committee on National Resources:

> The National Mall — the great swath of green in the middle of our capital city and stretching from the foot of the United States Capitol to the Potomac River — is America's civic stage. For more than 200 years it has symbolized our nation and its democratic values, which have inspired the world. "We the People" come here to celebrate our rights and freedoms, our history and culture, our unity and diversity, and our way of life.[1]

Millions of people visit the National Mall each year. It is one of the most significant public spaces in the United States and represents a legacy of landscape architecture, engineering, and community development, a place of commemoration for national history, and the site of key historic events such as the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom and the January 20, 2009, inauguration of President Barack Obama.

Engineer Pierre Charles L'Enfant laid out Washington, DC, in 1791, proposing a grand promenade, or "mall," lined with prominent buildings for the "learned." The original boundary of the Mall included approximately 175 acres. Through the nineteenth century, federal officials made limited improvements to the National Mall, including the Smithsonian Institution, Washington Monument, and landscape designer Andrew Jackson Downing's reconceiving of the public grounds as a series of distinct, picturesque gardens united by winding paths. The Senate Park Commission of 1901–02 (popularly known as the McMillan Commission) brought a new vision for the National Mall that resulted in the construction of new Beaux-Arts-style buildings and replacement of Downing's Victorian landscape with formal rows of trees flanking a central lawn.

Beginning in the late nineteenth century, the open space afforded by the National Mall, specifically the Ellipse and the Washington Monument Grounds, became the site for large gatherings and celebrations, such as the annual Fourth of July celebration and fireworks. As the National Mall expanded in the early twentieth

1 US Department of the Interior, Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs, "National Mall Future - 5/20/08," accessed online August 8, 2023 at https://www.doi.gov/ocl/hearings/110/natlmallfuture_052008.

century with the implementation of the 1902 McMillan Plan, so did the number and size of events, with many reoccurring celebrations, such as the National Cherry Blossom Festival, National Christmas Tree Lighting, and Lincoln and Jefferson birthday celebrations originating in the 1920s.

When L'Enfant proposed what became the National Mall, the engineer made no mention of the public grounds' use as a stage for events or political protests. Instead, the conception of the Mall as a demonstration space was a hard-fought product of the twentieth century. A formal redesign of the landscape and effective protest organizers and participants transformed the National Mall into the kind of space the United States had long lacked—a national public square, which has become increasingly important as a public location for free speech. The twentieth century brought significant changes to how the space was used as demonstrations took place representing the modern civil rights movement, anti-war sentiments, and human rights. Along the way, protestors challenged long-existing norms and policies on what the Mall and the national capital were for and who was welcome there.

From the 1960s through the early twenty-first century, a re-envisioned National Mall presented a more diverse picture of American history and brought new life to L'Enfant's grand promenade. This is reflected in the expansion of annual events held on the Mall, such as the Smithsonian Folklife Festival and the National Black Family Reunion, which brought more people to the National Mall and celebrated the culture and diversity of a larger segment of the American population. Many annual events and celebrations, such as the Fourth of July celebration, the National Christmas Tree Lighting, and the National Cherry Blossom Festival, expanded in scope and size during this time, continuing to symbolize the unity of American culture and becoming synonymous with Washington, DC, as the nation's capital.

Over the years, the number of special events on the National Mall has grown exponentially. In 1956, 290 events took place across all parks in the National Capital Region. In 1981, there were 348 special events in what is now National Mall and Memorial Parks alone. The number exceeded 700 in 1985, and in 2003 the National Capital Region issued more than 2,000 permits for public uses in the

National Mall and Memorial Parks.[2] Today, the number exceeds 4,000 permits a year and the National Mall attracts more than 25 million visitors each year.[3]

Since Ronald Reagan's 1981 inauguration on the West Front of the Capitol, the Mall has played an increasingly important role in presidential inaugurations as a space for open, public participation in inaugural events including but not limited to the swearing-in ceremony. Barack Obama's 2009 inauguration opened up the entire length of the Mall to public attendees and became the largest event in Washington, DC, history with an estimated 1.8 million people in attendance.

The National Mall and particular locations within it have been the focus of many studies and designations of historic significance. West Potomac Park was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1973 (additional documentation, 2001) and President's Park South was listed in 1980. The National Mall Historic District was listed in 1981. The revised 2016 National Register of Historic Places nomination for the National Mall Historic District encompasses and supersedes all previous documentation of the landscapes within the National Mall Historic District and gives an updated evaluation of significance based on recent events.

GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION

The study area for this Historic Resource Study encompasses what is commonly known as the National Mall and the Ellipse. The National Mall stretches from the grounds of the US Capitol west to the Potomac River and from the Thomas Jefferson Memorial north to Constitution Avenue and is the dividing line between the Northwest and Southwest quadrants of Washington, DC (see Figure 1). For the purposes of this study, the National Mall is defined as public land managed by the National Park Service as part of National Mall and Memorial Parks. The study also includes President's Park South, commonly known as the Ellipse, which is part of White House and President's Park. Both the National Mall and Memorial Parks and the White House and President's Park are within Region 1 - National Capital Region.

2 Robinson and Associates, *National Park Service National Capital Region Administrative History, 1952-2005* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, 2008), 150; National Park Service, National Capital Region Office of Communications, "National Mall & Memorial Parks Little- Known Facts," accessed January 4, 2024 at https://www.nps.gov/nationalmallplan/Documents/Media/NAMA%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf.

3 National Mall and Memorial Parks, "Permits & Reservations," accessed June 20, 2024 at https://www.nps.gov/nama/planyourvisit/permitsandreservations.htm. For more information on how First Amendment and special events on the National Mall are permitted by the National Park Service, see Robinson and Associates, *National Capital Region Administrative History*, 142-151.

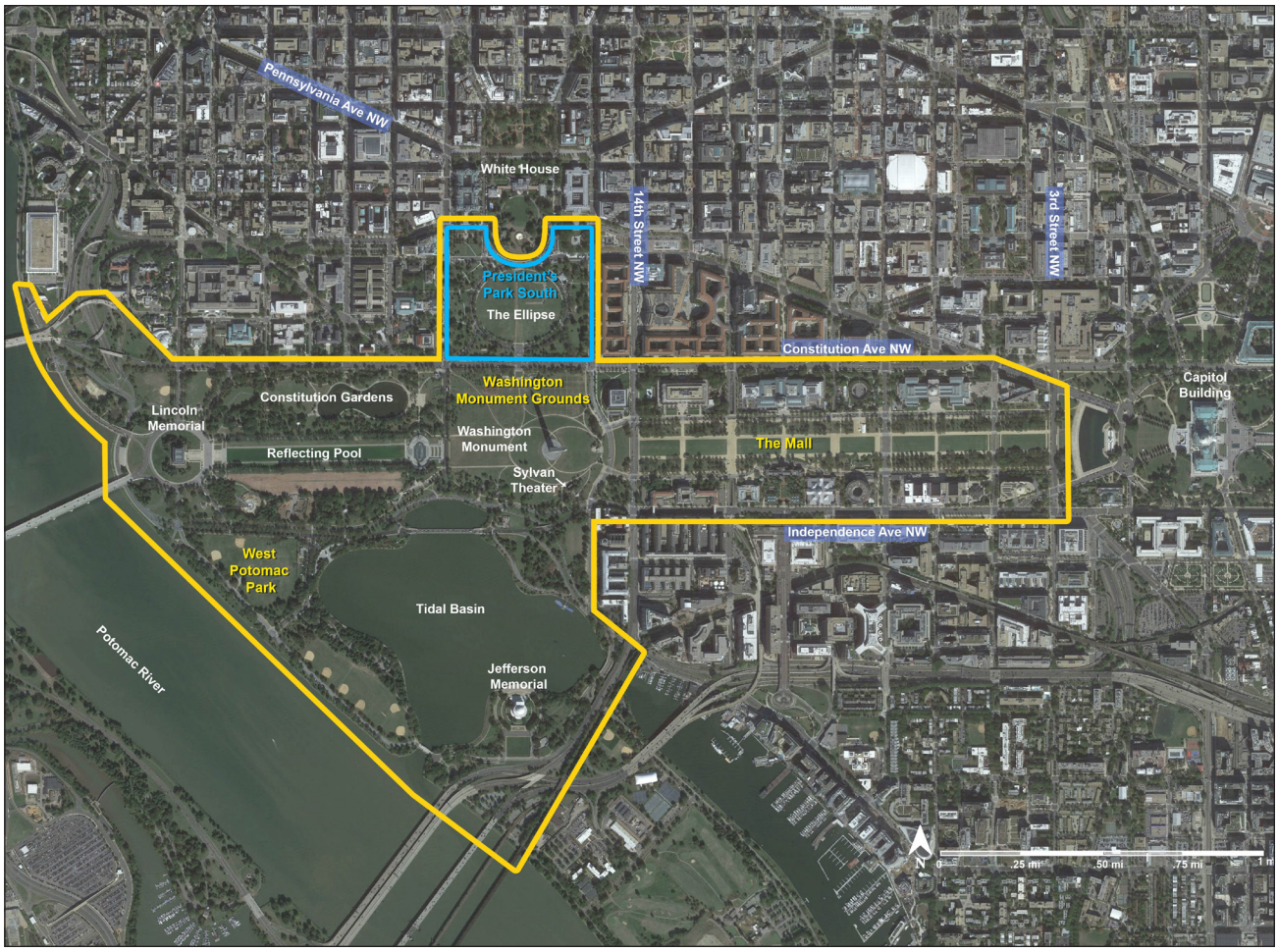

Figure 1. **Map depicting the key features of National Mall within the Study Area (outlined in yellow). President's Park South (outlined in blue) is part of White House and President's Park. The remainder of the Study Area is part of National Mall and Memorial Parks.**

As it is defined in the 2016 National Register nomination, the National Mall is approximately 692.45 acres and is bounded by 3rd Street NW–SW, Independence Avenue NW, Raoul Wallenberg Place SW, CSX Railroad, the Potomac River, Constitution Avenue NW, 17th Street NW, the White House Grounds, and 15th Street NW. The National Mall occupies Reservation No. 1, Reservation No. 2, Reservation Nos. 3, 3A, 3B, 4, 5, 6, 6A, Reservation No. 201, Reservation No. 332, and Reservation No. 553.

The National Mall study area includes four primary landscapes: the Mall, Washington Monument Grounds, President's Park South, and West Potomac Park, described in more detail below.[4] The Mall, Washington Monument Grounds, and West Potomac Park are within the park unit National Mall and

4 The following is summarized from Judith H. Robinson, Daria Gasparini, and Tim Kerr, National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, "National Mall Historic District – Boundary Increase/Additional Documentation," August 2016, National Park Service.

Memorial Parks. President's Park South is within the park unit White House and President's Park.

The Mall

What is known today as the Mall extends from 3rd Street NW–SW on the east to 14th Street NW–SW on the west, between Constitution Avenue NW and Pennsylvania Avenue NW on the north, and Independence Avenue SW and Maryland Avenue SW on the south.

The Mall was a key part of L'Enfant's 1791 plan for the capital of the United States. The primary feature of the Mall is an open, grassy green space of approximately 135 acres with an allée of trees. This plan, which focused on the visual relationships of the city's buildings and monuments, was also adopted and significantly enhanced by the McMillan Commission, which established a setback for buildings along the Mall to ensure viewsheds were not disrupted. When finally constructed in the 1930s after some delay, the green space between 3rd Street SW and 14th Street SW, designed by Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., followed this precedent and was intended to create a vista between the US Capitol to the east and the Washington Monument to the west. The circulation patterns were changed with the 1973 master plan developed by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill. These features are lined with buildings of varying architectural style and construction date, ranging from the Smithsonian Institution Building, designed by James Renwick Jr. and constructed between 1847 and 1855, and the National Museum of African American History and Culture, designed by Freelon Group, Adjaye Associates, and Davis Brody Bond and completed in 2016. The Mall borders Union Square (the plaza west of the US Capitol Building) at its eastern end and the buildings and gardens of the US Department of Agriculture Administration Building (Rankin, Kellogg & Crane, 1908) the National Gallery of Art (John Russell Pope, 1941), and the Smithsonian Institution museums to the north and south.

Historically, the Mall extended to the east to 1st Street NW–SW and included what is now known as Union Square. Today, Union Square is part of the US Capitol Grounds and has been under the responsibilities of the Architect of the Capitol since 2011. This study at times uses "historic Mall" to refer to the section of the National Mall between 3rd and 14th Streets NW–SW. This distinction distinguishes what remains of L'Enfant's original Mall boundaries from the expanded conception of the National Mall established by the McMillan Plan.

Washington Monument Grounds (including the Sylvan Theater)

The Washington Monument Grounds are located approximately in the center of the National Mall. The site, which comprises Reservation No. 2, is bounded by Constitution Avenue on the north, 14th Street, Raoul Wallenberg Place (15th Street), and Independence Avenue on the east, the Tidal Basin on the south, and 17th Street on the west.

The grounds include the Washington Monument, a 555-foot-tall Egyptian style obelisk of white marble (designed by Robert Mills, built in two phases between 1848 and 1884), the grassy knoll on which it sits, ancillary buildings like the Monument Lodge and Survey Lodge/Boiler House, and structures like the Bulfinch Gateposts, Sylvan Theater, and German-American Friendship Garden. The National Museum of African American History and Culture is also included in the Monument Grounds. Of the associated features, the Sylvan Theater has been a notable location for public gathering and events since it was built in 1917. The first iteration was an earthen stage, with the first permanent stage built in 1944. In 1976, a major renovation added dressing rooms and storage in time for the bicentennial celebration.

President's Park South (including The Ellipse)

President's Park South is part of Reservation 1 and includes the grounds south of the White House bounded by State Place, South Executive Avenue, and Hamilton Place on the north, 15th Street NW on the east, Constitution Avenue NW on the south, and 17th Street NW on the west. The 52-acre President's Park South is one component of the larger White House and President's Park, which also includes the White House Grounds and Lafayette Park. President's Park South features the Ellipse at its center, Sherman Park in the northeast corner, and the First Division Monument in the northwest corner. Since 1974, President's Park South has been administered by what is today called the White House and President's Park.

L'Enfant first identified this location in 1791 as the site for a park associated with the White House, which he referred to as President's Park, that would connect the White House with the National Mall. It is the primary remnant of Andrew Jackson Downing's design for the Mall and President's Park in 1851. His plan included a circular road enclosing a parade ground—now known as the Ellipse.

The Ellipse is created by a circular drive and framed by elm trees. The interior of the Ellipse contains no plantings in order to keep the vista open between the White House and the Washington Monument and Jefferson Memorial except for the National Christmas Tree, which is offset toward the northeast. The Ellipse is the central feature of President's Park South but it also includes other monuments

and memorials, including a plaque commemorating the National Christmas Tree ceremony.

West Potomac Park (including the Lincoln Memorial, Reflecting Pool, Constitution Gardens, Tidal Basin, and Jefferson Memorial)

West Potomac Park encompasses nearly 400 acres and extends from the Washington Monument Grounds to the banks of the Potomac River. It includes a number of important memorials and landscape features like the Lincoln Memorial, the Jefferson Memorial, the World War II Memorial, the Martin Luther King, Jr., Memorial, and Constitution Gardens. The land was reclaimed from wetland by the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and opened as a public park in 1897. It was an important feature of the McMillan Plan, as it extended the east–west axis of the Mall significantly.

Located at the western edge of the mall, the Lincoln Memorial was designed by Henry Bacon and constructed between 1914 and 1922. It is a Greek temple with a portrait sculpture of Abraham Lincoln. The landscape design was completed in 1932. The Reflecting Pool, east of the Lincoln Memorial, was constructed between 1919 and 1924. The long, shallow pool reflects images of the Lincoln Memorial and the Washington Monument. An additional pool east of the Reflecting Pool known as the Rainbow Pool is incorporated into the World War II Memorial, which was designed by Friedrich St. Florian and built between 2001 and 2004.

Constitution Gardens is a 43-acre site within West Potomac Park that is located north of the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool. Its boundaries are Constitution Avenue NW on the north, 17th Street NW on the east, the base of the southern slope of the flood control levee that runs parallel to the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool on the south, and Henry Bacon Drive on the west. Constitution Gardens was designed by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill and completed in 1976. It is also the location of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

The Tidal Basin is located south of the Washington Monument Grounds. The creation of the basin was an important part of the land reclamation completed by the USACE while creating West Potomac Park, and it is a focal point of the National Mall. The edge of the basin is lined with Japanese cherry trees.

The Thomas Jefferson Memorial sits on a roughly 19-acre site in West Potomac Park on the south bank of the Tidal Basin on axis with the White House and 16th Street NW. Occupying a cardinal point on the National Mall, the Thomas Jefferson Memorial grounds are bounded by East Basin Drive on the east and south and by the Tidal Basin on the west and north. Landscape architect Frederick

Law Olmsted, Jr., with associate Henry V. Hubbard, designed the memorial grounds. The memorial honors America's third president and the drafter of the Declaration of Independence and was designed by architect John Russell Pope. It was constructed between 1939 and 1943 and dedicated on the bicentennial of Jefferson's birth.

PROJECT PURPOSE

The purpose of this Historic Resource Study is to provide baseline documentation on the numerous First Amendment demonstrations, national celebrations, events, and observances, such as the National Cherry Blossom Festival, presidential inaugurations, Fourth of July celebration, and the National Christmas Tree Lighting, that attract millions of visitors a year to the nation's capital. The project documents the history and significance of annual national celebrations and events at the National Mall and Memorial Parks and President's Park South (previously administered by NAMA until 1974). The Historic Resource Study examines how the history of segregation and the National Mall's role in iconic civil rights demonstrations, including the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, have influenced its symbolism as a national public space. Ultimately, this Historic Resource Study provides park and regional managers critical baseline information to manage and interpret resources related to national celebrations and events.

SCOPE

The scope of this project is the development of a Historic Resource Study (HRS) of Events and Celebrations on the National Mall and President's Park South. Specific areas of research identified include:

1. An overview of the inception of all major national events, celebrations, and demonstrations, and their role in the evolution and symbolism of public civic space in the nation's capital. The discussion should address and acknowledge the influence of the 1791 L'Enfant Plan in visioning a designed ceremonial space and its later articulation by the 1902 McMillan Plan.

2. The establishment and history of national events and celebrations, including civil rights demonstrations, to the present. Provide a detailed chronology of events, celebrations, and demonstrations.

3. The role of African American struggles for civil rights and their influence on First Amendment activities in a discussion of the evolution and expansion

of the National Mall as civic space providing citizens a platform for not only celebrations and festivities but also peaceful protest and demonstrations.

METHODOLOGY

Staff from NPS-National Capital Region (NPS-NCR), National Mall and Memorial Parks (NAMA), President's Park South (PRPA), and Quinn Evans met virtually on September 29, 2022, for a kickoff meeting. During this meeting, the team identified project goals, refined the scope of work, and discussed the research process and records sources. The NPS provided government-furnished data including reports and studies. A draft research plan and outline was submitted on February 10, 2023. NPS provided comments on March 13, 2023, and the comments were reviewed in a conference call on March 23, 2023. Quinn Evans historians Patti Kuhn Babin and S. Michael Mitchell conducted research at the DC History Center and Martin Luther King, Jr., Memorial Library and the National Park Service Museum Resource Center in June through August 2023. This research included photograph and textual records. This research was supplemented by records at the Library of Congress and other secondary sources. Additional primary research included historic newspaper digital archives and historic photographs.

This Historic Resource Study is divided into separate chapters that explore the history of events that have taken place on the National Mall. While the themes identified in this report as well as organizations, individuals, and places associated with them are not exhaustive, this document forms the basis to identify and evaluate additional research topics. The themes are identified below.

Chapter 1: The Establishment of the National Mall as "America's Front Yard" and a "Stage of Democracy" provides an overview of the National Mall's evolution as a national public space and the ways in which its design and use impacted Americans' perceptions of its purpose. Approached through both prescriptive and descriptive lenses, the chapter explores how formal plans and actual public use shaped the National Mall.

Chapter 2: Presidential Inaugurations and Events discusses the role the National Mall played in early presidential inaugurations and how it has evolved since 1981, when the swearing-in ceremony was first held on the West Front of the Capitol Building.

Chapter 3: National Events, Festivals, and Celebrations explores important singular and annually reoccurring events that have taken place on the Mall,

representing its role as "America's front yard," and how these events have evolved and grown over time.

Chapter 4: First Amendment Events describes how the National Mall has developed into an important space for social and political demonstrations, particularly related to civil rights, and how it has become one of America's most important gathering spaces for free speech.

Appendix A: Select Chronology includes key events discussed in the chapters above and other notable events that have occurred on the National Mall. While not all events listed in the chronology are discussed in detail in the HRS, the intent is to include other known events for future research purposes. The chronology includes the year, date, event name, description, location, theme, and source.

RESEARCH LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This Historic Resource Study focuses specifically on the topic of events, celebrations, and demonstrations on the National Mall. The time period for this study begins in 1791 with the first plan for the National Mall and extends to September 2022, though the events of the very recent past are not described in as much detail as historical events, some of which have been the subject of scholarly contexts.

While this document explores events on the National Mall and the role of the National Mall as an important public space, it is not an exhaustive history of all the ways this space has been used in its over 200 years of history. More detailed special history studies could be completed on specific events or themes if deemed helpful for understanding the significance of a specific area of or feature on the National Mall or a specific interpretive theme. In particular, more detailed studies could be completed on annual celebratory events on the National Mall, including the Fourth of July celebration, the National Christmas Tree Lighting/ Pageant of Peace (formerly Christmas Pageant of Peace), and the National Cherry Blossom Festival. Further studies could also explore particular First Amendment demonstrations or causes and their impact on the National Mall in greater depth, such as how LGBTQ+ activists used the Mall to advance equality and justice for those in their community with events like the National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights and the AIDS Memorial Quilt. Studies could also explore how specific First Amendment Events, such as the March for Life, have become important annual occurrences on the National Mall, attracting participants from across the country.

Additionally, information on events and celebrations explored in this document could be used to update and/or amend the historic context and significance statements for National Register-listed properties on the National Mall, such as the Lincoln Memorial and the Washington Monument Grounds. Since the National Register Multiple Property Documentation *20th Century African American Civil Rights Sites in Washington, D.C., 1912–1974*, prepared in 2020, does not include sites managed by the National Park Service, this HRS could be used to update and/or amend National Register listings of sites on the National Mall to include significance associated with the civil rights movement.[5]

This document begins to explore the history of traditionally excluded groups and their participation in events on the National Mall. Unsurprisingly, these groups have historically been underrepresented in historic documentation. Information has been included where known, but this document acknowledges and recommends a more complete study that focuses on the use and experiences of underrepresented groups at the National Mall. Additionally, more research on segregation is needed to fully understand the impacts of Washington, DC, laws and policies on those attending celebrations and events on the National Mall.

5 Sarah Jane Shoenfeld and Nakita Reed, National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, *20th Century African American Civil Rights Sites in Washington, D.C., 1912–1974* (Washington, DC: DC Preservation League, 2020).

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Chapter 1

The Establishment of the National Mall as "America's Front Yard" and a "Stage of Democracy"

Chapter title page: Aerial view of National Mall, taken from above Washington Monument Grounds looking east toward Capitol, 1936 (National Archives and Records Administration, Record Group 18, Records of the Army Air Forces).

Chapter 1: The Establishment of the National Mall as "America's Front Yard" and a "Stage of Democracy"

Sociologist Nathan Glazer adeptly describes the importance of the National Mall in his introduction to *The National Mall: Rethinking the Monumental Core*:

> The National Mall in Washington is the most cherished tract of urban public land in the United States. Stretching from the Capitol to the Lincoln Memorial, it is the defining center of ceremonial and public Washington. The major sites and museums and memorials are clustered there, every visitor goes there, and many do not venture far from it.[1]

Over the course of two centuries, the National Mall has become not only a symbolic space in the heart of the nation's capital but also our nation's front yard and democratic stage. As our nation's front yard, the National Mall is a place where visitors of every race, nationality, and faith come to celebrate, commemorate, demonstrate, and recreate. Additionally, the National Mall serves as a stage for national events where Americans celebrate their national identity. It is a national civic space for public gatherings because "it is here that the constitutional rights of speech and peaceful assembly find their fullest expression."[2]

When engineer Pierre Charles L'Enfant laid out Washington, DC, in 1791, he proposed a promenade, or "mall," lined with gardens and prominent buildings for the "learned."[3] Federal officials made limited improvements to the National Mall in the first half of the nineteenth century, until construction of the Smithsonian Institution and Washington Monument introduced educational and memorial uses, respectively, and landscape designer Andrew Jackson Downing reconceived of the public grounds as a series of distinct, picturesque gardens united by winding paths. The Senate Park Commission of 1901–02 brought a new vision for the National Mall that resulted in the construction of Beaux-Arts-style buildings and replacement of Downing's Victorian landscape with formal rows of trees flanking

1 Nathan Glazer and Cynthia Field, eds., *The National Mall: Rethinking Washington's Monumental Core* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), 1.

2 National Park Service, National Mall and Memorial Parks, "National Mall Plan: Summary (Washington, DC: National Park Service, 2010), 7.

3 Judith H. Robinson, Daria Gasparini, and Tim Kerr, National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, "National Mall Historic District – Boundary Increase/ Additional Documentation" (August 2016), 102.

a central lawn. From the 1960s through the early twenty-first century, new buildings and landscape features, museums that presented a more diverse picture of American history, and unanticipated public uses for protest and gathering brought new life to L'Enfant's promenade.

THE L'ENFANT PLAN AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT (1791–1849)

On July 16, 1790, President George Washington signed into law the Residence Act, which gave the president the authority to choose the site of the first permanent capital for the new United States. Washington announced his choice in January 1791. Located primarily in the state of Maryland, the site was a ten-mile square of tidal plain and river terrace at the confluence of the Potomac River and its Eastern Branch. The president also chose the planner of the new city—Pierre Charles L'Enfant, a French engineer who had served in the American Revolution. Washington charged L'Enfant with both laying out the new city and designing some of its principal public buildings.[4]

L'Enfant sent President Washington a draft plan (now lost) of the new city in June 1791, less than six months after the president had selected the site. L'Enfant envisioned a Baroque plan of radial avenues laid over an orthogonal grid and emanating from regularly placed squares and circles (Figure 2). He planned for a T-shaped public space that would connect the President's House, a building for the legislature, and an equestrian statue of George Washington. L'Enfant described these public grounds as a "public walk and avenue" that was composed "in a manner as most [sic] form a whole as grand as it will be agreeable and convenient to the whole city."[5] The Grand Avenue, as L'Enfant named it in his plan, was 400' wide and flanked on either side by gardens. The avenue was named a "mall" as early as September 30, 1791, when the *Maryland Journal* published a description of L'Enfant's plan for the city.[6] The area that L'Enfant set aside for the Mall was at the time filled with a forest of oak trees.[7] L'Enfant assigned functions to particular areas through a numbered public reservation system. The National

4 Robinson, Gasparini, and Kerr, "National Mall Historic District," 102.
5 Quoted in Robinson, Gasparini, and Kerr, "National Mall Historic District," 102.
6 Robinson, Gasparini, and Kerr, "National Mall Historic District," 103.
7 Kirk Savage, *Monument Wars: Washington, D.C., the National Mall, and the Transformation of the Memorial Landscape* (Berkley: University of California Press, 2009), 34.

Mall was Original Reservation or Appropriation No. 2, and the Washington Monument Grounds comprised Original Reservation or Appropriation No. 3.[8]

L'Enfant's intended use of the Mall shifted throughout 1791. In June, the planner described it as "a place of general resort and all along side of which may be placed play houses, rooms of assembly, cademies [sic] and all such sort of places as may be attractive to the learned and afford diversion to the idle." A manuscript drawing he prepared later that year, however, designated the buildings on either side of the mall as "best calculated for spacious houses and gardens, such as may accommodate foreign Ministers, etc." Although L'Enfant's intentions shifted between two distinct uses, the general layout of an avenue lined with gardens and buildings remained consistent.[9]

L'Enfant's plans reserved the space between these buildings, the Mall itself, for what he termed a "public walk," or a landscaped public garden, between the

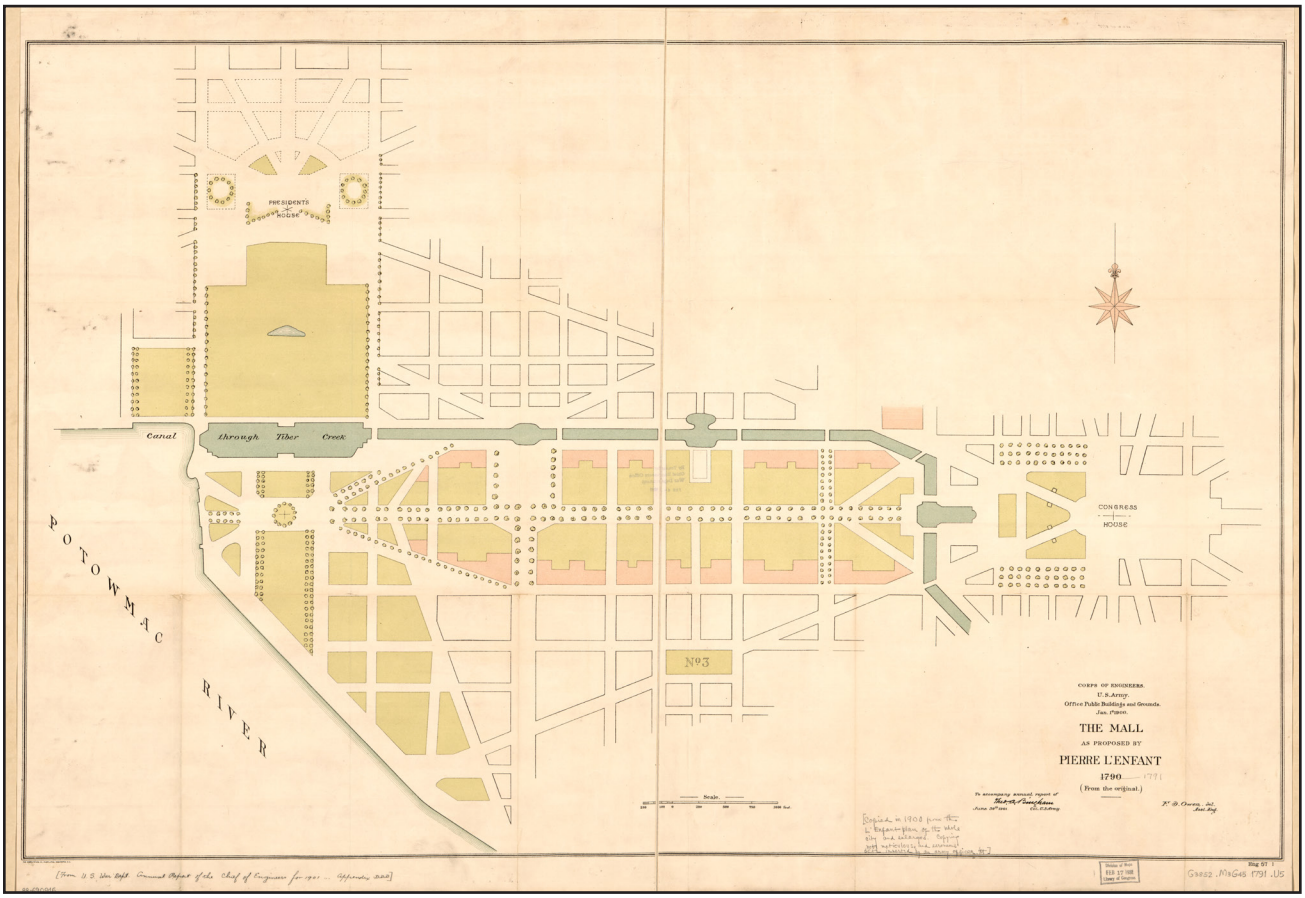


Figure 2. Office of Public Buildings and Grounds, ***The Mall as proposed by Pierre L'Enfant 1791: from the original, 1900*** (Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division).

8 The District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Office uses "Original Reservation or Appropriation" to differentiate L'Enfant's original seventeen reservations from the more numerous "reservations" the Office in Charge of Public Buildings and Grounds established in the 1880s.

9 Robinson, Gasparini, and Kerr, "National Mall Historic District," 104–05.

Capitol and the equestrian statue of George Washington. Historian Kirk Savage speculates that L'Enfant expected that the gardens that would flank the Mall would be varied, perhaps even picturesque, as picturesque gardening had been in fashion in France since the mid-eighteenth century.[10] The Mall would serve as a leisure space between L'Enfant's proposed theaters and academies and offer the city's principal social amenity. In designing a national capital city, the planner resisted monumentality in favor of informal, leisurely use. According to historian Michael J. Lewis, "L'Enfant's Mall was to have no lofty monumental role."[11] Instead, Pennsylvania Avenue was to serve the monumental, ceremonial role. L'Enfant imbued the new city's layout with the concept of federalism: instead of planning the Mall as a single Roman-style forum representing the nation, the engineer dispersed fifteen squares throughout the city reflecting the decentralized nation of states. The squares, not the Mall, were intended to be public spaces where monuments taught republican virtues. "L'Enfant imagined the Mall not as the didactic stage of American political memory but as a congenial park, offering 'diversion to the idle,'" writes Lewis.[12]

Figure 3. Detail, Robert Pearsall Smith, ***View of Washington***, 1850, showing proposed Smithsonian Institution and Washington Monument, both under construction by this time (Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division).

10 Savage, *Monument Wars*, 162.
11 Michael J. Lewis, "The Idea of the American Mall," in *The National Mall: Rethinking Washington's Monumental Core*, eds. Nathan Glazer and Cynthia R. Field (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), 14.
12 Lewis, "The Idea of the American Mall," 15.

Due to acrimony between L'Enfant and the city commissioners President Washington appointed to carry out development of the city, the president fired the engineer and replaced him with surveyor Andrew Ellicott. Informed by L'Enfant's manuscript, Ellicott produced a revision of his predecessor's plans that provided greater detail but also proposed changes. Ellicott straightened some diagonal avenues, eliminated some public reservation and small diagonal avenues, and revised the space south of the planned equestrian statue of Washington.[13]

L'Enfant's proposed vision for the Mall largely remained a vision in the nineteenth century's first half. Contemporary observers described the area as a "waste ground," an unregulated space where Washingtonians dumped trash and planted vegetable gardens. An oak forest populated much of the Mall until it was cleared in the 1810s (Figure 3). The clearing turned the Mall into eroded scrubland, while pigs and cows roamed the grounds and chewed away most of the saplings that might have established a new forest.[14] Historic drawings and photographs capture the early nineteenth-century Mall as a large undeveloped space. Neither academies nor rooms for assembly were constructed as L'Enfant intended, as the federal government largely neglected development of the Mall.[15] Instead, the Mall's development in the first half of the century occurred in an ad hoc manner. Political leaders and city commissioners instead focused their efforts on building (and rebuilding after the 1814 British attack) the President's House and Capitol. In 1823, Congress granted five acres of public land at present-day Union Square to the Columbian Institute for the Promotion of Arts and Sciences for the purposes of building a botanical garden.[16] Meanwhile, the horror of American slavery was also on full display on the Mall. Pens incarcerating enslaved persons sat at the Mall's edge at 7th Street NW, and coffles—groups of enslaved persons chained together—regularly shuffled across the Mall on their way to loading docks on the Potomac River.[17]

L'Enfant and Ellicott both delineated a canal running immediately north of the Mall and cutting through it at 3rd Street NW–SW. They intended the canal to connect Tiber Creek with the Anacostia River. The Washington City Canal that was completed in 1815 instead ran east along the northern edge of the Mall, made a hard turn south at 6th Street NW–SW, resumed its eastward path near the middle of the Mall, turned back south at 3rd Street NW–SW, and continued its path through the city until it reached the Anacostia River (Figure 4).

13 Robinson, Gasparini, and Kerr, "National Mall Historic District," 104–05.
14 Savage, *Monument Wars*, 35, 70.
15 Lewis, "The Idea of the American Mall," 18.
16 Robinson, Gasparini, and Kerr, "National Mall Historic District," 109.
17 Savage, *Monument Wars*, 46.

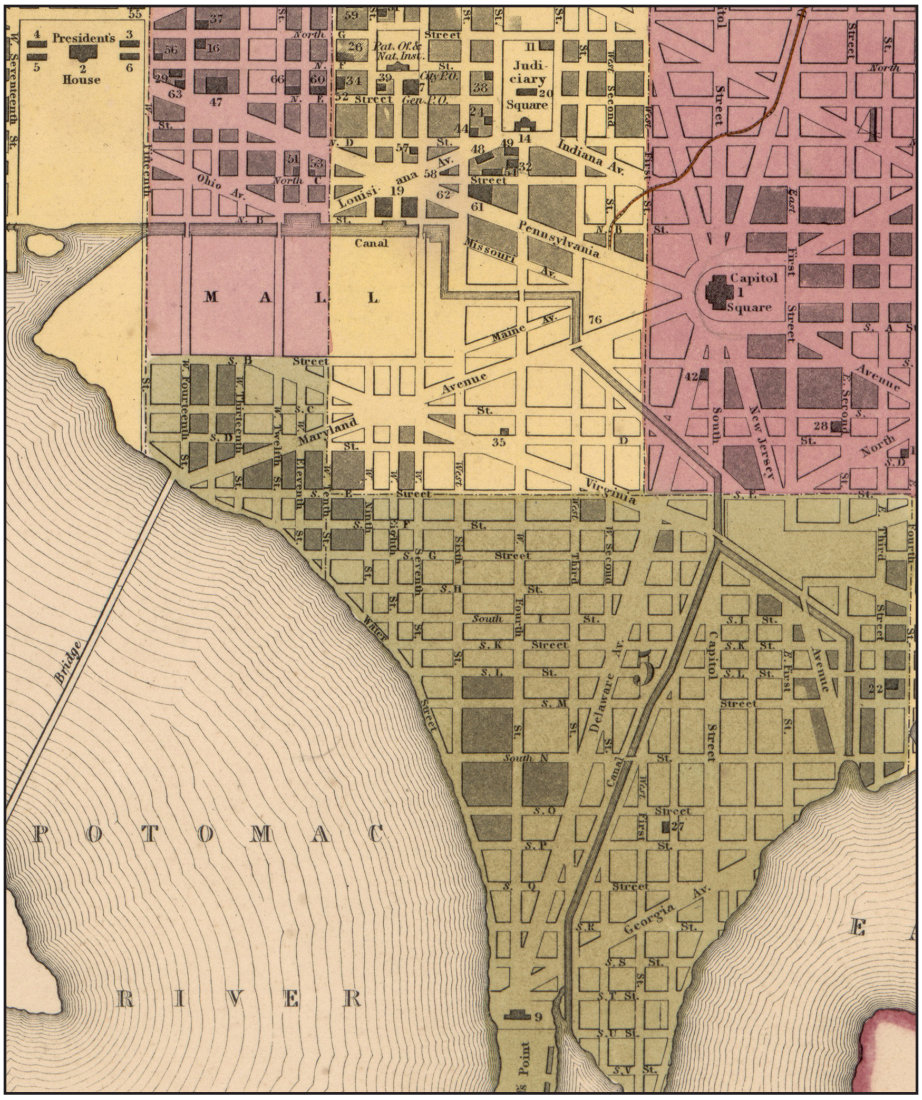


Figure 4. S. Augustus Mitchell, detail of *City of Washington* map, 1851, showing as-built path of Washington City Canal (Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division).

In 1822, Congress enacted legislation that provided for the creation of four new squares on the Mall reservation for private development. The new trapezoidal squares, as L'Enfant intended, were bounded by 3rd and 6th Streets and Pennsylvania and Missouri Avenues NW. Missouri Avenue NW was an unnamed radial avenue L'Enfant had previously planned but remained unbuilt. Missouri Avenue NW comprised the interior boundary of the new private land, leaving narrow public spaces between the new avenue and the canal (Figure 3). Development occurred slowly on the new squares in the following decades. Historic maps and other illustrations from the mid-nineteenth century show the northern two blocks that bordered Pennsylvania Avenue NW developed with buildings while the southern two blocks remained undeveloped. By 1850, many new buildings occupied the two northernmost blocks along Pennsylvania Avenue NW and served as residences, hotels, boarding houses, and stores.[18]

18 Robinson, Gasparini, and Kerr, "National Mall Historic District," 109–10.

The Mall as it existed in the early nineteenth century, however, did not provide a space where the public could gather for events. As the Mall was mostly populated with an oak forest until 1810 and composed of mostly scrubland in the first three decades after, the President's House (now White House) and its grounds served as the most prominent spaces for large outdoor public events of national significance. Thomas Jefferson, for instance, hosted an Independence Day celebration at the President's House and its grounds during his presidency (see page 86).[19] In 1829, a raucous crowd famously attended a public reception for newly inaugurated president Andrew Jackson at the President's House that extended to the south lawn (see pages 65–66).[20]

The National Mall's two most significant developments in the first half of the nineteenth century were the Washington Monument and the Smithsonian Institution. The Continental Congress had first authorized a monument honoring George Washington in 1783, and L'Enfant made it an integral part of his design of the city—at the intersection of the legislative and executive axes on his plan. The Washington National Monument Society, formed in 1833 and charged with selecting an architect, chose Robert Mills, who had already designed several of the new city's federal buildings. Drawing from noted monuments in classical architecture, Mills designed a colonnade encircling an obelisk. Although the society did not approve the colonnade, the obelisk was constructed to Mill's design. Charged with selecting the site, President James Polk and society managers chose an approximately 29-acre area bounded by Canal Street to the north, 15th Street NW–SW to the east, and the Potomac River to the south and west. By the time the cornerstone was laid on July 4, 1848, the site was 371.6 feet east and 123.17 south of L'Enfant's original location. Although the exact reason for the site shifting is not known, speculation has included the need for extensive landfill to create enough building surface to support both the obelisk and (unbuilt) colonnade and the inability of the marshy soil near the Tiber Creek to support the structure.[21] The Washington Monument Grounds soon became the site for large gatherings, beginning with a celebration on July 4, 1848, to commemorate the laying of the cornerstone (see page 87).

The Smithsonian Institution was the result of English scientist James Smithson's bequest to fund an educational institution in the United States. In 1846, Congress

19 White House Historical Association, "Fourth of July Celebrations at the White House in the 19th Century," accessed July 31, 2023 at https://www.whitehousehistory.org/fourth-of-july-celebrations-at-the-white-house-in-the-19th-century.

20 David S. Heidler and Jeanne T. Heidler, "Not a Ragged Mob; The Inauguration of 1829," White House Historical Association, accessed August 10, 2023, available at https://www.whitehousehistory.org/not-a-ragged-mob-the-inauguration-of-1829.

21 Robinson, Gasparini, and Kerr, "National Mall Historic District," 111.

Figure 5. Smithsonian Institution Building (or Castle), front, Mall-facing facade, ca. 1861–64 (Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division).

passed legislation that specified the funding's use and the location of the new institution—between 9th and 12th Streets SW on the south side of the National Mall. The red sandstone Medieval Revival-style building (later known as the Castle) designed by architect James Renwick was completed in 1855 and honored L'Enfant's desire that buildings for the "learned" be placed on the National Mall (Figure 5).[22]

ANDREW JACKSON DOWNING AND THE PICTURESQUE MALL (1850–1900)

By 1850, Washingtonians and federal officials recognized that the National Mall had not developed to the level of L'Enfant's ambitions, despite important efforts like the Washington Monument and the Smithsonian Institution (both under construction by this point). In 1849, Congress entrusted maintenance of the Mall public grounds to the newly created Department of the Interior. In October 1850, a group of prominent Washingtonians—Mayor Walter Lenox; Joseph Henry, secretary of the Smithsonian Institution; and W. W. Corcoran, a prominent financier and art collector—presented a proposal to landscape Washington's central spaces to President Millard Fillmore. Their effort was concurrent with efforts by the Interior Department's Commissioner of Public Buildings Ignatius Mudd to improve the Mall in anticipation of completing the Smithsonian Institution and Washington Monument. With the backing of prominent officials and Washingtonians and the president, Mudd invited Andrew Jackson Downing, the country's preeminent landscape design theoretician, practitioner, and tastemaker, to view the Mall grounds and suggest improvements. An 1851

22 Robinson, Gasparini, and Kerr, "National Mall Historic District," 110.

Smithsonian report stated that Downing's charge was to turn "the whole Mall, including the Smithsonian grounds, into an extended landscape garden, to be traversed in different directions by graveled walks and carriage drives and planted with specimens properly labeled, of all the varieties of trees and shrubs which flourish in this climate."[23]

Downing presented his plan in February 1851 for a series of "different, but compatible gardens" connected by winding paths (Figure 6).[24] Although he fulfilled L'Enfant's desire that the Capitol and President's House be connected by a park-like space, his plan for the Mall was a stark deviation from L'Enfant and Ellicott's Baroque plan. These "different, but compatible gardens" were six "scenes," as Downing described them, that consisted of a "Botanic Garden" between 1st and 3rd Streets NW–SW, a "Fountain Park" between 3rd and 7th Streets NW–SW, the "Smithsonian Pleasure Grounds" between 7th and 12th Streets NW–SW, an "Evergreen Garden" between 12th and 14th Streets NW–SW, "Monument Park" between 14th Street NW–SW and the Potomac River, and "Parade or President's Park" south of the President's House. The plantings and composition in each "scene" varied. For President's Park, Downing proposed a classical arch marking its Pennsylvania Avenue entrance and a circular parade ground (what became known as the "White Lot" and later the Ellipse) near the city canal on 15th Street, south of the Treasury Building. It was also to be more prominent than the original Jefferson arch that was in the same vista, but

Figure 6. Andrew Jackson Downing, ***Plan Showing Proposed Method of Laying Out the Public Grounds at Washington***, 1851. Manuscript copy by Nathaniel Michler, 1867 (National Archives and Records Administration, Record Group 77).

23 Quoted in Robinson, Gasparini, and Kerr, "National Mall Historic District," 112.

24 Therese O'Malley, "'A Public Museum of Trees': Mid-Nineteenth Century Plans for the Mall," in *The Mall in Washington, 1791–1991*, 2nd edition, ed. Richard Longstreth (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 2002), 66.

farther back, closer to East Executive Avenue. Both features were intended to complement the classical architecture of the President's House and the Greek Revival-style Treasury Building designed by Robert Mills. The "scenes" planned for the Washington Monument Grounds and National Mall, however, eschewed classicism for the picturesque compositional techniques for which Downing had become known. He placed looping, asymmetrical paths and spare plantings of trees around the Washington Monument, winding carriage drives and varied vegetation fronting the Smithsonian, and dense groups of conifers within concentric ellipses in the Evergreen Garden. Downing also rerouted the canal to follow Missouri Avenue NW between 3rd and 6th Streets to allow space for a fountain, a pond, and additional plantings. Downing employed curving lines and the soft edges of his massed plantings as a contrast to the angularity of L'Enfant's classical forms and the city's growing number of classical buildings.[25] Downing paired dense, secluded groves with sparse, airy groves in a scheme derived from naturalistic European garden design to move visitors from darkness to light and from openness to enclosure. Movement from one scene to another was to be a process of revelation, with each scene only becoming apparent as one stepped out of or into it.[26]

Downing not only ignored L'Enfant's broad avenue concept, but he also proposed expanding the Mall's symbolic function beyond what the French engineer suggested. Downing's Mall reconciled L'Enfant's intended recreational function with its emerging educational and memorial functions established by the Smithsonian Institution and Washington Monument, respectively. The Smithsonian Institution offered the educational and cultural role L'Enfant had envisioned, while the Washington Monument stood in place of his planned equestrian statue. Downing went beyond L'Enfant to argue that the landscape itself, what he conceived of as a "museum of trees," could be a didactic instrument to teach about nature and provide moral uplift.[27] As the United States continued its westward conquest of North America in the mid-nineteenth century, Downing wrote numerous essays attacking the wanton destruction of nature. Critical of humanity's relentless conquest of land and resources in the name of progress, Downing's Mall was intended as a place of moral repair that would restore the human connection to nature.[28]

With President Fillmore's approval, grading and clearing of the Smithsonian grounds commenced in spring 1851 (Figure 7). Congress also approved funding

25 O'Malley, "'A Public Museum of Trees': Mid-Nineteenth Century Plans for the Mall," 66–71.
26 Savage, *Monument Wars*, 73.
27 Lewis, "The Idea of the American Mall," 21.
28 Savage, *Monument Wars*, 73.

Figure 7. Detail, E. Sachse, ***Bird's-eye view of Washington, D.C.*, 1852,** looking west from the Capitol (Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division).

to landscape the grounds south of the President's House at this time. As work was underway, however, Downing died in a steamboat accident on the Hudson River in August 1852. As Downing was both the superintendent of the work and chief advocate for its principles, his death significantly hindered his plan's implementation. In addition, Downing's detailed plans for the Mall were lost after his death. The Smithsonian grounds and to a lesser extent President's Park South were the only areas developed according to his plan.[29]

Divided jurisdiction over the public grounds after 1867 also inhibited Downing's plan from full implementation. Congress transferred authority to the Army Corps of Engineers' Office in Charge of Public Buildings and Grounds (OPBG) to maintain the Mall between 3rd and 12th Streets NW–SW (with the exception of the Baltimore and Potomac Railroad Station discussed below), the Washington Monument Grounds, and President's Park. The Architect of the Capitol (AOC) assumed care of the Capitol grounds after 1867 and soon implemented landscaping designed by landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted. The Agriculture Department oversaw the development of its own grounds between 12th and 14th Streets NW–SW.[30]

Although Downing's 1851 plan was not implemented precisely to his specifications, his general picturesque approach of dividing large public grounds

29 O'Malley, "'A Public Museum of Trees': Mid-Nineteenth Century Plans for the Mall," 72–74; Robinson, Gasparini, and Kerr, "National Mall Historic District," 113.

30 O'Malley, "'A Public Museum of Trees': Mid-Nineteenth Century Plans for the Mall," 72–74; Robinson, Gasparini, and Kerr, "National Mall Historic District," 113.

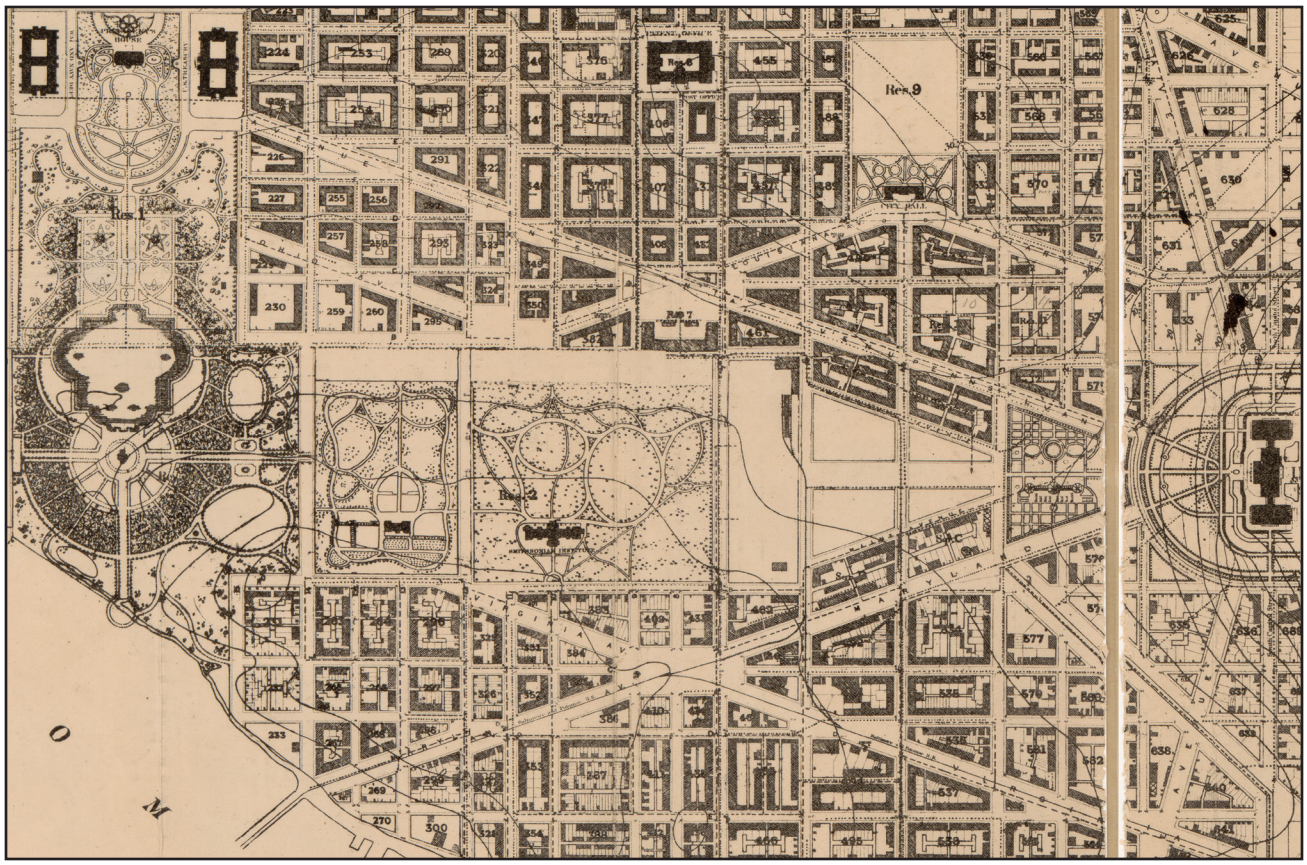


Figure 8. Proposed scheme for redeveloping National Mall showing Downing and Downingesque landscape of looping paths in their existing condition. Treatment of Mall west of 14th Street reflects proposed but unimplemented recommendations. Map by Joseph Enthoffer, originally published by Faehtz & Pratt, 1873 (Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division).

into smaller parks, establishing curving circulation patterns, and employing a variety of dense planting did guide development of the Mall, Washington Monument Grounds, and President's Park South in the second half of the nineteenth century (Figure 8). Downing intended for his series of gardens to be connected by an overall pathway pattern, but developments instead focused on grounds fronting government buildings within parcels divided by city streets. Where Downing had planned an Evergreen Garden, Commissioner of Public Buildings Benjamin French (Mudd's successor) permitted the newly established Department of Agriculture to plant experimental gardens beginning in 1863. South of the experimental gardens, the department constructed a new headquarters to a design by German architect Adolf Cluss.[31] Other buildings completed during this period include the Washington Armory (1856) at 6th and B Streets SW.

Much of the work Commissioner of Public Buildings Ignatius Mudd implemented in the 1850s deteriorated from neglect or disappeared during the Civil War. The Washington Monument Grounds became a cattle yard and slaughterhouse while the Armory became the Armory Square Hospital and was fronted by a complex of temporary wartime medical facilities that occupied significant space on the

31 Robinson, Gasparini, and Kerr, "National Mall Historic District," 118.

Figure 9. Bird's-eye view of National Mall showing grazing cattle near the city canal on the Washington Monument Grounds, looking northwest from 14th Street NW–SW, 1863. Note 14th Street in the foreground and the Treasury Building at the middle-right of the image (Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division).

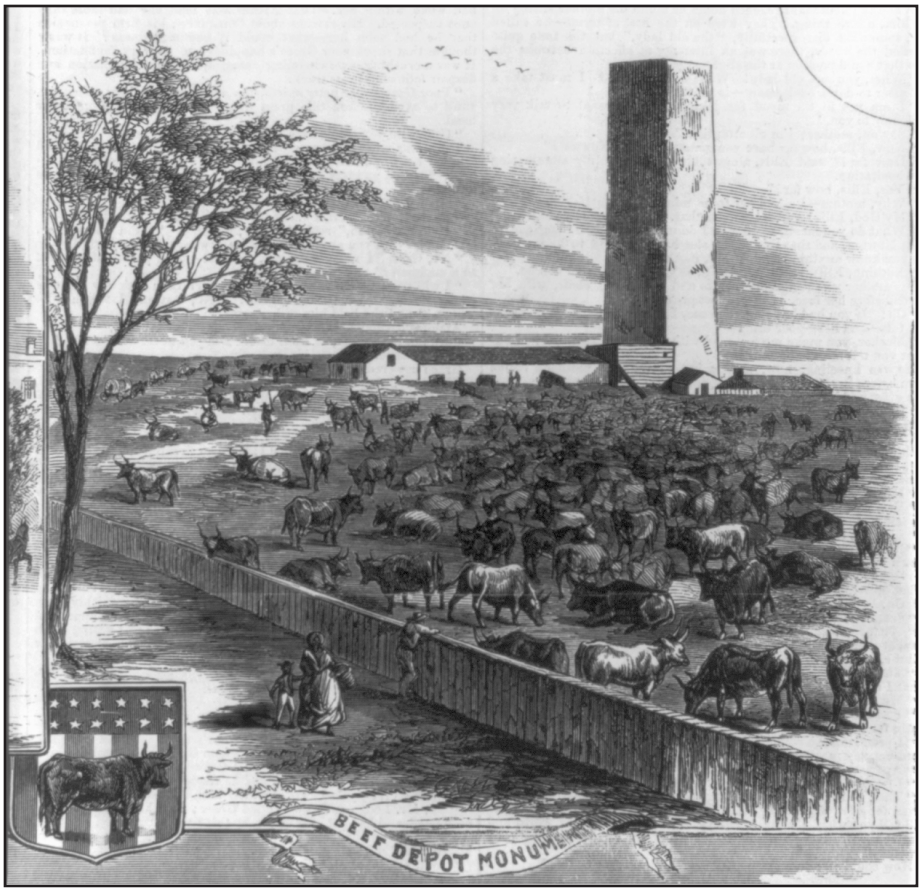


Figure 10. Drawing titled "Beef Depot Monument" that mocked the presence of grazing cattle on the Mall and the unfinished Washington Monument printed in *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, February 1, 1862, 173 (Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division).

Mall (Figure 9). Cattle grazed at the Ellipse, leaving the space "almost a desert," according to Commissioner of Public Buildings French.[32] In 1865, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* took the opportunity to mock both the state of the Mall and the stalled progress on the Washington Monument. An illustration printed in the paper depicted the partially finished monument surrounded by grazing cattle and offered the caption "Beef Depot Monument" (Figure 10).[33] For the newspaper, the image provided an ironic juxtaposition of actual public use vs. official, planned Washington. The Mall and Ellipse were also used for recreational purposes. In 1865, Washington's first baseball team, the Nationals, chose the Ellipse as their home field. A Washington African American team, the Washington Alerts, hosted the Philadelphia Pythians on the Ellipse in 1867.[34]

Beginning in 1867, the OPBG dismantled the military hospital intrusions on the public grounds and restored the landscape. This work included a massive tree-planting campaign on the Mall and elsewhere in the city in the 1870s, creating a vast, unified urban forest (Figure 11, Figure 12, and Figure 13). The OPBG planted

Figure 11. View from the Washington Monument of the Agriculture Department Grounds and Smithsonian Grounds on the Mall, looking east toward the Capitol, 1902. Originally published by Underwood & Underwood (Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division).

32 Robinson, Gasparini, and Kerr, "National Mall Historic District," 114.
33 *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, February 1, 1862, 173.
34 "Was baseball ever played on the Mall?," *Histories of the National Mall*, accessed January 3, 2024, available at https://mallhistory.org/explorations/show/baseball#:~:text=Washington%27s%20first%20baseball%20team%2C%20the,constructed%20specifically%20for%20the%20tournament.

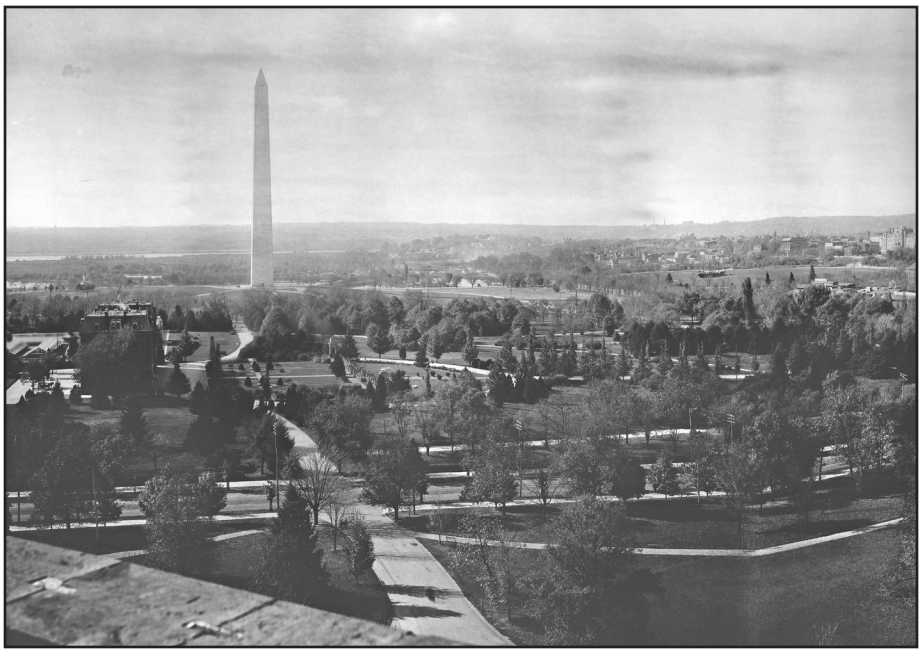


Figure 12. View of the National Mall looking west from atop the Smithsonian Institution Building (Castle), 1886. The image captures the extensive trees, gardens, and winding paths on the Mall (Smithsonian Institution Archives. Image #MAH-61686A).

Figure 13. Ground-level perspective of Smithsonian Grounds showing the maturation of the Downing-designed landscape, 1900 (Smithsonian Institution Archives. Image #MAH-17051).

more than seventy thousand trees over several years. As a result, the city's image became closely associated with trees by the 1880s.[35] The OPBG also reestablished the Ellipse with new grading and a new design of roads and walks by 1880. Alexander "Boss" Shepherd, Washington's director of public works, concurrently initiated covering the city canal. Although the Washington City Canal remained in operation until the mid-1850s, it did not foster the industrial development in

35 Savage, *Monument Wars*, 91.

Figure 14. Detail of Adolph Sachse sketch of Washington, DC, 1883, showing development of the National Mall's eastern end after the closing of the Washington City Canal (Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division).

the city its planners and boosters had envisioned and instead became an open sewer.[36] The city laid a new street, B Street North (later Constitution Avenue), over the old canal. The portion of the Mall over which the canal extended became two parks—Armory Square (or Armory Park) and Seaton Park, laid out in the area where Downing had planned the unbuilt "Fountain Park" (Figure 14). Other important projects from this period include the completion of the Washington Monument in 1884 and its opening to the public in 1888.[37] While the Washington Monument Grounds was the site of large gatherings and events prior to 1888, including annual Fourth of July celebrations, its completion solidified its use and importance for national celebrations and other activities.

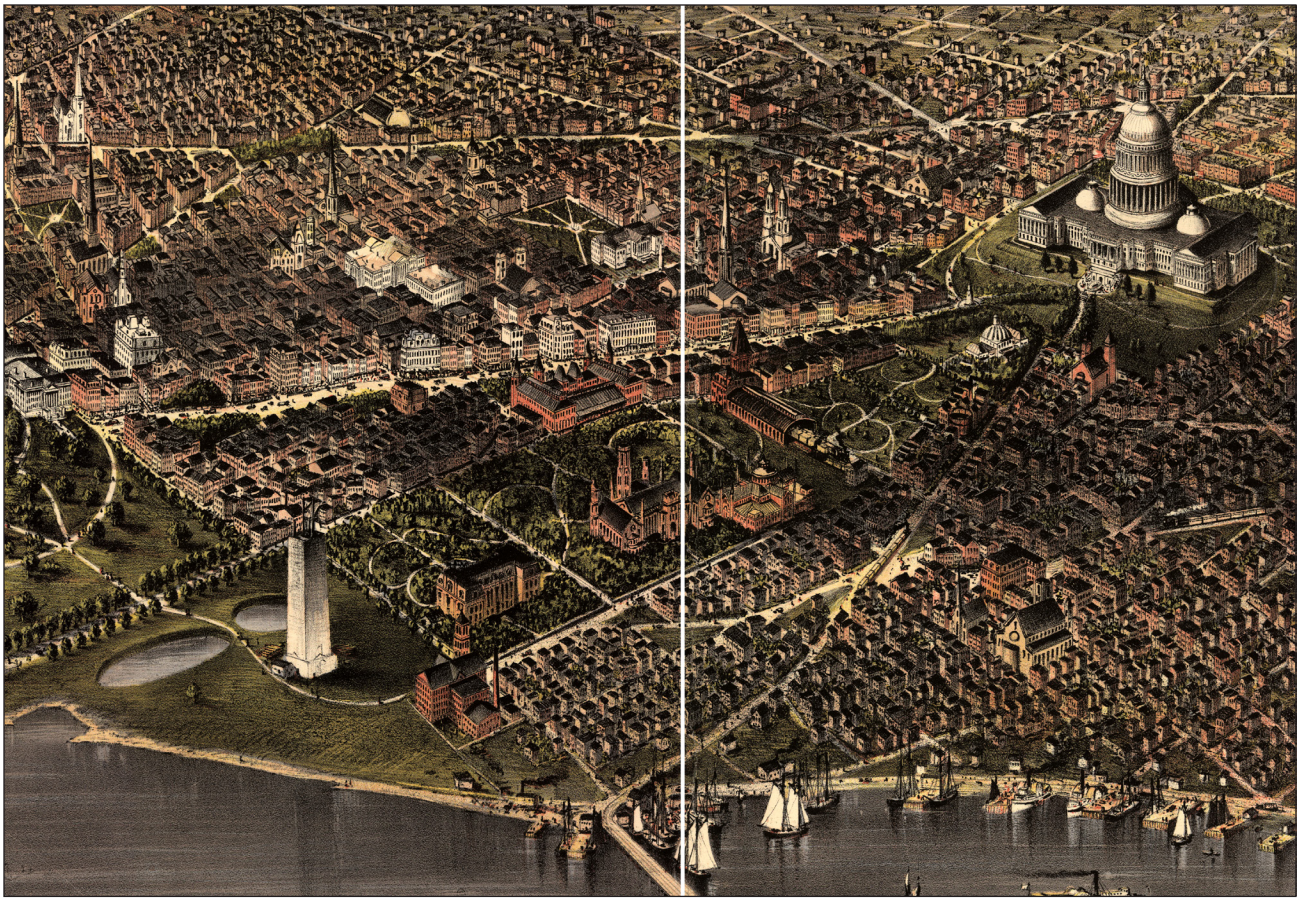
Two new buildings filled out the Mall's south side in the late nineteenth century. The buildings—the US National Museum (now the Smithsonian Arts and Industries Building) and Army Medical Museum—reflected architect Adolf Cluss's eclectic take on Victorian-era revival architecture. The former, when it opened in 1881, helped further establish the Mall as a space for museums holding artifacts of national significance.[38] In contrast, the Baltimore and Potomac Railroad Station, completed in 1874 on the north end of Armory Square at 6th Street NW and B Street NW, marked a significant intrusion by private enterprise onto public grounds (Figure 15). Because of the station's construction, mountains of coal and out-of-service trains were regular features of the area directly abutting the train shed. In 1893, to mitigate the aesthetic impacts of such train features, a

36 Elliot Carter, "What's Left of the Washington City Canal?," Architect of the Capital, accessed April 20, 2023, available at https://architectofthecapital.org/posts/2016/5/29/washington-city-canal.
37 Robinson, Gasparini, and Kerr, "National Mall Historic District," 115, 132.
38 Robinson, Gasparini, and Kerr, "National Mall Historic District," 118.

4'-long, tree-covered berm was built west of the tracks and train shed to screen them from views from the west. The station and subsequent berm effectively bisected the Mall into east and west sections.[39]

The Downing and Downing-inspired landscape created a new symbolic function on the Mall. The landscape designer and other Americans in the nineteenth century saw trees as living memorials of the past, and, in many cases, particular trees on the Mall were dedicated to prominent individuals. Thus, the urban forest that populated the Mall and extended through the city in the nineteenth century's second half paired with commemorative statues to establish a memorial landscape. Visitors flocked to Washington in the late nineteenth century to see its vast collection of trees and what had become, as Kirk Savage writes, "a profusion of edifying of delightful grounds."[40] "Trees and monuments help explain why Washington emerged in the nineteenth century as the most important tourist city in the United States," Savage argues.[41] Indeed, tourists came to Washington in droves despite the fact that the city had no formal monumental

Figure 15. C. R. Parsons, ***City of Washington birds-eye view from the Potomac-looking north*, 1880. Originally published by Currier & Ives. The drawing shows the extent of Downing's influence over the landscape treatment of the National Mall (Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division).**



39 Robinson, Gasparini, and Kerr, "National Mall Historic District," 118–19.
40 Savage, *Monument Wars*, 64, 91.
41 Savage, *Monument Wars*, 94.

core or "centripetal" space that concentrated the nation's experience in one place. Instead, the nation's memorial landscape was spread across the city in a scattering of public buildings and monuments.[42] In this way, Downing's scheme complemented L'Enfant's dispersal of commemorative functions across the city.

Thus, the late-nineteenth-century National Mall served various symbolic roles, as Downing intended— didactic, moralizing, and memorializing. It hosted several functions, both intended and unintended—public grounds for leisure as L'Enfant proposed, public cattle grazing space, transportation hub, and educational and memorial landscape. Some observers saw the urban forest and pleasure grounds that developed on the National Mall by the end of the nineteenth century as a fulfillment of L'Enfant's vision of leisure space for the "idle." Some critics, however, began to complain that the trees that resulted from Downing's plans and the 1870s tree-planting campaign had matured to the point that they disrupted L'Enfant's vistas and axial relations. This was especially apparent on the Mall, as the old "waste" ground became an urban forest by the 1870s. Despite the Mall's fragmented development due to divided jurisdiction, the public grounds offered sylvan views of a cohesive wooded landscape that spread across the Mall and connected it to forested areas across the city.[43] *Harper's Monthly* described the Mall in 1881 as a "noble pleasure-ground" that had "almost taken shape as the continuous public park it is intended to be."[44] The forest that dominated the Mall left the Washington Monument Grounds and the Ellipse as the public grounds' sole large-scale open spaces for people to gather in the hundreds or thousands.

A concurrent project undertaken beginning in the 1870s significantly increased the public grounds both physically and symbolically west of the Washington Monument grounds. The Army Corps of Engineer initially conceived of the project as a plan to improve navigation of the Potomac River that was consistently impeded by sediment. Channel dredging proved to be a way to control flooding and raise the muddy tidal flats along the Potomac River. The Corp devised and executed a plan in the early–mid 1880s in which scows would carry the dredged materials to railroad cars that then transported the mud across trestles into the flats. The Corp built a stone seawall on a foundation of brush and rock laid in a trench. After 1884, they used hydraulic dredging machinery that included a pump that sucked mud and sand from the channel and deposited it through a pipe in the desired location (west of the Washington Monument grounds). The result was the enlargement of the land mass adjoining the Mall's west end. Over the course of

42 Savage, *Monument Wars*, 95.
43 Savage, *Monument Wars*, 95.
44 George P. Lathrop, "A Nation in a Nutshell," *Harper's Monthly* (March 1881), 544.

three decades of work, the project created 739 acres of new land—what are now East and West Potomac Parks.[45]

THE SENATE PARK (MCMILLAN) COMMISSION REINTERPRETS L'ENFANT (1901–43)

By the beginning of the twentieth century, a group of politicians, business leaders, federal officials, and architects sought to commemorate the one hundredth anniversary of the federal government's 1800 move to Washington with public improvements. The result of these efforts was the Senate Park Commission. The commission, established by the US Senate in 1901, was chaired by Senator James McMillan and included architects Daniel Burnham and Charles McKim, landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens, and, acting as its secretary, Charles Moore. Their mission was to improve the design and appearance of Washington, DC, particularly its historic core. The commission's recommendations were compiled into a 1902 report that became known as the McMillan Plan.[46] Among other goals, the McMillan Plan established a design framework for the greater National Mall area. The McMillan Plan sought to recapture the design essence of the L'Enfant plan by removing what the commissioners saw as discordant elements and allowing development of new buildings and parks based on City Beautiful movement-influenced principles.[47]

The City Beautiful movement was a US urban planning movement prevalent in the 1890s through the 1920s. The theorists, architects, landscape architects, and planners who shaped the movement sought to improve cities' appearance and their residents' quality of life through comprehensive planning. The movement applied the balance and harmony of European classical architecture and planning to American cities. Advocates emphasized building civic centers, parks, and grand boulevards, and new public buildings were to be designed according to composition principles of symmetry and axiality taught at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris. Such City-Beautiful-aligned planning and architecture shaped the development of the temporary White City of the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893. Burnham, a partner at the prolific Chicago firm Burnham & Root, was the fair's chief of construction, and McKim, Olmsted, and Saint-Gaudens all played prominent roles. In Washington, City Beautiful advocates

45 Robinson, Gasparini, and Kerr, "National Mall Historic District," 119.
46 "McMillan Plan," Cultural Landscape Foundation, accessed April 20, 2023, available at https://www.tclf.org/landscapes/mcmillan-plan.
47 *Constitution Gardens: National Mall & Memorial Parks – West Potomac Park: Cultural Landscape Inventory* (National Park Service, 2008), 21.

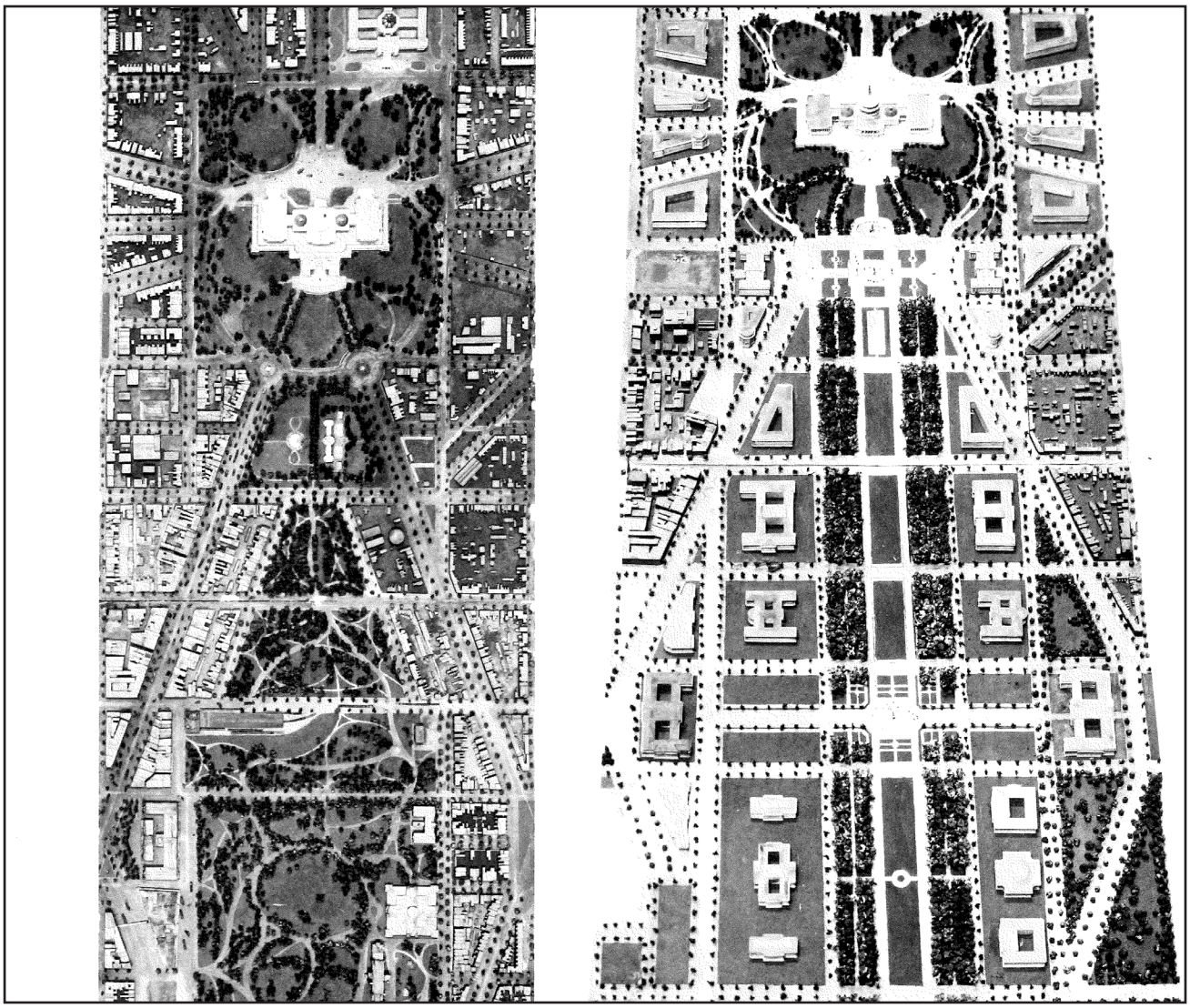


Figure 16. Existing conditions (left) and the McMillan Plan's proposed treatment (right) of the National Mall, 1901 (Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division).

found an opportunity to apply their vision on a much larger scale and enact permanent change.[48]

The commission proposed a radical revision of what the Mall had become and challenged the principles that had guided its development in the past century. The commission's 1902 report to Congress—*The Improvement of the Park System of the District of Columbia*—noted that "the great space known as the Mall, which was intended to form a unified connection between the Capitol and the White House, and to furnish sites for a certain class of public buildings, has been diverted from its original purpose and cut into fragments, each portion receiving a separate and individual treatment, thus invading what was a single

48 Daniel M. Bluestone, "Detroit's City Beautiful and the Problem of Commerce," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 47, no. 3 (September 1988): 245–62.

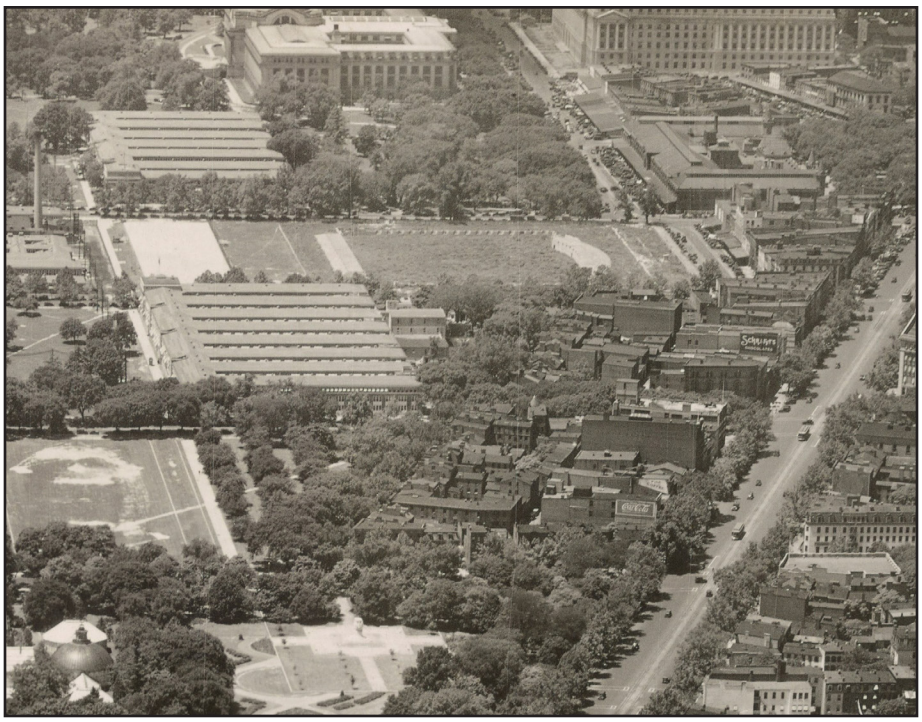


Figure 17. Aerial view of nineteenth-century buildings between then-Missouri Avenue NW and Pennsylvania Avenue NW, looking west, 1930 (National Archives and Records Administration, Record Group 18).

Figure 18. Similar view to previous figure depicting partial demolition of nineteenth-century buildings, 1932 (National Archives and Records Administration, Record Group 18).

composition."[49] At the heart of the commission's proposals for the National Mall was the elimination of its Victorian landscape, including Downing's Smithsonian grounds and other improvements that followed his picturesque approach. In place of the scattered trees were formal rows of trees flanking a central lawn, and consistent, straight lines were proposed for buildings sites and circulation paths (Figure 16). The commission proposed that new buildings have a 445-foot setback from the center of the Mall and, thus, 890 feet between building façades along the Mall. Proper building setbacks, an open lawn, and removing discordant elements like the Baltimore and Potomac Station would establish a wide, open vista from the Washington Monument to the Capitol. The McMillan Plan's Mall composition formed a Roman cross to include a site proposed for the planned Lincoln Memorial at the western end of the Capitol axis.[50] The commission honored the Mall's nineteenth-century development, however, in advocating that new buildings be "devoted to scientific purposes and for the great museums."[51] The commissioners argued that the Mall should be timeless and set apart from the changing city around it. Although Downing had intended the Mall to be an escape from the city, the urban forest that resulted from his plans was part of an interconnected network of similar grounds that integrated it with the city.[52]

The Senate Park commissioners saw themselves as L'Enfant's successors and their proposals as the logical extension of his design. However, as architectural historian Richard Guy Wilson notes, the McMillan Plan went "far beyond" what L'Enfant had proposed.[53] Historian Kirk Savage affirms Wilson's point, arguing that the commissioners' claims that they were continuing L'Enfant's intent were "profoundly misleading."[54] The commissioners, Savage writes, also downplayed the destructive elements of their plan. The tree-clearing required to open the vista would destroy what had become a beloved local park to Washingtonians and visitors. Although the commissioners named the Baltimore and Potomac station as a key "discordant" building the plan aimed to remove, the plan would also require demolishing a group of residential and commercial buildings between 3rd and 6th Streets NW on Missouri Avenue. The majority of the buildings on Missouri Avenue were demolished for construction of the National Gallery of Art on a site the McMillan Plan set aside for its new civic architecture (Figure 17 and Figure

49 Charles Moore, ed., *The Improvement of the Park System of the District of Columbia,* Report of the Senate Park Commission, 57th Congress, 1st Session, Senate Report No. 166 (1902), 23.
50 Robinson, Gasparini, and Kerr, "National Mall Historic District," 123–24.
51 Moore, *The Improvement of the Park System of the District of Columbia*, 44.
52 Savage, *Monument Wars*, 174.
53 Richard Guy Wilson, "American Renaissance: Charles Follen McKim and the Aesthetic Ideal," in *The National Mall: Rethinking Washington's Monumental Core*, eds. Nathan Glazer and Cynthia R. Field (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), 28.
54 Savage, *Monument Wars*, 10.

Figure 19. Rendering of McMillan Plan proposal for National Mall showing Beaux-Arts-style buildings lining a new central lawn, 1902. The view faces southwest from just north of the Capitol dome (Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division).

18). The federal government made no effort to rehouse those residents displaced by their homes' demolition.[55]

The McMillan Plan's Mall was to be instantly understood as a national Court of Honor that created, for the first time, a concentrated monumental core designed to reference American history and aspire to higher ideals of national prominence.[56] Indeed, the McMillan Plan's Mall fully embraced and greatly enhanced its didactic and memorializing roles, albeit in a manner vastly different from L'Enfant or Downing. Americans could come to the National Mall, stroll around its classically landscaped grounds, and learn about and celebrate their nation through noble monuments, sculptures, and museums (Figure 19).[57] Whereas the L'Enfant plan reflected the nascent republic's largely decentralized government in its informal Mall as a public park for the "idle" and dispersal of monumental sites throughout the city and the Downing Mall evoked nineteenth-century sensibilities about connecting to nature and environmental moral uplift by providing a vast museum of trees, the McMillan Plan established a classical, monumental core that reflected a more centralized national government more

55 Savage, *Monument Wars*, 172.

56 The Court of Honor was a feature of the 1893 Chicago fair (Savage, *Monument Wars*, 159).

57 Edith L. B. Turner, "The People's Home Ground," in *The National Mall: Rethinking Washington's Monumental Core*, eds. Nathan Glazer and Cynthia R. Field (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), 70.

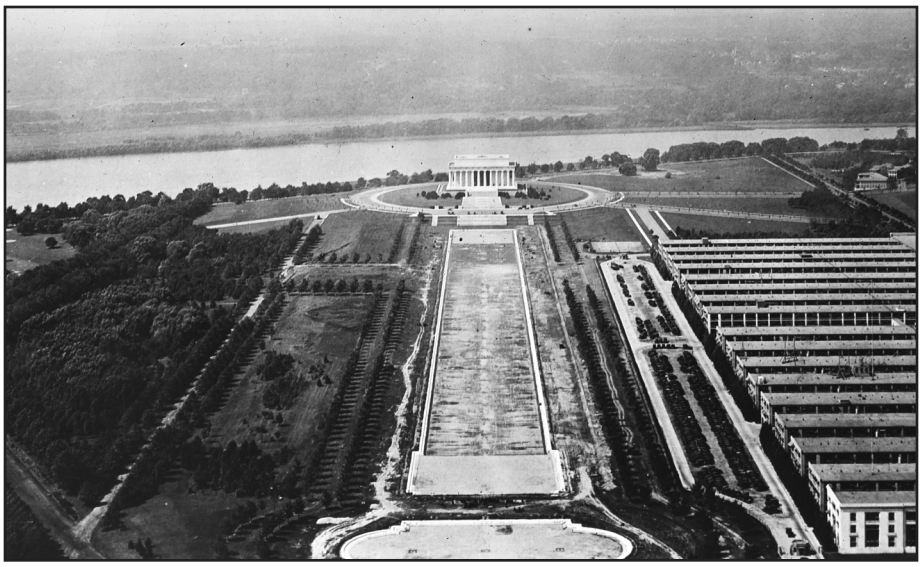


Figure 20. Bird's-eye view of Lincoln Memorial and Reflecting Pool under construction, looking west, 1921 (National Archives and Records Administration, Record Group 79).

Figure 21. View across National Mall east from Washington Monument, 1918. The image includes the temporary World War I buildings near the center (Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division).

confidently asserting itself on the international stage in the early twentieth century.[58]

The McMillan Plan's successes in the 1910s and 1920s included construction of the Lincoln Memorial on the commissioners' preferred site in the newly established West Potomac Park (Figure 20). The Lincoln Memorial, designed by architect Henry Bacon, and the accompanying Reflecting Pool were completed in 1922. In 1918, the federal government constructed temporary buildings to

58 Turner, "The People's Home Ground," 70.

aid American efforts during World War I (Figure 21). The buildings were placed north of the Reflecting Pool site and in Reservation Nos. 4 and 5 between 4th and 7th Streets NW–SW. The temporary buildings did not abide the setbacks and projected far into the center of the Mall. Although the buildings themselves, constructed of concrete or stuccoed wood, did not adhere to the McMillan Plan's Beaux-Arts architectural preferences, the site plan developed by architect Horace Peaslee and Colonel W. W. Harts of the OPBG followed the McMillan Plan's guidance in its layout of roads, walks, and open spaces. When the federal government removed most of the temporary buildings in the early 1930s, the framework of the site plan remained.[59]

Redesigning the Mall proved controversial among many Washingtonians. The plan required demolishing houses and businesses and removing a forest, gardens, and statues that both locals and tourists had cherished for many decades.[60] Because of such resistance, it was not until the mid-1930s that much of the McMillan Plan's vision for the Mall became reality. The work included cutting down the nineteenth-century trees, planting formal rows of American elm trees in lawn panels intended to frame the Mall's central vista, installing new light fixtures, and sodding the Mall's central lawn (Figure 22). In addition, traffic congestion in downtown Washington prompted federal officials to build four new roads running east to west across the Mall (named for presidents Washington, Adams, Jefferson, and Madison) as part of the 1930s work. The new roads also provided parking to

Figure 22. Photograph showing clearing and grading work on the National Mall fronting the Smithsonian Institution as the Downing landscape was supplanted by the McMillan Plan's vision, 1934 (Smithsonian Institution Archives. Image #SIA 000095_B31_F19_002).

59 Robinson, Gasparini, and Kerr, "National Mall Historic District," 128.
60 Savage, *Monument Wars*, 152.

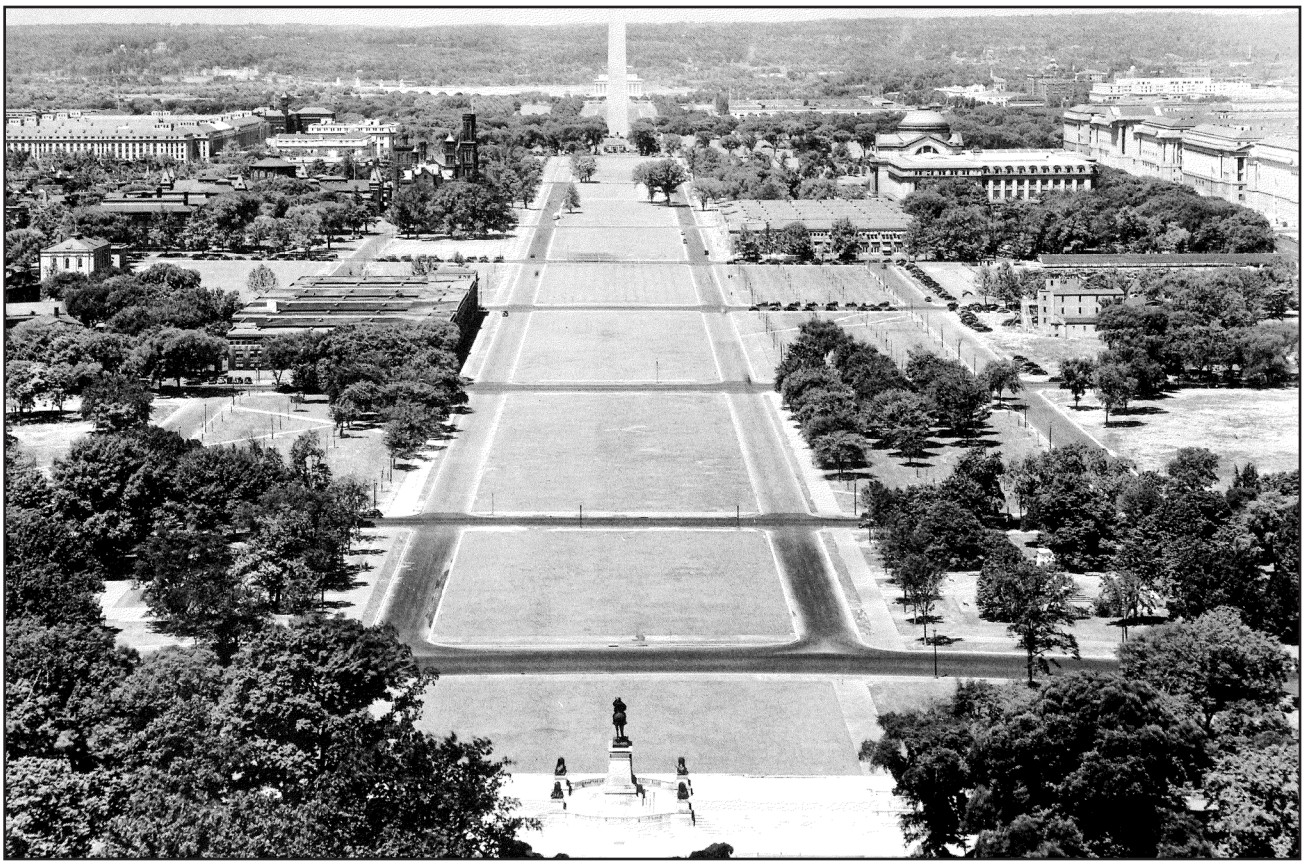


Figure 23. Bird's-eye view of National Mall west from Capitol, 1936, capturing implementation of McMillan plan's landscape treatment (US Commission of Fine Arts).

accommodate the increased presence of automobiles in Washington. A 1936 aerial photograph shows the redesigned Mall soon after completion (Figure 23).

Ongoing and planned physical changes to the Mall paralleled administrative changes. In February 1925, Congress absorbed the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds into the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks. The director of the new office would report directly to the president of the United States.[61] In June 1933, President Franklin Roosevelt's administration issued Executive Order #6166, which abolished the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks and transferred its responsibilities to the newly established Office of National Parks, Buildings, and Reservations in the Department of the Interior. This new agency was a reconfiguration of the National Park Service, which dated to 1916, to include greatly expanded responsibilities such administering areas formerly under the Forest Service and War Department and numerous sites in and near Washington, DC. Under the new organization, the former Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks became National Capital Parks. The Roosevelt

61 "A History of National Capital Parks," *NPS History*, accessed July 19, 2023, available at http://npshistory.com/publications/nace/adhi/chap2.htm.

administration restored the agency's original name, National Park Service (NPS), in 1934 but retained its new responsibilities.[62]

Despite the McMillan Commission's rhetoric about the Mall becoming a space of national unity, their plan provided no gathering places for public assembly or political expression. Instead, commissioners expected visitors to the reimagined National Mall to engage in "gentle contemplation."[63] The transformation of the Mall landscape, however, unintentionally created a vast new space for people to gather, historian Lucy Barber writes. Whereas the public had previously gathered at the Washington Monument Grounds or the Ellipse for events and demonstrations, the historic Mall (between 3rd and 14th Streets) had been filled with trees and the picturesque Downing and Downing-inspired landscape and, therefore, not conducive to assemblies of people. The large expanse of lawn established by 1936 allowed crowds to assemble and see one another.[64] Architectural historian Richard Longstreth adds that the Mall's design after 1936 allowed people, rather than buildings or memorials, to dominate the space.[65] Indeed, one of the largest and most complex events took place on the newly completed and expanded National Mall in the summer of 1937. The Boy Scouts of America's National Jamboree attracted tens of thousands of people to the National Mall and created a vast "Jamboree City," with accommodations for around 28,000 scouts and leaders (see pages 111–14). While the event was the first and last Boy Scout Jamboree on the National Mall due to the cost to the federal government and the loss of recreation areas to the public during the event, it paved the way for the National Mall as the location of large-scale events of national importance.

The Mall, meanwhile, continued to serve recreational purposes. Baseball continued as a regular feature at the Ellipse; indeed, in 1904, the OPBG laid out nine baseball diamonds there. By the end of World War I, tennis courts were installed in President's Park South near 15th and B streets. Facilities for baseball, basketball, football, soccer, tennis, and golf were built on the Washington Monument Grounds in the first quarter of the twentieth century.[66]

62 Mackintosh, *Rock Creek Park: An Administrative History*, 70; *The Mall, National Mall, Cultural Landscape Inventory* (National Park Service, 2018), 32.
63 Savage, *Monument Wars*, 173.
64 Lucy Barber, *Marching on Washington*, 222.
65 Richard Longstreth, "Introduction: Change and Continuity on the Mall, 1791–1991," 15.
66 Robinson, Gasparini, and Kerr, "National Mall Historic District," 134.

RACIAL SEGREGATION AND THE MALL

Although the McMillan Commission filled its 1902 report with references to civic improvements for "the public," this generalized conception of the American public did not account for the realities of life in the District of Columbia and the United States for Black Americans.[67] Historically, the federal government purposefully excluded Black people, women, and other underrepresented groups from full and open participation in public spaces and events that have been the dominion of White men. Thus, accounts of these underrepresented groups' limited participation are often difficult to find, particularly through traditional research methods. The *de jure* and *de facto* racial segregation of public spaces during the twentieth century provides an important context to this history of events on the National Mall.[68]

In the Reconstruction Era (ca. 1865–77), Black people, many of whom had been formerly enslaved, began to have more access to aspects of society that had been closed to them. The federal Freedmen's Bureau helped freed Black men and women establish schools, purchase land, and legalize marriages entered into during slavery.[69] African American men were elected to Congress and state legislatures for the first time in US history. President Abraham Lincoln's second inauguration on March 4, 1865, was the first to include Black marchers in the inaugural parade, though they were not invited to participate in any other inaugural events. The marchers included four companies of African American troops, African American Masons, and an African American lodge of the fraternal Independent Order of the Odd Fellows.[70] Frederick Douglass was among those greeted at the White House following the parade, though he faced difficulties getting past the guards at the event. The more inclusive society previewed during Reconstruction was short lived, however, as a White backlash against such opportunities resulted in increasingly racially restrictive laws—known colloquially as Jim Crow laws—in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, particularly in the South.

Washington, DC, had relatively few Jim Crow laws, but *de facto* segregation and racism were widespread by turn of the twentieth century. Most of the recreation

67 See Charles Moore, ed., *The Improvement of the Park System of the District of Columbia* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1902), 28, 29.

68 *De jure* segregation is legally sanctioned segregation based on laws or actions of the state; *de facto* segregation is segregation that occurs due to economic or social factors absent explicitly legal grounding.

69 "The Freedmen's Bureau," National Archives, accessed December 13, 2023, available at https://www.archives.gov/research/african-americans/freedmens-bureau?_ga=2.169867105.1714000436.1702488261-1277137914.1683666273.

70 Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies, "Pass in Review," US Senate, accessed December 13, 2023, available at https://www.inaugural.senate.gov/pass-in-review/.

facilities in the District of Columbia were racially segregated, either by social custom or administrative design.[71] Federal recreation facilities in the District of Columbia were also segregated. A debate over segregated beaches on the Tidal Basin in the National Mall illustrates the ongoing controversy regarding this policy. When a swimming beach for White people opened on the Tidal Basin in 1918, a proposed beach for "colored people" on the opposite bank followed a few years after. This proposition resulted in debates about segregation and other racial policies in the House and the Senate. The local press fed concerns about having a "colored beach" in such a prominent location. The *Baltimore Afro-American* newspaper noted that many Black Washingtonians opposed having to use a separate beach and but did not provide specific names or protest activities. The paper often referred to the beach as a "Jim Crow beach."[72] An article in the newspaper struck a defiant tone: "If use of the existing beach by white people should be permitted under any circumstances, there is a growing disposition among the colored people in the District to use it with them."[73] In the end, after no resolution could be reached, funding shut down entirely and the White beach was closed in 1926.[74]

Segregation in the District increased in the first decades of the twentieth century. Anti-discrimination laws passed in 1872 and 1873 had surreptitiously disappeared from the DC Code by the early 1900s.[75] Segregation in Washington expanded dramatically during President Woodrow Wilson's administration (1913–21), with previously integrated departments in federal agencies such as the Post Office and Treasury having separate washrooms and lunchrooms for "colored only."[76] One of the most public displays of segregation on the National Mall was the 1922 dedication of the Lincoln Memorial, where seating was segregated by race. Historian Christopher A. Thomas writes, "[The dedication] was a microcosm of the strained race relations of its day, marked by the rhetoric of good intentions and the behavior of bigotry."[77]

71 Martha Verbrugge, "Exercising Civil Rights: Public Recreation and Racial Segregation in Washington, DC, 1900–49," in *DC Sports: The Nation's Capital at Play*, eds. Chris Elzey and David K. Wiggins (Fayetteville, AR: University of Arkansas Press, 2015), 111–12.

72 "Bathing Beach Plan Killed By Madden," *Baltimore Afro-American*, June 20, 1925.

73 "No Colored Beach. No White One,"*Baltimore Afro-American*, March 7, 1925.

74 Verbrugge, "Exercising Civil Rights," 113–14.

75 Patricia Kuhn Babin, *Links to the Past: A Historic Resource Study of National Park Service Golf Courses in the District of Columbia* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, 2017), 91.

76 Peter Perk, "Race Riot of 1919 Gave Glimpse of Future Struggles," *Washington Post*, March 1, 1999.

77 Kelly B. Gormly, "A Century Ago, the Lincoln Memorial's Dedication Underscored the Nation's Racial Divide," *Smithsonian Magazine*, May 22, 2022.

The policy of segregated municipal recreation areas was formalized in the 1930s under the "Recreation System Plan for the District of Columbia," which was based on the city's segregated school system. While municipal parks were now segregated by administrative policy, Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes described NPS's segregation policy as follows: "everyone regardless of creed, color, or race…is invited to visit the national parks and monuments [but] it has long been the policy to conform generally to the State customs with regards to accommodation of visitors."[78] Ickes personally was an advocate for desegregation, but his role as secretary of the interior required that he follow the Roosevelt administration's policies. The administration was reluctant to support civil rights due to a delicate political coalition required to pass New Deal legislation.[79]

Through the 1930s, however, Black activists and allies from within and outside the Interior Department helped to challenge such policies in DC and elsewhere. W. J. Trent served as an advisor to Ickes and pushed for the desegregation of southern national parks. Trent collaborated with civil rights organizations to implement change within the strictures of the federal government. A veteran of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), attorney William Hastie served in the Interior Department as an assistant solicitor from 1933 to 1937. Hastie worked closely with NPS solicitor Nathan Margold and with the NAACP to develop a strategy to challenge the constitutionality of segregation in the courts rather than pushing for the equalization of facilities. This coordinated effort between civil rights groups and advocates within the federal bureaucracy gradually forced a reconsideration of the Interior Department's policy on racial segregation in visitor facilities in southern parks.[80]

The Roosevelt administration's delicate balance on civil rights can be seen in the inaugural planning for Roosevelt's 1933 inauguration. The event was controversial for its "two separate sets of inauguration activities," including *de facto* segregated inaugural balls and the selling of tickets for separate sections for Black people in the parade grandstand. Planners for Roosevelt's inauguration had created a subcommittee, the Committee on Special Entertainment, ostensibly to make sure Black people were treated fairly, though this group faced intense criticism from

78 Terrance Young, "A Contradiction in Democratic Government: W. J. Trent, Jr., and the Struggle to Desegregate National Park Campgrounds," *Environmental History* 14, no. 4 (October 2009): 656.

79 Tsahai Tafari, "The Rise and Fall of Jim Crow: The Presidents," *Thirteen*, accessed August 8, 2023, available at https://www.thirteen.org/wnet/jimcrow/print/p_struggle_president.html.

80 Erin Krutko Devlin, *Segregation in Virginia's National Parks, 1916–1965* (National Park Service, 2022), 25–26.

the Black community.[81] Dr. Carter G. Woodson, editor of the *Journal of Negro History*, stated that "to make a special effort to stage festivities at the back door when they are denied the right to come through the front door and participate in the grand functions of this occasion is…a step backward toward slavery…. It looks too much like slavery to see our men and women purchasing expensive finery to imitate others whom they can only see by peeping through the windows and the cracks of the doors."[82]

Opera singer Marian Anderson's April 1939 performance to an integrated audience at the Lincoln Memorial could be viewed as a turning point for Harold Ickes's public support of desegregation (see pages 181–83). As a representative of the Roosevelt administration, Ickes personally introduced Anderson, who sang in front of a diverse audience of 70,000, contrasting strongly with the segregated dedication of the memorial in 1922. In May 1939, a month after Anderson's performance, Ickes blasted the National Gentile League's plans for a three-day rally at the foot of the Washington Monument. Answering to the league's request for permission to use the Sylvan Theater for the event, Ickes stated:

> The Sylvan Theater belongs to all of the people of the United States, regardless of race, color or creed and for that reason we should not permit its use by an organization that, according to its letterhead and the body of its application, is designed to foster, if not to create, race prejudice against another group of American citizens.[83]

Still, NPS did not necessarily follow Ickes's example. Arno B. Cammerer, the director of NPS through most of the 1930s, chose to keep recreational facilities in the National Mall segregated following the municipal policies rather than integrate them as Ickes had suggested.[84] In December 1945, Secretary Ickes furthered the Department of Interior's policy of non-discrimination with new general rules and regulations that mandated proprietors, owners, and operators of public facilities in NPS-managed areas could not discriminate based on "race, creed, color, or national origin.[85]"

81 G. David Houston, "Houston Defends March 4th Inaugural as Democratic," *Baltimore Afro-American*, February 25, 1933.
82 Dr. Carter G. Woodson, "Woodson Raps Separate Arrangements for the Roosevelt Inauguration," *Baltimore Afro-American*, February 4, 1933.
83 "Gentile League Rally in Sylvan Theater Banned," *Evening Star*, May 30, 1939.
84 Babin, *Links to the Past*, 121–22.
85 *Federal Register*, December 8, 1945, 14866.

ADAPTING THE MCMILLAN PLAN FOR MODERN USE (1943–PRESENT)

In the immediate post-World-War-II era, the McMillan Plan's physical transformation of the National Mall firmly established it as the city's monumental core. The clearing of the Mall's nineteenth-century landscape in the mid-1930s, however, created a huge open tract that newspapers observed was at times "empty of life and movement."[86] Indeed, some saw the large open space as uninviting and lacking human scale. The pre-1930s Mall regularly drew both Washingtonians and visitors who strolled through the forests and gardens throughout the day. The broad vista, by contrast, at times left a literal and symbolic void, and the new through-roads encouraged visitors to experience the city's monumental core by automobile rather than on foot.[87] For proponents of the McMillan Plan's vision, the persistent presence of wartime temporary buildings and a lack of an appetite for large-scale intervention were obstacles to further progress on the National Mall. A sharp increase in federal employees through the New Deal and World War II did not reverse after the war's conclusion. The federal workforce remained constant until the Korean War again increased government ranks, necessitating retaining the temporary buildings from both world wars. In addition, neither the legislative nor the executive branch expressed enthusiasm to fulfill the McMillan Plan proposals as their predecessors had.[88]

The ways in which use of the Mall had changed and the lack of interest in further development both provoked criticism. Some federal officials and Washingtonians feared that the National Mall had become stagnant at mid-century. Washington's *Evening Star* reported in autumn 1966 that the Mall was a "gigantic parking lot," a result of the many surface parking lots that had been constructed on the Mall's south side in recent decades. A sea of cars, for instance, is shown filling the space where the Armory Square Hospital had sat before its demolition in 1964 (Figure 24). The *Evening Star* article explained the newspaper's assessment:

> During the day, the roadways through it are jammed with cars and tourist buses. But people, for whom this great mile-long open space stretching between the Capitol and the Washington Monument was intended, are conspicuously absent. The only ones you see are those walking to and from the cars and buses, or between the museums along the Mall's borders [(Figure 25)]. Why is it that this grand green park, rimmed with rows of tall trees, is one of the loneliest spots in town? The answer is easy: It's dead, dull and unbeguiling.[89]

86 Robert J. Lewis, "Needed: A Miracle on the Mall," *Evening Star*, September 13, 1964.
87 Savage, *Monument Wars*, 251–52.
88 Robinson, Gasparini, and Kerr, "National Mall Historic District," 135.
89 Roberta Hornig, "The Story of the Mall," *Evening Star*, October 30, 1966.

Figure 24. This early 1970s view of the National Mall (facing north from south side of the Mall toward the National Gallery of Art) shows the large swaths of land devoted to surface parking lots by the mid-twentieth century (DC Department of Transportation).

Figure 25. Buses, such as those shown here parked in front of the Smithsonian Institution Building (or Castle) ca. 1950s, increasingly dominated the Mall in the mid-twentieth century (Smithsonian Institution Archives. Image #SIA2010-3253).

The National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC), the region's chief planning agency, defended the existing Mall. In the their 1961 report *The Nation's Capital, Policies Plan for the Year 2000*, the NCPC referred to the Mall as a "complete entity." The document pushed back against criticism like that expressed in the *Evening Star* and rejected calls for features that would establish a more human scale on the Mall as inappropriate and weakening its presence as a monumental open space.[90]

Civil rights leaders also did not take such a negative view of the National Mall. Beginning in the late 1930s, they increasingly saw the National Mall's memorial

90 National Capital Planning Commission, *The Nation's Capital, Policies Plan for the Year 2000* (National Capital Planning Commission, 1961), 74.

Figure 26. Protestors in the Youth March for Integrated Schools in October 1958 are shown marching on Constitution Avenue NW. View facing west. The National Mall is shown at far left of image (National Archives and Records Administration, Record Group 79).

landscape, greatly enhanced by the construction of the Lincoln Memorial, as a setting in which they could invoke the nation's history to draw attention to racial and economic injustice. The Senate Park commissioners imagined the redesigned Mall as a formal garden that would serve as a space of national unity where Americans would visit to learn about and celebrate their history. Although demonstrations had occurred sporadically on the Mall (mostly on the Washington Monument Grounds or the Ellipse) through the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the establishment of the open lawn unintentionally created a national stage on which Americans could gather. Protestors for civil rights and other causes in the mid-twentieth century reappropriated the McMillan Plan's prescribed universality to their own ends and brought an entirely new function to the Mall (Figure 26). Historian Kirk Savage argues, "Precisely because the Mall was a nonplace, empty of human comfort and local attachment, it could become an extraordinary core of moral significance, the location of the nation's conscious."[91] Chapter 4 of this report addresses the Mall's transformation into a space of protest more extensively.

The increasing frequency of demonstrations near the White House and on the National Mall in the 1960s prompted NPS to implement a permit policy. Despite the fact that these demonstrations were overwhelmingly peaceful, the administration of President Lyndon Johnson grew increasingly concerned about safety at the White House and potential damage to the United States' image

91 Savage, *Monument Wars*, 252, 258.

Figure 27. New attractions like a carousel fronting the Smithsonian Institution Building (Castle) as shown in this photograph reinvigorated the Mall, 1966 (National Park Service, Interior Region 1- National Capital Region, National Capital Region Public Affairs Collection, 1901–2000, Catalog Number NRCO 6).

abroad during the Cold War. In 1965, the Johnson administration and the Secret Service attempted to prohibit all protests on the Pennsylvania Avenue sidewalk fronting the White House. Federal officials feared that protests criticizing American foreign policy were undermining the US war in Vietnam. Although the administration did not implement a prohibition, Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall established new regulations that required an official permit for public gatherings on certain NPS-administered parkland in the national capital. According to the new regulations issued in 1966, permits issued by the park superintendent were required for demonstrations in most National Capital Parks, such as Lafayette Park, President's Park (including the White House sidewalk), and the National Mall. Those assembling without a permit would be subject to fine and imprisonment. A series of court cases in subsequent years revised the permit regulations slightly. For instance, NPS revised the permit policy to exempt demonstrations of 25 or fewer persons.[92]

While the Lincoln Memorial became a key site during the civil rights movement, particularly after the 1963 March on Washington, and the Washington Monument Grounds remained a highly used site for national celebrations and events, the east end of the National Mall, closer to the Capitol was less used in the early 1960s. S. Dillon Ripley, who began his 20-year tenure as secretary of the Smithsonian Institution in 1964, called the Mall "a cemetery-like dead space in the center of

92 Title 36, Code of Federal Regulations § 7.96 - National Capital Region.

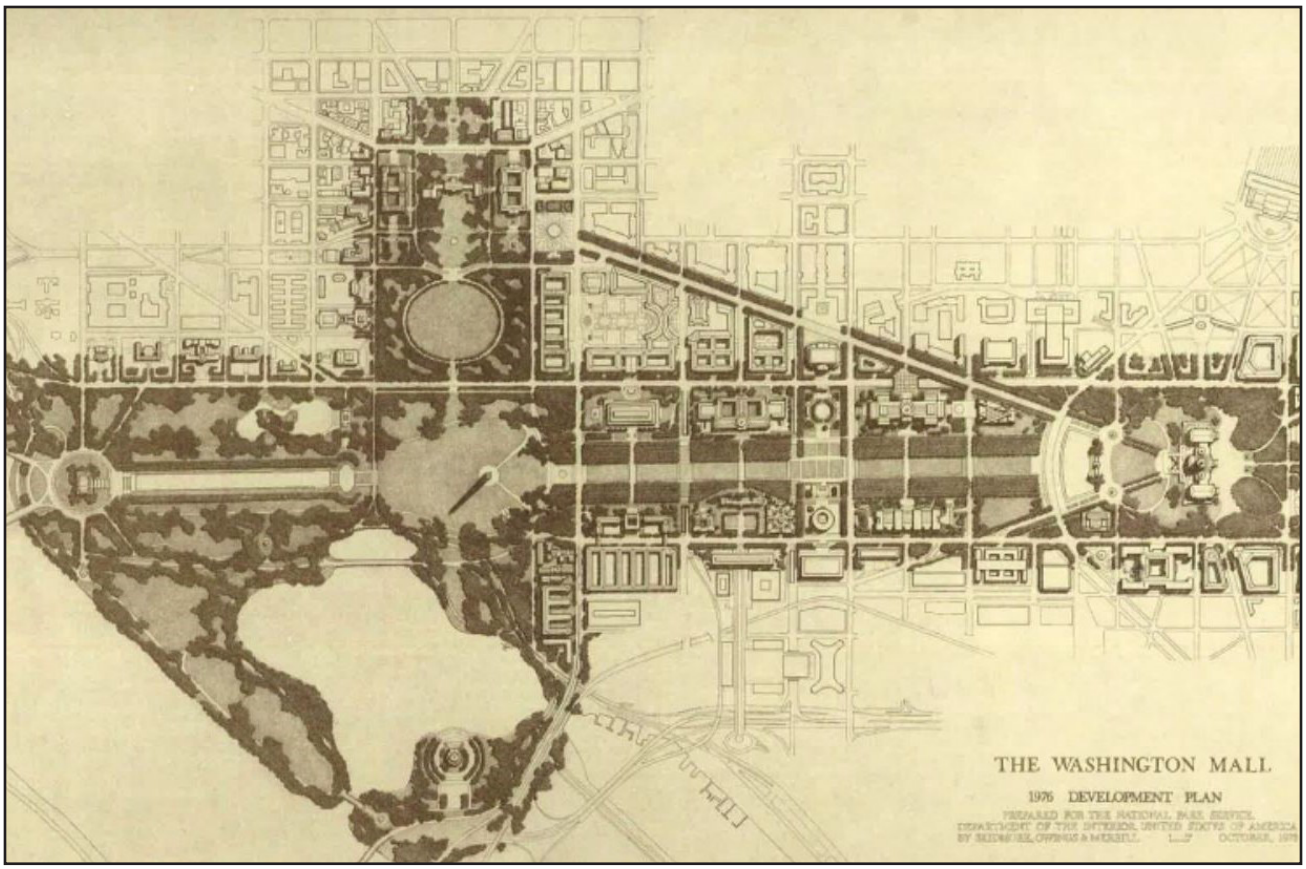


Figure 28. Shown in this plan, SOM recommended removing automobile use on the National Mall by converting roads to pedestrian paths, 1973 (Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, Washington Mall: Circulation Systems, National Park Service, 1973).

Figure 29. Bird's-eye view of West Potomac Park showing Constitution Gardens (left) and Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool (right), looking east, 1992. Photograph by Jack Boucher for Historic American Buildings Survey (Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division).

the nation's capital."[93] As a child, Ripley had been fond of the Tuileries Gardens in Paris, full of life with its paths, trees, and greenery in the center of the city. In contrast, Ripley saw the National Mall as lacking people, civic life, and enjoyment. Ripley led the Smithsonian through a period of great change, both socially and scientifically. In addition to overseeing the expansion of the Smithsonian with eight new museums and the growth of visitors from 10.8 million to 30 million, Ripley helped transform the National Mall into an active place with new public events, including the highly popular annual Smithsonian Kite and Folklife Festivals (see pages 127–33) and bringing a carousel to the Mall grounds fronting the Smithsonian Castle (Figure 27).[94] The same 1966 Washington *Evening Star* article that bemoaned the Mall becoming a parking lot also predicted Ripley's "imaginative" leadership would initiate a new beginning for the Mall.[95]

In response to conditions on the National Mall and perhaps to criticisms like those printed in the *Evening Star,* the National Park Service hired architecture firm Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM) to prepare a master plan that would suggest improvements in time for the nation's upcoming Bicentennial Celebration in 1976 (see pages 133–38). The master plan project occurred as part of the Beautification Program efforts of First Lady Claudia "Lady Bird" Johnson. Architect Nathaniel Owings led the firm's efforts. Published in 1966, the *Washington Mall Master Plan* aimed to make the Mall a more people-oriented, celebratory space by freeing it of vehicular traffic and parking and leaving it entirely to people and their activities.[96] The master plan proposed removing automobiles from the National Mall through a wholesale revision of its crossing streets, tunneling north–south streets and converting east–west streets to pedestrian paths (Figure 28). Some of SOM's recommended changes to the Mall's street system were already under way by the time the plan was published. In 1962, 12th Street had been tunneled under the Mall. The 9th Street tunnel proposal predated the SOM plan, even though it was not completed until 1971. SOM followed up the 1966 plan with a plan titled *Washington Mall: Circulation Systems* in 1973 that reiterated their proposals for converting roads to paths. Only the inner Mall streets (Washington and Adams Drives) became pedestrian paths as SOM recommended.[97]

93 C. Kurt Dewhurst, Charlie Seemann, and Patricia Hall, eds., *Folklife and Museums: Twenty-First Century Perspectives* (Blue Ridge Summit, PA: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2016), 296.

94 "S. Dillon Ripley, 1913-2001," Smithsonian Institution Archives, accessed August 3, 2023, available at https://siarchives.si.edu/history/s-dillon-ripley; Irvin Molotsky, "S. Dillon Ripley Dies at 87," *New York Times*, 13 March 2001.

95 Hornig, "The Story of the Mall."

96 Hornig, "The Story of the Mall."

97 Robinson, Gasparini, and Kerr, "National Mall Historic District," 21, 137, 138.

Figure 30. The Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden soon after opening, 1974 (Smithsonian Institution Archives. Image #78-6607).

The 1966 and 1973 plans also resulted in a landscaped park north of the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool named Constitution Gardens, which was completed in 1976 in time for the Bicentennial Celebration. The design by David Childs of SOM and landscape architect Dan Kiley created a naturalistic, wooded park, not unlike Downing's plans. Constitution Gardens is composed of informal tree massings, curving paths, an irregularly shaped lake, and open meadows (Figure 29).[98] Improvements like street closings and the introduction of Constitution Gardens helped soften the post-1930s Mall's grand scale and formality and make it more hospitable to people on foot.[99] SOM's other major project on the National Mall in the late 1960s involved the addition of a new contemporary art museum for the collection of art collector Joseph Hirshhorn. Both the modernist Hirshhorn museum building, a concrete cylinder resting on four piers, and an accompanying sculpture garden were boundary-pushing additions to the National Mall when they debuted in 1974 (Figure 30).[100]

Accessibility to the Mall was further enhanced when Washington, DC, debuted its Metro system, a publicly funded transit network that connected the District, Maryland, and Virginia via underground and elevated tracks and stations. A year after the system's debut, the Smithsonian Metro station opened. Metro planners

98 Robinson, Gasparini, and Kerr, "National Mall Historic District," 39–40.
99 Savage, *Monument Wars*, 262.
100 Richard Guy Wilson, "High Noon on the Mall: Modernism versus Traditionalism, 1910–1970," in *The Mall in Washington, 1791–1991*, 2nd edition, ed. Richard Longstreth (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 2002), 163.

Figure 31. View of National Mall from the Capitol, looking west, 1992 (Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division).

placed the underground station's south entrance at the southwest corner of Independence Avenue SW and 12th Street SW and the north entrance at the Mall's elm tree panel north northeast of the Department of Agriculture building. The Smithsonian station offered easy access to the original Smithsonian Castle, Washington Monument, National Museum of American History, and National Museum of Natural History.[101]

The establishment of additional museums in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries further expanded the National Mall's educational function. In 1976, the Smithsonian Institution opened the National Air and Space Museum. Construction required demolishing the Armory Square Hospital (former Washington Armory). By 1980, only one site the McMillan Plan identified for development remained unoccupied—a trapezoidal site at the southern end of Reservation No. 6 (Figure 31). Congress enacted legislation authorizing construction of the National Museum of the American Indian on the site in 1989. The design process for the building and grounds process included extensive consultation with Indigenous tribes and artists. The National Museum of the American Indian opened in 2004.[102]

While the National Museum of the American Indian was under construction, NCPC released a report in 1997 titled *Extending the Legacy: Planning American's Capital for the 21st Century* that, among other goals, sought to address the concentration of museums and memorials on the National Mall. The plan instead

101 Zachary M. Schrag, *The Great Society Subway: A History of the Washington Metro* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 150–51.

102 Robinson, Gasparini, and Kerr, "National Mall Historic District," 137, 141–42.

proposed that new monuments and memorials be constructed elsewhere in the city, such as along a revitalized South Capitol Street or on 8th Street NW between the National Archives and Mt. Vernon Square.[103]

By the early twentieth century, Americans had come to view the National Mall as a sacred, essential landscape steeped in history. Public memory of the forested, picturesque landscape that existed until the 1930s was increasingly faint. Instead, the popular perception was that the monumental, expansive Mall the Senate Park Commission created had always existed, historian Kirk Savage observes. The Mall, he writes, became a space "set apart from its own history."[104] Several new memorials to the United States' armed conflicts were constructed on the Mall in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, significantly enhancing the Mall's memorial function. These included but was not limited to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial completed in Constitution Gardens in 1982, the Korean War Veterans Memorial south of the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool in 1995, and the World War II Memorial east of the Reflecting Pool (absorbing the Olmsted, Jr.-designed Rainbow Pool) in 2004. As the National Mall was increasingly filled with new memorials and museums, Congress passed legislation in 2003 declaring the public grounds to be a completed work of civic art and prohibited the siting of new commemorative works, museums, or visitor centers within the Mall's cross-axis (defined by the legislation as "the Reserve").This law remains in effect.[105]

With this perception in mind, in 2005 Congress directed NPS to prepare a new plan for the National Mall that would ensure its long-term protection. With more the 25 million visitors a year, previous plans (in 1791, 1851, 1901–02, and the 1960s–70s) did not imagine the levels and kinds of use the National Mall experienced in the 2000s. In November 2006, NPS publicly initiated the project and completed the *National Mall Plan* in 2010. Over 30,000 people provided ideas, statements of concern, and comments during the plan's preparation.[106]

103 National Capital Planning Commission, *Extending the Legacy: Planning America's Capital for the 21st Century* (National Capital Planning Commission, 1997), 26.
104 Savage, *Monument Wars*, 8.
105 National Park Service, *National Mall Plan: Summary* (2010), 5; *Statement of Stephen E. Whitesell, Regional Director, National Capital Region, National Park Service, Department of the Interior, Before the Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands of the House Committee on Natural Resources, Concerning the Future of the National Mall*, June 1, 2012, Department of the Interior, accessed May 29, 2024, available at https://www.doi.gov/ocl/hearings/112/NationalMallFuture_060112.
106 National Park Service, *National Mall Plan*, 3; National Park Service, "Update on the National Mall Plan," accessed 3 August 2023, available at https://www.nps.gov/nationalmallplan/National%20Mall%20Plan.html.

Recognizing the changes made to the National Mall over the last two centuries and aging facilities and infrastructure, the *National Mall Plan* addresses the need for the renewal and repair of many of the National Mall's facilities and other features. When planning efforts began in 2006, deferred maintenance on the National Mall alone totaled over $450 million, not including necessary improvements to meet visitor needs. The plan outlines the need for improved accessibility on the National Mall—as America's front yard, the National Mall has to be easily accessible, with better connections to the city and its transportation systems, and it must provide improved pedestrian walks that are accessible to visitors with disabilities. The plan also addresses the need to attract vast numbers of people as the country's democratic stage and focuses on the flexibility, efficiency, and sustainability required to accommodate a variety of events "from First Amendment demonstrations, national celebrations, and special events attended by hundreds of thousands of visitors, to tours by school groups, military veterans, and foreign visitors, to individual opportunities for general enjoyment and recreation." Ultimately, the 2010 *National Mall Plan* "sets a practical, ambitious but achievable vision for a sustainable National Mall where visitors feel welcomed and proud of this space that symbolizes our nation."[107]

Since 2010, the National Park Service has completed several projects related to the *National Mall Plan*, including widening the walks that cross the Mall's central lawn to limit the amount of foot traffic, equipment, and event structures on the grass. The project was completed in 2016.[108] Additionally, when the National Park Service began the plan in 2006, Congress had already approved several projects, including the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Memorial and the National Museum of African American History and Culture.[109]

The National Mall's transformation into "America's front yard" inevitably created tension between its frequent public use and the realities of maintaining such as a space. Over time, for instance, this heavy public use deteriorated significant portions of the Mall's turf grass, and standard lawn rehabilitation procedures, such as aeration, dethatching, and reseeding, proved incapable of reversing the damage. In response, NPS, from 2010 through 2016, undertook an extensive restoration of the National Mall's turf grass between 3rd and 14th Streets NW–SW. The agency consulted with a host of turf grass science experts and devised a plan that included replacing the old soil with a new soil mix and a sublayer

107 National Park Service, *National Mall Plan*, 7.
108 Adrian Higgins, "Once barely surviving, the grass on the Mall gets a serious makeover," *Washington Post*, September 20, 2016.
109 National Park Service, *National Mall Plan*, 3; National Park Service, "Update on the National Mall Plan," accessed 3 August 2023, available at https://www.nps.gov/nationalmallplan/National%20Mall%20Plan.html.

Figure 32. Aerial view of National Mall, looking east toward Capitol, 2008, before implementation of the turf project (National Park Service).

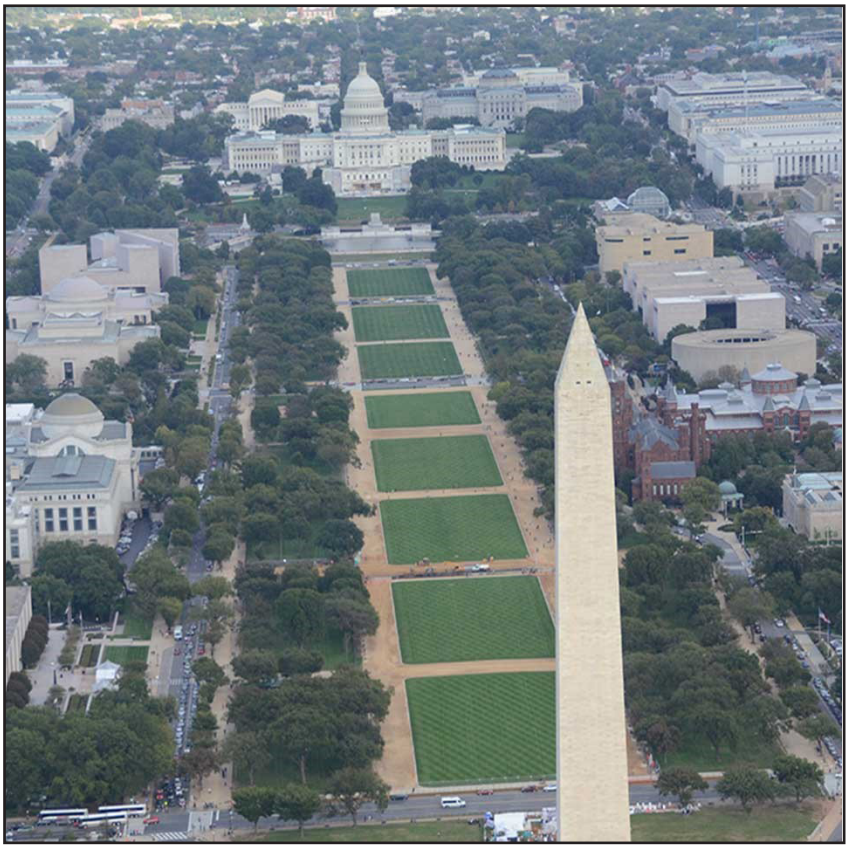


Figure 33. Similar view as that captured in previous figure, showing completion of turf project, after 2016 (National Park Service).

of pea gravel, laying sod, installing French drains along the edges and a grid of drainage lines, and irrigating the grass with a powerful new sprinkler system. NPS completed three panels by 2012, and the remaining panels were finished in 2016 (Figure 32 and Figure 33).[110]

The turf grass project had a tremendous impact on events held on the National Mall. Care for the grass's long-term health prompted NPS to enforce stricter permit requirements for events. Under the new guidelines, NPS stated its preference that events of all types, especially those using structures, should be held in non-turf areas like walkways and hardscape panels. Strict requirements were placed on events using structures on the central lawn panels. Chairs required protective covering over the turf. The guidelines also set new time requirements for how long tents, stages, LED screens, and other key physical components of events could remain on the National Mall.[111] In response, some events typically held on the National Mall moved elsewhere in the District.[112] A *Washington Post* editorial by Judy Scott Feldman, founder of the National Mall Coalition (formerly the National Coalition to Save Our Mall), charged NPS with prioritizing the health of natural resources such as grass over the National Mall's public use.[113]

A different issue based in a similar debate—the Mall's physical vs. symbolic maintenance—also emerged in 2010. NPS proposed installing a pumping station on the Mall to clean up the brackish waters of the Lincoln Memorial and World War II Memorial reflecting pools. The agency planned to place the pumping station among trees north of Independence Avenue. Judy Scott Feldman, at an NCPC meeting, argued that having it in such a visible location on the National Mall would be an eyesore. *Washington Post* art and architecture critic Philip Kennicott criticized Feldman and NPS for each rooting their argument in loyalty to the McMillan Plan. Kennicott instead argued that NPS, NCPC, and other stakeholders in the Mall's maintenance and use should move beyond the McMillan Plan and embrace new ideas, such as planting trees on the central lawn fronting the Smithsonian Castle (amounting to a semi-restoration of the Downing landscape) and dismantling war memorials after the last of a war's veterans had passed away to make way for new uses.[114] Without explicitly saying so, Kennicott

110 Higgins, "Once barely surviving, the grass on the Mall gets a serious makeover."
111 National Park Service, *Park Use and Resource Protection Planning Guide (Turf Management Guide Section 1)*, accessed August 7, 2023, available at https://www.nps.gov/nama/learn/management/turf-management-guide-chapter-1-section-1.htm.
112 Lonnae O'Neal Parker and Jonathan O'Connell, "Tightening rules on the Mall leave fests in peril," *Washington Post*, February 26, 2014.
113 Judy Scott Feldman, "It's a national Mall, not a national park," *Washington Post*, January 17, 2014.
114 Philip Kennicott, "The McMillan Plan stands in the way of a better Mall for Washington," *Washington Post*, April 11, 2010.

Figure 34. Ground-level view of Washington Monument and National Museum of African American History and Culture, 2019. Photograph by Brooke Ward (available through Creative Commons at https://www.flickr.com/photos/brookward/48777349122/sizes/l/).

challenged the assertion built into the *National Mall Plan* that the Mall was "finite" and Congress's declaration that it was "complete."[115]

This assertion met further scrutiny as the Smithsonian Institution sought to expand its presence on the National Mall with new museums reflecting a more inclusive American history. In 2016, the Smithsonian Institution opened the National Museum of African American History and Culture on the Washington Monument Grounds (Figure 34).[116] The discussion over whether the Mall was "finite" continued into the 2020s as the Smithsonian Institution announced plans to build the American Women's History Museum and National Museum of the American Latino on the Mall. Lonnie G. Bunch III, secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, defended the museum site choices, arguing that new museums representing diverse groups would enhance the Mall's appeal to visitors and that the Mall should evolve over time because it "has been changing since it was laid out, just like the country."[117] The proliferation of museums demonstrated that the National Mall, in the twenty-first century, continued to fulfill L'Enfant's vision of a grand promenade lined with buildings of cultural importance for the "learned."[118]

Likewise, this conception of the Mall as "finite" and "complete" essentially closed the space to memorials honoring new figures and reinforced inequities

115 National Park Service, *National Mall Plan*, 5.
116 Ian Volner, "National Museum of African American History and Culture," *Architect*, September 18, 2012.
117 Lonnie G. Bunch III, "Yes, the museums honoring women and Latinos belong on the Mall," *Washington Post*, November 13, 2022.
118 Robinson, Gasparini, and Kerr, "National Mall Historic District," 103.

Figure 35. vanessa german's sculpture *Of Thee We Sing* was among the works of art included in the outdoor exhibition *Beyond Granite: Pulling Together*, 2023 (photograph by Elvert Barnes, available through creative commons at Flickr.com).

in the history of the nation, the District, and these public grounds. In summer 2023, the Trust for the National Mall partnered with NCPC and NPS to host an experimental series of art installations on the National Mall designed to challenge this idea and invite new, diverse stories. The month-long initiative titled *Beyond Granite: Pulling Together* was a curated outdoor exhibition that aimed to establish a more inclusive, equitable, and representative commemorative landscape. The exhibition included six installations in Constitution Gardens, the Washington Monument Grounds, Lincoln Memorial Circle fronting the memorial, and near the Smithsonian Metro station at 12th Street NW. One such installation was artist vanessa german's *Of Thee We Sing*, an imaginative figural representation statue in steel and resin of Marian Anderson held up by a sea of hands that was placed at the Lincoln Memorial in commemoration of her seminal concert (Figure 35).[119] Another installation titled *America's Playground: DC* by artist Derrick Adams and placed in Constitution Gardens was public artwork in the form of a monumental and operational playground paired with a large photograph of the previously all-White Edgewood Park that was taken days after the 1954 Supreme Court ruling *Bolling v. Sharpe* initiated the desegregation of DC playgrounds.

Debates over development and the placement of new museums and memorials were not just about building sites but continued the enduring questions over what the Mall should be used for and who it reflects. Viewed against the legacy of slavery, segregation, and exclusion on the National Mall, the quest to offer more museums and memorials representing a larger group of Americans makes

119 The artist uses the lowercase "vanessa german."

the Mall more reflective of and welcoming to a diverse nation. Historian William Walker visited the Museum of African American History and Culture soon after its opening and noted that African American museumgoers he spoke with particularly "seemed to carry the weight of a pilgrimage."[120] He writes that "the simple fact of its presence transformed the space of the National Mall, making it a Mecca for all kinds of people."[121]

The twenty-first-century National Mall reflects an ongoing negotiation between its didactic and memorial role; its function as "America's front yard" for events, celebrations, and protests; and the enormous task of maintaining such an important space.

120 William Walker, "A visitor's observations on the National Museum of African American History and Culture, Part I," National Council on Public History, accessed August 10, 2023, available at https://ncph.org/history-at-work/a-visitors-observations-on-the-national-museum-of-african-american-history-and-culture-part-i/.

121 Walker, "A visitor's observations on the National Museum of African American History and Culture, Part I."

Chapter 2

Presidential Inaugurations and events

Chapter title page: Photograph of fireworks over the National Mall for President Truman's inauguration on January 20, 1949 (Abbie Rowe, National Park Service, Harry S. Truman Library and Museum).

Chapter 2: Presidential Inaugurations and events

The inauguration of President Thomas Jefferson in 1801 was the first to be held in Washington, DC, the nation's new capital. Earlier inaugurations took place in previous capitals, at Federal Hall in New York City and at Congress Hall in Philadelphia. Early inauguration festivities were limited compared to their modern counterparts; following the example set by President George Washington, the inauguration for a president's second term is typically even more restrained. The first instance of an inaugural "parade" occurred at President Thomas Jefferson's second inauguration in 1805 as an unplanned escort gathered during the president's ride from the Capitol to the White House. In addition to the inaugural parade, fireworks displays were one of the earliest events that became tradition for inaugural celebrations.

In the early 1800s, most inaugurations were held in the House of Representatives Chamber of the Capitol. Starting with President Andrew Jackson in 1829, the ceremony was moved to the Capitol's East Portico, setting the precedent of holding the ceremony outside in public view.[1] An official committee of citizens first planned a program of inaugural events for the public for President William Henry Harrison's inauguration in 1841.[2] In the years that followed, technological advancements also increased public access to the inaugurations. President James Polk's ceremony in 1845 was covered by telegraph and President James Buchanan's 1857 inauguration was the first to be photographed.[3]

Starting in 1901, a bipartisan committee of three senators and three representatives known as the Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies (JCCIC) has planned the swearing-in ceremonies for incoming presidents. Additional technological advancements in the twentieth century began to significantly change how the ceremonies were shared with the public. Loudspeakers were used for the first time to amplify the acoustics to the crowd

1 The inauguration of James Monroe in 1817 took place outdoors in front of the temporary Old Brick Capitol (where the US Supreme Court now stands). The US Capitol was being rebuilt after the British burned the building in August 1814 during the War of 1812.

2 "Inauguration of President William Henry Harrison," Histories of the National Mall, Accessed August 8, 2023, https://mallhistory.org/items/show/345.

3 "Past Inaugural Ceremonies," Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies, Accessed August 8, 2023, https://www.inaugural.senate.gov/past-inaugural-ceremonies/.

at President Warren G. Harding's 1921 inauguration. President Calvin Coolidge's 1925 inauguration was broadcast on the radio, and the next inauguration, President Herbert Hoover's in 1929, was the first to be filmed for TV broadcast. In 1949, President Harry Truman's inauguration was broadcast live on television for the first time. President John F. Kennedy's inauguration in 1961 was the first to be broadcast in color.[4] A press gallery was installed for the first time on the Capitol Grounds in 1965 for President Lyndon B. Johnson's inauguration. President Bill Clinton's was the first to be broadcast on the internet in 1997.[5] Most recently, President Joe Biden's 2021 inauguration relied heavily on virtual, livestreamed events due to public health measures related to the COVID-19 pandemic that limited in-person gatherings.

In recent history, the president-elect selects the Presidential Inaugural Committee to raise funds and plan all events outside of the swearing-in ceremony, such as the concerts, balls, and parades. These events are more tailored to the president-elect and usually reflect important parts of their political platform. These are the events that have changed the most over the course of the last 200 years. Modern inaugural festivities can last up to a week, with events before and after the swearing-in ceremony. There is often a mix of free public events, ticketed events, and invitation-only events.

In the last several decades, the pageantry and scale of inauguration festivities have grown significantly. Public access to the events, whether physical or through media coverage, has also steadily increased, and the National Mall has played an important role as the setting for many of these events. The main goal of hosting events on the Mall has consistently been the maximization of public attendance and accessibility, though the use of the Lincoln Memorial, the Reflecting Pool, and other areas of the Mall for President Biden's virtual events underscores how symbolically important the grandiose and recognizable setting is for the American people.

4 "Inauguration at the U.S. Capitol," Architect of the Capitol, Accessed August 8, 2023, https://www.aoc.gov/what-we-do/programs-ceremonies/inauguration

5 Jim Bendat, *Democracy's Big Day: The Inauguration of Our President*, 1789-2013 (Bloomington: iUniverse Inc., 2012), 24.

EARLY INAUGURAL HISTORY AND THE NATIONAL MALL (1789–1980)

Well before the National Mall played a role in the presidential swearing-in ceremony, the location served as a place of gathering for celebration. Early in inaugural history, the Mall was both the setting for inaugural fireworks displays and a staging ground and starting place for inaugural parades.

Fireworks have been part of many inaugural celebrations since President Washington's 1789 inauguration concluded with a fireworks display in New York City.[6] A fireworks display on the Washington Monument Grounds marked

Figure 36. Depiction of President Grover Cleveland's first inauguration fireworks celebration on the Ellipse in 1885 (Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division).

6 "Inauguration at the U.S. Capitol," Architect of the Capitol.

President Grover Cleveland's first inauguration in 1885 and the end of Cleveland's second inauguration festivities in 1893, which the public watched from the West Front of the Capitol Building (Figure 36). Fireworks were set off on the Ellipse in 1905 for President Theodore Roosevelt's inauguration.[7] The size of the fireworks display over the Mall made the newspaper for President William Howard Taft's inauguration in 1909, President Woodrow Wilson's in 1913, and President Truman's in 1949.[8]

After President Jefferson's impromptu parade in 1805, the first organized inaugural parade took place for President James Madison's inauguration in 1809 and took place before the swearing-in ceremony as part of the escort to the Capitol Building. This small event consisted of a presidential review of nine military companies of militia. Following this first parade, future inaugurations had larger and more elaborate military processions. President William Henry Harrison's inaugural parade in 1841 was the first to include floats and military companies from outside Washington, DC. The shift to a procession after the swearing-in ceremony that proceeds from the Capitol to the White House took place with President Ulysses S. Grant in 1873.[9]

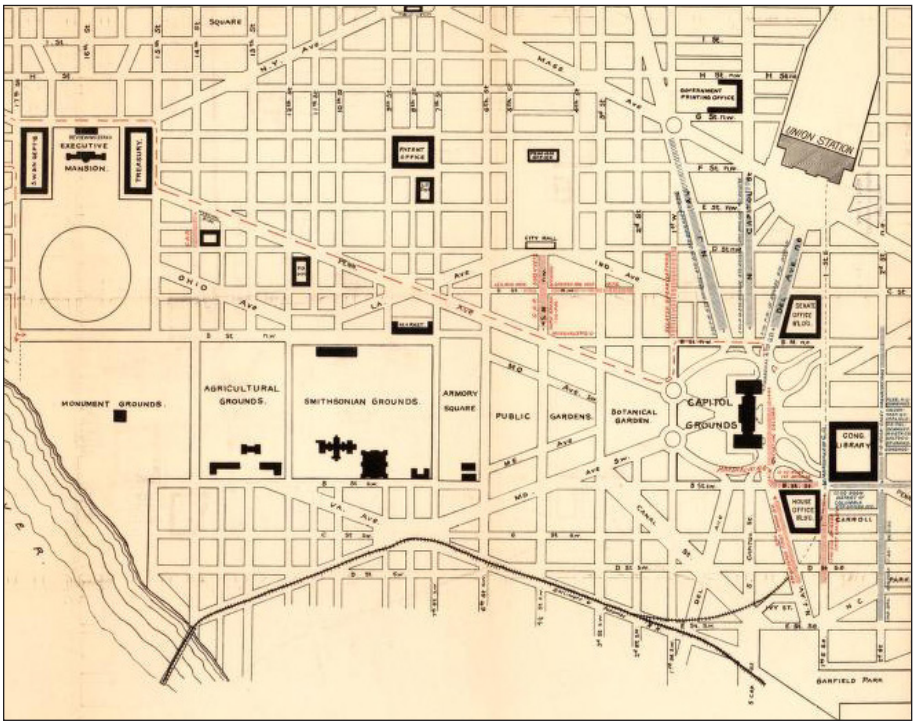


Figure 37. A map of the typical parade route and formation areas from President Wilson's 1917 inauguration (Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division).

7 "Plans for Great Ball," *Washington Post*, January 24, 1905.
8 "Taft's Inaugural Sets New Record for Splendor," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, February 28, 1909. "Aerial Fireworks Make Washington Scene of Beauty," The Atlanta Constitution, March 5, 1913.; "Fireworks Mark Inaugural," *The Miami News*, January 20, 1949.
9 "Pass in Review," Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies Accessed April 8, 2024, https://www.inaugural.senate.gov/pass-in-review/

The typical parade route begins near the Capitol Building and proceeds down Pennsylvania Avenue Northwest to the White House (Figure 37). As shown on the 1917 map used for President Wilson's inaugural parade, the early route followed B Street Northwest through the Capitol Grounds and turned to proceed down Pennsylvania Avenue.[10] After B Street became Constitution Avenue in the 1930s, the route changed slightly to follow Constitution Avenue to Pennsylvania Avenue, avoiding the Capitol Grounds. Crowds gather along the parade route, and the incoming president and their family have traditionally ridden in a car and walked part of the route (or all of the route, in the case of President Jimmy Carter and First Lady Rosalynn Carter). Presidents also watch the parade from the Presidential Review Stand near the White House.[11]

The March 4, 1829, inauguration of President Jackson on the East Portico of the Capitol Building was the first of nearly 50 swearing-in ceremonies held outside. In keeping with his reputation as the "People's President," representing the common citizen, Jackson intended the oath and address to be public so that as many people as possible could be part of the occasion. The crowd at the ceremony has been described as disorderly, loud, and deeply passionate; Jackson had to be ushered away after they broke through a barrier and began to ascend the Capitol steps toward him.[12]

In addition to holding the swearing-in ceremony in the open, Jackson invited the public to a reception at the White House, shocking Washington regulars, and forming the first full-scale parade from the Capitol to the White House.[13] A crowd descended on the White House, growing more chaotic as their numbers increased. When the crowd inside the building became out of control, quick-thinking waiters served whiskey punch on the South Lawn in order to draw guests outside (Figure 38).[14] Though Jackson's opponents viewed the events of his inauguration as evidence of the dangers of the common citizen getting too close to government, it did mark a turning point in the level of public access to the festivities. Since President Jackson's inauguration, ceremonies have been

10 Norris Peters Co, Map of the City of Washington, Inaugural Ceremonies, March 5, 1917, Library of Congress Geography and Map Division Washington, D.C., Accessed April 8, 2924, https://www.loc.gov/resource/g3851e.ct004639/?r=-0.449,0.033,1.619,0.698,0

11 Shelly McKenzie, "A History of Presidential Inaugural Celebrations and Events of Public Expression at the White House and President's Park" (National Park Service, Office of White House Liaison, July 1999)

12 David S. Heidler and Jeanne T. Heidler, "Not a Ragged Mob; The Inauguration of 1829," The White House Historical Association, Accessed August 8, 2023, https://www.whitehousehistory.org/not-a-ragged-mob-the-inauguration-of-1829.

13 Geri Zabela Eddins, "Americans Love a Parade: The History of Presidential Inaugural Parades," Accessed April 3, 2024, https://ourwhitehouse.org/presidential-inaugural-parades/

14 David S. Heidler and Jeanne T. Heidler, "Not a Ragged Mob."

Figure 38. Depiction of the enormous crowd south of the White House on President Andrew Jackson's inauguration day in 1829 (White House Historical Association).

held inside only due to extreme weather or other extenuating circumstances.[15] Following this event at President Jackson's inauguration, the inaugural parade has largely replaced public receptions as the free, open to the public celebration of inaugurations.[16]

Unfortunate circumstances led to the first inauguration to be held at the White House: President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's in 1945. Due to his poor health, security concerns, and austerity due to the ongoing World War II, President Roosevelt's fourth inauguration was held on the South Portico of the White House before a very small crowd of less than 10,000.[17] Invited guests watched from the South Lawn, with additional public onlookers watching from the Ellipse (Figure 39 and Figure 40).[18] After Roosevelt's inauguration, swearing-in ceremonies returned to the East Portico of the Capitol for several decades until President Ronald Reagan's inauguration in 1981.

15 Jim Bendat, *Democracy's Big Day: The Inauguration of Our President*, 1789-2013 (Bloomington: iUniverse Inc., 2012), 48.
16 Geri Zabela Eddins, "Americans Love a Parade: The History of Presidential Inaugural Parades."
17 Shelly McKenzie, "A History of Presidential Inaugural Celebrations and Events of Public Expression at the White House and President's Park," 103.
18 "Inaugurations and the White House," The White House Historical Association, Accessed August 8, 2023, https://www.whitehousehistory.org/press-room/press-backgrounders/inauguration-fact-sheet.

Figure 39. 1945 photograph of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's fourth inauguration showing the limited invited crowd standing on the South Lawn of the White House, with the general public gathered on the Ellipse (National Park Service; Interior Region 1 – National Capital Region; National Capital Region Public Affairs Collection 1901-2000; NCRO 6).

Figure 40. 1945 aerial view of the South Lawn of the White House, with the general public gathered on the Ellipse (National Park Service; Interior Region 1 – National Capital Region; National Capital Region Public Affairs Collection 1901-2000; NCRO 6).

With President Jimmy Carter's inauguration in 1977, the National Mall became the setting for additional events that would become part of future inaugurations. In a significant shift from previous inaugural celebrations, President Carter's inaugural committee planned to "open up the city" with a week of festivities with

Figure 41. Martin Luther King Sr. speaking at a nondenominational prayer service at the Lincoln Memorial the morning of President Jimmy Carter's swearing-in ceremony in 1977 (Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division).

the main events completely open to the public. The morning of the inauguration, the committee held a nondenominational prayer service and concert for the public at the Lincoln Memorial (although Carter himself and the future First Lady Rosalyn Carter did not attend). Martin Luther King Sr. spoke to a crowd of roughly 5,000 people, along with two renowned opera singers and other religious leaders (Figure 41).[19]

Tour guides led free sightseeing tours to city institutions like the Kennedy Center, Lincoln Memorial, Jefferson Memorial, Washington Monument, Smithsonian, the US Capitol, and the National Archives, many of which are on the Mall.[20] The city's museums and theaters were asked to revert to the expanded schedule they had during the 1976 Bicentennial celebration to make them easier for visitors to attend. The inauguration was intended to be a more organized "people's inauguration" like that of President Jackson in 1829.[21] For the first time, the planning committee made accommodations for disabled people at the inauguration. Arrangements included accessible transportation, bathrooms, American Sign Language interpreters, and attendants and guides for those in need of any assistance.[22]

19 Kenneth A. Briggs, "Plea by Dr. King's Father Adds Touch of Revivalism to the Day," *New York Times*, January 21, 1977, Accessed August 8, 2023, https://www.nytimes.com/1977/01/21/archives/plea-by-dr-kings-father-adds-touch-of-revivalism-to-the-day.html.
20 Megan Rosenfeld, "Diverse 'People's Inaugural' Projects Now Taking Shape," *Washington Post*, January 2, 1977.
21 Karlyn Barker, "Inauguration Invitation: All in America," *Washington Post*, November 15, 1976.
22 Megan Rosenfeld, "Diverse 'People's Inaugural' Projects Now Taking Shape."

MODERN INAUGURATIONS ON THE NATIONAL MALL (1981–PRESENT)

The relocation of the swearing-in ceremony to the West Front of the Capitol is often attributed to President Reagan himself (Figure 42 and Figure 43). However, the JCCIC announced the new location for the ceremony before the political parties' nominees had been finalized in the summer of 1980, well before the winner of the election was known. Senator Mark Hatfield of Oregon, the chairperson of the JCCIC, made the initial suggestion.[23] The decision to relocate from the East Portico was made in an effort to save the expense of building an inaugural platform, as the terraces on the West Front could be used instead. The move would also allow for larger crowds of spectators using the National Mall as the public viewing space. Interviewed by the press about the change in

Figure 42. Looking toward the Mall from the West Front of the US Capitol during President Reagan's first inauguration in 1981 (Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division).

23 "Inaugurations and the White House," The White House Historical Association, Accessed August 8, 2023, https://www.whitehousehistory.org/press-room/press-backgrounders/inauguration-fact-sheet.

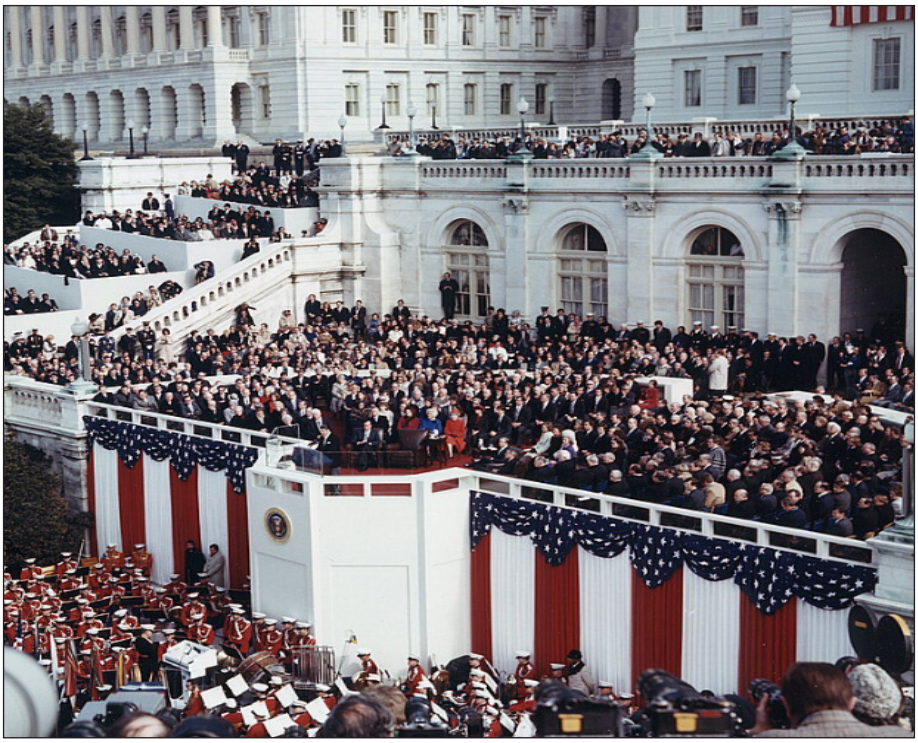


Figure 43. President Ronald Reagan delivering his inaugural address to crowds on the West Front of the US Capitol in 1981, beginning the tradition of holding the ceremony on the side of the Capitol facing the National Mall (Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division).

the inauguration location, David Maxfield of the Smithsonian Institution said that officials had wanted to use the West Front of the Capitol in the past, but "quite simply, until the twentieth century, the National Mall was a mess!"[24]

The West Front also provided sweeping views of the monuments and the National Mall as a backdrop for photographs and television broadcasts of the event.[25] As a former actor, Reagan used this dramatic setting to his advantage in his inaugural address, stating:

> This is the first time in our history that this ceremony has been held, as you've been told, on this West Front of the Capitol. Standing here, one faces a magnificent vista, opening up on this city's special beauty and history. At the end of this open mall are those shrines to the giants on whose shoulders we stand.
>
> Directly in front of me, the monument to a monumental man, George Washington, father of our country. A man of humility who came to greatness reluctantly. He led America out of revolutionary victory into infant nationhood. Off to one side, the stately memorial to Thomas Jefferson. The Declaration of Independence flames with his eloquence. And then, beyond the Reflecting Pool, the dignified columns of the Lincoln Memorial. Whoever would understand in his heart the meaning of America will find it in the life of Abraham Lincoln.

24 Shelly McKenzie, "A History of Presidential Inaugural Celebrations and Events of Public Expression at the White House and President's Park," 103.

25 Donald Ritchie, "Who Moved the Inauguration? Dispelling an Urban Legend," Oxford University Press Blog, January 22, 2009, Accessed August 8, 2023, https://blog.oup.com/2009/01/moving_inauguration/.

> Beyond those monuments to heroism is the Potomac River, and on the far shore the sloping hills of Arlington National Cemetery, with its row upon row of simple white markers bearing crosses or Stars of David. They add up to only a tiny fraction of the price that has been paid for our freedom.[26]

Much more of the 1981 ceremony and its related events was televised than previous ceremonies, including the congressional luncheon and other events that had been closed to the public. This marked a new turning point in the number of inaugural events that became public-facing, whether for public attendance or television. Still, most of President Reagan's 1981 inaugural events were ticketed. The public events were held on the Mall and at the White House. The "Lincoln Memorial Opening Ceremony Fireworks Extravaganza" was an $800,000 event that contributed significantly to what was the most expensive inaugural celebration to date.[27] An outdoor band concert was held on the West Lawn the day before the inauguration, January 19, 1981.[28]

After facing public criticism for the high cost and exclusivity of the events of his 1981 inauguration, Reagan's 1985 inaugural committee attempted to emphasize free, public events to reach a wider number of people to celebrate the 50th presidential inauguration. They hosted three open events on the National Mall, including the opening ceremony. The festivities began with the "Prelude Pageant Gala to the Inaugural" on the Ellipse, which took place on January 18,

Figure 44. President Ronald Reagan and First Lady Nancy Reagan at the "Prelude Pageant Gala to the Inaugural" on the Ellipse, January 18, 1985 (Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum).

26 Ronald Reagan,"Inaugural Address 1981," Accessed August 8, 2023, https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/archives/speech/inaugural-address-1981.
27 Marc Kaufman, "'81 Inaugural Will Top All Festivities," *The Albuquerque Tribune*, January 19, 1981.
28 "Inauguration at the U.S. Capitol."

1985 (Figure 44). The Prelude Pageant featured military bands and a history of American music and speeches from past inaugurations.[29]

Another free event, the "National Pageant of Young Americans," took place at the Jefferson Memorial on January 20, 1985. The youth pageant was a performance of 3,500 high school students from more than 200 schools nationwide.[30] Money left over from fundraising for President Carter's austere inauguration in 1977 was used to set up a non-profit organization that funded smaller-scale public events like concerts and extended hours at national museums along the Mall for the thousands of people who traveled to the capital during the week of the inauguration and could not attend the limited-capacity events.[31] Another fireworks display was held at the Washington Monument to close out the celebrations.[32] An invitation-only black tie event, the "50th American Presidential Inaugural Gala," celebrated the 50th presidential inauguration.[33] The swearing-in ceremony was planned for the West Front of the Capitol, but was moved inside to the Capitol Rotunda due to extremely cold temperatures, still the coldest Inauguration Day on record. The inaugural parade was also cancelled. Every swearing-in ceremony since has been held on the West Front of the Capitol.[34]

President George H. W. Bush's inauguration celebrations kicked off on January 19, 1989, with an hour-long public concert at the Lincoln Memorial featuring Lee Greenwood and the Beach Boys (Figure 45). While celebrities like Frank Sinatra had been common at ticketed inaugural balls for decades, this concert marked the beginning of an increasing emphasis on celebrity appearances at public inaugural celebrations. The event ended with a fireworks display and was attended by about 10,000 people.[35] The inaugural committee gave away free flashlights to represent the "thousand points of light," a phrase used by President Bush on the campaign trail.[36]

29 William E. Farrell, "Reagan Inauguration to Be Low-Key Affair," *New York Times*, November 30, 1984, Accessed August 8, 2023, https://www.nytimes.com/1984/11/30/us/reagan-inauguration-to-be-low-key-affair.html.
30 Johanna Neuman, "Washington Pulls All Stops for Reagan's Inaugural Bash," *Pensacola News Journal*, January 18, 1985.
31 Nolan Waters, "Carter Inaugural Leaves a Legacy to Ordinary Folks," *The Journal Herald*, January 18, 1985.
32 Clay F. Richards, "Lavish $15 Million Ceremony Begins Reagan's Second Term as President," *The Montgomery Advertiser*, January 12, 1985.
33 "4-Day Schedule of Events for 50th Inaugural Is Listed." *Arizona Republic*, January 18, 1985.
34 "President's Swearing-In Ceremony," Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies, Accessed August 8, 2023, https://www.inaugural.senate.gov/presidents-swearing-in-ceremony/.
35 Karen Hosler, "Inaugural Festivities Open to a Beat," Washington Bureau of *The Sun*, January 19, 1989.
36 Richard Willing, "'American Zest' Surrounds the Bush Oath," *Chilicothe Gazette*, January 19, 1989.

Figure 45. Swearing-in of President George H. W. Bush with view of the National Mall and crowd, January 20, 1989 (Smithsonian Institution Archives, Acc. 11-009, Image No. 89-2843-13).

Aretha Franklin, Tony Bennett, Bob Dylan, Stevie Wonder, Ray Charles, and many other celebrities performed to a crowd of thousands at President Clinton's kick-off inauguration concert in 1993, "A Call for Reunion," at the Lincoln Memorial, which culminated with a 45-minute fireworks display.[37] The event's messaging emphasized inclusiveness and unity and organizers drew connections to the 1969 Woodstock festival, though the crowd was primarily white, middle-class supporters of the politically moderate Clinton. The concert was not broadcast live because the rights were sold to HBO for $1.5 million to help offset the cost of the inaugural events. It was broadcast on TV following a delay.[38]

In addition to the Lincoln Memorial concert, First Lady Hillary Clinton had the idea for the folk festival on the Mall, called "America's Reunion on the Mall," for President Clinton's 1993 inauguration (Figure 46). The event had stalls with food and music set up on the Mall, modeled on the Smithsonian Institution's Folklife Festival and an arts and crafts fair organized for Clinton's inauguration as the governor of Arkansas.[39] Organizers claimed the Clinton inauguration would be the "most open, most accessible, must culturally diverse with the most free events in history" (Figure 47).[40] Though promoted as a populist, people-friendly

37 "Glitzy Inaugural Parties Filled with Biggest Stars," *Pensacola News Journal*, January 18, 1993.; Gary Blonston, Susan Bennett, and Robert A. Rankin, "Crowds Throng to Capital's Mall to Launch Clinton-Gore Inaugural," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, January 18, 1993.

38 Gary Blonston, Susan Bennett, and Robert A. Rankin, "Crowds Throng to Capital's Mall to Launch Clinton-Gore Inaugural."

39 "Crowd Finds Fun, Excitement, Souvenirs, Colossal Cheesecake," *Pensacola News Journal*, January 18, 1993.

40 Marsha Mercer, "Clinton's Inaugural Exceeds Budget," *The Daily Item*, January 20, 1993.

Figure 46. "America's Reunion on the Mall," January 17, 1993. President William Jefferson Clinton and Hillary Rodham Clinton, Vice President Al Gore and Mary Elizabeth "Tipper" Gore walk down the steps of the Lincoln Memorial (National Archives and Records Administration, Record Group 330).

inauguration, many events still reserved the majority of space for paying guests to offset the cost of the celebrations.

Like his first, President Clinton's 1997 inauguration started with an "American Journey" festival on the National Mall, featuring food, music, speakers, technology exhibits, children's exhibits, educational programming, dancers, and other performances celebrating American history. Seven large heated tents set up along the Mall offered shelter from the cold temperatures.[41] Celebrities such as Ken

41 Brigid Schulte, "Mall Events Offer Thrills and Chills," *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, January 19, 1997.

Figure 47. Tents set up on the National Mall for "America's Reunion on the Mall" during President Bill Clinton's first inauguration on January 17-18, 1993, which housed food, musical performances, and more (Smithsonian Institution Archives, Acc. 11-009, Image No. 2003-0088).

Burns, Bill Nye the Science Guy, Elmo, Barney, and musical performers Better Than Ezra, Chaka Khan, and Peter, Paul, and Mary could be found performing at the tents on the Mall.[42] The event was family-oriented, free, and lasted for eight hours Saturday and Sunday, the weekend of the inauguration. A simultaneous fireworks display said to rival that of the 1976 Bicentennial took place at 10 locations around the city, including over the Mall. The inaugural committee also planned a production of the musical King! on the National Mall to pay tribute to Martin Luther King Jr. because Inauguration Day coincided with Martin Luther King Jr. Day that year.[43]

42 Mike Feinsilber, "Clinton Strives for Inaugural to Remember," *Wausau Daily Herald*, January 19, 1997.

43 "Festivities to Include King Tribute," *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, January 19, 1997.

Figure 48. President George W. Bush taking the oath of office on the West Front of the Capitol on January 20, 2001 (Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies).

On January 18, 2001, President George W. Bush hosted an event at the Lincoln Memorial called "Celebrating America's Spirit Together," which featured live performances from pop stars like Wayne Newton, Jessica Simpson, and Ricky Martin.[44] Roughly 75,000 people came to the opening ceremony. The night concluded with a fireworks display.[45]

After a series of ticketed, closed events, President Bush's second inauguration's kickoff day on January 19, 2005, ended with "A Celebration of Freedom," fireworks and a "musical extravaganza" on the Ellipse.[46] Open, public events were limited, perhaps due to anticipated threats of terrorism. Critics spoke against spending millions of dollars on inaugural celebrations when the nation was at war in Iraq and Afghanistan. Most ticketed events focused on celebrating the armed forces, such as the Commander in Chief Ball. As the first inauguration after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, security was particularly high with street closures around the National Mall and thousands of interagency and military law

44 "At Inaugural's Opening, Bush Says He's 'Ready to Start,'" CNN.com, January 18, 2001, Accessed August 8, 2023, https://www.cnn.com/2001/ALLPOLITICS/stories/01/18/inaugural.wrap/index.html.
45 Bob Dart, "Organizers Gear up for Inaugural Extravaganza," *Dayton Daily News*, January 18, 2001.
46 Joseph P. Kann, "Tribute to Service Revs up Inauguration Festivities," *The Boston Globe*, January 19, 2005.

enforcement officers on duty.[47] Officials called it the "tightest inaugural security ever deployed."[48]

The historic inauguration of President Barack Obama on January 20, 2009, again changed precedent for the swearing-in ceremonies. For the first time, the National Park Service opened the entire length of the National Mall for the public to view the swearing-in of the first Black president (Figure 49). The goal was to make the inauguration "the most open and accessible in history."[49] The Mayor of Washington, DC, at the time, Adrian Fenty, stated that the inauguration would be "for all Americans" and that the city was "dedicated to opening it up so that people from across the country can gather together in America's front yard. We remain hard at work to ensure the day's festivities are safe and accessible for visitors, residents, and businesses alike."[50] Despite this, the massive influx of people did create crowd control issues and expose weaknesses in security and operational planning. Over 1,000 people who had purple section tickets to the inauguration were stuck in the blockaded Third Street tunnel under the National Mall after being directed there by security, a location that came to be known as the "Purple Tunnel of Doom."[51]

Figure 49. Looking west from the US Capitol Building over the crowds at the swearing-in ceremony of President Barack Obama on January 20, 2009. An estimated 1.8 million people stretched the length of the entire National Mall (National Archives and Records Administration, Electronic Records Archive).

47 "Pomp, Pageantry, Tight Security at Inauguration," CNN.com, January 20, 2005, Accessed August 8, 2023, http://www.cnn.com/2005/ALLPOLITICS/01/19/bush.inauguration/.

48 Terence Hunt, "Bush 'eager' to Begin Second Term," *Victoria Advocate*, January 20, 2005.

49 "Entire Length of National Mall Open for Inauguration," NBC Washington, December 4, 2008, Accessed August 8, 2023, https://www.nbcwashington.com/local/entire-length-of-national-mall-open-for-inauguration/1845840/.

50 "Entire Length of National Mall Open for Inauguration."

51 "Surviving the Purple Tunnel of Doom," NBC Washington, January 21, 2009, Accessed August 8, 2023, https://www.nbcwashington.com/news/local/surviving-the-purple-tunnel-of-doom/2092831/

A concert at the Lincoln Memorial on January 18, 2009, opened President Obama's inauguration celebration. Called "We Are One: The Obama Inaugural Celebration," the concert was described by the Presidential Inaugural Committee as "grounded in history and brought to life with entertainment that relates to the themes that shaped President Obama, and which will be the hallmarks of his administration." It was free to the public and broadcast live on radio and television as well as livestreamed. The concert featured Black artists like John Legend and Queen Latifah, who explicitly referenced the similarities to the performance of Black opera singer Marian Anderson on the Lincoln Memorial steps in 1939, after she was refused entrance to the segregated Constitution Hall to perform. More than 400,000 people attended.[52]

Instead of the Mall being used for a parade staging area as it had been in the past, those who could not get tickets to the Capitol Grounds viewing area would be able to watch and listen to the ceremony on large JumboTrons placed along the length of the Mall.[53] The event set a record for the highest attendance for any event ever held in Washington, DC, and as the most-attended inaugural event in history with an estimated 1.8 million attendees. The event also broke records for Metrorail ridership. Officials urged attendees to arrive early, and some were waiting on the Mall before 4 a.m. The crowd forced three Smithsonian buildings along the Mall to close temporarily due to overcrowding.[54] The entire length of the Mall was open again for President Obama's second inauguration in 2013 and President Donald Trump's inauguration in 2017 (Figure 50).

Following the string of presidents before him, President Trump's inauguration opened with a day-long "Voices of the People" public concert at the Lincoln Memorial on January 19, 2017. Later that evening, the inaugural committee held another concert for his supporters, called the "Make America Great Again! Welcome Celebration." Tom Barrack, the committee chairperson, noted that the event would feature "typically and traditionally American"entertainment, though critics noted that the lack of current celebrities was more likely due to many of them denying Trump's request to appear. The final set list included country singer Toby Keith, 3 Doors Down, and Lee Greenwood, who had also performed at

52 Steve Hendrix and Jonathan Mummolo, "Jamming on the Mall for Obama," *Washington Post*, January 19, 2009, Accessed August 8, 2023, https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/01/18/AR2009011800917.html?hpid=topnews&sid=ST2009011802825&s_pos=.

53 Brett Zongker, "National Mall Will Be Open for Obama Inauguration," Foxnews.com, December 4, 2008, Accessed August 8, 2023, http://origin.foxnews.com/wires/2008Dec04/0%2C4670%2CInaugurationMall%2C00.html.

54 "Huge Crowds Attend Inauguration, Parade," NBC News, January 20, 2009, https://www.nbcnews.com/id/wbna28746413.

Figure 50. Looking from the Capitol Building to the crowd on the full extent of the Mall during President Donald Trump's inauguration in 2017 (Donald J. Trump Presidential Library).

President George H. W. Bush's inauguration in 1989.[55] The concert ended with a fireworks display.[56]

As it did with many aspects of life, the COVID-19 pandemic affected the 2021 inauguration of President Biden. Speakers and guests at the ceremony included Jennifer Lopez, Lady Gaga, and the youngest inaugural poet in history, Amanda Gorman. The event took place two weeks after a violent mob gained access to the US Capitol, attempting to stop the official process that would formalize President Biden's election. Both for security reasons and to control the spread of the virus, the live audience was incredibly limited and the National Mall, which had been a public viewing area since President Obama's first inauguration in 2009, was closed to the public. Both the inaugural committee and the JCCIC urged people not to gather for the inauguration; Washington DC's mayor at the time, Muriel Bowser, told tourists not to travel to the city and asked officials to deny all permits to demonstrate.[57] 20,000 National Guard troops were mobilized and given authorization to use lethal force. While the National Guard has been part of every

55 Mikael Wood, "Trump's Pre-Inaugural Concert Projected a Troublingly Narrow Vision of America," *Los Angeles Times*, January 20, 2017, Accessed August 8, 2023, https://www.latimes.com/entertainment/music/la-et-ms-trump-inauguration-concert-20170117-story.html.

56 "Billionaires and Companies Power Record Inaugural Haul," *Tipton County Tribune*, April 19, 2017.

57 Adam Edelman, "Biden Plans 'America United' Inauguration Theme," NBC News, January 11, 2021, Accessed August 8, 2023, https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/white-house/biden-plans-america-united-inauguration-theme-n1253715.

Figure 51. Pillars of light lining the Reflecting Pool at a memorial service held for victims of the COVID-19 pandemic on January 19, 2021 (NPGallery).

inauguration since President Washington's, they are typically unarmed and fulfill a support role, such as directing traffic.[58]

The inaugural committee for President Biden announced a memorial for COVID-19 victims at the Reflecting Pool of the Lincoln Memorial on January 19, 2021, the evening before his inauguration (Figure 51). 400 illuminated pillars around the Reflecting Pool represented the deaths of 400,000 Americans to date from the COVID-19 virus. Like the other aspects of the Biden inauguration, the event was closed to live audiences for public health and security reasons but broadcast to the public on television and online through streaming services.[59]

The swearing-in ceremony was also closed to uninvited guests. Despite security concerns, President Biden refused to move the swearing-in ceremony inside the Capitol (Figure 52). A public art display of 191,500 United States flags and 56 pillars of light—to represent the 50 states and six US territories—was installed along the length of the Mall. The flags stood in place of the public that could not attend due to the pandemic. The National Park Service closed access to the Washington Monument through January 24, citing "credible threats to visitors

58 Paul D. Shinkman, "National Guard at Capitol Authorized to Use Lethal Force in Aftermath of Mob," *U.S. News*, January 14, 2021, Accessed August 8, 2023, https://www.usnews.com/news/national-news/articles/2021-01-14/national-guard-at-capitol-authorized-to-use-lethal-force-in-aftermath-of-mob.

59 Mary Louise Kelly, "400 Lights, for 400,000 Dead, Illuminate Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool," NPR, January 19, 2021, Accessed August 8, 2023, https://www.npr.org/sections/coronavirus-live-updates/2021/01/19/958449203/400-lights-for-400-000-dead-to-illuminate-lincoln-memorial-reflecting-pool.

Figure 52. The masked and socially distanced guests at President Joe Biden's 2021 inauguration, at the height of public health restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Architect of the Capitol),

and park resources."[60] Fencing surrounded the Mall and the city blocks near the perimeter were divided into green and red security zones. The flag display set up for the swearing-in ceremony remained in place but was not accessible in-person; it could, however, be viewed online in Google Street View.[61]

"Celebrating America" was a concert and broadcast event held on Inauguration Day 2021 as part of the festivities for President Biden. Like his swearing-in ceremony, the concert was closed to live public audiences but was broadcast live and available for streaming (Figure 53). The program was nominated for two Primetime Emmy Awards for Outstanding Music Direction and Outstanding Variety Special (Live).[62] Hosted by cultural icon Tom Hanks, the event featured performances by Bruce Springsteen, Jon Bon Jovi, John Legend, Foo Fighters, Demi Lovato, and Katy Perry. The most notable appearance may have been three past presidents representing both parties, Presidents Barack Obama, Bill Clinton, and George W. Bush, who joined together in a recorded message to unite the

60 Adam Edelman, "Biden Plans 'America United' Inauguration Theme."
61 Jordan Pascale and Mikaela Lefrak, "Inauguration Fencing and Concrete Barriers to Start Coming Down Wednesday Night," DCist, January 20, 2021, Accessed August 8, 2023, https://dcist.com/story/21/01/20/security-measures-field-of-flags-display-taken-down-dc-inauguration/.
62 Academy of Television Arts & Sciences, "Celebrating America - An Inauguration Night Special," Emmys.com, Accessed August 8, 2023, https://www.emmys.com/shows/celebrating-america-an-inauguration-night-special.

country.[63] The event culminated in a large fireworks display over the National Mall.

As the number and types of events have changed over time, the National Mall has only increased in prominence as a setting for inaugural celebrations. The West Front of the Capitol has been the chosen location for the swearing-in ceremonies for all incoming presidents following Ronald Reagan. Other newer precedents, like holding an inaugural concert at the Lincoln Memorial, have also been followed by several of the most recent presidents. In addition to being the foremost public gathering space for crowds attending events in person, the iconic memorials and buildings of the Mall serve as an important backdrop for an increasing number of people who participate from a distance with the help of changing technology, offering an anchoring sense of place that adds to the monumental feel of these historic national events.

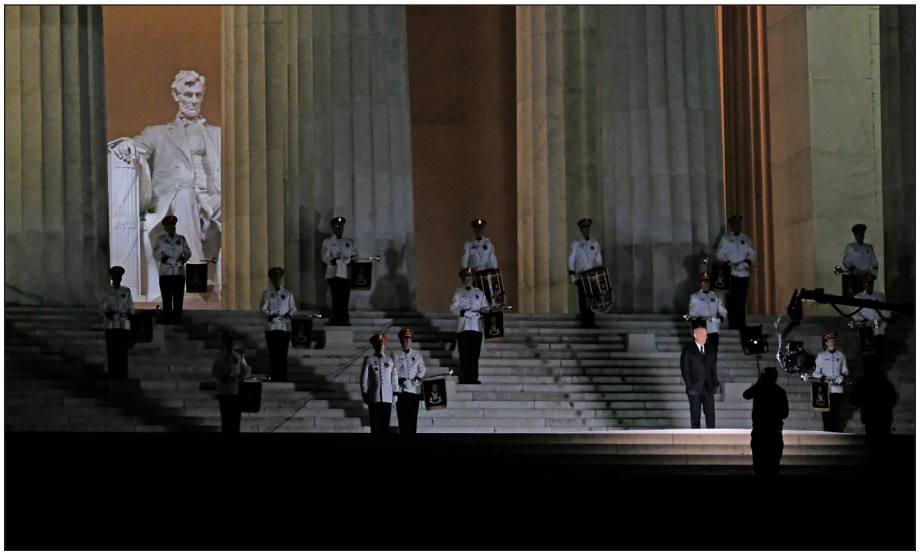


Figure 53. Primetime special "Celebrating America," filming in front of the closed Lincoln Memorial to open Joe Biden's inauguration week in 2021 (NPGallery).

63 Daniel Arkin, "'Celebrating America': Top Moments from Biden's Presidential Inauguration Special," NBC News, January 20, 2021, Accessed August 8, 2023, https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/white-house/celebrating-america-top-moments-biden-s-presidential-inauguration-special-n1255103.

Chapter 3

National Events, Festivals, and Celebrations

Chapter title page: Crowd waits for the fireworks at the Reflecting Pool for the Annual Fourth of July Celebration in 1965 (National Park Service, Interior Region 1- National Capital Region, National Capital Region Public Affairs Collection, 1901–2000, Catalog Number NRCO 6).

Chapter 3: National Events, Festivals, and Celebrations

As "America's Front Yard," the National Mall is the site of many national events and celebrations, including many that take place annually and attract thousands of people. Many of these events, such as the annual Fourth of July Celebration and the National Cherry Blossom Festival, are synonymous with the National Mall and are recognized and often attended by citizens from across the country as well as international visitors. Others, such as the annual celebration of Thomas Jefferson's birthday at the Jefferson Memorial, are less known, yet they also commemorate key events in our nation's history.

Richard Kurin, former director of the Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, writes, "Most [American citizens] assert participation in a single American civic culture and call for broadening the bounds of inclusion in that culture. Indeed, the notion of the Mall as mirroring the ideal unity of the people is regularly celebrated through presidential inaugurations and victory celebrations, as well as annual Independence Day concerts and fireworks."[1] Ultimately, the National Mall is "the people's place," to be used and enjoyed by the people.

This chapter explores the National Mall as the site of national events, festivals, performances, and celebrations, a trend that primarily occurred on the Washington Monument Grounds and the Ellipse in the nineteenth century and spread to other locations on the National Mall after the implementation of the McMillan Plan in the early twentieth century. While this chapter does not capture every event and event type that has occurred on the National Mall, nor does it provide a comprehensive history of each major event, it attempts to summarize the origins of many of the annual events that are synonymous with the National Mall today. This includes summarizing notable one-time events as well as depicting the major trends that have inspired and influenced events on the National Mall over the course of its 200-year existence.

1 Richard Kurin, S*mithsonian Folklife Festival, Culture of, By and For the People* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1998), 23-24.

EARLY EVENTS AND CELEBRATIONS ON THE NATIONAL MALL (1791–1900)

The tradition of celebrating the Fourth of July, Independence Day, is the oldest documented annual celebration on the National Mall. Generally speaking, the American tradition of observing the signing of the Declaration of Independence occurred immediately after its adoption on July 4, 1776, when patriots celebrated with concerts, bonfires, and firing of cannons that accompanied public readings of the declaration. Philadelphia held the first annual commemoration of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1777, which included fireworks. The *Pennsylvania Evening Post* reported, "at night there was a grand exhibition of fireworks. . . on the Commons, and the city was beautifully illuminated." Concurrently in Boston, the Sons of Liberty set off fireworks over Boston Common. Following the end of the Revolutionary War in 1781, Americans continued to commemorate Independence Day each July. The practice became more widespread after the War of 1812. Major events, such as the groundbreaking ceremonies of for the Erie Canal (1817) and the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad (1828), were scheduled to coincide with Fourth of July celebrations. In 1870, Congress made July 4 a federal holiday.[2]

In the District of Columbia, the annual Fourth of July celebration began at the White House. Historian William Seale describes the celebration of the Fourth of July in Washington, DC, during President Thomas Jefferson's administration (1801–1809), which took place on the north grounds of the White House and into today's Lafayette Park:

> The Fourth of July was a time to be outside. The President's Park—called the "common"—came alive at daybreak with the raising of tents and booths soon followed by crowds of people. A regular fair was held, selling food and drinks, as well as baskets, rugs, and other cottage products. There were horse races and tests of skill among the men. Cockfights and dogfights took place on the sidelines. In the bare "parade" kept clear in the middle, Washington Militia and other military companies drilled between ten o'clock and noon. Music played as well, and guests were invited into the White House to greet the President and celebrate their independence.[3]

2 History.com, "Fourth of July - Independence Day,"accessed December 4, 2023, https://www.history.com/topics/holidays/july-4th; Library of Congress, "Today in History - July 4," accessed 4 December 2023, https://www.loc.gov/item/today-in-history/july-04/#:~:text=By%20the%201870s%2C%20the%20Fourth,holiday%20on%20June%2028%2C%201870.

3 William Seale, *The President's House: A History* (Washington, DC: White House Historical Association, 1986), 108-109, quoted in Richard Kurin, "Culture of, by and for the People," *The National Mall: Rethinking Washington's Monumental Core*, Nathan Glazer and Cynthia R. Field, eds. (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2008), 94.

The annual tradition of a reception held at the White House on the Fourth of July was continued by subsequent presidents for much of the nineteenth century.[4]

The Fourth of July celebration on the Washington Monument Grounds was formalized on July 4, 1848, when the Washington Monument Society laid the cornerstone of the Washington Monument. President James K. Polk led a parade that included members of the Cabinet and Congress, military units, fire companies, and bands from the Capitol to the Washington Monument site where Speaker of the House Robert C. Winthrop gave a two-hour oration. Estimates on the crowd at the ceremony were as large as 20,000 people. The festivities concluded with a grand fireworks display. The celebration on the monument site was the precursor to the annual Fourth of July celebration held on the Washington Monument Grounds today.[5]

The use of the Monument Grounds for celebrations as well as to gain momentum for donations for the Washington Monument fund continued into the 1850s. On July 4, 1850, the Washington Monument Memorial Society planned an elaborate patriotic celebration at the base of the monument. The *Daily National Intelligencer* reported on the event:

> The excessive heat of the weather prevented the formation of a military and civic procession, as was at first contemplated by the board of managers, From one to two thousand persons assembled under a broad awning on the extensive stage (on the east front of the Monument). Many Senators and Members of Congress, officers of the Army and Navy, and members of the board of aldermen and board of common council were present to witness the ceremonies.[6]

President Zachary Taylor notably attended the Fourth of July celebration at the Washington Monument Grounds in 1850. He reportedly fell ill after drinking iced milk and eating cherries at the event and died five days later from a gastrointestinal illness (possibly cholera).[7]

4 White House Historical Association, "Fourth of July Celebrations at the White House in the 19th Century," accessed July 31, 2023, https://www.whitehousehistory.org/fourth-of-july-celebrations-at-the-white-house-in-the-19th-century.

5 John Milner Associates, *Washington Monument Grounds Cultural Landscape Report*, prepared for National Park Service, Denver Service Center and National Capital Region, December 2003 (revised August 2011 and January 2015), 2-6; "The Beginning and the End," *Evening Star*, February 21, 1885, 3.

6 Frederick I. Harvey, *History of the Washington National Monument Society*, (Washington, DC: Government Printing Press, 1903), 50.

7 White House Historical Association, "Fourth of July Celebrations at the White House in the 19th Century," accessed July 31, 2023, https://www.whitehousehistory.org/fourth-of-july-celebrations-at-the-white-house-in-the-19th-century; K. Jack Bauer, *Zachary Taylor: Soldier, Planter, Statesman of the Old Southwest* (Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press, 1985), 314.

The Fourth of July celebration at the Washington Monument continued in the years that followed. The *Evening Star* reported on July 10, 1855, that the fireworks had been postponed "owing to rainy weather," yet "[t]housands upon thousands of spectators—men, women, and children—were in attendance on the National Monument grounds" to watch the display.[8] The annual tradition of gathering in what is now President's Park South and the Washington Monument Grounds for Fourth of July celebrations was likely suspended during the Civil War (President Abraham Lincoln ordered the use of the Washington Monument Grounds as a cattle yard beginning in May 1861) but continued in the latter decades of the nineteenth century. [9]

The assassination of President Abraham Lincoln in April 1865 inspired Black Washingtonians, as well as their Republican allies, to mourn, celebrate, and rally at the White House in July 1865. As noted by authors Chris Myers Asch and George Derek Musgrove in *Chocolate City: A History of Race and Democracy in the Nation's Capital*:

> Before emancipation, the Fourth of July had grated on black nerves, a cruel reminder of American hypocrisy on race and freedom But with the end of the war and the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment by Congress (it had yet to be ratified by three-quarters of the states), the holiday became yet another chance for black people to claim their rightful status as full citizens of the country.[10]

On July 4, 1865, three months after the end of the Civil War, citizens of Washington, DC, ushered in Independence Day by "the usual firing of guns by men, and rattling of fire-crackers and toy artillery by the children." Beginning in the late morning, the Colored People's Educational Monument Association, also known as the National Lincoln Monument Association, held a Fourth of July celebration on the "grounds immediately south of the President's Mansion" in memory of President Abraham Lincoln.[11] The overall purpose of the organization, established in May 1865 and led by Reverend Henry H. Garnet, was to raise funds for a school for African Americans in honor of Abraham Lincoln.[12]

8 "The Fireworks," *Evening Star,* July 10, 1855, 3.
9 Judith H. Robinson and Tim Kerr, *Washington Monument Grounds Historic District National Register of Historic Places Additional Documentation* (Washington, DC: Robinson and Associates 2016), 40.
10 Chris Myers Asch and George Derek Musgrove, *Chocolate City: A History of Race and Democracy in the Nation's Capital* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2017), 135.
11 "Celebration of the Fourth," *Evening Star,* July 5, 1865.
12 Constitution of the Educational Monument Association to the Memory of Abraham Lincoln (Washington, DC: McGill & Witherow 1865), https://tile.loc.gov/storage-services/service/rbc/lcrbmrp/t1307/t1307.pdf.

The *Evening Star* reported that the July 1865 event "was looked for with considerable interest by both white and colored. . . ."[13] While people began to gather on the White House South Grounds as early as 10 am, shortly after 11 am, a procession of "colored Sabbath schools" passed through the President's grounds "leaving by the southeast gate" and "entered the grounds best known as the 'White Lot'" (now the Ellipse). Here, seats had been constructed in the "willow grove near the southern enclosure," and another "neat stand erected for the comfort of the speakers and band." The Union Cornet Band, formerly the band of the War and Treasury Department, performed at the event. Speakers included Reverend Anderson, pastor of the 19th Street Baptist Church, and John F. Cook, prominent educator, politician, businessman, civil rights activist, and member of Washington's Black elite, who presided over the event and read the Declaration of Independence as well as letters of support, including one from Frederick Douglass. William Howard Day, a Black abolitionist, editor, educator, and minister, spoke for over an hour on freedom, equality, and slavery in the United States. American poet John Pierpont followed with a poem on slavery.[14] An 1865 pamphlet commemorating the significant event stated that it was "the first time that the colored people have attempted any celebration of a national character."[15]

Black citizens continued to gather on Independence Day at what is now known as the Ellipse in the second half of the nineteenth century. The *National Republican* reported on July 6, 1876, that while White citizens traditionally left the city on the Fourth of July, the "colored portion of the community as a general thing remained in town and many of them attended the picnic in the White Lot for the benefit of Saint Augustine Catholic Church."[16] The gathering took place even as major filling and grading efforts were taking place on the Ellipse in the 1870s.[17]

In June 1886, the *Critic and Record* newspaper reported that "[s]everal enterprising citizens" were proposing a fireworks display on the Monument Grounds and encouraged a "public spirited Congressman" to move an

13 "Celebration of the Fourth," *Evening Star*, July 5, 1865.

14 National Lincoln Monument Association, Daniel Murray Pamphlet Collection, and African American Pamphlet Collection, *Celebration by the Colored People's Educational Monument Association in memory of Abraham Lincoln, on the Fourth of July, in the Presidential grounds, Washington, DC* (Washington, DC: McGill & Witherow, Printers and Stereotypers, 1865), https://www.loc.gov/item/12030032/; "Celebration of the Fourth," *Evening Star*, July 5, 1865, 3; United States Senate, "Henry Wilson: A Featured Biography, accessed July 7, 2023, https://www.senate.gov/senators/FeaturedBios/Featured_Bio_Wilson_Henry.htm.

15 National Lincoln Monument Association, *Celebration by the Colored People's Educational Monument Association in memory of Abraham Lincoln, on the Fourth of July, in the Presidential grounds, Washington, DC.*

16 "Excursions and Picnics," *National Republican*, July 6, 1876.

17 Susan Calafate Boyle et al, *The White House & President's Park Cultural Landscape Report* (Washington, DC: National Park Service 2001), 147.

appropriation to cover the cost.[18] In the end, citizens formed a committee to organize the fireworks display for the Fourth of July celebration and solicited subscriptions to pay for the event. The *Washington Post* covered the 1886 Fourth of July celebration and reported that a large crowd "assembled on the green at the rear of the White House," and people filled the Washington Monument Grounds to watch the event. The newspaper reported that the fireworks commenced at 9 pm:

> [A] balloon, with fireworks attached, was sent up, and went sailing high over the heads of the crowd, dropping little balls of fire which hung for some time in the air, and looked like red and green railroad lanterns. Then there were bouquets of rockets, which sent myriads of red and green lights spluttering through the air, and looked like red and green railroad lanterns.[19]

Beginning in 1891, local societies the Sons of the Revolution and the Sons of the American Revolution began a custom of joining in "patriotic observance of the anniversary of the nation's birth," with a street parade and "appropriate exercises" at the Washington Monument. In the morning of July 4, members met in Lafayette Square and then marched to the Washington Monument. At the monument, the Declaration of Independence was read and the Marine Band performed patriotic music.[20] The following year, the two societies held a similar event at the Washington Monument, which included a 13-gun salute by the Washington Light Infantry and a section of the District artillery. Participants read the Declaration of Independence and gave public addresses from a small platform erected at the base of the monument.[21] The Sons of the Revolution and the Sons of the American Revolution continued this tradition at least through 1898.[22] In 1899 the groups moved the celebration inside to the Columbia Theater.[23]

Newspaper articles suggest that the tradition of a public fireworks display at the Ellipse or Washington Monument Grounds did not continue after 1886 and during the 1890s, when many Washingtonians used the holiday to leave the city.[24] A publicly organized celebration and fireworks gained momentum in 1898, with the District Commissioners and prominent businessmen calling for a

18 Untitled, *Washington Critic*, July 4, 1886, 2.
19 "The Fourth in the City," *Washington Post*, July 6, 1886.
20 "Freedom's Birthday," *Evening Star*, July 4, 1895.
21 "Old-Time Fourth of July," *Washington Post*, July 3, 1892, 3.
22 "Patriotism on Tap," *Washington Post*, July 3, 1894, 8; "Was a Quiet Fourth," Washington Post, July 5, 1895, 5; "Uncle Sams's Birthday," *Washington Post*, July 4, 1896, 2; "All with Celebrate, *Washington Post*, July 4, 1898.
23 "Patriotism Runs Wild," *The Times*, July 5, 1899, 2.
24 "Patriotism on Tap," *Washington Post*, July 3, 1894, 8; "Was a Quiet Fourth," Washington Post, July 5, 1895, 5; "Uncle Sams's Birthday," *Washington Post*, July 4, 1896, 2.

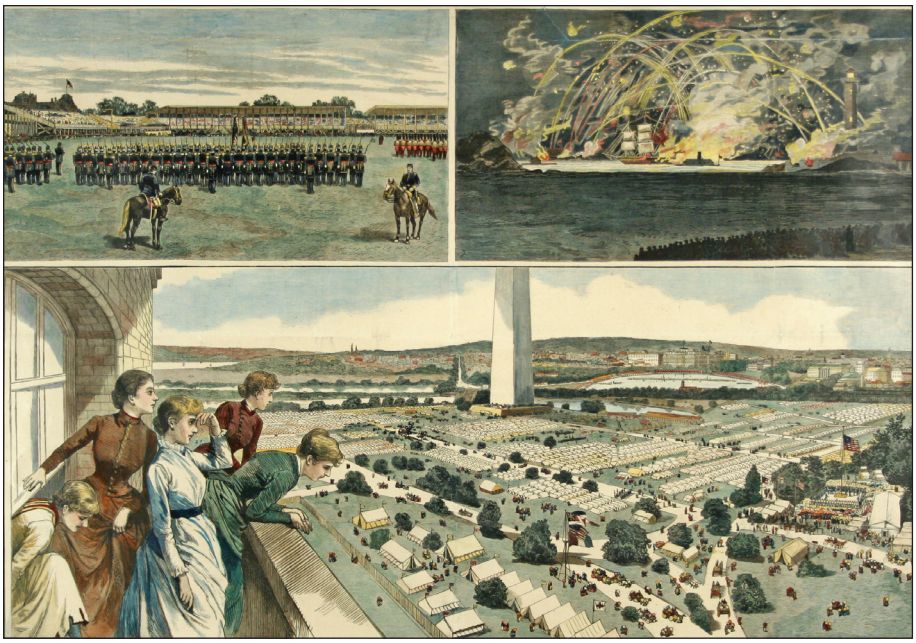


Figure 54. Scenes from the National Military Drill held on the Ellipse and Washington Monument Grounds May 23–30, 1887, published in *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, June 4, 1887 (The George Washington University Museum, Washington, DC, AS 385, The Albert H. Small Washingtoniana Collection).

"great celebration." The patriotism and desire for a larger, "special celebration" coincided with the Spanish–American War (April 25–December 10, 1898).[25]

The Ellipse and the Washington Monument Grounds attracted other large events during the late nineteenth century, including a national military drill held in May 1887 (Figure 54). The national military drill was a drill competition between volunteer soldiers of the National Guard across the country. Since the end of the Civil War, several interstate competitive drills had been held at different locations across the country. The competitions not only improved drill and discipline of the troops but also their morale. Supporters felt as though a "national competitive drill and encampment at the National Capital would not only collect a larger body of representative soldiers of the several States, but would be of more military importance and advantage from the national character the event would necessarily attain amid national surroundings."[26] While the intent of the exercise was to "embrace the most thoroughly representative men of each State and Territory whence they came," several units, including units from Montgomery, Alabama, and San Antonio, Texas, refused to participate after the announcement in the spring of 1887 that "three negro companies" would participate in the event.[27]

25 "For a Rousing Fourth: Public Sentiment in Favor of a Great Celebration," *Washington Post*, June 19, 1898.
26 "A History of the Drill," *Washington Post*, May 23, 1887.
27 "A History of the Drill," *Washington Post*, May 23, 1887; "A Military Color Line," Washington Post, 3 April 1887; "Unwilling to Drill With Negroes," *Washington Post*, April 6, 1887.

The event, held on the White Lot south of the White House May 23–30, 1887, brought more than 70 companies and 3,000 men to Washington. The participants camped on the grounds in what was called "Camp George Washington." More than $25,000 was distributed in prizes and thousands of spectators, including President Grover Cleveland and First Lady Frances Cleveland, watched the events.[28] In addition to the drill competition, the event included an elaborate firework display reenacting the naval fight between the *Monitor* and the *Merrimac* at Hampton Roads, Virginia, on March 9, 1862 (Figure 54). For the display, the vessels were mounted on trucks, which ran on an iron railway, to give the ships motion for the battle. The recreated scene also included a toll lighthouse, Fort Monroe, a sandy beach, and the rocky foreland to represent the scene of the battle.[29] Admission to the re-enactment, which reportedly cost $10,000, was 50 cents.[30]

Another large event on the Washington Monument Grounds and the Ellipse in the late nineteenth century was the national encampment of the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) in September 1892, which attracted nearly 30,000 participants. The GAR was a Union veterans' organization, the first nationwide veterans organization and precursor to the American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars, formed in 1866. The organization held state and national conventions, or "encampments," where members could reunite with other Civil War veterans.[31] The national conventions, in particular, served as a venue to elect GAR leadership and set national policy.[32] While the GAR held their national encampment in Washington, DC, in May 1870, it did not parallel the scale of the events held in 1892.[33] The organization had reached its peak membership just two years prior in 1890, the 25th anniversary of the end of the Civil War, with 410,000 members.[34]

Unlike the controversy surrounding the 1887 national military drill over the inclusion of Black troops, the GAR openly welcomed Black veterans into

28 "How the Drill Originated," *Washington Post*, October 25, 1886; "Camp Washington," Washington Post, May 24, 1887.
29 "At the Camp Ground," *Washington Post*, May 22, 1887.
30 "Amusements," *Evening Star*, May 18, 1887.
31 Henry Ford Museum, "Members of the Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.) Visiting Mount Vernon, September 21, 1892," accessed July 28, 2023, https://www.thehenryford.org/collections-and-research/digital-collections/artifact/422785.
32 Barbara A. Gannon, *The Won Cause: Black and White Comradeship in the Grand Army of the Republic* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 3.
33 *Proceedings of the National Encampment of the Grand Army of the Republic Held at Washington, D.C., May 11 and 12, 1870* (Washington, DC: 1870), https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015059503022&seq=59
34 Prairie Public Broadcasting, "The Grand Army of the Republic," accessed November 15, 2023, https://news.prairiepublic.org/dakota-datebook/2020-09-03/the-grand-army-of-the-republic

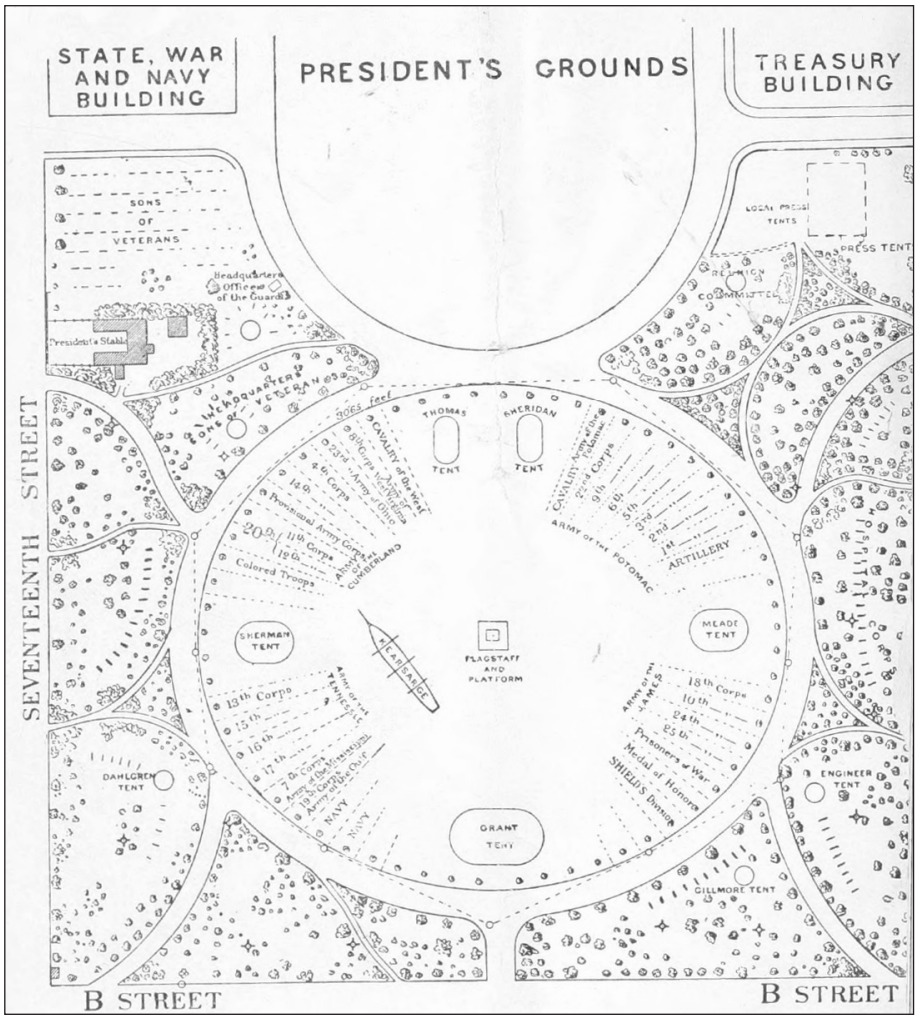


Figure 55. "Diagram showing the Location of Reunion Tents, on White Lot - Grand Army Place - during Encampment of the Grand Army of the Republic at Washington, DC Sept. 19th to 24th 1892" (1892 Souvenir Program, Library of Congress).

Figure 56. Replica ship of the *USS Kearsarge* on the Ellipse during the 1892 Grand Army of the Republic Encampment (Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division).

its organization. Barbara Gannon states in, *The Won Cause: Black and White Comradeship in the Grand Army of the Republic*:

> Black and white veterans were able to create and sustain an interracial organization in a society rigidly divided on the color line because the northerners who fought and lived remembered African Americans' service in a war against slavery. While there were some controversies involving African American GAR membership in southern states, most white veterans accepted black Americans, and these men participated in the GAR's political life at the state level. . . Despite poverty and illiteracy, African Americans maintained their all- black GAR posts well into the twentieth century, demonstrating the importance of these institutions to the entire community. In a nation in which black Americans, either male or female, had precious little autonomy, they had it in the world they made within this interracial organization.[35]

The interracial makeup of the GAR was evident during the 1892 national encampment in Washington when Black and White veterans marched in the parade down Constitution Avenue to commemorate the 27th anniversary of the end of the Civil War and participated in the events on the National Mall.[36]

For the 1892 encampment, workers erected temporary barracks "to house the hosts of old soldiers," located on the lawn on the north side of the Washington Monument.[37] The reunion itself took place on the Ellipse, with a flag staff and platform in the center and tents and regiments encircling the platform, including an area specified for "Colored Troops (Figure 55)." Also displayed on the lawn of the Ellipse was a replica ship of the *USS Kearsarge* (Figure 56).[38] On the evening of September 21, 1892, thousands witnessed a "magnificent pyrotechnic display" was held on the Washington Monument Grounds.[39] The GAR returned to hold its national encampment on the Washington Monument Grounds in 1902 and in 1915.[40] The last GAR national encampment held in Washington, DC, occurred in September 1936, but none of the related events took place on the National Mall.[41]

35 Gannon, *The Won Cause*, 5.
36 Gannon, *The Won Cause*, 3.
37 "Erection of Barracks," *Washington Post*, August 5, 1892, 2.
38 Souvenir program, G. A. R., 26th national encampment, Washington, D. C., September 20, 1892, https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=loc.ark%3A%2F13960%2Ft9d50s27h&seq=19.
39 "The Sky Filled with Stars," *Washington Post*, September 21, 1892, 12.
40 Library of Congress, "Grand Army of the Republic and Kindred Societies: A Guide to Resources in the General Collections of the Library of Congress," accessed July 3, 2023, https://guides.loc.gov/grand-army-of-the-republic/national-encampments#s-lib-ctab-26926157-3.
41 The 1936 events occurred at the Mayflower Hotel, the Department of Labor Building, and Constitution Hall. *Journal of the Seventieth National Encampment of the Grand Army of the Republic* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office 1937), https://tile.loc.gov/storage-services/public/gdcmassbookdig/journalofnationa00gran_12/journalofnationa00gran_12.pdf.

EVENTS AND CELEBRATIONS ON THE NATIONAL MALL IN THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY (1900–1942)

EVENTS AND CELEBRATIONS DURING 1900S AND 1910S

With their large open spaces and prominence within the core of the city, the Washington Monument Grounds and the Ellipse continued to be the primary locations for special events and celebrations during the early decades of the twentieth century, including the Fourth of July celebration. With momentum growing in the late nineteenth century, the DC Commissioners began organizing a single "large patriotic meeting" and raised funds to pay for the display of fireworks on the Washington Monument Grounds in 1903. The *Evening Star* reported that while celebrations by the entire community had occurred in Washington "many years ago," more recently, organizations held several separate events. Commissioner Henry MacFarland believed that the nation's capital should have an annual celebration worthy of the nation's birthday for the entire District of Columbia. He also noted that there should be a display of fireworks and a procession. MacFarland's motion to the board of District Commissioners in May 1903 stated:

> I move that the Commissions of the District of Columbia provide for a general celebration of independence day, the Fourth of July next, and invite the participation of the citizens of the District of Columbia. I believe that the nation's birthday should be celebrated in the national capital under the auspices of its executive government. . .[42]

Commissioner MacFarland also called for the establishment of a committee to organize and plan for the event.[43]

The celebrations on July 4, 1903, began with a public meeting in the morning, held on the northeast lawn of the White House, that included a reading of the Declaration of Independence and a performance by the Marine Band. Fireworks began at 8 pm on the Washington Monument Grounds, made possible by a fund of over $2,000.[44] The tradition continued in the following years, with some variance. In 1911, for example, the ceremonies began in the morning at the Municipal Building (now known as the Wilson Building) and opened with a concert by the Marine Band followed by an oration and reading of the Declaration of Independence. The events shifted to the Ellipse in the evening for the fireworks.[45] In 1914, despite "one of the summer's heaviest rains," 50,000 people gathered on the Washington Monument Grounds for "one of the final acts

42 "Local Celebration," *Evening Star,* May 19, 1903, 10.
43 "Local Celebration," *Evening Star,* May 19, 1903, 10.
44 "Rousing Celebration," *Evening Star,* July 3, 1903, 7; "Women Observe the Fourth," *Washington Post*, July 5, 1903, 6.
45 "Ready for Fourth," *Washington Post*, July 3, 1911, 1.

in the great community drama that was staged throughout the day." The United States Engineer Band started the celebrations, which proceeded with "a program of moving pictures" shown on a screen. During intermissions, works of patriotic song were shown on the screen and "the vast audience sang to the accompaniment of the band."[46]

> At 9:20 the 21-bomb salute which was to introduce the fireworks was fired, and as though in answer to a prearranged signal the downpour began. Thousands of umbrellas were hoisted, but many thousands of spectators were unprepared, and soon the big audience was in retreat.
>
> The expert force in charge of the pyrotechnic display worked on in spite of the storm, rushing through their program as rapidly as possible. The result was even more spectacular than had been planned. For half an hour while the torrents fell the air near the monument was filled with brilliant lights and colored bombs, white half a dozen set pieces blazed at once. Many who were armed with umbrellas held their places, and others witnessed the spectacle from beneath trees…[47]

The *Washington Post* reported that the crowd "was perhaps the largest that has come together in Washington since the late inauguration ceremonies" and set a new record for Independence Day gatherings in the District.[48]

Many events held on the Washington Monument Grounds and Ellipse in the early decades of the twentieth century were tied to military-related memorials, celebrations, and war efforts. One large event took place on Memorial Day 1911, when 30,000 people attended a field Mass on the Washington Monument Grounds, honoring those killed in the Spanish–American War (Figure 57). The *Washington Post* reported that the event exceeded "in splendor and magnitude any outdoor religious service ever conducted in the District." It was the first field Mass ever celebrated in Washington, DC. President William Howard Taft attended the "solemn services," which were preceded by a parade down Pennsylvania Avenue. Spanish–American War veterans sponsored the Mass, celebrated by Monseigneur William T. Russell of Saint Patrick's Catholic Church. In addition to Spanish–American War veterans, participants in the Mass included Civil War veterans, thousands of school children, and thousands of men representing the Catholic organizations of the District of Columbia.[49] The tradition continued in 1912 on June 9, drawing 20,000 attendees at the outdoor memorial service (Figure 58). On the north side of the Washington Monument, attendees celebrated the Mass in front of an "improvised altar, sheltered by a huge tent and festooned with

46 "50,000 at Fireworks," *Washington Post*, July 5, 1914.
47 "50,000 at Fireworks," *Washington Post*, July 5, 1914.
48 "50,000 at Fireworks," *Washington Post*, July 5, 1914.
49 "Taft at Field Mass," *Washington Post*, May 29, 1911, 1.

Figure 57. View of the 1911 Military Field Mass on the Washington Monument Grounds (Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division).

Figure 58. Crowd attending the 1912 Military Field Mass on the Washington Monument Grounds (Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division).

American flags." On one side was a smaller tent, which sheltered the St. Patrick's choir and an orchestra. On the opposite side of the altar was the United States Marine Band.[50] The final service took place on May 17, 1914, once again on the Washington Monument Grounds. Thousands of people of all denominations gathered on the grounds to attend the Mass for all who "laid down their lives on the altars of their country's service."[51]

50 "Field Mass on the Monument Grounds for Solider Dead," *Evening Star*, June 10, 1912.

51 "Thousands Attend Military Field Mass in Honor of Nation's Dead," *Evening Star*, May 18, 1914: 12.

Two years later, on the evening of Memorial Day 1916, the shaft of the Washington Monument became a movie screen when the Bureau of Commercial Economics, a membership organization consisting of large universities in the US, arranged for a display of motion pictures of the national parks on the monument's northern side. Due to the roughness of the monument's stone, "special silken screen" was attached to the monument's face that "was centered on an enormous laurel wreath." A specially designed truck, fitted with removable sides, contained the projector. The films, which totaled four hours of footage, depicted scenes from the Grand Canyon, Yellowstone, Yosemite, Crater Lake, Rocky Mountain, Sequoia, and others. Several thousand people attended.[52]

The construction of the Sylvan Theater in 1916 strengthened the use of the Washington Monument Grounds as a primary gathering space for important events and celebrations, providing a physical space for performances and concerts. The first performance at the Sylvan Theater took place on June 2, 1917, in front of a crowd of 15,000. Following the performance of "The Drama Triumphant," the Marine Band played the "Star Spangled Banner" and "Dixie."[53] In the following decades, the Sylvan Theater hosted numerous concerts and performances, particularly in the summer months, known as the "summer festival" season beginning in 1929 and sponsored by local community organizations. [54]

The country's entry into World War I in April 1917 sparked several patriotic events and celebrations on the Ellipse and Washington Monument Grounds. In June 1917, Confederate Army veterans gathered in Washington, DC, for their annual reunion, the first held north of the Mason–Dixon line. An article in the *Washington Post* noted that the reunion in Washington "celebrating the obliteration of sectional lines in this country" was appropriate "in the early days of the war with Germany." The veterans "will come to Washington, their Capitol," to give testimony of their loyalty, and they will be received with open hearts." Concurrently with the Confederate veterans, thousands belonging to the Grand Army of the Republic also came to Washington to "renew friendships formed before the war and to shake hands with former foes."[55] For the first time, veterans of the Confederate Army as well as the Union Army marched together on Pennsylvania Avenue. While more than 10,000 Confederate veterans were anticipated, the number was expected to reach 30,000 with members of the Grand Army of the Republic and Spanish–American War veterans. The event included

52 "Movies on Monument," *Washington Post*, May 31, 1916, 12.
53 "15,000 at Sylvan Play," *Washington Post*, June 3, 1917, 4.
54 "Community Center Fete to be Staged Tomorrow," *Evening Star*, July 19, 1932, 7.
55 "The Confederate Reunion," *Washington Post*, April 16, 1917, 6.

Figure 59. Confederate Reunion on the Washington Monument Grounds in 1917 with "human flag" of school children (Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division).

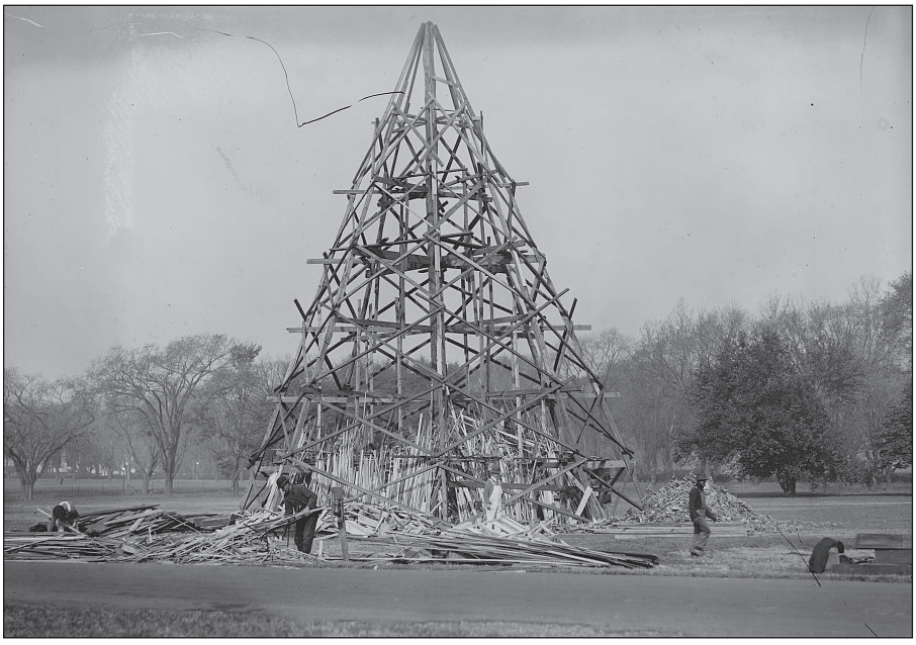


Figure 60. Erection of the Liberty Loan Bonfire on the Ellipse in October 1917 (Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division).

a "human flag" made up of 2,300 school children of the Southern Society of Washington on the Washington Monument Grounds (Figure 59). Washington government officials also put on a presentation titled "The Continental Congress" at the Sylvan Theater as part of the events.[56]

Efforts surrounding World War I also inspired a "Liberty Loan Bonfire" on the Ellipse in October 1917 (Figure 60). To raise funds to finance the war, the federal government sold Liberty Bonds to fund the borrowing effort, known

56 "Wilson is to Review Men of Gray and Flue in United Ranks Today," *Washington Post*, June 7, 1917, 1.

as the "Liberty Loan." The US Treasury issued the securities and the Federal Reserve and its member banks conducted the bond sales.[57] The bonfire, held on October 23, the eve of "Liberty Day," included a concert by the US Marine Band and a chorus of 2,500 school children singing patriotic songs. Eleanor Wilson McAdoo, daughter of President Woodrow Wilson and wife of Secretary of the Treasury William Gibbs McAdoo, lit the fire, which consisted of pieces of wood contributed by every state. Several thousand people braved the rainy weather to attend the event, which ended with a fireworks display.[58]

One change to Independence Day celebrations that occurred due to the United States' entry into World War I in July 1917 was the absence of fireworks. The *Washington Post* reported that the Capital would celebrate "its first war-time Independence day in nineteen years and its second in more than a half century in a matter entirely unlike its peace Independence day. The most noteworthy departure will be the absence of the usual pyrotechnic display on the Ellipse." Although without fireworks, the Sons of the Revolution and the Sons of the American Revolution held a joint public celebration at the base of the Washington Monument and a "dramatic production" took place at the Sylvan Theater.[59]

Following the end of World War I in 1918, the Sylvan Theater became an integral part of the Fourth of July celebrations at the Washington Monument, with the Marine Band playing at the theater as part of the events. The program for the Fourth of July through World War II typically consisted of the Marine Band concert, a reading of the Declaration of Independence, a massing of the colors by local organizations, and of course, the fireworks display (Figure 61 and Figure 62). Other special events sometimes accompanied the celebrations. In 1929, for example, there was a "sham battle" between Army planes over the Washington Monument as well a "torchlight parade" around the Monument.[60] A committee continued to raise funds to finance the event.

The annual Independence Day celebration endured the years of the Great Depression (1929–1939). Beginning in 1931, organizers began selling seats in the stands erected each year on the north slope of the Monument Grounds to raise

57 Federal Reserve History, "Liberty Bonds," accessed July 3, 2023, https://www.federalreservehistory.org/essays/liberty-bonds.
58 "Beacon for Bonds Illuminates the Skies," *Evening Star*, October 24, 1917; "Fires to Tell of Loan," *Washington Post*, October 21, 1917: 12; "Mammoth Bonfire on White Lot," *Washington Post*, October 14, 1917.
59 "Solemn 4th for City," *Washington Post*, July 4, 1917.
60 "Program of Independence Day Celebration at Sylvan Theater," *Washington Post*, July 4, 1927; "Blasts Herald noisy Capital July 4th Fete," *Washington Post*, July 4, 1929.

Figure 61. View of the crowds at the Washington Monument Grounds at the Fourth of July celebration in 1919 (Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division).

Figure 62. View of the crowds on the Ellipse at the Fourth of July celebration in 1919 (Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division).

money for the cost of building the stands and for the fireworks display.[61] Tickets were 25 cents and were sold at local hotels.[62] As the country prepared for war in 1941, the fireworks at the Fourth of July celebration were "bigger and better than ever," not only because rain had spoiled the display the year prior but also because of the anticipation that there would not be a display the following year "due to national demands."[63]

61 "President Invited to July 4 Display," *Washington Post*, June 26, 1930, 20.
62 "Bigger Fireworks on Fourth Planned," *Washington Post*, June 15, 1933, 10; "July 4 Crowds Pouring In and Out of Capital," *Washington Post*, July 3, 1938, 2.
63 "Greatest July 4 Program Yet Will be Warning to Dictators," *Washington Post*, July 4, 1941, 1.

Figure 63. US Army Blimp landing at Washington Monument, Washington, DC, as part of the Bicentennial Celebration of George Washington's birth in February 1932 (Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division).

While newspapers indicate that local citizens also celebrated the anniversary of George Washington's birth on February 22 in the nineteenth century, formal ceremonies typically took place at Washington's tomb at his Mount Vernon home. On February 21, 1885, the day before George Washington's birthday (which fell on a Sunday that year), crowds gathered at the Washington Monument for its formal dedication, which included the participation of President Chester Arthur, who dedicated the monument "to the immortal name and memory of George Washington." The day ended with a brilliant fireworks display.[64] Beginning in 1920, citizens celebrated Washington's birthday with a ceremony at the Washington Monument, decorating the base of the monument with wreaths and 48 flags representing each state in the union. The *Evening Star* reported that it was a "new ceremony" instituted by Colonel Clarence S. Ridley of the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds, who was in charge of the monument grounds. The ceremonies, beginning at 9 am, lasted all day and included a bugler who "sounded the call to the colors" and "a large gathering of federal and District government

64 John Milner, *Washington Monument Grounds Cultural Landscape Report,* 2-13.

Figure 64. President Franklin D. Roosevelt (center) and First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt attending President Lincoln's Birthday ceremony at the Lincoln Memorial, 1941 (National Park Service, Interior Region 1- National Capital Region, National Capital Region Public Affairs Collection, 1901–2000, Catalog Number NRCO 6).

officials, citizens and tourists" who "stood in salute."[65] A similar ceremony was held in the following years, and in 1923 the proceedings were broadcast over the entire country by radio for the first time.[66] During the celebrations for the 200th anniversary of George Washington's birth, held in February 1932, an Army blimp landed at the base of the Washington Monument and the crew placed a wreath at the monument's base (Figure 63).[67]

The completion of the Lincoln Memorial and Reflecting Pool in 1922 not only introduced a new monument to the expanded National Mall, it also created a space for additional events and celebrations. After the dedication of the memorial in May 1922, which drew a large crowd, events celebrating President Lincoln's birthday on February 12 expanded to include the Lincoln Memorial. On Lincoln's birthday in February 1923, thousands visited the memorial to pay tribute.[68] Beginning in 1927, the Military Order of the Loyal Legion sponsored the event, which attracted thousands to make a pilgrimage to the shrine.[69] The following year, the event included a ceremony at the Lincoln Memorial during which participants placed wreaths on the base of the statue, a eulogy was given for the "martyred President. " The US Marine Band also performed.[70] On February 12,

65 "States are Represented at Monument Ceremony in Honor of Washington," *Evening Star,* February 23, 1920, 1; "Unusual Tributes Paid Washington in Services Here," *Evening Star,* February 23, 1920, 1

66 "Memorial Service Sent Out by Radio," *Washington Post,* February 23, 1923, 4.

67 "Army Blimp Damaged Landing to Place Wreath at Monument," *Evening Star*, February 6, 1923, 1.

68 "Young and Old Pay Tribute to Lincoln," *Washington Post*, February 13, 1923.

69 "Lincoln Greatest of All Americans, Robison Declares," *Washington Post*, February 13, 1927, 2.

70 "Lincoln's Birthday Honored In Capital by North and South," *Washington Post*, February 14, 1928, 2.

1936, President Franklin Roosevelt attended the ceremony and "led the Nation in paying tribute to Abraham Lincoln on the 127th anniversary of the emancipator's birth."[71] President Roosevelt's attendance continued throughout his presidency and set a precedent for US presidents for years to come (Figure 64).[72]

NATIONAL CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING AND NATIONAL CHERRY BLOSSOM FESTIVAL

The 1920s brought two events to the National Mall that quickly became annual traditions and continue to this day. For the last 100 years, the President of the United States lights the National Christmas Tree, officially kicking off the holiday season in Washington, DC. The first instance of the event was on Christmas Eve 1923, when President Calvin Coolidge "pressed a button, lighting the great National Christmas tree rising 60 feet high in the oval south of the White House."[73] The 1923 fir tree, "cut in the heart of the Green mountains" of Vermont, had arrived in Washington via train in the weeks prior as a gift from Middlebury College in Vermont, the president's home state (Figure 65). Nearly 3,000 electric light bulbs illuminated the tree. The Marine Band contributed to the music program at the tree lighting event itself, while the community center department of the District's public schools arranged for several celebrations "at the big tree."[74]

The publicity surrounding the annual tree lighting event, which was eventually broadcast via radio, illustrates a trend among many National Mall events and continued to grow throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. As explained by historian and journalist David Greenberg, "The 1920s were a decade of advertising, copywriters, punchy prose, tabloid journalism with splashier photography displays, so we're getting this visual culture, and both [Presidents] Harding and Coolidge recognized the publicity value of a photo op."[75]

Some accounts suggest that the idea for the event came from Frederick M. Feiker, assistant to the Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover and former technical journalist for General Electric, and that it was essentially a response to the electric lobby encouraging the use of electricity—in 1920, 35% homes in the US had electricity, and 68% did by 1930. Feiker later described his idea in a 1932 letter:

71 "Lincoln Tribute Led by Roosevelt," *Washington Post*, February 13, 1936, X1.
72 "District Pays Lincoln Honor at Memorial," *Washington Post*, February 13, 1943, B1.
73 "The White House Week," *Time Magazine*, January 7, 1924.
74 "National Christmas Tree for President," *Washington Post,* December 13, 1923, 2; "Huge Christmas Tree on Way Here," *Evening Star,* December 15, 1923, 8.
75 Olivia B. Waxman, "The Electricity Lobby Was Behind the First National Christmas Tree Lighting," *Time Magazine*, December 1, 2016, https://time.com/4580764/national-christmas-tree-lighting-history-origins/.

Figure 65. The National Christmas Tree on the Ellipse in 1923 (Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division).

> The Society for Electrical Development was interested to have as many people use electric lights at Christmas time as possible, so I thought of this idea of having the National Christmas Tree at Washington, which would stimulate other people to have outdoor Christmas trees. In order to get this started, we had to get the President of the United States to light the tree. If you get the President of the United States two years in succession to do a thing, he will always do it.[76]

The tradition continued the following year but moved from the Ellipse to Sherman Square, where President Coolidge oversaw the lighting of a 35-foot Norway Spruce from New York State.[77] The American Forestry Association donated the tree, which President Coolidge accepted "to call attention to the destruction each year of millions of evergreen trees." The Electric League of Washington provided the 1,500 electric lights, in the colors of amber, red, and green, to illuminate the tree.[78] Coolidge and subsequent presidents used the live Norway spruce tree in Sherman Square (Figure 66) for the annual festivities until 1934, when the event

76 Olivia B. Waxman, "The Electricity Lobby Was Behind the First National Christmas Tree Lighting," *Time Magazine*, December 1, 2016, https://time.com/4580764/national-christmas-tree-lighting-history-origins/.

77 "Planting the Coolidge Christmas Tree," *Evening Star*, December 18, 1924.

78 "1,500 Lights Planned for Christmas Tree," *Washington Post*, December 17, 1924: 9; "Yuletide Services to Be Held For All In Capital Tonight," *Washington Post*, December 24, 1924, 1.

Figure 66. President Herbert Hoover and his family in front of the nation's Christmas tree in Sherman Square on December 25, 1931 (Herbert Hoover Presidential Library and Museum).

was moved to Lafayette Square north of the White House, where President Franklin D. Roosevelt illuminated a 23-foot-tall fir tree from North Carolina.[79] The tree and ceremony returned to the Ellipse in 1939 when 8,000 people, "many with blankets about their knees and all shivering as the wind whipped across the Ellipse, heard [President Roosevelt] 'thank God for the interlude of Christmas' in the warring world." Roosevelt, joined by First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt and their family, lit the tree, a 36-foot red cedar from Mount Vernon Memorial Highway.[80]

The annual National Cherry Blossom Festival also occurred for the first time in the 1920s. Originating in 1927, the festival is a spring event that commemorates the 1912 gift of 3,000 cherry trees from Mayor Yukio Ozaki of Tokyo to the city

79 "President to Loose Christmas Spirit with Tree Lighting," *Washington Post*, December 16, 1934, 2.

80 "Roosevelt Lights Tree, Decries War," *Washington Post,* December 25, 1939, 1; National Park Service, White House and President's Park, "1939-1940 National Christmas Trees," accessed August 17, 2023, https://www.nps.gov/whho/learn/historyculture/1939-1940-national-christmas-trees.htm#CP_JUMP_2803143.

of Washington, DC, as a sign of friendship between the United States and Japan. Geographer and writer Eliza Ruhamah Scidmore spearheaded the effort. First Lady Helen Taft and Viscountess Chinda Iwa, wife of the Japanese ambassador, planted the first of the 1912 shipment of trees along the north shore of the Tidal Basin during a ceremony in 1912. Between 1913 and 1920, workers continued to plant Yoshino cherry trees along the Tidal Basin and East Potomac Park.[81] Viewing the blooming cherry blossoms quickly became a highly popular event. In 1927, the *Evening Star* reported that as the news spread that the blossoms were in bloom, "the driveways in Potomac Park became the mecca for hundreds of motorists and pedestrians intent on viewing the entrancing wreath of shell-pink petals which nature was unfolding as a diadem for Her Royal Highness, Miss Spring."[82]

Washington social and civic leaders began contemplating an annual observance of the blooming of the cherry trees and in 1927 planned a pageant featuring 500 school children to "inaugurate a new tradition." The *Evening Star* reported that "Season after season has seen these cherry blossom days become more securely enshrined in the heart of the community" and envisioned the annual event becoming associated with Washington, DC, similar to tulip season in Holland, apple blossom time in Normandy, and mountain laurel days in New England.[83]

The first pageant, held on Haines Point, took place on April 16, 1927. The US Army Band provided music throughout the event, which consisted of two acts interpreted through dance: reenactments of a traditional cherry blossom festival in Japan followed by the donation and acceptance of the cherry blossoms in Washington, DC. Former First Lady Helen Taft and the Japanese Ambassador Tsueneo Matsudaira and his wife attended the event, which was not thwarted by the threat of rain. The sponsors of the event, the National Memorial Foundation, announced their goal to hold the festival annually.[84]

Although a small event was held in 1929 (planned for the Sylvan Theater but moved to the Wardman Hotel due to rain), a larger, three-day event in the spring of 1930 was subsequently canceled. The *Evening Star* reported that the event was to be of "gigantic scale, rivaling New Orleans' Mardi Gras," and had attracted

81 National Park Service, *Tidal Basin Cultural Landscape Inventory* (Washington, DC: National Park Service 2020) 23-24; National Cherry Blossom Festival, "History of the Cherry Blossom Trees and Festival," accessed June 22, 2023, https://web.archive.org/web/20160314055554/http://www.nationalcherryblossomfestival.org/about/history/; National Park Service, "History of the Cherry Trees," accessed June 22, 2023, https://www.nps.gov/subjects/cherryblossom/history-of-the-cherry-trees.htm.

82 "Cherry Blossoms Make 1937 Debut," *Evening Star*, March 19, 1927, 1.

83 "500 Capital Children to Join in Cherry Blossom Pageant," *Evening Star*, March 17, 1927, 1.

84 "Cherry Blossom Pageant Success," *Evening Star,* April 16, 1927, 4.

Figure 67. Sakiko Saito, daughter of the Japanese Ambassador and Mme. Saito, is crowned Queen of the Cherry Blossoms by Melvin Hazen, Commissioner of the District of Columbia on April 8, 1937 (Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division).

national and international interest. The reason for the cancelation was lack of time and funds to complete the arrangements as well as the "grave illness" of then Chief Justice William Howard Taft, who as President, along with former First Lady Helen Taft, had been instrumental in bringing the trees to Washington.[85]

The festival finally returned in 1934 with a three-day event in April organized by the Commissioners of the District of Columbia. Events included a grand parade, the illumination of the trees, a fireworks display on the Washington Monument Grounds, a concert at the Sylvan Theater by the US Army Band, a regatta in the Tidal Basin, and a parade of floats around the Tidal Basin.[86] To illuminate the cherry blossoms at night, the Potomac Electric Power Company (PEPCO) installed over $2,000 of underground wiring, cables, and other permanent equipment around the Tidal Basin. The trees "were drenched in illumination" by 450 floodlights.[87] The festival concluded with a reception and ball held at the Mayflower Hotel. Miss Eleanor Roosevelt, the daughter of Assistant Secretary of the Navy Henry L. Roosevelt, was crowned the first queen of the Cherry Blossom Festival.[88] The first day of the festival alone attracted approximately 100,000 people, many visiting from out of town.[89] At the festival's end, officials estimated that it had brought more than 500,000 visitors to the city and $5 million in local business.[90]

85 "Cherry Festival Delayed One Year," *Evening Star*, March 7, 1930, 17.
86 "500,000 Cherry Fete Visitors Set Record," *Washington Post*, April 23, 1934, 1.
87 "Cherry Blooms Dark as Mixup Keeps Floodlights in Storage," *Washington Post*, March 30, 1935, 1.
88 "Festival Events," *Evening Star*, April 20, 1934, 6.
89 "100,000 See Cherry Buds; Traffic Tied," *Washington Post*, April 16, 1934.
90 "500,000 Cherry Fete Visitors Set Record," *Washington Post*, April 23, 1934, 1.

The District Commissioners called off the festival in 1935 and 1936 because of a Shriners' convention and because the buds appeared earlier than the April 16 date of the festival, respectively.[91] The festival returned in 1937, 10 years after the first 1927 pageant and 20 years after Japan's gift of the trees in 1917.[92] A crowd of 50,000 gathered around the Tidal Basin on the evening of April 11 to watch ten-year-old Saikiko Saito, daughter of the Japanese Ambassador Hiroshi Saito, crowned queen of the 1937 Cherry Blossom Festival (Figure 67).[93]

CHARLES LINDBERGH WELCOME

While the National Mall hosted several annual events beginning in the 1920s, it also continued to serve as the stage and gathering area for special, one-time events that garnered national attention. On June 11, 1927, shortly after the first Cherry Blossom Festival, President Calvin Coolidge welcomed American aviator Charles Lindbergh home as "an illustrious citizen of our Republic, a conqueror of the air and strengthener of the ties which bind us to our sister nations across the sea" before a crowd estimated at 200,000 on the Washington Monument Grounds (Figure 68).[94] Less than a month earlier, Lindbergh had successfully completed the first transatlantic flight from Long Island, New York, to Paris, France, on his *The Spirit of St. Louis* airplane. Washington, DC, was his first stop back in the United States after a tour of Europe and a week-long passage across the Atlantic. For political reasons, Lindbergh was "persuaded" to return back to the United States via a US Navy Cruiser. Postmaster General Harry Stewart New, a Republican appointee, convinced President Coolidge that Lindbergh had to be welcomed first in the nation's capital rather than in New York City (which was controlled by Tammany Hall Democrats).[95]

Government and business leaders planned an extravagant welcome for Lindbergh, including a military parade down Pennsylvania Avenue, a state dinner, a wreath-laying at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, and a visit with disabled veterans at Walter Reed.[96] As the *Washington Post* reported on Washington's excitement for his visit, "Nowhere in America has Lindbergh's triumphant flight evoked more

91 "Cherry Blossoms Steal March on City, So Festival's Called Off," *Washington Post*, March 31, 1936, 1.
92 "Gala Cherry Festival Opens at Dawn Today," *Washington Post*, April 8, 1937, 1.
93 "50,000 Attend Blossom Fete Despite Cold," *Washington Post*, April 11, 1937, 1.
94 "Cheering Thousands Hail Lindbergh in Triumphal Parade Along Avenue," *Evening Star,* June 11, 1927, 1-2
95 Marcel Chotkowski Lafollette, Smithsonian Institution Archives, "Science Service, Up Close: "Charlie Is My Darling" — Lindbergh in Washington, June 1927," February 2, 2017, https://siarchives.si.edu/blog/science-service-close-lindbergh-washington-1927.
96 Boundary Stones, "Washington Rolls Out the Red Carpet for Charles Lindbergh," December 1, 2016, https://boundarystones.weta.org/2016/12/01/washington-rolls-out-red-carpet-charles-lindbergh#footnote-13.

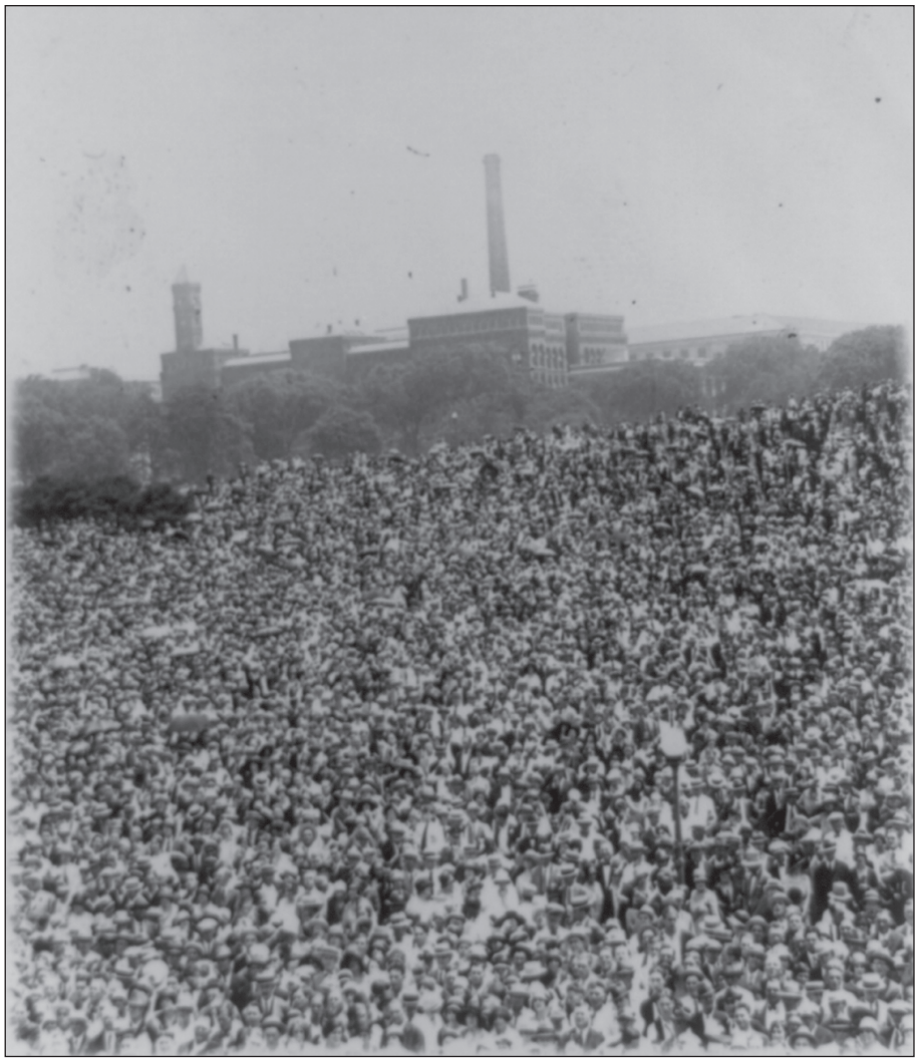


Figure 68. Crowds gathered at the Washington Monument Grounds, Washington, DC, to welcome Charles Lindbergh on June 11, 1927 (Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division).

fervent enthusiasm than here in the Nation's city, and no individual, American or foreign, has ever received a more rousing welcome than will be accorded him. It is fitting that Capt. Lindbergh should come first to Washington."[97]

The parade down Pennsylvania Avenue began at the Capitol and concluded at the Washington Monument Grounds with a medal ceremony, during which President Coolidge presented Lindbergh with the Distinguished Flying Cross. While Lindbergh thanked the president, 48 pigeons were released symbolizing the 48 states in the union and the Marine Band played. The event concluded with a pyrotechnics display in which flags and "funny puffed up animals" attached to small parachutes were launched over the crowd.[98] The *Washington Star* noted of Lindbergh's parade down Pennsylvania Avenue that "Washington has witnessed

97 "Lindbergh's Welcome Home," *Washington Post*, June 2, 1927, 6.

98 "Verbatim Report of Lindbergh Day As Broadcast by Radio," *Washington Post*, June 12, 1927, M8; Boundary Stones, "Washington Rolls Out the Red Carpet for Charles Lindbergh," December 1, 2016, https://boundarystones.weta.org/2016/12/01/washington-rolls-out-red-carpet-charles-lindbergh#footnote-13.

far greater parades in numerical numbers, but never had the city poured out its welcome in such lavish fashion to a returning hero."[99]

NATIONAL 4-H CAMP AND THE BOY SCOUT NATIONAL JAMBOREE

Five days after Lindbergh's welcome, 4-H, a youth-based development organization administered by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA), held its first National Camp in Washington, DC, on the lawn in front of the west wing of the Department of Agriculture Building from June 16 to 23, 1927 (Figure 69). The event was a success, with 275 4-H club members and leaders representing 41 states attending and camping in tents pitched in the shadow of the Washington Monument. In addition to lectures and speeches by prominent government officials, including William M. Jardine, the Secretary of Agriculture, attendees toured the Lincoln Memorial, the White House, and other local sites. The 1927 event became the prototype for subsequent 4-H National Camps held in Washington, DC; 4-H held the camp in Washington, DC, twenty-five additional times (no camps were held during World War II) before it was replaced by the National 4-H Conference in 1957.[100]

Figure 69. US Department of Agriculture (USDA) hosts National 4-H camp on the National mall in 1927, held on the grounds of the Department of Agriculture (National Archives and Records Administration, Record Group 16).

99 "Cheering Thousands Hail Lindbergh in Triumphal Parade Along Avenue," *Evening Star*, June 11, 1927, 1-2

100 Tyler Archer, "The History of the National 4-H Camp, 1927-1956," National 4-H History Preservation Program, accessed August 14, 2023, https://4-hhistorypreservation.com/History/Events/4-H_Camp/; Sue Benedetti, "National 4-H Camp Comes to DC," National 4-H History Preservation Program, accessed August 14, 2023, http://news.4-hhistorypreservation.com/2015/06/15/national-4-h-camp-comes-to-d-c/.

One of the largest and perhaps most complex events held on the National Mall prior to World War II and after the implementation of the McMillan Plan was the first annual Boy Scouts of America National Jamboree held in the summer of 1937, a decade after the first National 4-H camp. The Jamboree was originally planned for August 1935 to coincide with the organization's 25th anniversary but was canceled by President Franklin D. Roosevelt due to a polio outbreak in Washington, DC.[101] In his February 1934 radio address, President Roosevelt had personally invited the Boy Scouts of America to the "Nation's capital in the summer of 1935." Roosevelt noted, "Of course it would be physically impossible for us to have the whole membership of the Boy Scouts of America, a million strong, come to Washington at one time, but I much hope that it will be possible to have every nook and cranny of our Nation represented."[102] President Roosevelt had a personal interest in the Boy Scouts and prior to his presidency served as the president of the New York City Boy Scout Foundation. In 1933, President Roosevelt became the first and only President of the United States to be inducted in to the Boy Scout's Order of the Arrow, the organization's honor society. Roosevelt, like all US Presidents since the organization's founding in 1910, served as the organization's honorary president while in office.[103]

Organizers anticipated 30,000 scouts and leaders would attend the 1937 jamboree in Washington. The tent city, covering 350 acres and erected to house the scouts, stood on Haines Point, the East Potomac Park Golf Course, and the Washington Monument Grounds (Figure 70). Additionally, organizers built an arena with seating for 12,000 between the Washington Monument and Constitution Avenue. Railroad sidings led right to the "Jamboree City" so that the scouts could easily detrain with their camping gear. The "city" was divided into 25 "villages," each with its own post office, hospital, and food depot.[104]

On the last day of June 1937, 28,000 American and international Boy Scouts and Scout leaders opened the first National Jamboree. Approximately 40,000 people attended the opening ceremonies, which took place at the base of the Washington Monument (Figure 71). At the ceremonies that launched the 10-day affair, Attorney General Homer S. Cummings read greetings from President Franklin D. Roosevelt and Colonel Theodore Roosevelt, son of President Theodore

101 "$550,000 Refund to 22,000 Scouts of World Begun," *Evening Star*, 10 August 1935: 14.
102 President Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Radio Address to the Boy Scouts of America," accessed 7 June 2023, https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/radio-address-the-boy-scouts-america.
103 Boy Scouts of America, Order of the Arrow, "Our History," accessed November 16, 2023, https://oa-bsa.org/history/fdr-inducted-oa
104 "Boy Scouts Will Come Here From All Over World for Jamboree," *Washington Post*, 6 June 1937, B2.

Figure 70. Map showing the location of sites used during 1937 Boy Scout National Jamboree (NPS History, http://npshistory.com/publications/management/national-scout-jamboree-1937.pdf).

Roosevelt, read campfire stories to the Scouts. The *Washington Post* reported: "The Monument has looked down upon greater throngs, as on July 4 fireworks displays, but never before has it been host to the type of celebration staged on its north slope last night."[105] Ironically, the Jamboree forced the annual Fourth of July celebration and fireworks to move from the Washington Monument Grounds to the Ellipse, where approximately 150,000 people attended.[106]

The organization and construction of facilities for the 10-day event was a massive undertaking. Congress authorized the Secretary of War, Secretary of the Navy, Secretary of Agriculture, and Secretary of the Treasury to lend Army, Navy, Coast

105 "28,000 Cheering Scouts and Leaders Open Jamboree," *Washington Post*, July 1, 1937.

106 Memorandum for Miss Isabel F. Story from Frank T. Gartside, Acting Superintendent National Capital Parks, July 4, 1937, http://npshistory.com/publications/management/national-scout-jamboree-1937.pdf.

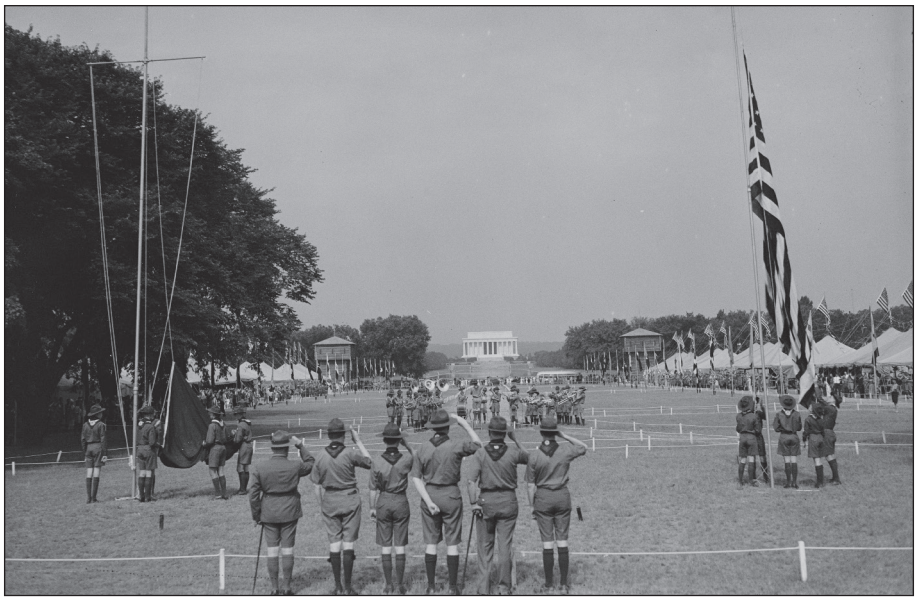


Figure 71. Official opening of the Boy Scout Jamboree on June 30, 1937. "With nearly 30,000 boys standing at attention, flags throughout the Boy Scout encampment were simultaneously raised today to mark the official opening of the Great National Jamboree." This picture was taken near the base of the Washington Monument looking west toward the Lincoln Memorial (Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division).

Guard, and any other needed equipment for the National Jamboree. As many 150 workers from the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) helped assemble the event and 250 workers removed the tents and helped restore the grounds following the end of the Jamboree.[107]

After the Jamboree, the federal government concluded that the event could not be held again in Washington, DC, due to the cost to the government and the loss of recreational activities to DC residents. Records indicate that the event destroyed 50% of the turf, which cost $94,000 to rehabilitate, and almost 130,000 people were kept from enjoying the National Mall and other areas impacted by the event.[108]

SEGREGATION AT EVENTS AND CELEBRATIONS IN THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY

It is difficult to fully determine if early events and celebrations on the National Mall were segregated and if Black residents and visitors, and other marginalized people, participated in these events during the first half of the twentieth century. However, there is evidence that some of the events were segregated. At the first National Christmas Tree Lighting in 1923, for example, the *Evening Star* reported that "[m]en women and children of all races and creeds each will have a share of expressing the feeling that pervades their hearts on the night before Christmas." A choir from the Epiphany Episcopal Church and a brass quartet of the US Marine

107 Various files, NPS History, National Scout Jamboree, accessed July 3, 2023, http://npshistory.com/publications/management/national-scout-jamboree-1937.pdf; Jeff Ohlfs, "NPS & the National Scout Jamborees," *Ranger* (Spring 2014): 14-15.

108 Various files, NPS History, National Scout Jamboree, accessed July 3, 2023, http://npshistory.com/publications/management/national-scout-jamboree-1937.pdf; Jeff Ohlfs, "NPS & the National Scout Jamborees," *Ranger* (Spring 2014), 14-15.

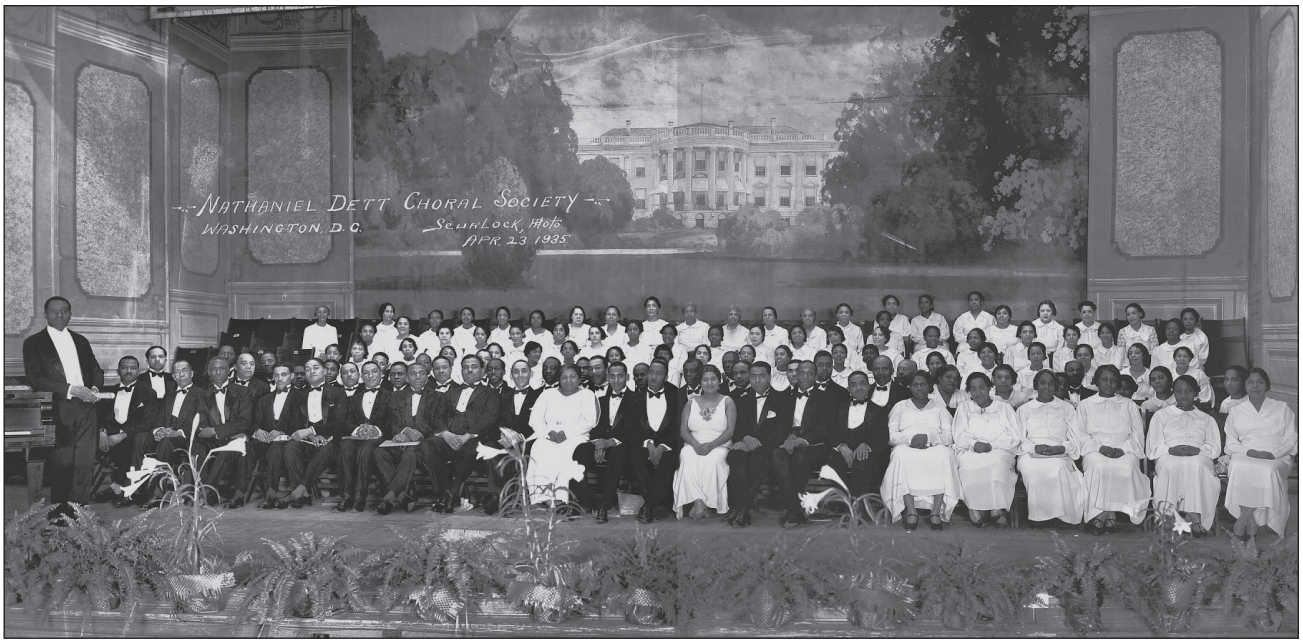


Figure 72. Nathaniel Dett Choral Society in April, 1935. (Scurlock Studio Records, Archives Center, National Museum of American History Smithsonian Institution).

Band gave a concert at 5 pm as part of the event. The newspaper reported that "after the close of the White House caroling, the colored residents of Washington will assemble at the community tree and at midnight inaugurate impressive services."[109] *Times Magazine* also covered the event and reported that at "midnight a group of Negro voices renewed the carolling about the great Christmas tree." The event followed the segregation practiced and sanctioned in Washington, DC, in the 1920s, which had expanded during Woodrow Wilson's presidency (1913–1921).[110]

Newspaper articles also suggest performances at the Sylvan Theater were segregated in the 1930s. A May 1931 article in the *Washington Post*, announcing the opening of the theater for the season with a performance by the Marine Band, stated that the "first band concert of the season for colored patrons will be held on the night of May 22 at Franklin Park. The Community Center Band Will Play."[111] Yet later in the summer of 1931, a Black dance troupe performed at the Sylvan Theater along with the Community Center Band.[112] In 1935, the *Washington Post* reported that the Nathaniel Dett Choral Society, which consisted of 200 singers from Black churches and musical organizations, performed a concert at the Sylvan Theater in June as part of the summer performances organized by the summer festival committee of the Community Center Department. The choral society

109 "President to Open Christmas Rites in Capital Today," *Evening Star*, 24 December 1923, 1.
110 "The White House Week," *Time Magazine*, January 7, 1924.
111 "Marine Band to Open Sylvan Theater Season," *Washington Post*, May 20, 1931, 7.
112 "Colored Dancers to Give Program," *Washington Post*, June 28, 1939: 9; George Clark, *Stepping to the National Stage: Protesting Injustice, Producing Shakespeare, and Claiming Black Space at the Sylvan Theater*, Masters Thesis, Harvard University (2022), 8.

Figure 73. Woman watching the Queen of the Cherry Blossom Festival being crowned in May 1941. The woman is using a mirror to view the event (Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division).

(Figure 72) was established in the fall of 1934 by Virginia Williams, a local public school music teacher.[113] Although rain reduced the number of participants and the size of the audience, the *Washington Times* reported that the program "was characterized by the fervor of the singers and the consequent beautiful tone color." The choral society sang most of the sections a capella and "the closing group of spirituals was especially well received as they were sung with a greater freedom and abandon. . ."[114]

As George Clark writes in *Stepping to the National Stage: Protesting Injustice, Producing Shakespeare, and Claiming Black Space at the Sylvan Theater,* these events "say that Black access to the Sylvan was contextual and contingent on competition for the venue with more White acts and speakers."[115] Even if the events were not officially segregated, segregation practices throughout the District of Columbia likely discouraged Black residents and visitors from participating.

As the National Park Service's non-segregation policies under Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes expanded and solidified during the late 1930s and 1940s, the use of the National Mall by Black residents and visitors as well as other minorities likely grew. [116] Ickes strengthened the non-segregated, anti-prejudice policy of the Department of the Interior and for National Mall events when he approved

113 "Sylvan Theater Offers Colored Choral Society," *Washington Post*, 30 June 1935, MS4; "Music Teachers to Speak," *Evening Star,* May 1, 1935.
114 "Choral Program," *Washington Times*, July 1, 1935, 16.
115 Clark, *Stepping to the National Stage*, 8.
116 For additional information on the Department of the Interior's policies on segregation, see Chapter 1 and Patricia Kuhn Babin, Links to the Past: A Historic Resource Study and Erin Krutko Delvin, *Segregation in Virginia's National Parks, 1916-1965* (Washington, DC: National Park Service 2022).

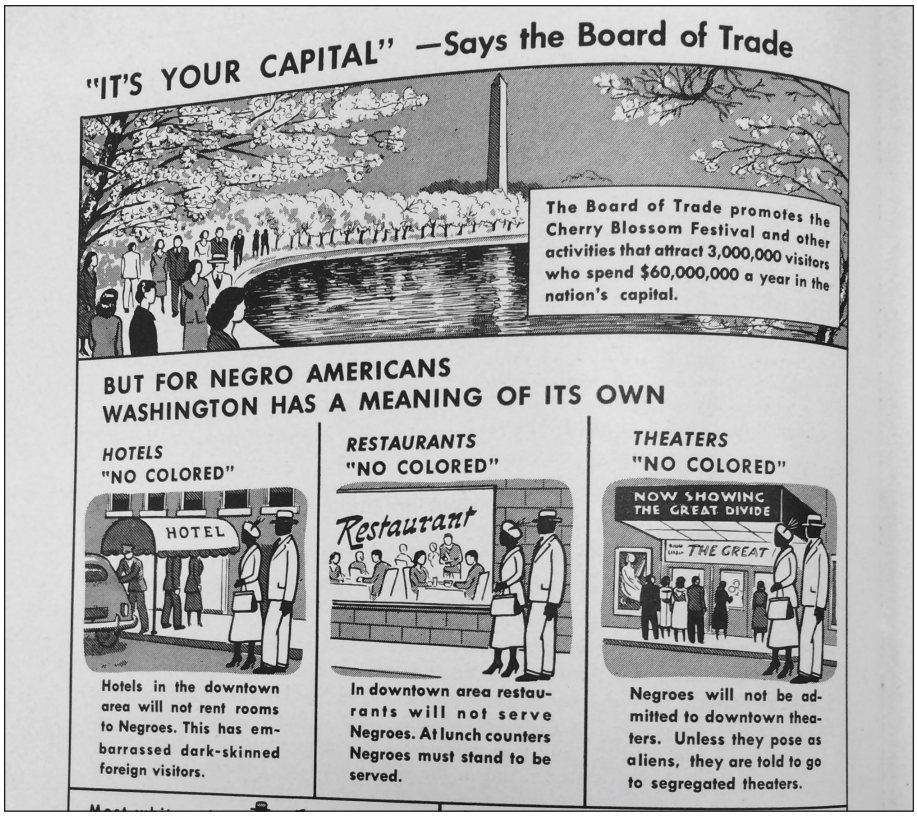


Figure 74. Page from *Segregation in Washington: a report of The National Committee on Segregation in the Nation's Capital*, published in 1948 (Landis).

the April 1939 performance by Black contralto Marion Anderson at the Lincoln Memorial and when he denied a permit to the National Gentile League, "a fascist outfit," for an event on the Washington Monument Grounds in May 1939. A 1949 report by Harry S. Wender on the status of segregation in Washington, DC, indicated that the Sylvan Theater and "spectacles," such as the Fourth of July Celebration, White House Christmas Tree dedication, and the Cherry Blossom Festival, were "unsegregated."[117] Wender was an attorney and chair of the DC Board of Recreation interested in ending segregation at DC parkland, including those under NPS jurisdiction.[118]

However, a 1948 study developed by the National Committee on Segregation in the Nation's Capital called out the contradictions in the District and detailed how Black and White residents and visitors received unequal treatment in nearly every aspect of life in the city.[119] The report, written by Kenesaw Mountain Landis

117 "Text of Wender Segregation Study," *Washington Post*, May 8, 1949, M18; Harry S. Wender, *Analysis of Recreation and Segregation in the District of Columbia* (Washington, DC: District of Columbia Recreation Department, 1949), held at George Washington University Melvin Gelman Library.

118 "Harry S. Wender," DigDC, accessed April 10, 2024, available at https://digdc.dclibrary.org/islandora/object/dcplislandora%3A59347.

119 Kenesaw Mountain Landis, *Segregation in Washington: A report of The National Committee on Segregation in the Nation's Capital* (Chicago: National Committee on Segregation in the Nation's Capital, 1948), held at Founders Library, Howard University.

(nephew of the baseball commissioner of the same name), contained tables of facts, lurid stories, and humiliating anecdotes from foreign visitors expressing their disgust by what they had found and experienced in the blocks surrounding the National Mall and its monuments. The report was accompanied by sequential art, making it even more effective in introducing the topic of segregation and racism to a wider audience. The report specifically called out the Cherry Blossom Festival and other activities supported by the Board of Trade, which attracted three million visitors a year who spent $60 million a year in the nation's capital. Yet Black residents and visitors could not stay in hotels or eat in restaurants in downtown Washington.[120] It was not until June 1953, when the US Supreme Court unanimously ruled that pre-existing anti-discrimination laws (including what was known as the "lost laws" of 1872 and 1873, which forbade racial discrimination in DC restaurants and disappeared from the D.C. Code since 1901) were still valid, that segregation in restaurants across the city officially ended.[121]

EVENTS AND CELEBRATIONS ON THE NATIONAL MALL DURING WORLD WAR II AND THE POST-WAR YEARS (1942–1960)

EVENTS AND CELEBRATIONS AND THE IMPACTS OF WORLD WAR II

World War II and its aftermath impacted several of the annual events held on the National Mall. While many events were canceled during the war, the National Mall also served as the site of several large-scale events to bolster support for the war effort and sell war bonds. These events often featured celebrities, foreshadowing the growing scale, publicity, and complexity of events held on the National Mall in the decades to come.

One of the largest events during World War II took place in September 1943, when the Washington Monument Grounds hosted a "huge Army spectacle" that spanned 17 days beginning on September 9 (Figure 75). Colonel Clarence

120 Neil Flanagan, "Look how real estate professionals in 1948 perpetuated segregation in DC," Greater Greater Washington, November 12, 2015, accessed August 4, 2023, https://ggwash.org/view/39898/look-how-real-estate-professionals-in-1948-perpetuated-segregation-in-dc.

121 Read the Plaque, "Mary Church Terrell, the Lost Laws, and the End of Segregation in DC Restaurants," accessed August 4, 2023, https://readtheplaque.com/plaque/mary-church-terrell-the-lost-laws-and-the-end-of-segregation-in-d-c-restaurants#:~:text=Near%20Me%20buttons.-,Mary%20Church%20Terrell%2C%20the%20Lost%20Laws%2C%20and%20the%20End%20of,(formerly%20on%20this%20site); John Kelly, "Remembering the 'Lost Laws' of Washington," *Washington Post*, February 11, 2018.

Figure 75. Back the Attack war bond rally held on the National Mall in support of World War II, September 12, 1943 (National Capital Region Photograph Collection, The People's Archive, DC Public Library).

Figure 76. Celebrities on stage at the Back the Attack war bond rally held on the National Mall in support of World War II, September 12, 1943 (National Capital Region Photograph Collection, The People's Archive, DC Public Library).

Renshaw of the Army Corps of Engineers, who oversaw the construction of the Pentagon, was in charge of constructing the exhibit halls and other structures on the grounds to display "an impressive array of fighting equipment to acquaint the public with the weapons their bonds buy, thereby accelerating the day of victory." The *Washington Post* sponsored the event, which was arranged and directed by the US Army at the request of the Treasury Department and in connection with the Third War Loan Drive.[122] The newspaper reported, "With the impressive

122 "Officials Break Ground Today On Site of 'Back the Attack,'" *Washington Post*, August 18, 1943, 1; "Army Show To Open Here On Sept. 9," *Washington Post*, August 16, 1943, B1.

background of the Washington Monument Grounds, from the eminence of the shaft itself down to the edge of elm locked walks, 'Back the Attack,' undoubtedly will stand alone as a live, breathtaking and majestic symbol of an aroused and determined America at war."[123]

The "biggest army show on earth in a peaceful surrounding" included a 103-foot-by-34-foot Army Chapel and a 300-foot railroad track for the mobile locomotive unit. The Army Air Forces alone, with a display of fighter and bomber craft as well as captured German, Italian, and Japanese planes, occupied 118,000 square feet on the Monument Grounds. An arena built for the event faced south toward the Washington Monument and contained seating for more than 5,000 people.[124] Black Troops also played an important role in Back the Attack, including a "colored barrage balloon unit" from Camp Tyson that demonstrated how barrage balloons were used to protect convoys, ammunition dumps, cities, and installations from low-flying strafing planes.[125] Kicking off the event was the Hollywood Bond Cavalcade, which included stars Dick Powell, Fred Astaire, Judy Garland, Mickey Rooney, and Lucille Ball. Starting in Washington, the Hollywood Bond Cavalcade went on a coast-to-coast "bondstorming tour" via a special train to promote the bond drive (Figure 76). While the Back the Attack event was free, bond purchasers were able to get tickets for the evening performances in the arena. When the event closed on September 27, 1943, organizers estimated that over 1.7 million people had visited.[126]

The following year the Army Air Forces held the event Shot from the Sky on the Washington Monument Grounds for the Fifth War Loan drive. The show, which opened on June 12 and closed on July 8, 1944, consisted of approximately 2,600 pieces of captured equipment from enemy forces.[127] The event began with a parade on June 11, 1944, from 7th Street and Constitution Avenue to the Washington Monument Grounds.[128] Shot from the Sky continued through early

123 "Officials Break Ground Today On Site of 'Back the Attack,'" *Washington Post*, August 18, 1943, 1.
124 "DC Awaits Holly Wood Cavalcade to Open Loan Drive," *Washington Post*, September 8, 1943; "206,000 See Display of Might As Great Army Show Closes," *Washington Post*, September 27, 1943, 1; "Builders' Dreams of Army Show Unfold as Chapel Work Begins,"*Washington Post*, August 26, 1943, 1.
125 "Negro Troops To Be In War Drive," *Atlanta Daily World*, September 5, 1943, 1; Featured in Big DC Army Show," *Chicago Defender,* September 25, 1943, 22.
126 "DC Awaits Holly Wood Cavalcade to Open Loan Drive," *Washington Post*, September 8, 1943; "206,000 See Display of Might As Great Army Show Closes," *Washington Post*, September 27, 1943, 1; "Builders' Dreams of Army Show Unfold as Chapel Work Begins,"*Washington Post*, August 26, 1943, 1.
127 " DC 'Liberation' Loan Drive For 107 Million Opens Today," *Washington Post*, June 12, 1944, 1.
128 "Parade Opens 'Shot From Sky' Exhibit," *Washington Post,* June 11, 1944, M2.

July and overlapped with the annual Fourth of July event at the Washington Monument.

With America at war, the 1942 Independence Day celebration in Washington was subdued, "the day observed in watchful silence, with residents ever aware of the enemy threat on the capital." The fireworks celebration on the Washington Monument Grounds was canceled in 1942 and 1943 and the accompanying parade was also banned.[129] The Fourth of July celebration returned in 1944, coinciding with the war bond rally Shot from the Sky exhibit. In addition to fireworks, the 1944 celebration, called Washington's Cavalcade of Freedom, included a concert by the Marine Band, the massing of the colors by 30 organizations, and a program by several Hollywood stars. A committee of local theater company officials met with Hollywood representatives to organize the event and provided tickets for the show to purchasers of war bonds, available at local movie theaters.[130] An estimated 325,000 people gathered for the event on July 4, 1944, with an estimated 175,000 at the Monument Grounds and 150,000 more "around the fringes." According to the *Evening Star*, it was "the largest ever to gather for a single event in the District" and sold over $1 million in war bonds.[131] Prior to the fireworks, actors Gil Lamb, John Payne, Paul Whiteman, Rosemary Lane, Marlene Dietrich, Dennis O'Keefe, William Holden, Mischa Auer, Red Skelton, Ellen Woods, and Ethel Merman "made their appearance in a parade of jeeps which had started at the Mayflower hotel." The 30-minute fireworks display gave Washington "a realistic taste of the noise of a bombardment. Aerial rockets, [and] mock battles . . ."[132]

The Cavalcade of Freedom Independence Day celebration continued through the 1940s and in 1947 DuMont, one of the pioneering commercial television networks, broadcast the celebration on television for the first time. Over 225,000 people attended the celebration on the Washington Monument Grounds, which included "oratory, music, pageantry" and fireworks. The District of Columbia Recreation Board, the Washington Board of Trade, the Motion Picture Owners of Greater Washington, and the National Park Service National Capital Parks all sponsored the event. While admission was free, organizers offered 15,000 seats for $1 each for those who preferred to sit during the festivities.[133] The Fourth of July

129 "War Shadowed This Fourth," *Washington Post*, June 29, 2000, G23.
130 "DC to Have Spectacular July 4 Show," *Washington Post*, June 30, 1944.
131 "325,000 Here Attend War Bond 'Cavalcade,' At the Monument," *Evening Star*, July 5, 1944.
132 "325,000 Here Attend War Bond 'Cavalcade'," At the Monument," *Evening Star*, July 5, 1944.
133 "Television Broadcasts July fourth Program for First Time Here," *Washington Post*, July 5, 1947; "Cavalcade of Freedom Fireworks Include Picture of Truman," *Washington Post*, July 2, 1947.

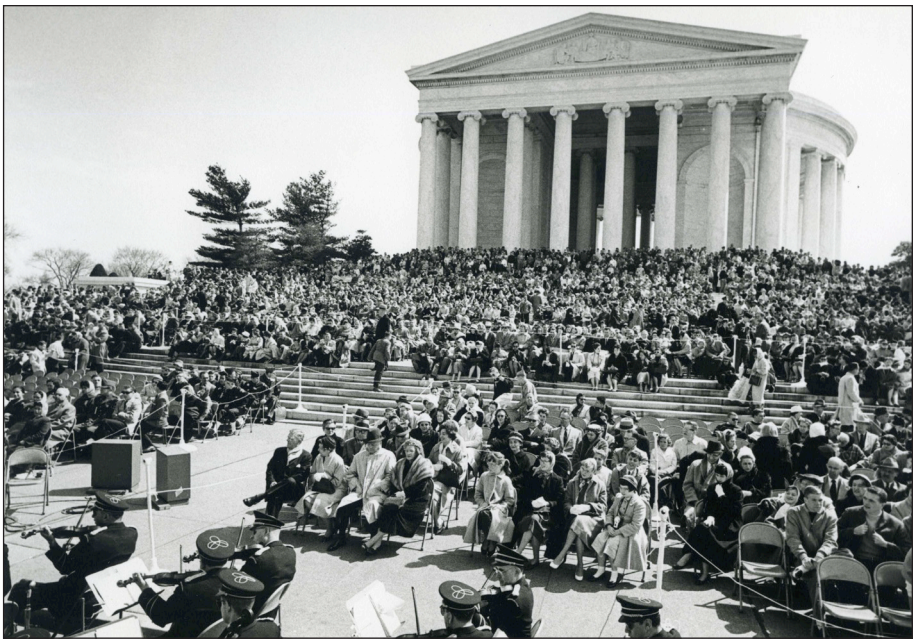


Figure 77. Crowd watching the Marine Band perform at the Cherry Blossom Festival in front of the Jefferson Memorial, April 1960 (National Park Service, Interior Region 1- National Capital Region, National Capital Region Public Affairs Collection, 1901–2000, Catalog Number NRCO 6).

celebration continued on the Washington Monument Grounds until 1958, when the National Park Service moved the event to Roosevelt Island. The *Washington Post* reported that National Capital Parks thought it could give Washington "a bigger and better fireworks show" at the new location, despite minor protests from patriotic groups, who felt that the change upset a long-standing tradition, and nature conservationists, who were concerned for birds on the island. The National Park Service provided seating for several thousand spectators at the Watergate steps, located between the Lincoln Memorial and the Potomac River, but most of the crowd was expected to view the fireworks from the Potomac River seawall and other high park grounds throughout the area. The event's location shift coincided with President Theodore Roosevelt's centennial year and the formal dedication of the Roosevelt Island.[134] The event returned to the Washington Monument Grounds the following year.[135]

The Cherry Blossom Festival continued as an annual tradition until the spring of 1942, when the District Commissioners canceled the event due to World War II. The Commissioners insisted that animosity for the trees due to Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor was not the reason for the cancellation; instead, officials claimed that they were concerned that the festival would create traffic jams and no protection could be given and because a large area of the Tidal Basin was being used by the US Army.[136] During the war years, the trees became known as the "Oriental cherry trees," removing their association with Japan. According to a 1943 article in the

134 "Leader Approves Roosevelt Island Fireworks," *Washington Post,* June 25, 1958, B1; "big Display Set for 9:10 P.M. at Roosevelt Island," *Washington Post*, July 3, 1958, B1.
135 "DC Area Celebrates the Fourth," *Washington Post*, July 5, 1959, A1.
136 "Cherry Fete Is Canceled Due to War," *Washington Post*, March 4, 1942.

Figure 78. Crowd at the 1954 dedication of the Japanese stone lantern at the Cherry Blossom Festival (National Park Service, Interior Region 1- National Capital Region, National Capital Region Public Affairs Collection, 1901–2000, Catalog Number NRCO 6).

Washington Post in 1942, the trees were "the target of many venomous letters" to the White House that called for their removal.[137] In December 1941, only a few days after the attack on Pearl Harbor, vandals cut down four cherry trees from the south bank of the Tidal Basin and inscribed on one "To Hell with the Japanese."[138]

Following the end of World War II, the Cherry Blossom Festival returned in 1947 with the theme of world peace. Over 450,000 people visited the Tidal Basin during the two-day event.[139] By 1957, the festival extended to six full days. The festivities began with a traditional opening ceremony on the north side of the Tidal Basin, including a performance by the United States Marine Band and speeches by the Japanese Ambassador Masayuki Tani and National Park Service Director Conrad Wirth, and ended with a public pageant and the crowning of the Cherry Blossom Queen at the Jefferson Memorial, a tradition that continued in the following years (Figure 77).[140] Beginning in 1948, the National Conference of State Societies was the official sponsor of the Cherry Blossom Queen program. On March 30, 1954, the Japanese Ambassador to the United States, Sadao Iguchi, gifted a 300-year-old Japanese stone lantern to the City of Washington as a rededication of friendship between the two nations, commemorating the 100th anniversary of the first Treaty of Peace, Amity and Commerce between the United States and Japan signed

137 Gerald G. Gross, "This Capital of Ours," *Washington Post*, March 1, 1942, B3.
138 "Japan's Mark is Taboo," *Washington Post*, December 11, 1941, 8.
139 "Blossom Fete Theme Called World Peace," *Washington Post*, March 19, 1947; "1947 Cherry Blossom Fete Breaks Attendance Marks," *Washington Post*, April 14, 1947.
140 "Blossoms Will Cooperate as Cherry Festival Opens," *Washington Post*, April 2, 1957, C6.

Figure 79. National Christmas Tree and Stage in 1945 (National Park Service, Interior Region 1- National Capital Region, National Capital Region Public Affairs Collection, 1901–2000, Catalog Number NRCO 6).

at Yokohama on March 31, 1854 (Figure 78). Since 1954, the National Cherry Blossom Festival has opened with the lighting of the lantern.[141]

While the National Christmas Tree Lighting continued during World War II, the event moved to the south lawn of the White House in 1941 at the request of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, who thought the "proper place for the tree is right next to the fence at the south end of the White House grounds."[142] British Prime Minister Winston Churchill attended the ceremony on December 24, 1941, along with President Roosevelt. Both delivered Christmas messages to the crowd from the South Portico of the White House. While the public was allowed to attend the ceremony, attendees were not allowed packages or cameras and were checked by Secret Service before entering the event.[143] Between 1941 and 1953, the event remained on the south lawn of the White House (Figure 79). In 1941, two live, 25-foot Oriental spruces were moved from a location within the White House grounds and replanted within the iron fence of the grounds. The trees were alternately used each year until 1954.[144]

141 National Park Service, "Cherry Blossom Festival, History of the Trees," accessed August 4, 2023, https://www.nps.gov/subjects/cherryblossom/history-of-the-cherry-trees.htm.
142 The White House and President's Park, "1941-1953 National Christmas Trees," accessed December 19, 2023, https://www.nps.gov/whho/learn/historyculture/1941-1953-national-christmas-trees.htm.
143 "Impatient Comment Stops as Churchill Speaks," *Washington Post*, December 25, 1941, 5.
144 The White House and President's Park, "1941-1953 National Christmas Trees," accessed December 19, 2023, https://www.nps.gov/whho/learn/historyculture/1941-1953-national-christmas-trees.htm.

Figure 80. Aerial view of the Ellipse showing the setup for the Pageant of Peace, 1954 (National Park Service, Interior Region 1- National Capital Region, National Capital Region Public Affairs Collection, 1901–2000, Catalog Number NRCO 6).

Figure 81. National Christmas Tree and Pageant of Peace Stage in December 1954 (National Park Service, Interior Region 1- National Capital Region, National Capital Region Public Affairs Collection, 1901–2000, Catalog Number NRCO 6).

In 1948, President Harry Truman did not attend the ceremony in person but gave a signal to turn on the lights from his home in Independence, Missouri. Four major networks broadcast the event on television for the first time. The 800 bulbs that illuminated the tree included white as well as the traditional red and green, "for the benefit of television." A "flashing star-shaped crown of eight bulbs" topped the tree.[145]

145 "Button to Set Nation's Tree Aglow at 5:16," *Washington Post*, December 20, 1948.

The fanfare surrounding the National Christmas Tree Lighting continued to expand in the 1950s. From its beginning in 1923, the National Christmas Tree Lighting always took place on Christmas Eve. On December 17, 1954, President Dwight D. Eisenhower kicked off a new, "more extensive holiday observance" known as the Pageant of Peace (or Christmas Pageant of Peace). The event, starting earlier in December and relocated to the Ellipse, continued through January 6 with "daily religious and international programs" and dramatized "the Christmas theme of 'Peace on earth, good will toward men."[146] Smaller live trees representing the 48 states, five territories, and the District of Columbia formed a Pathway of Peace, which led to the centered tree (Figure 80 and Figure 81).[147] The *Washington Post* also announced that when President Eisenhower pushed the button to light the big tree, he signaled "via short wave radio, United States miliary installations throughout the world which will light trees simultaneously."[148] The superintendent of National Capital Parks, Edward J. Kelly, served as general chairman of the event.[149] An estimated 7,500 people attended the opening ceremony and lighting of the 65-foot tree to hear President Eisenhower's message.[150]

The completion and dedication of the Jefferson Memorial on April 13, 1943, began an annual tradition, similar to the events at the Washington Monument and Lincoln Memorial, that includes speakers, laying of wreaths, and musical performances (Figure 82). The 1943 dedication coincided with the 200th anniversary of President Thomas Jefferson's birth and included the reading of the Declaration of Independence and a performance by the US Marine Band.[151] The 1948 ceremony, sponsored by the District Society of the Sons of the American Revolution, involved the participation of 25 patriotic and service organizations. A wreath from President Harry Truman was one of twenty laid at the monument.[152] In 1957, the National Park Service and the DC Society of the Sons of the American Revolution sponsored the event, which included music by the US Army Band.[153]

146 "Ike to Light Yule Tree Night of December 17," *Washington Post*, November 5, 1954.
147 "7,500 on Hand at Opening of Peace Pageant," *Evening Star*, December 18, 1954; National Park Service, "History of the National Christmas Tree," The White House and President's Park,accessed August 14, 2023, https://www.nps.gov/whho/learn/historyculture/national-christmas-tree-history.htm.
148 "Ike to Light Yule Tree Night of December 17," *Washington Post*, November 5, 1954.
149 "Ike to Light Yule Tree Night of December 17," *Washington Post*, November 5, 1954.
150 "7,500 on Hand at Opening of Peace Pageant," *Evening Star*, December 18, 1954.
151 "Jefferson Shrine Ceremony Set for Noon Hour Tomorrow," *Washington Post*, April 12, 1943, B1.
152 "25 Organizations Will Mark Jefferson Anniversary Today," *Washington Post*, April 13, 1948, B1.
153 "Memorial Rites Mark Birthday to Jefferson,"; *Washington Post*, April 14, 1957, A2.

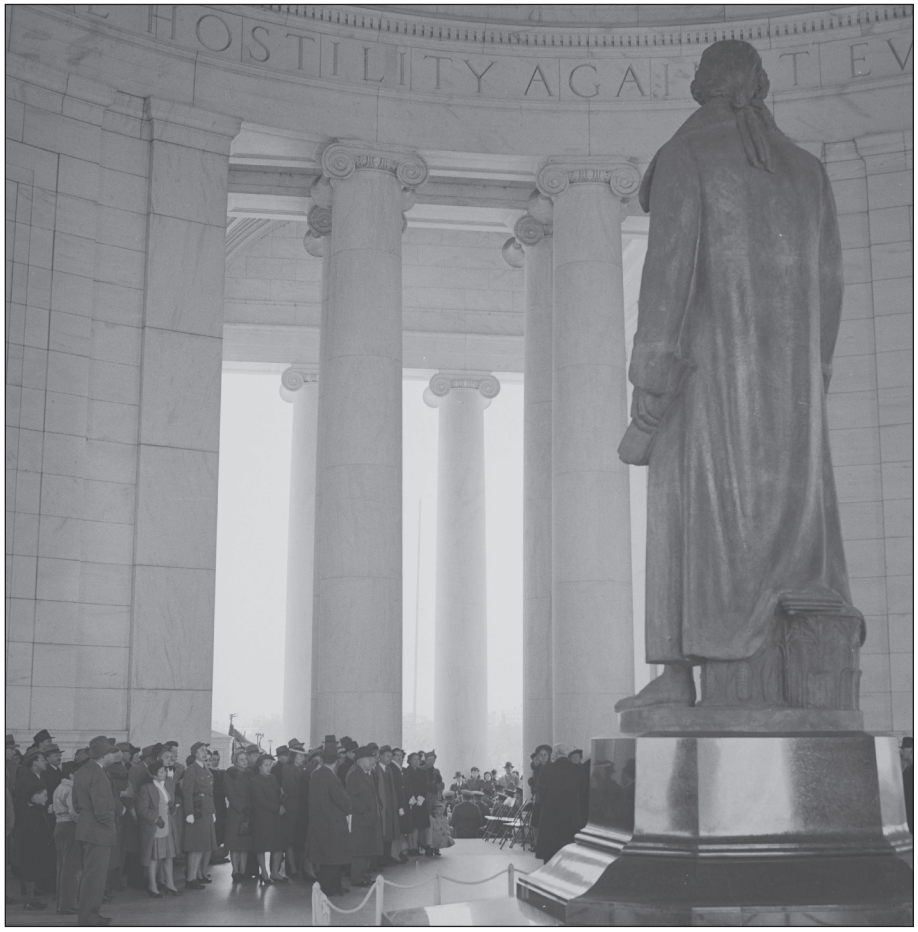


Figure 82. Thomas Jefferson birthday celebration at the Jefferson Memorial on April 13, 1944 (National Park Service, Interior Region 1- National Capital Region, National Capital Region Public Affairs Collection, 1901–2000, Catalog Number NRCO 6).

THE FOLKLIFE FESTIVAL AND THE BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION (1964–1976)

SMITHSONIAN FOLKLIFE FESTIVAL

The massive growth of the Smithsonian Institution under Secretary S. Dillon Ripley during his two decades of leadership (1964–1984) led not only to the expansion of museums along the National Mall but also to annual festivals that greatly influenced the types, size, and organization of festivals and other events for years to come. In particular, Ripley and the Smithsonian popularized the use of the National Mall between 7th Street NW–SW to 14th Street NW–SW, which until the implementation of the Smithsonian's new programs in the 1960s was relatively unused for large-scale events and celebrations.

S. Dillon Ripley wanted to reinvent the museum experience to go beyond its traditionally static encounters with objects and looked for ways to "awaken an often sleepy National Mall." Only a few years after he joined the Smithsonian as secretary, Ripley implemented his vision of enlivening the National Mall as an animated public space by organizing the Smithsonian Kite Festival in March

Figure 83. View of kites at the Washington Monument during the 1967 Kite Carnival (National Park Service, Interior Region 1- National Capital Region, National Capital Region Public Affairs Collection, 1901–2000, Catalog Number NRCO 6).

1967, installing a carousel that opened in April 1967, and holding the Smithsonian Festival of American Folklife in July 1967.[154]

As the Smithsonian expressed in its annual report, the year 1967 was focused on keeping its environment, the National Mall, "alive and vital."

> This we have attempted in the past two years in conjunction with the Master Plan for the Mall as well as the operations of overall stewardship being constantly undertaken by the National Park Service. It is important to recognize that buildings are not simply entities in themselves, set down haphazard in an alien environment. Rather, if they develop a strong interplay with the landscape, both are benefited, both come alive.[155]

One afternoon the year prior, in 1966, Paul E. Garber, then-assistant director of the National Air and Space Museum, and S. Dillon Ripley were walking along the National Mall. Garber's memory of the walk was that Ripley commented on the beauty of the Mall and bemoaned the fact that there were few people enjoying it. Ripley asked Garber if he had any ideas for bringing more people to the Mall. Garber, an aviation enthusiast and skillful kite- and model-maker since childhood, suggested a "carnival of kites."[156]

154 Diana Baird N'Diaye, Olivia Cadaval, Sojin Kim, eds., *Curatorial Conversations: Cultural Representation and the Smithsonian Folklife Festival* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2016).

155 Smithsonian Institution, *Smithsonian Year* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution 1967).

156 National Air and Space Museum, "Paul Garber's Target Kites," January 12, 2015, https://airandspace.si.edu/stories/editorial/paul-garbers-target-kites; Phil Casey, "Man at the String's End," *Washington Post*, April 6, 1969, 142.

Garber's first annual "Kite Carnival," later known as the Smithsonian Kite Festival, took place in March 1967 (Figure 83). The event began with two lectures on kites and a kite workshop held earlier in March and ended with a carnival and contest at the Washington Monument Grounds on March 25, 1967. Nearly 2,000 people gathered at the Washington Monument for the event, where kites were judged for their construction, craftsmanship, decoration, and performance.[157] Following its success, the Smithsonian continued the kite festival as an annual event until 2011, when it continued as part of the Cherry Blossom Festival.

From 1967 to 1969, the National Park Service allowed the Smithsonian to hold the festival on the Monument Grounds regardless of an 1892 law forbidding kite flying in the District. After an unrelated kite-flying incident at P Street Beach near Dupont Circle in 1969 that resulted in the arrest of a person flying a kite, authorities tightened the restrictions and the National Park Service denied the festival's permit in 1970. Without a repeal of the 1892 law or a new law permitting kite flying under controlled conditions, the Smithsonian moved the event to Fort Washington in early April of 1970.[158] In the spring of 1970, the underground newspaper *Quicksilver Times* filed a permit with the National Park Service for a kite fly-in on the National Mall on July 4 but was also denied. On April 11, 1970, around 30 people gathered at the Washington Monument Grounds in protest. Four were arrested. The participants organized a larger protest the following week. This time Park Police arrested 11 people "after a horde of youthful kite fliers raced down a hill just below the monument, lifting their multi-colored kites into the clear blue sky and shouting, 'Let's do it!'" While some kite fliers were unsuccessful, "enough stayed up to keep several Park Policemen busy for more than an hour hauling in the kites and their owners."[159] After a local lawyer filed a lawsuit, Congress struck down the 1892 statute in May 1970. On May 24, 1970, 4,000 people gathered at the Washington Monument to celebrate the appeal. The National Park Service gave away more then 2,500 kites to attendees. A local radio station broadcast the awards ceremony, held at the Sylvan Theater, and local rock bands played on stage for most of the afternoon.[160] The success of the festival led to it being held annually on the Washington Monument Grounds every spring.

157 John Carmody, "Sun, Kites Pervade Monument Ground," *Washington Post*, March 26, 1967, A1; "Smithsonian Plans Site Session," *Washington Post*, February 26, 1976, B2.

158 Herman Schaden, "Kites Flying Saturday," *Evening Star*, April 2, 1970, 21.

159 Duncan Spencer, "4 Accused of Flying Kites at Monument," *Evening Star*, April 12, 1970; David Holmberg, "11 More Arrested White Flying Kites at the Monument," E*vening Star,* April 19, 1970; John Kelly, "Until 1970, it was illegal to fly a kite in Washington. Hippies got the law changed," *Washington Post*, April 4, 2020.

160 William C. Woods, "Flying A Kite is All Right," *Washington Post*, May 25, 1970, B1; John Kelly, "Until 1970, it was illegal to fly a kite in Washington. Hippies got the law changed," *Washington Post*, April 4, 2020.

Figure 84. Photograph of the 1973 Folklife Festival adjacent to the Reflecting Pool. Shown are a Kentucky tobacco barn (left) that hosted many of the musical performances and a race track (right) and show ring for daily presentations (National Park Service, Interior Region 1- National Capital Region, National Capital Region Public Affairs Collection, 1901–2000, Catalog Number NRCO 6).

Smithsonian Secretary S. Dillon Ripley's goal for the Festival of American Folklife (renamed the Smithsonian Folklife Festival in 1998) followed larger trends in the civil rights movement as well as in the field of museum curatorship in the 1960s by presenting the "tradition-bearers as living, breathing individuals rather than as the inanimate objects they produce."[161] The festival's use of research-based living performances and demonstrations was also consistent with the larger trend in the museum world at the time of using living history as a presentation and interpretation technique. Instead of using present-day actors, the Folklife Festival's approach to living history was through the unscripted participation of the people who were active and exemplary practitioners of the representative communities and traditions, ultimately giving a voice to grassroots culture.[162] As explained by Richard Kurin, former director of the Smithsonian Folklife Festival, who began his Smithsonian career working on the 1976 festival for the Bicentennial Celebration,

> For the Smithsonian, the festival constituted the people's museum, wherein the celebrated national treasures were the people themselves and their traditional wisdom, knowledge, skill, and artistry. In terms of subject matter, the festival was seen as a corrective of sorts, a way of telling the story of the diverse people that populated the nation but whose cultural achievements were not represented in the museums or their collections.[163]

161 Richard Kurin, S*mithsonian Folklife Festival, Culture of, By and For the People* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1998), 23-24; Laura E. Smith, *Programming the Smithsonian Folklife Festival: National Cultural Policies on the National Mall*, Masters Thesis, American University, 2011, 24.

162 Richard Kurin, S*mithsonian Folklife Festival, Culture of, By and For the People* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1998), 23-24; Laura E. Smith, *Programming the Smithsonian Folklife Festival: National Cultural Policies on the National Mall*, Masters Thesis, American University, 2011, 24.

163 Richard Kurin, *Reflections of a Culture Broker: A View from the Smithsonian* (United Kingdom: Smithsonian, 1997), 121.

The Smithsonian held its first festival over July 1–4, 1967, on the National Mall between Madison Drive and Jefferson Drive and 10th Street and 14th Street, south of the National Museum of History and Technology (now the National Museum of American History) and the National Museum of Natural History. The event featured two tents (one for crafts and one for sales), a music stage, and a performance area on the terrace of the Museum of History and Technology. Fifty-eight traditional craftspeople and thirty-two musical and dance groups from across the United States demonstrated and performed at the first festival. Free to the public, the 1967 Festival drew more than 400,000 attendees and great interest from the press.[164] After the festival's success, the Smithsonian decided to make it an annual event.

In the 1970s, national reporters underscored how the festival brought together people with different, often diverging, interests during a time of great divisions and national scandals.[165] In 1972, *Washington Post* reporter Tom Shales wrote of the festival, "It was a day when hippie met hillbilly, Indian met white man…"[166] As expressed by historian William S. Walker,

> Debuting in the summer of 1967, the festival brought black, white, Asian, Latino, and Native American cultural practitioners from all over the United States and abroad to the National Mall each year. Participants included well-known performers, such as Doc Watson, Bill Monroe, and Lightnin' Hopkins, as well as ordinary people who practiced their traditions within their families and communities. There were soapmakers, weavers, carvers, blacksmiths, storytellers, dancers, cheese makers, sheep shearers, and musicians – many of whom had never performed outside their local communities.[167]

In 1973 the National Park Service became a co-sponsor of the festival and it moved to the western part of the National Mall alongside the Reflecting Pool, between 17th and 23rd Streets and between Constitution Avenue NW and Independence Avenue SW. By 1973, the event also expanded to over a week, from June 30 to July 8.[168]

Recognizing the need to be more inclusive, the Folklife Festival in 1974, 1975, and 1976 highlighted cultures of the African Diaspora (Figure 85 and Figure 86).

164 Smithsonian Folklife Festival, "1967 Festival of American Folklife," accessed July 2, 2023, https://festival.si.edu/past-program/1967.
165 Kurin, S*mithsonian Folklife Festival*, 132.
166 Tom Shales, "In Mud, With Folk," *Washington Post*, July 1, 1972, D1.
167 William S. Walker, *A Living Exhibition: The Smithsonian, Folklife, and the Making of the Modern Museum,* dissertation, Brandeis University, 2007, 228-229.
168 Smithsonian Institution, "1973 Festival of American Folklife," accessed July 2, 2023, https://festival.si.edu/past-program/1973.

Figure 85. View of crowd at the African Diaspora Market at the Smithsonian American Folklife Festival, ca. 1974–1975 (National Park Service, Interior Region 1- National Capital Region, National Capital Region Public Affairs Collection, 1901–2000, Catalog Number NRCO 6).

Figure 86. John White from Camden, Mississippi, demonstrates his basket making and caning skills at the Smithsonian Institute's 1974 American Folklife Festival, representing Mississippi craftsmen (NPGallery, NPS/John Mohlhenrich).

Author James I. Deutsch writes in "Crossing Borders on the US National Mall: The African Diaspora Programs at the Festival of American Folklife,"

> The African Diaspora programs were successful in serving three important functions: they introduced the very notion of an African Diaspora to millions of Folklife Festival visitors, serving not only to dispel notions of African as exotic, but also highlight the contributions of African culture to everyday American life; they helped to foster greater unity and dialogue within the diversity of African Diasporic cultures; and they set a dynamic and engaging model for future

> Folklife Festival programs that has continued to the present.[169]

The events included basket weavers, cooks, dancers, hairdressers, musicians, and woodcarvers representing diasporic traditions from Ghana, Nigeria, Trinidad and Tobago, and the United States, and highlighted the cultural connections between the traditions. The three programs were significant. Smithsonian historian and curator Faith Davis Ruffins recalled, "Perhaps for the first time ever in American public history, a Black American mythos—the notion of the unity of African peoples across time and space—was presented by a preeminent cultural institution.[170] One participant in the 1974 African Diaspora program expressed her personal experience and the value of the event to her and her three children in a letter to the Smithsonian's assistant secretary for public service:

> As we strolled through the African Diaspora area we stepped inside the "church" to hear the story teller, William Faulkner [an 84-year-old preacher from North Carolina], who was then performing. Immediately we were absorbed, along with the others hearers representing many ages and races, in the charming and amusing story of the short-tailed animals and the long-tailed animals. We also were introduced to the African origins of these stories and to the hidden meanings they conveyed in a slave culture. No written collection of these stories, not even the recording of them (which we subsequently bought) could equal the experience of participating with a variety of other listeners in the event.[171]

1976 BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

The Smithsonian's Folklife Festival as well as the Fourth of July celebration became the centerpieces of one of the most significant and nationally visible celebrations on the National Mall in the latter half of the twentieth century: the Bicentennial Celebration of 1976. Plans for the United States' bicentennial in 1976 were years in the making, with Washington, DC, at the center of much of the planning efforts. President Lyndon B. Johnson established the American Revolution Bicentennial Commission on July 4, 1966, to prepare an overall program for commemorating the bicentennial of the American Revolution and "to plan, encourage, develop, and coordinate observances and activities, focusing on the national and international significance of the American Revolution, and its

169 James I. Desutsch, "Crossing Borders on the US National Mall: The African Diaspora Programs at the Festival of American Folklife," in *Mapping the History of Folklore Studies: Centres, Borderlands and Shared Spaces* (United Kingdom: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2017), 61.
170 Desutsch, "Crossing Borders on the US National Mall: The African Diaspora Programs at the Festival of American Folklife," 62.
171 Desutsch, "Crossing Borders on the US National Mall: The African Diaspora Programs at the Festival of American Folklife," 67.

implications for present and future generations."[172] The initial commission was comprised of designated federal officials and 17 members of the public appointed by the President of the United States. After criticism that the Commission was a tool for corporate businessmen to engage in "crass commercial exploitation" of the bicentennial, the Commission was terminated and replaced by the American Revolution Bicentennial Administration (ARBA) in December 1973, first under President Richard Nixon and subsequently under President Gerald Ford.[173] ARBA focused its efforts on supporting and coordinating around 66,000 recognized local, state, and private celebrations, including picnics, ceremonies, presentations, and other festivities held across the country. Official bicentennial events kicked off in April 1975 when the American Freedom Train began its 21-month tour of the 48 contiguous states and culminated on July 4, 1976, with elaborate fireworks displays in major US cities, including a televised display in Washington, DC.[174]

Washington civil and business leaders organized the nonprofit Happy Birthday USA! to fill in what they regarded as a gap in the city's initial bicentennial program—the lack of a full-scale birthday party. Major local and national corporations and local and federal government agencies financed the events. In addition to the fireworks, the organization also sponsored a parade along Constitution Avenue.[175] Officials estimated that 17 million visitors would descend on the nation's capital for the Bicentennial Celebration.[176]

The Smithsonian's expanded Folklife Festival ran for 12 weeks in the late spring and summer 1976 (June 16 through September 6) and was one of the key events of the Bicentennial Celebration. The festival once again took place in the western section of the National Mall, south of the Reflecting Pool between 17th and 23rd Streets. Like the years prior, the festival featured seven thematic programs, complemented by the Festival Stage for performances. More than 5,000 participants took part and the festival involved the participation of every region of the United States, 38 foreign governments, numerous Native American tribes,

172 Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, "FG 75 (American Revolution Bicentennial Commission) (White House Central Files: Subject Files)," accessed June 16, 2023, https://www.nixonlibrary.gov/finding-aids/fg-75-american-revolution-bicentennial-commission-white-house-central-files-subject.
173 Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, "FG 75 (American Revolution Bicentennial Commission) (White House Central Files: Subject Files)," accessed June 16, 2023, https://www.nixonlibrary.gov/finding-aids/fg-75-american-revolution-bicentennial-commission-white-house-central-files-subject.
174 The Gerald R. Ford Presidential Digital Library, "American Bicentennial Celebration," accessed 20 June 2023, https://www.fordlibrarymuseum.gov/library/exhibits/bicentennial/bicentennial.asp.
175 Jack Eisen, "July 4 Extravaganza Set," *Washington Post*, 15 April 1976, A1.
176 Jack Eisen, "July 4 Extravaganza Set," *Washington Post*, 15 April 1976, A1.

and many labor organizations. An estimated 4.5 million people attended the 1976 festival.[177]

Another main event in June 1976 was an eighteenth-century-style fireworks display on the east end of the Mall near the Union Square reflecting pool. The event coincided with the opening of "The Eye of Thomas Jefferson," the National Gallery of Art's bicentennial exhibition.[178] Other museums along the Mall also held special exhibits to coincide with the celebration. Foreshadowing the Solar Decathlon held on the National Mall during the early 2000s, the Federal Energy Administration and the Department of Housing and Urban Development sponsored an outdoor exhibit on solar energy and conservation at Jefferson Avenue and 3rd Street, which included a model solar home.[179] One of the most anticipated events was the opening of Smithsonian's new National Air and Space Museum on the Mall on July 1, 1976, which was quickly packed with more than 8,000 visitors within the first half hour.[180]

The city braced itself for up to 1 million Washingtonians and tourists to "celebrate, demonstrate, picnic and gawk in the downtown area" over the Fourth of July weekend.[181] Happy Birthday USA! sponsored several major events during the weekend. A parade on Constitution Avenue between 7th and 17th Streets NW attracted an estimated 500,000 spectators and around 10,000 participants marched in the parade.[182] An all-night candlelit prayer vigil "for peace, freedom and justice" was held at the Lincoln Memorial, and more than 5,000 people gathered on the steps of the National Archives to hear the reading of the Declaration of Independence.[183]

The *Washington Post* reported that the fireworks display was the biggest in American history. Instead of being set off from only one location on the Washington Monument Grounds, the fireworks were launched from two sites on the National Mall and in West Potomac Park.[184] On July 4, 1976, an estimated 1 million people gathered downtown and on the shores of the Potomac River to watch the fireworks, the largest crowd recorded in DC at that time. On the river,

177 Smithsonian Folklife Festival, "Past Programs, 1976 Festival of American Folklife," accessed July 2, 2023, https://festival.si.edu/past-program/1976#:~:text=The%20Festival%20of%20American%20Folklife%27s,Wednesday%20through%20Sunday%20each%20week).
178 Paul Richard, "Gunpowder Pictures at an Exhibition," *Washington Post*, 25 May 1976, B3.
179 "Surveying the 'Solar' System," *Washington Post*, 22 May 1976, C2.
180 "Possible Million Due on Holiday," *Washington Post*, July 2, 1976, A1.
181 "Possible Million Due on Holiday," *Washington Post*, July 2, 1976, A1.
182 "500,000 Watch Big Parade," *Washington Post*, July 4, 1976, 1.
183 "America Joyfully Toasts Birth of a Nation," *Washington Post*, July 5, 1976: A1.
184 Jack Eisen, "July 4 Extravaganza Set," *Washington Post*, April 15, 1976, A1.

Figure 87. Crowd at the Washington Monument during the Bicentennial Celebration, July 4, 1976 (Darrell C. Crain, Jr. Photograph Collection, The People's Archive, DC Public Library).

Figure 88. Crowds gathered at the Reflecting Pool during the Bicentennial Celebration, July 4, 1976 (Darrell C. Crain, Jr. Photograph Collection, The People's Archive, DC Public Library).

more than 1,000 boats anchored to watch a 45-minute fireworks display that depicted America from its earliest settlements to the space age. Despite a light rain in the afternoon, "cars began jamming roadways in and around Washington by 4 pm as spectators crowded into the city and nearby northern Virginia for the evening's fireworks spectacular." The evening's program began at the Sylvan Theater in the shadow of the Washington Monument, with the Grambling State University Marching Band and musician Johnny Cash, who was the grand marshal of the ceremonies. The US Army Band and Chorus and the Mormon Tabernacle Choir also performed. Vice President Nelson A. Rockefeller delivered a 10-minute speech before the fireworks began. The *Washington Post* reported, "In addition

to the hundreds of thousands of fireworks spectators sitting and standing on the ground throughout the vast grassy areas around the Washington Monument and across the river on the Potomac palisades, tens of thousands watched from the windows and roofs of office and apartment buildings, hotels and motels around downtown and in Alexandria and Arlington."[185]

On the last day of the Bicentennial Celebration, July 5, 1976, Happy Birthday USA! sponsored a family day picnic in West Potomac Park, attended by 1,000 adults and children. That same day, approximately 25,000 people attended the Folk Life Festival. Meanwhile, National Park Service trash crews collected over 1,000 cubic yards of garbage from the fireworks on the Washington Monument Grounds the evening prior, which was greater than anything the NPS experienced in 10 to 15 years.[186]

While large crowds attended the bicentennial events on the National Mall, some Black Washingtonians chose not to participate in the festivities. Many Black Americans held conflicting views on the bicentennial celebrations and, more generally, the celebration of the Fourth of July, due to the fact that at the time of the Declaration of Independence, most Black people in the United States were enslaved. Civil Rights activist Reverend Jesse Jackson and other Black leaders called for a boycott of the official 1976 bicentennial celebrations. In contrast, some supported Black Americans' participation in the bicentennial events as a cause for celebrating their significant contributions to the development of the United States of America. Betty Shabazz, widow of Malcolm X, stated, "Blacks have made more contributions…than any other ethnic minority." The *Washington Post* reported, "The events and activities of the holiday weekend in this predominantly black city and the nation's capital underscore both views."[187]

A number of Black Washingtonians actively participated in the official ceremonies, including Washington Mayor Walter E. Washington, who was a part of the parade. Carol Rankle, the only Black member of the Happy Birthday America! committee told the *Washington Post*, "We have a lot of things to celebrate. If we boycott everything the white man will continue to elevate himself." Rankle was instrumental in getting the Grambling University (a historically Black university) Marching Band to participate in the Pageant of Freedom on the Washington Monument Grounds. When she joined the committee in April 1976, she was dismayed that no all-Black groups were included in the activities, although "many

185 Lawrence Meyer, "America Joyfully Toasts Birth of a Nation," *Washington Post*, July 5, 1976.
186 Leon Dash and Joseph D. Whitaker, "Day after '4th' Quiet but Active," *Washington Post*, July 6, 1976, C1.
187 "Black Views Divided on Bicentennial," *Washington Post*, July 4, 1976, 45.

were mingled with predominately white groups." Many Black groups from across the country declined her invitation to participate in the events because they did not have the funds to travel to Washington. Rankle was able to raise money for the 130-member Grambling University marching band's trip to Washington.

Other Black Washingtonians chose to have their own distinctive celebrations. One Black Washingtonian told the *Washington Post* that his family was celebrating by hosting a "manumission" party on the Fourth of July: "We have no reason to celebrate the Fourth of July. We honestly felt that the holiday did not represent us."[188] Another Black Washingtonian told the *Evening Star* that "the Bicentennial is not for blacks. Black folks should have been at home trying to map out the revolution."[189] However, the *Evening Star* also reported that Black Washingtonians stayed away from the fireworks on the National Mall as "more of a protest against traffic than a boycott of the Bicentennial." One woman told the newspaper that for years her family gathered on the Washington Monument Grounds to watch the fireworks, but "This year being the Bicentennial I decided to act very American and give some nice tourist family a spot on the grass – and a lot of headaches in the traffic jam."[190]

Some Indigenous people were also wary of celebrating the bicentennial. In January 1975, leadership representing 24 tribes in seven western states met with John W. Warner, chief of the federal bicentennial agency, to discuss their inclusion in the celebration. Although they largely expressed appreciation toward the outreach, the tribal leaders rejected the invitation to participate, articulating that the bicentennial constituted a celebration of White European settlers that glossed over the centuries of violence toward and forced removal of Indigenous peoples. Robert Burnette, the tribal chair of the Rosebud Sioux of South Dakota, told Warner and other federal officials at the meeting, "This bicentennial is hypocritical because it makes heroes out of men who have stolen our land and our lives. I simply cannot celebrate the name or the deeds of such men."[191] "I simply

188 "Black Views Divided on Bicentennial," *Washington Post*, July 4, 1976, 45. For more on the Bicentennial and the downtown redevelopment in Washington, DC, see "Contrast in Bicentennial Projects Shows Split in City," *Washington Post*, July 3, 1976; and Lauren Pearlman, "The Bicentennial and the Battle of DC's Downtown Redevelopment during the 1970s," *Journal of Planning History* 19, no. 4 (2020): 207–227.

189 Jacqueline Bolder, "Why Many Blacks Stayed Away from the Fireworks," *Evening Star*, July 1, 1976, B1.

190 Jacqueline Bolder, "Why Many Blacks Stayed Away from the Fireworks," *Evening Star*, July 1, 1976, B1.

191 James T. Wooten, "Indians Balk at a Role in Bicentennial," *New York Times*, January 31, 1975.

cannot," Burnette added. The *New York Times* described the meeting as a "blunt, occasionally bitter and sometimes poignant confrontation."[192]

Other Indigenous groups, meanwhile, went beyond abstaining from the bicentennial and instead actively protested the celebrations. Four years after Native American demonstrators occupied the Bureau of Indian Affairs at 1951 Constitution Avenue NW, activists again orchestrated cross-country caravan to demand Indigenous rights. Named the Trail of Self-Determination, a continuation of the 1972 Trail of Broken Treaties, the caravan left Yakima Nation in Washington State in June 1976 and was joined by tribal nations on their way to Washington, DC. The caravan arrived in Washington on July 3, the eve of the bicentennial, and initially camped at the American University soccer field and the Piscataway Indian Center. On the following day, July 4, the demonstrators, by then numbering 300, gathered in front of the White House to demand an audience with President Gerald Ford and to speak before a joint session of Congress. The president and members of Congress did not oblige, but protesters continued demonstrating in front of the White House through the rest of July.[193] Although the protestors did not seem to disrupt bicentennial activities, they took the occasion as an opportunity to highlight the plight of Indigenous people.

THE EXPANSION OF EVENTS AND CELEBRATIONS ON THE NATIONAL MALL (1977–2010)

THE DIVERSIFICATION OF CULTURAL EVENTS ON THE NATIONAL MALL

The Smithsonian's Folklife Festival, as "an educational form of public cultural representation," quickly became the basis for other large-scale events in the latter decades of the twentieth century and beyond, bringing diversity to the types of events held on the National Mall. The festival model included "a research base, a community engaged curatorship, creative presentation, a respect for the dignity of those represented and the intelligence of visitors." This model particularly inspired National Council of Negro Women (NCNW) president Dorothy Height. Height enlisted Richard Kurin to help in the planning for a new event on the mall in 1986—the Black Family Reunion.[194]

192 Wooten, "Indians Balk at a Role in Bicentennial."
193 "The Trail of Self-Determination, 1976," National Park Service, accessed May 23, 2024, https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/trail-self-determination.htm.
194 Kurin, S*mithsonian Folklife Festival*, 14, 147.

On September 13, 1986, around 25,000 people gathered on the National Mall for the first National Black Family Reunion Celebration, sponsored by the NCNW. The organization, founded by Mary McLeod Bethune in 1936, was celebrating its 50th anniversary that year. The goal of the event was to combat negative stereotypes about Black families in the media and create a positive, culturally based event that would celebrate family values. The event featured food, entertainment, education, and cultural activities.[195]

While the mood at the September 1986 event was cheerful, the NCNW's purpose for the event was more serious. At the event, NCNW president Dorothy Height stated, "I have been on these grounds many times. Usually we are protesting. But we're not protesting today. We are facing our own problems and mobilizing our own people to build on the strengths of black families to deal with them." The event, located between 12th and 14th Streets NW, borrowed tents and stages from the Smithsonian Institution used for the Folklife Festival. Names of the pavilions reflected the festival's themes: Family Values, the Work Ethic, Health, Young Adults, Children. The festivities ended with a concert by the O'Jays, a musical group whose 1970s hit song "Family Reunion" was the festival's theme song.[196]

In 1995, the two-day event celebrated its 10th anniversary. Height reflected on the Black Family Reunion, saying, "I never dreamed it would be so big. It has stimulated more discussion about issues like family values. We've let people know that families do matter." Thousands of people attended the event to enjoy music, join lectures on health, spirituality, and politics, and browse African American history and crafts displays. The event concluded with a concert at the Sylvan Theater. By 1995, NCNW also sponsored similar events in Philadelphia, Los Angeles, and five other cities.[197] Although the NCNW eventually scaled back the event to two cities, Cincinnati and Washington, DC, by 2001, the festival continued to draw several thousands to the National Mall.[198] In 2005, the reunion celebrated its 20th anniversary. Part of its success was its accessibility to all. As one attendee noted, "It doesn't cost to come to the National Mall, and this event is huge." Height noted that the openness of the event and the fact that it could be enjoyed by just about everyone were two of its hallmarks.[199] Months after Height's

195 "Black Festival Celebrates Family Life," *Washington Pos*t, September 14, 1986, B1; "Sara Gebhardt, "Spirit of Family," *Washington Post*, September 5, 2003; Histories of the National Mall, "The National Black Family Reunion," accessed June 9, 2023, https://mallhistory.org/items/show/440.

196 "Black Festival Celebrates Family Life," *Washington Post*, September 14, 1986, B1.

197 Bill Miller, "Area Blacks Celebrate Family at 10th Reunion," *Washington Post,* September 10, 1995, 37.

198 Spencer S. Hsu, "Extended Reunion on Mall For Area's Black Families," *Washington Post,* September 9, 2001, C9A.

199 Henri E. Cauvin, "Black Family Reunion Reaches Milestone, Its Charm Unchanged," *Washington Post*, September 11, 2005.

death in April 2010, the NCNW held its 25th annual reunion on the National Mall. The NCNW held its last Black Family Reunion on the National Mall, and in Washington, DC, in September 2011. The one-day event included an ecumenical prayer breakfast, a variety of educational pavilions, and a concert tribute to Dorothy Height.[200]

By the late 1970s, the annual Caribbean Festival moved to the Ellipse, bringing additional attention to the event and the use of the National Mall for diverse cultural events. The Caribbean Festival began in 1974 as part of the National Park Service's Summer in the Parks, a popular program that ran between 1968 and 1976 to connect people to the parks through arts and recreation.[201] The festival originated as a way for Caribbean immigrants "to devote one day to the promotion of their diverse and colorful culture."[202] The July 1978 event on the Ellipse, sponsored by the DC Recreation Department, the National Park Service, and other Caribbean countries, featured a parade, West Indian food, and steel drum music.[203] In the following years, the event continued to attract tens of thousands to the Ellipse and became a popular rite of summer in Washington, DC.[204] The festival continued in the same location until 1990, when organizers moved the event to Prince George's County, Maryland, due to the fees required by the National Park Service to help defray cleanup and security costs for the event.[205]

Following the lead of the Caribbean Festival, the organizers of Washington, DC's Latino Festival moved the annual celebration to the National Mall in 1989. The 1989 festival on the Mall was a significant event for Washington DC's Latino community. As Olivia Cadaval writes in "'Tirarlo a la Calle/Taking It to the Streets': The Latino Festival and the Making of Community," the festival extended the concept of the barrio, or the "Latino physical and cultural space…to not only the entire Washington metropolitan area but also to the rest of the nation."[206]

What started in 1970 as a small cultural festival in the Adams Morgan neighborhood of Washington, DC, known as the Latino Festival or Fiesta DC, became a two-day event in July 1989 that attracted thousands and included a food

200 "Passing Along the Stories," *Washington Post*, September 11, 2011, C5.
201 "A Caribbean Celebration," *Evening Star,* July 4, 1978; National Park Service, "Summary in the Parks (1968-1976),"accessed 15 November 2023, https://www.nps.gov/articles/summer-in-the-parks-1968-1976.htm.
202 "A 'Hot, Hot, Hot' Time," *Washington Post,* July 5, 1988.
203 "Sun Dance Gives Calypso Carnival Respite from Rain," *Washington Post*, August 13, 1978.
204 "A Taste of the Indies," *Washington Post*, July 19, 1982.
205 "Taste of the Caribbean in Pr. George's," Washington Post, September 24, 1990.
206 Olivia Cadaval, "'Tirarlo a la Calle/Taking It to the Streets': The Latino Festival and the Making of Community," *Washington History* 4, no. 2 (Fall/Winter, 1992/1993), 48.

festival, a gala dinner, a parade, and an "outdoor extravaganza" on the National Mall.[207] When organizers started the Latino Festival in 1970, Latino residents in Mount Pleasant and the surrounding neighborhoods "were beginning to define community." Census records indicate that over 17,000 Latinos lived in the District of Columbia and over 70,000 lived in the larger metropolitan area in 1970.[208]

The volunteer-organized festival began as a small one-day event held in Kalorama Park and quickly became the life of the Latino community. As expressed by Arturo Griffiths, an early participant and organizer, "the Festival was a project that enriched our consciousness about the city and about what we are as a community [in] Washington, DC." After neighbors complained about the destruction of the grass in the park, festival organizers moved the event to Columbia Road, expanding the festivities to several stages for music and performances, additional booths for selling food, and a parade.[209]

By 1988, the festival had become too large for the neighborhood and its size made it difficult for the police and fire department to respond to incidents. Festival organizers recognized the need to move the event, along with the parade, to a larger, more open area.[210] Led by festival president Arturo Griffiths, organizers set their sights on the Washington Monument Grounds for the festival and Constitution Avenue for the parade. In addition to providing more space, moving the festival to the National Mall expanded the exposure of the Latino community in Washington, DC.[211] Griffiths later recalled that it was not an easy decision:

> [T]here was a lot of hostility in the country about Latinos…And there were issues of immigration that were very strong, at that time…there was a campaign against immigrants being in this country. So, to make a decision to go down to the Monument it was a big decision, it was a really big decision.[212]

More than 100,000 people attended the event on July 23, 1989. At the time, Fiesta DC was the city's longest-running community-sponsored festival. Musical performances took place at the Sylvan Theater and participants sold food from more than 200 booths on the Washington Monument Grounds. As the *Washington*

207 "Facing Debts, Divisions, Latino Festival Regroups: Current Board's Final Meeting to Detail Woes," *Washington Pos*t, January 4, 1993, B3.
208 Cadaval, "'Tirarlo a la Calle/Taking It to the Streets': The Latino Festival and the Making of Community," 42-43.
209 Arturo Griffiths Oral History Interview for Latino Festival DC Oral History Project, interview by Annette Raveneau, July 28, 2020.
210 Arturo Griffiths Oral History Interview for Latino Festival DC Oral History Project, interview by Annette Raveneau, July 28, 2020.
211 Lois Athey Oral History Interview for Latino Festival DC Oral History Project, interviewed by Annette Raveneau, August 6, 2020.
212 Arturo Griffiths Oral History Interview for Latino Festival DC Oral History Project, interview by Annette Raveneau, July 28, 2020.

Post reported, "For many vendors and performers, the festival provided an opportunity to introduce Latino customs to visitors, including tourists around the Mall. . . Others rued the move from the old neighborhood, saying it was impossible to recapture the spirit of previous celebrations." District Mayor Marion Barry called the festival's new location a success, telling the crowd "We're on the Mall to stay. We'll be back next year."[213]

Building on its success, organizers planned the following year to begin with a small, one-day event in Adams Morgan and the larger parade and festival on the National Mall. Austerity measures taken by both the city and federal governments initially threatened the event—organizers for all festivals held on District or National Park Service land faced extensive user fees for the first time as federal and local governments tried to reduce expenditures. The District of Columbia, facing a projected $95 million budget deficit, cut back on the estimated $67,000 in services it had promised to provide to the Fiesta DC event. At the same time, the NPS required festival organizers to pay an advance fee of $90,000 to cover the event's anticipated cost and maintenance. Some events on the National Mall, such as the Fourth of July celebration and the Cherry Blossom Festival were budgeted events, meaning that they were paid for by the federal government; demonstrations, protected by the First Amendment, were not charged user fees. The National Park Service stated in June 1990, "In the past we had a budget for unbudgeted events such as the festivals, but no more." After festival organizers appealed to Secretary of the Interior Manuel Lujan, Jr., the National Park Service and the organizers eventually came to an agreement to scale down the festival and end it earlier than initially planned. The scaled-down festivities reduced the National Park Service fee to $46,000, with the agency absorbing $11,000 of the cost.[214]

The following year, organizers canceled the main part of the festival after the NPS denied permission to hold the event on the Washington Monument Grounds. Carlos Lizarraga, a spokesman for the organization, told the *Washington Post*, "The festival will take place, as it does every year—but not on the Mall. The conditions demanded by the National Park Service are too hard for us to meet." National Park Service spokeswoman Sandra Alley responded that the festival "failed to provide us with the required information to ensure the public health and safety."

213 Michael Rezendes, "Old and New Customs Mingle at 'Fiesta DC,'" *Washington Post*, July 4, 1989.

214 "Compromise Saves Hispanic Festival," *Washington Post*, July 6, 1990; "DC Mall Festivals to Be charged User Fees," *Washington Post*, June 30, 1990, B01; "Expenses Jeopardize DC Hispanic Festival," *Washington Post*, July 20, 1990, B01; Lois Athey Oral History Interview for Latino Festival DC Oral History Project, interviewed by Annette Raveneau, August 6, 2020.

Additionally, due to sluggish fundraising, the organization lacked the necessary funds to cover the fee for the event. Despite the cancellation of the Mall portion of the vent, the smaller event in Adams Morgan and the parade on Constitution Avenue continued as planned.[215] While the event returned to the National Mall in 1992, debt from the previous events caused divisions amongst the festival organizers. In 1993, the event moved to Pennsylvania Avenue.[216]

In the shadow of the success and struggles of the Caribbean and Latino festivals, the Indian-American community in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area celebrated India's Independence Day at the Washington Monument Grounds on August 18, 1991. The event consisted of a cultural program, food bazaar, and sports activities. It was the first time the group had organized an event on the National Mall. Organizer Ramesh Ravella, vice president of the India Cultural Coordination Committee of Manassas, commended the cooperation from the National Park Service in organizing the event. In contrast to the issues experienced by the Fiesta DC organizers, the India Independence Day organizers were able to work through permitting issues with the NPS before the start of the event.[217]

The choice of the National Mall by various cultural groups highlighted the growing cultural diversity of events held there, as organizers perceived the Mall as a space that conferred prominence and legitimacy to their events and cultures. Yet the fees and regulations required to hold events on the National Mall likely impacted other events similar to the Latino and Caribbean festivals. Louis Athey, who volunteered with the 1988–1990 Latino Festival and organized the food booths, later recalled:

> And also there used to be a Caribbean Festival. And they couldn't afford to pay the DC fees. So they ended up going to Baltimore. As the fees go up; DC charges to have the police out. When you do the food booths, they charge a fee for the inspection. The food booth prices, I've noticed, are very expensive. I don't think the Mom and Pop food people have the food booths the way they used to. It's probably restaurants and businesses that can afford to pay the fee. . ."[218]

215 "Latin Fest Main Event Canceled," *Washington Post*, July 6, 1991, C1.
216 "Facing Debts, Divisions, Latino Festival Regroups," *Washington Post*, January 4, 1993; "Ingenuity Triumphs at Latino Festival," *Washington Post*, August 1, 1993.
217 Ramesh P. Ravella, "Praise for the National Park Service," *Washington Post*, September 7, 1991, A20.
218 Lois Athey Oral History Interview for Latino Festival DC Oral History Project, interviewed by Annette Raveneau, August 6, 2020.

Figure 89. Crowds near the stage and altar during the Pope John Paul II Mass on October 7, 1979 (National Park Service, Interior Region 1 - National Capital Region, National Capital Region Public Affairs Collection, 1901–2000, Catalog Number NRCO 6).

POPE JOHN PAUL II VISIT TO WASHINGTON, DC

The success and fanfare surrounding the Folklife Festival and the Bicentennial Celebration had a profound impact on the size and complexity of events on the National Mall in the following decades. One notable event in the wake of the bicentennial was the visit of Pope John Paul II to Washington, DC, in October 1979, the last stop on a week-long US tour. It was the first visit of a sitting pope to Washington and created immense anticipation for large crowds at the main event on October 7, a Sunday Mass on the National Mall (Figure 89). Officials predicted the Mass would attract 1 million worshippers, the largest gathering on the National Mall to date and larger than the 1960s civil rights demonstrations and the 1976 Bicentennial Celebration. The *Washington Post* reported: "The systems of the city are simply too small. Streets, buses, subway trains, food outlets, medical emergency facilities, yes, even restrooms, will be taxed far beyond ordinary capacity." The Metro system also anticipated large crowds and warned riders to expect major delays. The warnings led some to stake out spots on the National Mall on Saturday, 24 hours before the start of the Mass. The *Washington Post* reported, "Parents and their children, young couples and bands of young men and women unfolded their sleeping bags and began a joyous vigil until the next afternoon.... Most in the crowd were young, and as the guitars played and the voices rose in song, there was a sense that this was a bit of Woodstock—but without any scent of marijuana." In what would prove to be a theme of his 26-year pontificate, the pope invited the crowd to "reflect on the nature of marriage, on the family, and on the value of life," focusing in particular in his homily on respect

for human life.[219] In the end, the crowds were much smaller than anticipated, with around 175,000 in attendance.[220]

The 1979 Mass on the National Mall also added a new level of complexity—security. The Mass took place on a 10,000-square-foot, three-tiered stage and altar set up on the north side of the Smithsonian Castle. Police set up a 42-inch-high, 5,000-foot-long chain-link fenced enclosure around stage and altar with officers standing at 20-foot intervals along the south side of the fence.[221]

FOURTH OF JULY CELEBRATION

The Fourth of July celebration in 1977, compared to the Bicentennial Celebration the year prior, was "a leisurely, largely subdued, seemingly haphazard kaleidoscope of ceremony, summer outings, patriotism, picnicking, parades, some social protest, and fireworks." Around 210,000 attended the fireworks on the Washington Monument Grounds.[222] Beginning in 1980, the National Park Service sponsored a concert on the Washington Monument Grounds featuring the Beach Boys, who performed on a stage specially erected for the event, attracting large crowds (Figure 91). By 5 pm on July 4, 1980, over 200,000 people gathered on the Washington Monument Grounds to hear the band, which led the crowd "rocking and swaying in a joyous confusion of flying Frisbees, bounding soccer balls and foaming beer bottles." By the time the fireworks display started, the crowd had swelled to over 450,000.[223] The Beach Boys returned to the Fourth of July celebration in 1981, followed by the Grass Roots in 1982. In the spring of 1983, Secretary of the Interior James Watt announced the decision to ban "rock bands" like the Beach Boys and the Grass Roots from that year's Fourth of July celebration on the National Mall in order to keep what Watt called "the wrong element" from attending the celebration. Instead, Watt arranged for "patriotic, family-based entertainment" provided by the US Army Blues Band and Wayne Newton.[224] After Watt left his cabinet post in the fall of 1983, the Beach Boys

219 "Apostolic Journey to the United States of America, Holy Mass at the Capitol Mall, Homily of His Holiness John Paul II, Washington, 7 October 1979," *Vatican*, accessed February 29, 2024, available at https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/homilies/1979/documents/hf_jp-ii_hom_19791007_usa-washington.html.

220 Valentine, Paul W. and Douglas B. Feaver, "A How-to Guide for Seeing the Pope Next Weekend," *Washington Post*, September 30, 1979, C1; Maraniss, David A., "John Paul's Farewell Mass Celebrates Life: Pope's Farewell Mass Offers Celebration of Life," *Washington Post*, October 8, 1979, A1; Mark Jones, "DC's First Papal Visit, 1979," *Boundary Stones*, accessed July 3, 2023, https://boundarystones.weta.org/2015/09/23/dcs-first-papal-visit-1979.

221 Paul Valentine; Security, Traffic Plans for Papal Visit are Massive," *Washington Post*, September 14, 1979, VB1.

222 "Calm Fourth: 200,000 Witness Fireworks Display," *Washington Post*, July 5, 1977, A1.

223 "Glorious Fourth," *Washington Post* July 5, 1980, A1.

224 "Watt Sets Off Uproar With Music Ban," *Washington Post,* April 7, 1983, A1.

Figure 90. The Beach Boys perform at the Washington Monument Grounds on July 4, 1984 (National Park Service, Interior Region 1 - National Capital Region, National Capital Region Public Affairs Collection, 1901–2000, Catalog Number NRCO 6).

returned for the Fourth of July celebration in 1984 (Figure 90). Officials stated that the crowd was twice as large as the crowd the year prior, when Newton performed; the 1984 crowd was estimated to be the largest crowd since the bicentennial in 1976.[225] The following year, the crowd on the Washington Monument Grounds grew to 650,000 people who gathered to see the fireworks and hear the Beach Boys, whose late arrival postponed the firework display by a half hour.[226]

In 1986, the Fourth of July celebration went "back to the basics." The *Washington Post* reported, "For the last decade, ever since the Bicentennial bash made Mall-

225 "Mall-American 4th," *Washington Post,* 1983, A1.
226 "On the Mall," *Washington Post*, July 5, 1985, A1.

Figure 91. Huge crowds gather around the stage at the 1980 Fourth of July Celebration to hear the Beach Boys perform (National Park Service, Interior Region 1 - National Capital Region, National Capital Region Public Affairs Collection, 1901–2000, Catalog Number NRCO 6).

flowers out of many area residents—and especially during the Beach Boys era of programmed nostalgia and all-day sunbathing—Independence Day festivities around Washington have seemed a little slick and commercial." In 1986, many tourists were drawn to New York to celebrate the centennial of the Statue of Liberty. There was also more emphasis on "home-made Americana" that year. Consequently, the "Fourth was primarily a family affair, short on showbiz and long on tradition." Around 325,000 gathered on the National Mall for the event compared to 650,000 the year prior.[227]

In the following years and continuing today, music and performances tied to the Fourth of July celebration have taken place on the West Lawn of the Capitol. The National Symphony Orchestra began the tradition of giving a concert of patriotic music for the Fourth of July on the West Lawn in 1979.[228] In 1981, Congress authorized NPS to annually sponsor a series of National Symphony Orchestra concerts on the US Capitol Grounds in observance of Memorial Day, Labor Day, and Independence Day, all broadcast live on Public Broadcasting Service (PBS).[229] The Independence Day concert in particular, known as "The Capitol Fourth," has become a star-studded event, featuring world-class talents such as Frankie Valli, Patti LaBelle, Stevie Wonder, and Aretha Franklin.[230]

227 "On the Mall, Fewer People But a Still Festive Occasion," *Washington Post*, July 5, 1986, A1.
228 Martin Weil, "300,000 Congregate To Watch Fireworks," *Washington Post*, July 6, 1979, A1.
229 House Concurrent Resolution 133 (May 21, 1981).
230 Andrew Dentamaro, "Lend me Your Ears," Architect of the Capitol, May 13, 2016, https://www.aoc.gov/explore-capitol-campus/blog/lend-me-your-ears.

CHRISTMAS PAGEANT OF PEACE AND THE NATIONAL MENORAH

The Christmas Pageant of Peace continued to attract a growing number of visitors and special features. In 1972 alone, 1 million people visited the Ellipse to see the National Christmas Tree.[231] Like many other events on the National Mall and the Ellipse in the latter decades of the twentieth century, the Pageant of Peace and lighting of the National Christmas Tree became larger and more commercialized. In 1981, organizers flew in Andy Williams to entertain the crowd. As the *Washington Post* later reported, from that moment, "the Pageant of Peace had less to do with peace than with programming."

> Within two years there were singing chipmunks, tuba-playing Santas and a three-cycle magenta-and-white lighting scheme that turned the National Christmas tree alternately from white to pink beneath its clutter of three-dimensional plastic snowflakes and crisscross ropes of tinsel (Figure 92).[232]

The increased frivolity of the Pageant of Peace coincided with President Ronald Reagan's presidency.[233] Reagan, a former actor, was also known for his extravagant, highly televised inauguration in 1981 (see Chapter 2). Security concerns following an assassination attempt on March 30, 1981, in Washington, DC, led President Reagan to illuminate the tree remotely from the East Room of the White House. It was the first time a president was in Washington, DC, but was not at the tree lighting event.[234] From 1982 to 1988, the remainder of Reagan's tenure, the president typically lit the tree from the South Portico ground-floor entrance, except in times of inclement weather. In those instances, the event took place from just inside the door in the Diplomatic Reception Room.[235] In 2007, the Pageant of Peace was renamed the "The National Christmas Tree and Pathway of Peace."[236]

The lighting ceremony of the National Menorah has also become an annual part of the winter holiday season in Washington, DC, although unlike the National Christmas Tree and Christmas Pageant of Peace, it is a permitted First Amendment

231 "Yule Tree Will Be Planted on Ellipse," *Washington Post*, August 14, 1973, C1.
232 Ken Ringle, "Two Trees That Are Poles Apart," *Washington Post,* December 23, 1999.
233 Ken Ringle, "Frivolity and Heart Abound at National Tree Ceremony," *Washington Post*, December 16, 1983, B1.
234 National Park Service, "1981-1988 National Christmas Trees," The White House and President's Park, accessed August 14, 2023, https://www.nps.gov/whho/learn/historyculture/1981-1988-national-christmas-trees.htm.
235 "1981–1988 National Christmas Trees," National Park Service, accessed April 10, 2024, available at https://www.nps.gov/whho/learn/historyculture/1981-1988-national-christmas-trees.htm.
236 "2001–2008 National Christmas Trees," National Park Service, accessed April 10, 2024, available at https://www.nps.gov/whho/learn/historyculture/2001-2008-national-christmas-trees.htm.

Figure 92. Children celebrating with Alvin and the Chipmunks at the 1983 Christmas Pageant of Peace (National Park Service, Interior Region 1- National Capital Region, National Capital Region Public Affairs Collection, 1901–2000, Catalog Number NRCO 6).

event and sponsored by the American Friends of Lubavitch (Chabad). President Jimmy Carter participated in the first event in 1979 when, on the first night of Hanukkah, he walked from the White House to a public menorah constructed in Lafayette Park. American Friends of Lubavitch (Chabad) sponsored the event, with Rabbi Abraham Shemtov serving as the principal organizer.[237]

Rabbi Shemtov had requested a permit from the National Park Service to place the menorah in Lafayette Park. NPS, however, denied the permit on the grounds that it violated the separation of church and state. The rabbi complained to Stuart Eizenstat, a Jewish domestic adviser to President Carter. Eizenstat pressured Secretary of the Interior Cecil Andrus to reverse the permit denial on the grounds that NPS had already granted a permit to the National Christmas Tree. Reflecting decades later, Eizenstat stated that the moment marked a turning point in Jewish and American history. "It's the symbol of American Jewry coming of age with this holiday being much more public," Eizenstat observed.[238] The National Menorah's location shifted to the Ellipse in 1987.[239]

NATIONAL CHERRY BLOSSOM FESTIVAL

Similar to other events, the scope of the National Cherry Blossom Festival also expanded in the late 1980s and through the early 2000s. In 1985, the National Cherry Blossom Festival, Inc., a 501(c)(3) nonprofit and umbrella organization of

237 "First National Menorah Lighting," Histories of the National Mall, accessed July 5, 2023, https://mallhistory.org/items/show/525.
238 Michael Kranish, "Carter would make history lighting a Hanukkah menorah. But first, he needed a longer match," *Washington Post*, December 10, 2020.
239 Michael Kranish, "Carter Would Make History lighting a Hanukkah Menorah. But First, He Needed a Longer Match," *Washington Post*, December 10, 2020.

business leaders, civic groups, and government, was established to take over the planning, coordination, and programming for the annual festival. The one-week festival continued until 1994, when it was expanded to two weeks to allow more organizations to schedule events in conjunction with the celebration. In addition to the annual parade, events tied to the 1994 festival also included a black tie gala, a display of rice paper floats from Japan, and a dance troupe performance at the Kennedy Center. Aligning the festival with the trees blooming was always challenging, and the expansion of the festival to two weeks allowed for a larger buffer to overlap with the trees' peak blooming period.[240]

The 1994 festival was not without controversy. Since 1948, the National Conference of State Societies had been in charge of crowning the queen of the Cherry Blossom Festival and her court of princesses, who represented each state, territory, and the District of Columbia. The society of each state, territory, and the District chose the princesses, with the only qualifications being that she must be between the ages of 18 and 23 years old, a resident of the locality, and never married. The queen was chosen at the National Conference of State Societies' gala by spinning a wheel that held the names of each state, territory, and the District of Columbia. This method produced a homogeneous crowd of princesses, which became a concern of the National Cherry Blossom Festival, Inc. Drew Von Bergen, spokesman for the national festival, told the *Washington Post*, "You look at the princesses at the parade and basically, you see 50 white shining faces that are supposed to represent America. We were lucky if there were two or three minorities. . .We said they should take measures to ensure more diversity." Instead, the National Conference of State Societies split from the festival committee after 1993, telling the *Washington Post,* "Nobody tells us what to do with our princesses." The disagreement led to two festival openings, two queens and courts, and two formal balls in 1994.[241] By 1997, after encouragement from the Japanese Embassy, the two organizations signed a "memorandum of understanding" that laid out responsibilities.[242] It was not until 2012 that the National Conference of State Societies crowned the first African American Cherry Blossom Queen, Taylor Barfield.[243] That same year, the festival expanded to a full five weeks, celebrating the centennial of the 1912 planting of the Japanese cherry trees.

240 National Cherry Blossom Festival, "About the Festival," accessed July 3, 2023, https://nationalcherryblossomfestival.org/about-us/; "It's Two for One at Blossom Time," *Washington Post*, March 20, 1994, D1.
241 National Cherry Blossom Festival, "About the Festival," accessed July 3, 2023, https://nationalcherryblossomfestival.org/about-us/; "It's Two for One at Blossom Time," *Washington Post*, March 20, 1994, D1.
242 "Cherry Battle Blooms Anew," *Washington Post*, September 25, 1999.
243 Emily Wax, "DC's Cherry Blossom Queen Ritual Blossoms Into a Cultural Education," *Washington Post*, April 11, 2013.

OTHER ANNUAL EVENTS AND LARGE CELEBRATIONS

Several other annual events and large celebrations materialized during the late 1990s and early 2000s, attracting thousands to the National Mall. On June 8, 1991, 800,000 people flocked to the National Mall to participate in the National Victory Celebration to honor veterans and celebrate the end of Operation Desert Storm and the Persian Gulf War. It was the largest military celebration in Washington since World War II. The event began at Arlington Cemetery, continued with a parade of 8,000 veterans marching down Constitution Avenue, and ended with a United Service Organizations (USO) concert and firework display on the Washington Monument Grounds that was reportedly three times the size of the firework show on the Fourth of July (Figure 93). Thousands viewed a seven-block-long display on the National Mall of military equipment used in the war. The celebration also included an "All-American Picnic" on the Ellipse, open to the soldiers and their families.[244]

On New Years Eve 1999, Washingtonians, President Bill Clinton and First Lady Hillary Clinton, celebrities, and others welcomed the new millennium with several festivities, including events on the Washington Monument Grounds and at the Lincoln Memorial. The Lincoln Memorial served as the backdrop for America's Millennium Gala, an event commissioned by President Bill Clinton and First Lady Hillary Clinton, organized by record producer Quincy Jones and director George Stevens, Jr., and hosted by actor Will Smith. The Gala featured a "star-studded concert of great American music" and the world premiere of Steven Spielberg's short film *The Unfinished Journey*, "a concert piece of original music, poetry and images evoking the highlights and spirit of the last century." As midnight approached, attendees experienced a "spectacular high-tech sound and light display between the Lincoln Memorial and the Washington Monument" that was "the nation's salute to the new century." [245] At the time, the Washington Monument was covered in scaffolding for repairs. The "Midnight Moment" of the event occurred when 1999's final seconds were ticked off by a "spectacular pyrotechnic display of light" ascending the monument's scaffolding in 50-foot increments. At the climax of the event, the Washington Monument was fully illuminated for 20 seconds. Additionally, a 50-foot-tall structure with the number

244 "Desert Storm Celebration," *Washington Post,* June 3, 1991; "A Capital Thank-You," Washington Post, June 9, 1991; CBS News, "How CBS Reported the Last National Military Parade in 1991," February 8 2018, https://www.cbsnews.com/amp/news/how-cbs-news-reported-the-last-national-military-parade-in-1991/.

245 The White House, National Archives, "Schedule of Events for "America's Millennium: A Celebration for the Nation," accessed August 8, 2023, https://clintonwhitehouse4.archives.gov/WH/New/html/mil-sked.html.

Figure 93. "Spectators cover the Mall near the Washington Monument as they turn out for the United Service Organizations Show, part of the National Victory Celebration which is being held in honor of the Allied forces' liberation of Kuwait during Operation Desert Storm," June 8, 1991 (National Archives and Records Administration, Record Group 330).

2000 faced the Lincoln Memorial and flashed on and off at midnight.[246] In preparation, workers had draped a 500-foot sheet of fireproof material across the monument's face to protect it from more than 700 cigar-sized fireworks lashed to the scaffolding.[247] More than 300,000 people from the Washington metropolitan area and "even from around the country, sat or stood in awe as the monument

246 Michael E. Ruane, "Sparks Were Flying Before Fireworks," *Washington Post,* January 1, 2000, A6; Michael E. Ruane, "Fireworks to Dazzle, Delight," *Washington Post*, 31 December 1999:B1.

247 Peter Slevin, "00 Worries," *Washington Post*, January 2, 2000, A1.

counted down the final seconds with flashes of light that rose to the top of the 555-foot obelisk."[248]

In June 1999, HBO began sponsoring an annual "Screen on the Green" program on the Washington Monument Grounds, reminiscent of the film screening on the grounds 83 years earlier in 1916. Five movie classics, including *Casablanca* and *Citizen Kane*, were shown on a 20-by-40-foot outdoor screen. The National Park Service endorsed the festival, supporting its family entertainment that would draw people downtown to the National Mall after work hours.[249] The event, usually held on Mondays during the months of July and August, later moved to the Mall between 7th and 12th Streets NW and continued until 2015.

Other new annual events during the 2000s included the National Book Festival, founded in 2001 by First Lady Laura Bush and Librarian of Congress James H. Billington, and the Solar Decathlon, sponsored by the US Department of Energy beginning in 2002. The Library of Congress first held the National Book Festival in its grounds and buildings on Capitol Hill and moved it to the West Lawn of the Capitol and the National Mall in 2002. In 2003 the Library of Congress held the event solely on the National Mall between 7th and 14th Streets NW. The annual literary event brought together bestselling authors, poets, and illustrators with thousands of readers for book talks, panel discussions, and book signings. As the festival grew and evolved, the event became the nation's premier literary event and continued on the National Mall until 2013.[250] The first Solar Decathlon competition took place on the National Mall in early fall 2002. The 21-day inaugural event was visited by more than 100,000 people and included 14 teams that "designed, built, transported, and showcased zero energy houses powered entirely by renewable energy—a feat relatively unheard of at the time."[251] Following its success, the event returned to the National Mall from 2003 until 2010 (Figure 94).

The model of the Smithsonian Folklife Festival continued into the late 1990s and early 2000s with several one-time, large events that included the Smithsonian's 150th Birthday Party on the Mall (1996–1997), the National World War II Reunion

248 Susan Levine, "A Capital Celebration," *Washington Post,* January 1, 2000: A1.
249 Jaqueline Trescott, "On the Mall, Star-Filled Nights," *Washington Post*, June 24, 1999.
250 Library of Congress, "National Book Festival, History," accessed July 7, 2023, https://www.loc.gov/programs/national-book-festival/history/#:~:text=The%20National%20Book%20Festival%20was,first%20Festival%20was%20held%20Sept.
251 Department of Energy, "Solar Decathlon Turns 20!" 20 January 2022, accessed July 7, 2023, https://www.energy.gov/eere/articles/solar-decathlon-turns-20#:~:text=The%20first%20Solar%20Decathlon%20competition,unheard%20of%20at%20the%20time.

Figure 94. View of the Solar Decathlon on the National Mall in 2007 (National Archives, Record Group 48).

Figure 95. The 150th birthday celebration of the Smithsonian Institution in 1996 (Smithsonian Institution Archives Image # 96-25404-19).

(2004), and the First Americans Festival (2004).[252] The Smithsonian kicked off its 150th birthday in 1996 with numerous special events and exhibitions held throughout the year. On August 10 and 11, 1996, the Smithsonian held a two-day birthday celebration on the National Mall that stretched from the Capitol at 3rd Street to the Washington Monument (Figure 95). The event included 23 pavilions, exhibit tents, and performance stages. A concert held on Saturday evening featured Aretha Franklin, Mickey Hart, Trisha Yearwood, Buffy Sainte-Marie, and

252 Smithsonian Institution, "Smithsonian Folklife Festival, Mission and History," accessed June 12, 2023, https://festival.si.edu/about-us/mission-and-history/smithsonian.

the Smithsonian Jazz Masterworks Orchestra. The event ended with a 25-minute fireworks display. [253]

The National World War II Reunion, held over Memorial Day weekend in 2004, coincided with the dedication of the World War II Memorial on the National Mall. The four-day Tribute to a Generation celebration was produced by the Smithsonian Institution, Washington National Cathedral, Military Performing Units, and the American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC). The event "invited World War II veterans and their families…to the Mall to reunite, reminisce, and witness the dedication of the National World War II Memorial." As part of the event, the Smithsonian Institution Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, in partnership with ABMC, produced a National World War II Reunion. This open-air, tented activity was open daily and located on the National Mall from 3rd to 7th Streets NW, between the Smithsonian's Air and Space Museum and the National Gallery of Art. The event included the Reunion Hall, which served as a central gathering space, two large performance pavilions, the Wartime Stories tent, and the Preserving Memories tent, where experts from the National Archives, the Smithsonian Institution, and the Library of Congress counseled veterans and their families on how best to preserve documents, scrapbooks, photos, medals, and memorabilia from World War II.[254]

The First Americans Festival took place over six days in September 2004 (September 21–26), coinciding with the opening of the National Museum of the American Indian. The event began with a Native Nations Procession with more than 20,000 members of 500 tribes from all over the American hemisphere. The festival included several stages and pavilions erected on the National Mall between 4th Street and 9th Street NW, which held music and dance performances, storytelling events, and featured 300 performers representing 50 native communities (Figure 9[6]).[255] The dedication and procession alone drew 55,000 spectators to the National Mall. At the event, Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell, a member of the Northern Cheyenne tribe in headdress and buckskin jacket, told the crowd, "To all our Native American friends here today, I say: 'The sacred hoop

253 Lynda Schmitz Fuhrig, "Looking Wayback on the Smithsonian's Sesquicentennial" Smithsonian Museum Archives, accessed August 1, 2023, https://siarchives.si.edu/blog/looking-wayback-smithsonian%E2%80%99s-sesquicentennial.

254 The White House, President George W. Bush, "World War II Memorial," accessed August 1, 2023, https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/ww2/events.html; Library of Congress, National World War II Reunion and the Veterans History Project" accessed August 1, 2023, https://guides.loc.gov/world-war-ii-reunion.

255 Paul Schwartzman, "With Pride, Native Americans Drawn to the Mall," *Washington Post*, September 21, 2004.

Figure 96. First Americans Festival coinciding with the opening of the National Museum of American Indian in September 2004 (photograph by David, Flickr, https://www.flickr.com/photos/bootbearwdc/14415541/in/photostream/).

has been restored. The circle is complete. The reemergence of the native people has come true.'"[256]

THE NATIONAL MALL PLAN (2010–PRESENT)

Changes in policy regarding the use of the National Mall for festivals and events had a tremendous impact, notably on large-scale annual festivals. The new policies followed the 2010 approval of the National Mall Plan and restrictions on the use of temporary structures that harm the turf grass on the National Mall.[257] Between 2010 and 2016, the National Park Service and National Mall and Memorial Parks staff oversaw the renovation of the National Mall's turf. Completed in two phases, the first phase included the first three lawn panels closest to the Capitol. After the completion of the first phase in 2012, the second phase concentrated on the final five panels between 7th and 14th Streets, the most popular area of the National Mall for large events.[258]

In January 2011, the US Department of Energy announced that the Solar Decathlon would not be held on the National Mall and posted on its website:

> Over the years, the National Mall—the nation's front yard—has played host to many large, public events, which have impacted the long-term health of the Na-

256 Paul Schwartzman, "Tribes Welcome 'Long Overdue' Tribute," *Washington Post*, September 22, 2003, A01.
257 "Tightening Rules on the Mall Leave Fests in Peril," *Washington Post*, February 27, 2014.
258 Adrian Higgins, "Once Barely Surviving, the Grass on the Mall gets a Serious Makeover," *Washington Post*, September 20, 2016.

Figure 97. View of the 2000 Smithsonian Folklife Festival (photograph by Jeff Tinsley. Courtesy of the Ralph Rinzler Folklife Archives and Collections, Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, Smithsonian Institution).

Figure 98. View of the Smithsonian Folklife Festival site in 2014 (photograph by Francisco Guerra. Courtesy of the Ralph Rinzler Folklife Archives and Collections, Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, Smithsonian Institution).

tional Mall. In support of the historic effort underway to protect, improve, and restore the National Mall, the Department of Energy, in conjunction with the National Park Service, has decided to seek a new site for the US Department of Energy Solar Decathlon 2011.[259]

Participants from all over the world were six months away from shipping their final designs to Washington, DC, for the competition and were concerned about how the decision would impact their designs, particularly as the location of the National Mall was an incentive for teams to gain support from financial

259 US Department of Energy, "Message Regarding the Location of the U.S. Department of Energy Solar Decathlon 2011," January 11, 2011, accessed November 15, 2023, https://www.solardecathlon.gov/blog/archives/629.

backers.[260] In February 2011, the Department of Energy announced that the event would continue in Washington, but in a new location in West Potomac Park. The move allowed the students to "keep their existing home designs, tailored for Washington's latitude, temperature and humidity conditions."[261] The following year the event did not return to Washington, DC, and moved across the country to Irvine, California.

In January 2013, the National Park Service modified its permit regulations for the National Mall, again changing where and how bigger events could use the space. The National Park Service issued the new regulations in the wake of the massive crowds that attended President Barack Obama's second inauguration in 2013. The regulations prescribed where temporary structures could be erected and defined how much impact the turf grass could take. More importantly, the new regulations greatly impacted many of the annual events held on the National Mall, including the National Book Festival, the Black Family Reunion, the Smithsonian Folklife Festival, and others, events that had been held on the National Mall for years and even decades. Ultimately, the regulations forced many to cancel or hold their events elsewhere.

Because of the tighter restrictions, in January 2014 organizers of the National Book Festival announced that after 12 years on the National Mall the festival would move to the Walter E. Washington Convention Center, located in the District. The NCNW also announced that it would not hold its annual National Black Family Reunion on the National Mall in 2014 due to the turf grass project.[262] The national Washington, DC, event was not held elsewhere in 2014 or in subsequent years, although the Midwest Regional Black Family Reunion has continued in Cincinnati, Ohio.[263]

The new restrictions also threatened the Folklife Festival. National Park Service spokeswoman Carole Johnson told the *Washington Post,* "We're trying to find a solution. The Folklife Festival is really popular, we know that. We want to work with them. We work with all permittees to do what we can to accommodate them

260 Kelly Minner, "Solar Decathlon Moved from the National Mall" *Arch Daily*, January 18, 2011, https://www.archdaily.com/104685/solar-decathlon-moved-from-the-national-mall.
261 "Solar Decathlon to Get a New Spot," *Washington Pos*t, February 24, 2011.
262 "Tightening Rules on the Mall Leave Fests in Peril," *Washington Post*, February 27, 2014.
263 Voice of Black Cincinnati, "The 36th Annual Black Family Reunion celebration is August 15-18, 2024," accessed January 4, 2024, https://thevoiceofblackcincinnati.com/event/cincinnati-black-family-reunion/.

while at the same time protecting the grass for 25 million visitors we have each year."[264]

The *Washington Post* reported on the dichotomy of the issue in June 2014:

> At the intersection of Seventh Street and the Mall, two distinct views of one of the country's most visited parks are on display in the June sunshine.
>
> Facing the Capitol, a carpet of lush grass stretches from sidewalk to sidewalk, the manicured green dotted with strolling tourists, Frisbee players and picnic baskets.
>
> In the opposite direction, crowds of visitors meander between performances stages and artisan exhibits at the Smithsonian Folklife Festival, its large white tents staked into the trampled, weed-ridden ground between Seventh and 14th Streets.
>
> Here is the Mall as an iconic symbol of American democracy and ideals, conveyed through meticulously preserved landscape. And here it is as a robustly used gathering place, a showcase for creative expression and the exchange of ideas.
>
> So which is it? And can it be both?[265]

While many of the long-time events found other locations, the Folklife Festival remained on the National Mall. In June 2014 the National Park Service and the Smithsonian entered into an agreement to keep the Folklife Festival on the National Mall for another five years. The compromise maximized hardscape, or anything without turf, as usable space for the festival. It also included alternative flooring and tenting arrangements as well as opened the door to new ways to stage the festival. However, as the *Washington Post* reported, the compromise did "little to answer overarching questions of how much is the Mall for use, how much is it a place to be looked at and admired, and who gets to determine the balance."[266]

While the Folklife Festival returned, the arrangement for the event was notably different. A 2016 editorial in the *Washington Post* noted the change as well as the loss of other festivals on the National Mall:

> Where is the Black Family Reunion Celebration? Where is the National Book Festival"? Where is the Solar Decathlon? Gone, at least from the Mall. And the Smithsonian Folklife Festival? Oh, it was there this year, but if you looked down the Mall during its tenure, you saw some tents on the sidelines and a vast

264 "Tightening Rules on the Mall Leave Fests in Peril," *Washington Post*, February 27, 2014.
265 "Get Off My Lawn," *Washington Post*, June 28, 2014, C1.
266 "Agreement Keeps Folklife Festival on the Mall for Next Fivc Years," *Washington Post*, June 26, 2014.

> expanse of green emptiness in the middle where the action used to be.
>
> True enough, much of the ground was an unfrozen tundra, but if the National Park Service cannot build a public esplanade and mitigate the damage without banishing the wide and extravagant displays that define the Mall—and distinguish it from every other public space in America—it's not fulfilling its mission. Far from a "project…worth celebrating," this is a failure of imagination and stewardship.[267]

Independence Day on the National Mall in 2019 brought a change to the traditional festivities when President Donald Trump included an expanded celebration called "Salute to America" in honor of the United State's armed forces. Secretary of the Interior David Bernhardt noted that "For the first time in many years, the World War II Memorial and areas around the Reflecting Pool will be open for the public to enjoy a stunning fireworks display and an address by our Commander-in-Chief."[268] The fireworks launch site was moved from the Reflecting Pool to West Potomac Park, allowing prime viewing areas to be outside the established fireworks safety zone and open to the public. In addition to the traditional parade, concert on the West Lawn of the Capitol, and the fireworks display, Salute to America included military demonstrations, flyovers, and remarks by President Trump at the Lincoln Memorial (Figure 99).[269]

The 2020 coronavirus pandemic greatly impacted events on the National Mall and transformed how American and visitors participate in the events. On March 7, 2020, the District of Columbia announced its first confirmed case of COVID-19. Four days later on March 11, 2020, Mayor Muriel E. Bowser declared a state of emergency in the District. Mass gatherings of 50 or more people were no longer allowed. A National Park Service order suspended its acceptance of permits and cancelled or postponed previously scheduled events. The coronavirus pandemic had a profound effect on life across the city, and many events, such as the National Cherry Blossom Festival, were canceled. In June 2020, the National Park Service began issuing permits again for demonstrations and other events on the National

267 "Does the Mall Need New Grass?" *Washington Post*, September 25, 2016, A22.

268 National Park Service, "Secretary Bernhardt Announces Events for 2019 Independence Day Celebration in the Nation's Capital" Press Release, June 19, 2019, accessed December 7, 2023, https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1207/secretary-bernhardt-announces-events-for-2019-independence-day-celebration-in-the-nation-s-capital.htm.

269 National Park Service, "Secretary Bernhardt Announces Events for 2019 Independence Day Celebration in the Nation's Capital" Press Release, June 19, 2019, accessed December 7, 2023, https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1207/secretary-bernhardt-announces-events-for-2019-independence-day-celebration-in-the-nation-s-capital.htm.

Figure 99. The Blue Angels fly over the National Mall as President Donald J. Trump, addresses his remarks at the Salute to America event Thursday, July 4, 2019, at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC (Donald J. Trump Presidential Library).

Mall after a three-month hiatus.[270] While the annual parade was canceled, the National Park Service hosted its annual fireworks display on the National Mall on July 4, 2020, along with President Trump's Salute to America, held on the South Lawn of the White House and the Ellipse. [271] US Park Police had 300,000 masks on hand for the events and more than 100 hand washing stations were placed throughout the National Mall. [272]

Ultimately, the pandemic changed the format of many festivals. While President Donald Trump presided over the National Christmas Tree Lighting in 2020, there was no live audience and the ceremony took place on the White House Grounds. Viewers could watch the event live virtually and the lighting and performances were available for streaming throughout the holiday season.[273] Although the National Cherry Blossom Festival returned to the Mall in 2021, the parade was canceled and other events, such as the opening ceremony, were not held in

270 Fritz Hahn, "Coronavirus closes Smithsonian museums, cancels National Cherry Blossom Festival events," *Washington Post,* March 18, 2020; Andrew Giambrone, "Permits Are Being Issued Again for Demonstrations, Special Events On the National Mall," DCist, June 24, 2020, https://dcist.com/story/20/06/24/permits-are-being-issued-again-for-demonstrations-special-events-on-the-national-mall/.

271 "Officials Urge Caution Over Holiday Weekend as Virus Cases Flatline in D.C. Region," *Washington Post,* July 2, 2020; Department of the Interior, "Interior Presents the 2020 Independence Day Celebration in the Nation's Capital," Press Release, July 1, 2020, accessed 7 December 2023, https://www.doi.gov/pressreleases/interior-presents-2020-independence-day-celebration-nations-capital.

272 Thomas Robertson, "Crowds Flock to National Mall for 'Salute to America' Fireworks," WTOP, July 4, 2020.

273 Martin Weil," No Live Audience for National Christmas Tree Lighting, Park Service Says," *Washington Post*, November 11, 2020.

person and were livestreamed. The National Park Service encouraged people to stay home and enjoy the cherry blossoms online through the NPS's BloomCam rather than crowd the Tidal Basin, given the continuing restrictions on large gatherings.[274] The festival returned with in-person events in the spring of 2022, but with restrictions.[275] The Smithsonian also canceled its annual Folklife Festival in 2020 and 2021, returning to the National Mall in late June 2022 after the two-year hiatus. For the first time, selected evening concerts and daily conversations were livestreamed.[276]

Also returning in the summer of 2022 was the Fourth of July parade and the "star studded" evening concert on the West Lawn of the Capitol. The National Park Service announced in July 2022 that "After two years of virtual presentations due to the covid-19 pandemic, the concert venue. . . will be open to the public to enjoy the live broadcast.[277] For many, the holiday and the its annual celebrations on the National Mall signified a return to normal after two years of canceled or altered events as a result of the pandemic.[278]

274 WTOP News, "2021 Cherry Blossom Festival: Everything you need to know," March 12, 2021, accessed July 10, 2023, https://wtop.com/national-cherry-blossom-festival/2021/03/2021-cherry-blossom-festival-everything-you-need-to-know.

275 WTOP News, "2022 Cherry Blossom Festival: Everything you need to know," March 11, 2022, accessed July 10, 2023, https://wtop.com/national-cherry-blossom-festival/2022/03/2022-cherry-blossom-festival-everything-you-need-to-know/.

276 Smithsonian, "Smithsonian Folklife Festival Returns to the National Mall With Stories of Land, Sea and Sky," https://www.si.edu/newsdesk/releases/smithsonian-folklife-festival-returns-national-mall-stories-land-sea-and-sky.

277 "National Park Service Announces Lineup for Fourth of July Festivities," *Washington Post*, June 28 2022.

278 "In D.C. Area, a Sense of Normalcy as Celebrations Return," *Washington Post*, July 5, 2022.

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Chapter 4

First Amendment Events

Chapter title page: The observing crowd at the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom are shown sitting along the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool, August 28, 1963. Photograph looking east toward the Washington Monument (Courtesy DC Public Library, The People's Archive).

Chapter 4: First Amendment Events

On October 30, 2010, comedians and political satirists Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert led a joint rally on the National Mall to critique the United States' increasing political divisiveness. Initially conceived of as separate events, the Rally to Restore Sanity and/or Fear was both a sincere call for reconciling political differences and a satire meant to highlight some of contemporary politics' most destructive elements. Approximately 215,000 participants filled the National Mall, roughly between Union Square and 10th Street NW–SW, to witness Stewart and Colbert's part-protest, part-comedy show. The location choice demonstrated the degree to which the National Mall had become *the* national stage for political demonstration and could elevate protests or expressions of First Amendment rights, even by comedians, to national prominence. With their venue choice, Stewart and Colbert tapped into the ethos of the National Mall's firmly established history of powerful demonstrations, such as Marian Anderson defiantly singing to an integrated audience in 1939 or Martin Luther King Jr.'s powerful "I Have a Dream" speech at the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom in 1963.

When Pierre L'Enfant proposed what became the National Mall, the engineer did not indicate any intention that the public grounds should be used as a stage for political events or protests. Nor did subsequent design interventions by Andrew Jackson Downing and the Senate Park Commission anticipate this role or provide a programmed space for such activities. Instead, the conception of the Mall as a demonstration space was a hard-fought product of the twentieth century. Early in the century, demonstrators began harnessing spaces of national significance, such as the Washington Monument, to enhance their causes. Construction of the Lincoln Memorial and the implementation of a formal landscape redesign of the historic Mall provided new locations to appropriate as protest spaces. Effective protest organizers and participants cumulatively transformed the National Mall into the kind of place the United States had long lacked—a national public square.

EARLY MASS DEMONSTRATIONS IN THE NATION'S CAPITAL (1890–1929)

At the end of the nineteenth century, Washington, DC, had served as the nation's capital for 100 years. As the city approached this milestone, Americans still mostly regarded the capital city as a space reserved for the operation of the federal government. Members of Congress, historian Lucy Barber writes, felt insulated from the kinds of mass protest that occurred in other East Coast cities like New York or Philadelphia or that had long occurred in European capitals. Indeed, American politicians selected the federal city site partly for this reason. By the time federal leaders chose a site for the new capital, they had, in the years after the American Revolution, grown disenchanted with popular protest. This disenchantment "affected the purpose and location of the national capital," Barber argues.[1] Many of the founders of the US government argued that the capital should be in an isolated location away from urban centers, freeing politicians from the street politics of more established cities. In addition, the politically disenfranchised DC residents would have few reasons to protest political decisions made in Congress. The realities of transportation and financing also limited Americans' ability to mount a protest in Washington. However, as the city's population grew, local protests among residents emerged. "Election day riots, labor conflicts, and interracial violence intermittently disrupted the calm so central to the founders' imaginations," Barber explains.[2]

Despite such occasional incidents of local unrest, applying mass demonstrations to national causes in the name of First Amendment rights was relatively novel at the end of the nineteenth century. The idea that Washington could be a space for First Amendment protest was largely untested. This was partly because, at the time, Americans mostly understood the First Amendment's right to assembly as applying to holding organized meetings of concerned citizens locally in taverns, churches, or homes to discuss local matters.[3] They understood civil engagement foremost as distributing mass petitions and submitting them to government buildings.[4]

Historians credit Ohio business leader Jacob S. Coxey as the first person to substantially test the idea that Washington, DC, could be a place for Americans

1 Lucy Barber, *Marching on Washington: The Forging of an American Political Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 3–4. For additional discussion on the politics influencing the choice of the federal city site see Carl Abbott, *Political Terrain: Washington, D.C., from Tidewater Town to Global Metropolis* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999).
2 Barber, *Marching on Washington*, 4–5.
3 Barber, *Marching on Washington*, 5.
4 Monica Hesse, "How the March on Washington shaped the Mall," *Washington Post*, August 26, 2013.

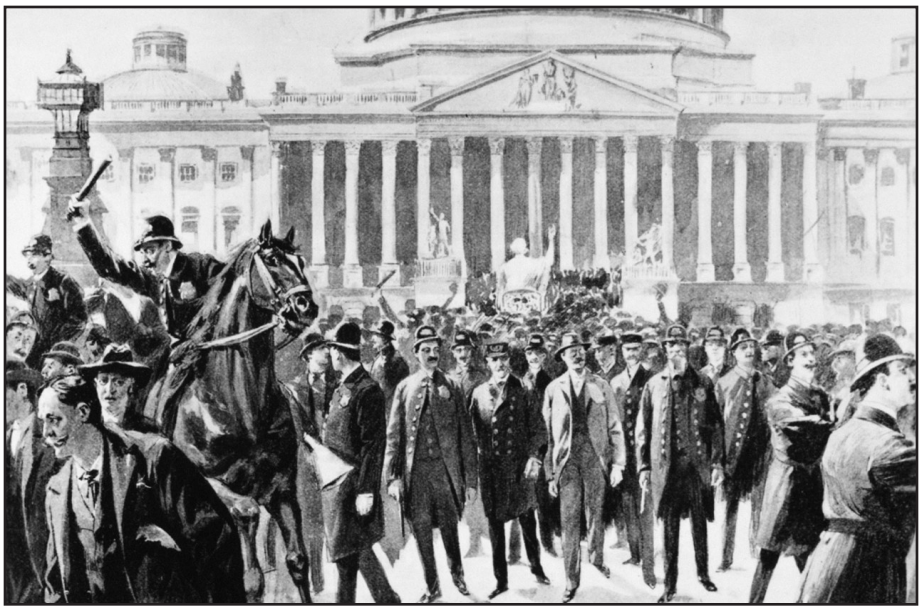

Figure 100. Jacob Coxey's Army during its leader's arrest in front of the Capitol, 1894 (*Harper's Weekly*, May 12, 1894, 436, Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division).

to travel to and air their grievances on national issues. Coxey's effort stemmed from the 1890s economic depression that followed the Panic of 1893, resulting in the unemployment rate rising to 10–20% throughout the decade. Coxey was both a wealthy quarry owner and a Populist who championed the plight of the working class during the depression.[5] He determined that congressional action was required to mitigate the depression's effect on workers. Coxey organized a group of 100 men, most of whom were unemployed, accompanied by reporters, to walk to Washington to petition Congress. Coxey and the group aimed to persuade Congress to authorize a substantial public roadbuilding program to provide jobs for the unemployed. The group named themselves the Commonweal of Christ but were referred to as Coxey's Army by the press and numbered approximately 500 by the time they arrived in Washington. On March 25, 1894, Coxey's Army left Massillon, Ohio, and walked 700 miles to arrive in the District on May 1.[6] They walked carrying signs with slogans like "More money! Less misery! Good Roads!"[7]

Coxey's Army included a diverse coalition of Black, White, and Indigenous men during a period of rampant racial segregation in the United States.[8] Although Coxey did not permit women to march in his army, they nonetheless played a significant role in the movement. For instance, women served as members

5 Douglas W. Steeples and David O. Whitten, *Democracy in Desperation: The Depression of 1893* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1998), 50, 88.

6 Wesley Bishop, "Coxey's Army of 1894 and the State of Populist Studies," Society for Historians of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era, accessed June 14, 2023, https://www.shgape.org/coxeys-army-of-1894-and-the-state-of-populist-studies/.

7 J. F. Jarvis, photographer, *"More money! Less misery! Good Roads!" Coxey's Army approaching Washington* (1894), Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division.

8 "Jacob S. Coxey," Pennsylvania Center for the Book, accessed December 13, 2023, https://pabook.libraries.psu.edu/literary-cultural-heritage-map-pa/bios/Coxey__Jacob.

of home guard units and women's auxiliaries that provided food and clothing to the crusaders on the road as well as to their families back home. Women also helped marchers find meals and places to sleep along the road. In several instances, women slipped into the ranks dressed as men. Indeed, women proved instrumental in the marchers reaching Washington, although historians have largely ignored their contribution.[9]

As the concept of mass protest in Washington was new in 1894, Coxey's Army provoked both confusion and criticism from the District press and politicians. The local Washington press regularly dismissed Coxey's efforts and those who traveled with him. Typical of this assessment, the *Washington Post* described Coxey's Army's cause "as the biggest of fools' errands" and not a legitimate protest.[10] Others did not know how to describe what Coxey was attempting. "The idea of hordes descending upon Washington in person was difficult to conceptualize," writes journalist Monica Hesse. In a nod to Americans associating civic grievance with petitions, Coxey described his group's effort as a "petition in boots." Many politicians and journalists saw it as an invasion.[11]

District police also struggled with how to plan for the group's arrival. They saw the 1882 Act to Regulate the Use of the Capitol Grounds, a federal law that had almost never been enforced, as legal grounds to stop Coxey from bringing his petition to Congress. The legislation prohibited the carrying of banners and the making of "any oration or harangue" on the Capitol Grounds. A broad clause in the legislation forbade all actions "designed to bring into public notice any party, organization, or movement."[12]

Against this opposition from members of Congress, the press, and the police, Coxey's Army nevertheless marched down Pennsylvania Avenue to the Capitol to deliver their petition on May 1, 1894. One estimate reported that 30,000 people, roughly equally Black and White and overwhelmingly working class, turned out to see Coxey's Army. Police, however, arrested Coxey just as he began to deliver his remarks on the Capitol steps (Figure 100). Although some Progressive Party senators rallied in Coxey's favor, Republican and Democratic senators argued that Washington, and especially the Capitol, was for official business and not for such public demonstrations. Coxey's Army's sole legislative success was the House Labor Committee agreeing to hear testimony on the causes of the

9 Carlos A. Schwantes, "Western Women in Coxey's Army in 1894," *Arizona and the West* 26, no. 1 (Spring 1984): 5, 7, 8, 12.
10 "Coxey Has His Day," *Washington Post*, May 2, 1894.
11 Barber, *Marching on Washington*, 12.
12 *An Act to Regulate the Use of the Capitol Grounds, Senate 789, Congressional Record*, 47th Cong., 1st sess., June 26, 1882, 13, pt. 6:5357.

economic depression. Coxey's Army's true legacy was in the type of protest its organizer envisioned.[13] "In a dramatic, new way," Lucy Barber argues, "the march raised the possibility that Americans and their political causes actually belonged in the capital."[14] Politicians and newspapers like the *Washington Post*, however, were horrified that Washington might become a place citizens from elsewhere in the nation could routinely claim as their own. After the dramatic conclusion to Coxey's Army, its organizer arrested on the Capitol steps, no other groups made a similar attempt until the 1910s.[15]

The earliest use of the National Mall for a political demonstration found in research to date was a protest by the Holy Name Society in 1910. This research also finds that the Holy Name Society march was the first mass protest in Washington since Coxey's Army. The Holy Name Society was a Catholic group with branches in major US cities and devoted to the "prohibition of profanity and the building up of the higher ideals in life."[16] Holy Name Societies elsewhere had previously held similar demonstrations in cities like Pittsburgh and Boston in order to bring attention to the use of profanity among men and boys.[17] Holy Name Societies in Washington, Baltimore, and nearby Maryland and Virginia organized the District demonstration.[18] On November 6, 1910, 7,000 Catholics marched silently, while bands played religious and patriotic music, from the Capitol down Pennsylvania Avenue, past the White House, and down 17th Street NW to celebrate Mass at the Washington Monument Grounds. Several Catholic dignitaries reviewed the march from the Willard Hotel on Pennsylvania Avenue NW. President William H. Taft watched the demonstration from a north window in the White House. The *Washington Post* counted thousands of spectators lining the parade route. "Not a profane word could be heard along the avenue while the marchers passed," the newspaper observed.[19] A large grandstand was constructed at the Washington Monument Grounds for the Catholic Mass.[20] Unlike their descriptions of Coxey's Army, the *Post* labeled the Holy Name Society's efforts a "march" and indicated more sympathy to their cause than the paper had shown to Coxey's.[21] The society followed up with subsequent marches in 1912 and 1915. Each additional march followed a similar route that concluded with Mass at the Washington Monument Grounds.[22]

13 Barber, *Marching on Washington*, 34–39.
14 Barber, *Marching on Washington*, 42.
15 Barber, *Marching on Washington*, 43.
16 "Big Addition to Roll," *Evening Star*, March 21, 1910.
17 "Prepare Crusade Upon Profanity," *Washington Times*, September 24, 1910.
18 "To Give Street Parade," *Evening Star*, October 15, 1910.
19 "War on Profanity," *Washington Post*, November 7, 1910.
20 "Holy Name Parade Program Finished," *Washington Times*, November 5, 1910.
21 "War on Profanity," *Washington Post*, November 7, 1910.
22 "Catholics to March," *Evening Star*, October 26, 1912; "Success Scored by Holy Name Parade," *Washington Times*, October 11, 1915.

The next major protest in the nation's capital occurred in 1913, when the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) orchestrated a procession down Pennsylvania Avenue. NAWSA suffragists Alice Paul and Lucy Burns carefully planned the Woman Suffrage Procession to demonstrate against the exclusion of women from the democratic process, highlight the accomplishments of women in the nation and the world, and advocate for an amendment to the US constitution guaranteeing women's right to vote. NAWSA's demonstration route led along Pennsylvania Avenue, from the Capitol to the Treasury Department building. Although research to date has not determined that the NAWSA demonstration extended to the National Mall, the march was, nevertheless, important in establishing Washington as a space for protesting in the name of First Amendment rights.

Paul and Burns organized the demonstration for March 3, 1913, the day before the inauguration of incoming President Woodrow Wilson, to capitalize on the inaugural festivities and crowd. Alice Paul took a less combative approach to organizing the march than had Coxey. Whereas Coxey had harshly rebuked Congress for its inactivity on unemployment, Paul courted government officials and police leaders. On the day of the demonstration, marchers proceeded carefully in an orderly procession that demonstrated the discipline of women as citizens (Figure 101). This play to respectability, however, did not undercut the bold and provocative act of marching down Pennsylvania Avenue for women's suffrage.[23] Approximately 5,000 women marched as bands played patriotic songs and elaborate floats celebrated women's accomplishments.[24] The marchers carried signs, banners, and flags reading "Votes for Women," and a horse-drawn float stated "We Demand an Amendment to the Constitution of the United States Enfranchising Women of this Country."[25]

Indicative of the racial segregation and prejudice rampant in the early twentieth century, NAWSA organizers required Black women to march separately from White women at the rear of the parade. At the national level, NAWSA did not explicitly forbid African American women from membership, but state and local organizations were able to and often did exclude them.[26] For instance, in a show

23 Barber, *Marching on Washington*, 50, 60.
24 "1913 Woman Suffrage Procession," National Park Service, accessed June 26, 2023, https://www.nps.gov/articles/woman-suffrage-procession1913.htm#:~:text=On%20March%203%2C%201913%2C%20the,Woman%20Suffrage%20Association%20(NAWSA).
25 *Women Marching in Suffragette Parade, Washington, DC* (1913), National Archives and Records Administration, Record Group 306, Records of the US Information Agency.
26 Allison Lange, "Suffragists Unite: National American Woman Suffrage Association," *Crusade for the Vote* (Fall 2015), accessed December 13, 2023, https://www.crusadeforthevote.org/nawsa-united.

Figure 101. View of the Woman Suffrage Procession, March 3, 1913, looking southeast on Pennsylvania Avenue toward the Capitol (published by Leet Brothers, Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division).

of expediency over justice, suffragist Susan B. Anthony in 1895 asked longtime women's suffrage supporter Frederick Douglass not to speak at a NAWSA convention in Atlanta out of fear of upsetting White Southern attendees.[27]

Although the march initially proceeded as planned, the observing crowd of approximately 250,000 gathered along Pennsylvania Avenue and began to bleed into the street and slow the procession. Male observers heckled, spat on, and physically assaulted marchers. Although police were stationed along Pennsylvania Avenue, they were either unable or unwilling to manage the hostile crowd.[28]

Despite the hostile crowd and insufficient police support, the Woman Suffrage Procession bore significant long-term results. Most concretely, the march was part of a widespread protest campaign in the District that became increasingly assertive. Suffragists continued to target prominent Washington sites throughout the 1910s. Realizing that more forceful actions were needed to pressure Wilson and Congress, Paul and Burns joined Alva Belmont in abandoning the more cautious NAWSA to found the National Woman's Party (NWP) in 1916. Belmont became the party's first president and primary benefactor. In January 1917, NWP

27 Sharon Harley, "African American Women and the Nineteenth Amendment," National Park Service, accessed December 13, 2023, https://www.nps.gov/articles/african-american-women-and-the-nineteenth-amendment.htm.

28 "1913 Woman Suffrage Procession," National Park Service, accessed June 26, 2023, https://www.nps.gov/articles/woman-suffrage-procession1913.htm#:~:text=On%20March%203%2C%201913%2C%20the,Woman%20Suffrage%20Association%20(NAWSA).

suffragists began picketing the White House daily to pressure the president to support the suffrage amendment; throughout 1917, over 1,000 women from across the country picketed on Pennsylvania Avenue in front of the White House. From June through November, police arrested 218 protestors and charged them with "obstructing sidewalk traffic."[29] Partly as result of the Woman Suffrage Procession and subsequent White House protests, President Wilson finally signaled support for the amendment in January 1918. The Nineteenth Amendment was ratified in 1920.

The 1913 Woman Suffrage Procession further established Washington as a national public stage for large-scale demonstration.[30] Both activists and the larger American public, reading newspaper coverage of the march, learned that large-scale demonstration in the nation's capital was possible. Paul and Burns were also aware of the evolving sense of the capital as a monumental space in the decade after the Senate Park (McMillan) Commission drafted its plan. Paul and Burns used the symbolic grandeur of both the inaugural procession and the McMillan Commission's conception of the capital to bring added weight to their cause.[31]

These early demonstrations in Washington (Coxey's Army, the Woman Suffrage Procession, and the Holy Name Society marches) together demonstrate how protestors in the early twentieth century focused on three sites—Pennsylvania Avenue between the Capitol and White House, in front of the White House on Pennsylvania Avenue, and the Washington Monument Grounds. By this time, demonstrators understood that these three sites had symbolic power. The avenue was the symbolic link between legislative and executive branches, the White House the home of the president, and the Washington Monument Grounds offered a large open space more conducive to gatherings surrounding a visually and symbolically prominent monument to the United States' first president. Architectural historian Richard Longstreth describes the Monument Grounds as an "enormous field, a plain on which almost nothing is allowed to interfere except the obelisk itself. . .The grassy knoll recedes toward trees that seem distant and unimportant."[32] Indeed, the Monument Grounds provided the open space for demonstrations that the remainder of the Mall (east of 14th Street) lacked.

29 "Today in History - August 28," Library of Congress, accessed June 26, 2023, https://www.loc.gov/item/today-in-history/august-28/#:~:text=in%20the%20struggles.-,Picketing%20for%20Suffrage,women%20the%20right%20to%20vote.
30 Barber, *Marching on Washington*, 45.
31 Barber, *Marching on Washington*, 50, 55.
32 Richard Longstreth, "Introduction: Change and Continuity on the Mall, 1791–1991," 14.

In 1917, Congress established what became an additional demonstration space on the National Mall. The National Sylvan Theater opened on the Washington Monument Grounds in June 1917 as a federally funded outdoor performing arts space.[33] However, as author George Clark points out, politics were integrated with the theater's artistic program from the beginning. At the opening performance, the first half of the show featured a variety of musical performance while the second half was a "propaganda pageant" titled "The Call of the Allies," written by the theater's founder Alice Pike Barney to support US entry into World War I. This combination of performing arts and political speech became a regular feature of the theater throughout its history.[34]

By the 1920s, organizers began using the Sylvan Theater for political demonstrations and rallies. The Sylvan Theater demonstrations of the 1920s, George Clark argues, "tended toward the jingoistic, anti-progressive, the fearmongering, and the White supremacist."[35] In 1922, Alabama senator Thomas "Cotton Tom" Heflin spoke at a Flag Day event hosted by a local Elks lodge at the theater. Heflin was known for his staunch opposition to equal rights for African Americans, women, and Catholics.[36] At the Sylvan event, Heflin railed against what he saw as threats to the government by anarchists or Bolshevists.[37] As Clark notes, Heflin was at the time a reminder of violence against Black people. In 1908, then-Representative Heflin had thrown Louis Lundy, an African American man, from a Washington streetcar and shot him and Thomas McCreary, a White bystander, through the streetcar window. Audiences gathered that day in 1922 would likely have been aware of Heflin's actions. In 1925, the Ku Klux Klan led a massive march down Pennsylvania Avenue to a rally at the Washington Monument Grounds. Estimates of the Klan marchers ranged between 30,000–35,000 and 50,000. Observers from building windows along the route allegedly threw money at the marchers. As part of the Monument Grounds event, a Klan leader addressed the crowd from the Sylvan Theater stage.[38]

The Klan rally occurred only a year after a Roman Catholic event occurred on the Mall. The Holy Name Societies had brought their national convention to Washington on September 21, 1924. Over 10,000 Catholics marched down

33 "America's First National Theatre Opens in Washington," *The Theater* (July 1917), 9.
34 George E. Clark, "Stepping to the National Stage: Protesting Injustice, Producing Shakespeare, and Claiming Black Space at the Sylvan Theater" (master's thesis, Harvard University Division of Continuing Education, 2022), 6–7.
35 Clark, "Stepping to the National Stage," 13.
36 "Cotton Tom's Last Blast," US Senate, accessed June 26, 2023, https://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/minute/Cotton_Toms_Last_Blast.htm.
37 "Heflin Condemns Radical Criticism," *Washington Post*, June 12 1922.
38 Clark, "Stepping to the National Stage," 13.

Figure 102. On September 21, 1924, President Calvin Coolidge addressed a national convention of the Holy Name Societies amid anti-Catholic sentiment inflamed by the Ku Klux Klan (Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division).

Pennsylvania Avenue in the rain for four hours, rivaling the size of their 1910s anti-profanity events. At the conclusion of the march, the attendees assembled for Mass on the Washington Monument Grounds, with overflow on the Ellipse. A platform was constructed near 15th and B Streets for the official reviewing stand, where President Calvin Coolidge stood with the United States' senior cardinal and Vatican delegate, Bishop Thomas Shahan.[39] Photographs show a crowd covering the ground between the platform and the Washington Monument (Figure 102). In a speech to attendees that was broadcast across the country, Coolidge stated that participants were "performing both a pious and a patriotic service" by attending.[40] He declared that no religious test would ever be required as a qualification for holding office in the United States. The *New York Times* reported that the crowd interpreted his statement as a reference to the Ku Klux Klan, although he did not call the Klan out by name.[41] The organization of White Protestants that spread racial violence wielded immense political power and numbered as many as five million American members in the early 1920s.[42] Amid the context of the Klan's anti-Catholic rhetoric and actions, the 1924 Holy Name Societies event can be interpreted as a defensive, political act.

39 "Mighty Phalanxes of Holy Name Men Will March Today," *Evening Star*, September 21, 1924; Thomas A. Tweed, *America's Church: The National Shrine and Catholic Presence in the Nation's Capital* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 170.

40 Tweed, *America's Church*, 170.

41 "100,000 Catholics Cheer Coolidge Talk on Religious Liberty," *New York Times*, September 22, 1924.

42 James H. Madison, *A Lynching in the Heartland: Race and Memory in America* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 37.

To-date research suggests that throughout this period, 1890–1929, the Washington Monument Grounds (including the Sylvan Theater) appear to have been the only space on the National Mall that demonstrators used as a mass protest space. This conclusion, however, does not preclude smaller demonstrations, protests that were typically not covered in newspapers and, thus, not well documented for research. The remainder of the Mall Grounds' central green space between the buildings that lined it was filled with the picturesque Andrew Jackson Downing-designed and Downing-inspired landscape of separate gardens defined by clusters of trees, the World War I temporary buildings, and the station and train shed of the Baltimore and Potomac Station that extended across the Mall. The dense greenery, the temporary buildings, and train station and shed impeded the symbolic axis between the Capitol and Washington Monument and the ability to use that symbolic space for democratic expression. Demonstrating on the Mall would have been akin to demonstrating in a forest, limiting the potential for a crowd to assemble, see each other, and be seen by spectators. As Barber writes, "They simply couldn't have seen the protest for the trees."[43] As both Jacob Coxey and Alice Paul understood, visibility was key to a successful political demonstration. The Washington Monument Grounds, by contrast, provided the Mall's only large-scale open space capable of holding the hundreds or thousands of people necessary for a substantial demonstration. The Senate Park (McMillan) Commission's proposal to create a clear vista across the Mall to establish this axis remained unimplemented. The National Mall instead functioned more as a local park through the early twentieth century than as a nationally significant space.[44]

THE MAKING OF A POLITICAL AND PROTEST SPACE (1930–1963)

DEMONSTRATIONS ON THE NATIONAL MALL IN THE 1930S

At the beginning of the 1930s, the National Mall continued to be used in much the same manner as it had to that point. Physically, the nineteenth-century picturesque landscape treatment remained in place throughout most of the Mall, except where temporary buildings had intruded. Those demonstrators who did choose the National Mall as a protest venue still assembled on the Washington Monument Grounds, particularly the Sylvan Theater. Beginning in the 1930s, however, demonstration organizers and activists began using spaces on the National Mall for First Amendment demonstrations in greater numbers and for a wider range of causes. As discussed in Chapter 1 of this report, the landscape's

43 Hesse, "How the March on Washington shaped the Mall."
44 George P. Lathrop, "A Nation in a Nutshell," *Harper's Monthly* (March 1881), 544.

redesign in the 1930s greatly encouraged this gradual shift toward use of the National Mall for political purposes.

For the first half of the 1930s, the Washington Monument Grounds, including the Sylvan Theater, remained the space most often used for demonstrations on the Mall. Demonstrators' increased use of the Mall was concurrent with increased political activity during the Great Depression, particularly in the labor movement. The mid-1930s saw the greatest degree of labor militancy in US history. The Depression starkly highlighted class divisions and forced workers to recognize that union organizing was necessary to receive fairer treatment from employers. At the same time, the New Deal's pro-labor policies made unions more politically powerful than ever before.[45]

Amid these hard times, from May through July 1932, a group of World War I veterans organized in a group called the Bonus Expeditionary Forces (BEF) arrived in Washington, DC, to collect on bonuses promised to them after the war's end. Although bonuses were not scheduled to be paid until 1945, out-of-work veterans demanded early payment due to the particularly challenging circumstances brought by the Depression. During what was termed the Bonus March, the veteran group paraded down Pennsylvania Avenue, assembled on the Capitol steps, and camped at four sites around the city to pressure Congress to

Figure 103. A World War I veteran and his family are shown camping among the houses on then-Missouri Avenue NW as part of the Bonus March, July 1932 (Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division).

45 Robert S. McElvaine, *The Depression and New Deal: A History in Documents* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 69.

release the payments early. By late June, roughly 12,000 veteran marchers were camping in the District, including a major camp site in Anacostia Park in Southeast DC.[46] Unlike their response to Coxey's Army, the local press grew more supportive of the Bonus Marchers as their demonstration continued.[47]

Figure 104. Bonus Marchers shown on the Washington Monument Grounds as they lobbied the federal government for a promised bonus, ca. May–July 1932. View looking south (reprinted with permission of the DC Public Library, Star Collection © *Washington Post*).

In addition to the camp sites, the Bonus Army occupied spaces on the National Mall during their campaign. Protesting veterans and their families squatted in and around abandoned buildings on then-Missouri Avenue, a diagonal avenue on the Mall reservation between 3rd and 6th Streets NW that Congress created in the 1820s (Figure 103). The federal government had recently condemned the buildings in anticipation of the construction of the National Gallery of Art.[48] Although the precise number of women and children (including babies) who joined the male veterans in the encampments is not known, historians estimate

46 Senate Historical Office, "The Senate and the Bonus Expeditionary Force of 1932," US Senate, November 9, 2023, accessed December 13, 2023, https://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/senate-stories/senate-and-the-bonus-expeditionary-force-of-1932.htm.

47 Barber, *Marching on Washington*, 75, 81, 87.

48 Kirk Savage, *Monument Wars: Washington, D.C., the National Mall, and the Transformation of the Memorial Landscape* (Berkley: University of California Press, 2009), 172.

it to be in the hundreds.[49] In addition, a historic photograph printed in the Washington *Evening Star* shows that Bonus Marchers used the Washington Monument Grounds as part of their demonstration grounds (Figure 104). Because the photographer was positioned amid the group, it is difficult to assess the true crowd size and whether it extended north to the Ellipse.

The photograph, however, does hint at the interracial composition of the marchers. Black veterans comprised 15–20 percent of the marchers. In addition to demonstrating interracial working-class collective power, the march was particularly important to African American marchers and observers to advance the cause of civil rights amid the double challenge of both the Depression and entrenched racial segregation. Black communities in Southeast DC and elsewhere across the country sent food, clothing, tobacco, and money to support African American protesters. African American publications such as *The Crisis*, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People's monthly magazine, commended the integrated march and its possibilities for civil rights.[50]

Although the House of Representatives voted in favor of an early bonus, the Senate defeated the measure. In July, President Herbert Hoover deployed the US Army, under General Douglas MacArthur, to burn the camps and evict the marchers.[51] The army cleared the area with tear gas and bayonets. The clearing of protestors included those squatting in the houses on Missouri Avenue; the Bonus Army's occupation of Missouri Avenue proved to be one of the final political obstacles to the federal government clearing the National Mall of the remaining nineteenth-century Victorian landscape.[52]

On July 8, 1933, the National Woman's Party, led by Alice Paul, hosted a rally of 5,000 people at the Sylvan Theater to petition President Franklin Roosevelt to support the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) and "end the continued discriminations against married women in the [G]overnment service."[53] Paul and Crystal Eastman first drafted the Equal Rights Amendment in 1923 to guarantee equal legal rights for all American citizens regardless of sex. The program on July 8 began with a processional of women carrying banners from the Washington Monument down the slope to the Sylvan Theater as the Marine Band played. The processional was part of a memorial service "in the form of a dramatic pageant" in memory of leaders of the women's movement, with banners displaying the

49 Senate Historical Office, "The Senate and the Bonus Expeditionary Force."
50 Jennifer D. Keene, "1932: The Bonus March," *Washington History* 32, no. 1/2 (Fall 2020), 32.
51 Barber, *Marching on Washington*, 81, 89, 97–99.
52 Savage, *Monument Wars*, 173.
53 "Plead for Wives Holding U.S. Jobs," *Evening Star*, July 9, 1933.

names of women's movement leaders and one banner dedicated "To Unknown Women." During the event, Paul and other NWP members called for women's pay in government jobs to be equal to that given to men for the same work and for the right of married women to a job.[54] They noted that a large number of highly trained women had been fired from government jobs without notice.[55]

Demonstration planners, such as those in the NWP, likely continued using the Sylvan Theater or Washington Monument Grounds because these spaces remained the most conducive both spatially and symbolically to demonstrations on national issues. By 1936, however, the National Park Service implemented the McMillan Plan's landscape redesign of the Mall. The nineteenth-century picturesque gardens and most of the temporary World War I buildings were removed and replaced with a sodded central lawn flanked by formal rows of American elm trees in lawn panels that extended from 14th Street to 3rd Street. The lawn panels framed the Mall's central vista from the Capitol to the Washington Monument. As discussed in Chapter 1, this formal intervention unintentionally created a new space in which people could gather *en masse*. Journalist Monica Hesse writes, "The people who came along to clear the Mall—they had absolutely no idea they were creating a space of protest."[56] Historian Kirk Savage similarly writes, "once the vista [envisioned by the McMillan Plan] was swept clean, a new era of social protests would take its place."[57]

Despite the new open lawn on the National Mall, the Sylvan Theater remained the most commonly used protest space immediately after the mid-1930s redesign. Event organizers and protestors had yet to realize the Mall's potential for large gatherings. Small labor rallies occurred at the theater in 1937 and 1939. In both instances, demonstrators rallied against wage cuts for Works Progress Administration (WPA) workers. The WPA was a New Deal-era agency established to provide employment opportunities to workers in a variety of fields. At the July 1939 event, William Taylor, president of the National Negro Congress, appeared alongside labor activist Phillip Bonosky to protest wage reductions.[58]

Even when it was not used for explicitly stated protests or demonstrations, the Sylvan Theater hosted performances or events with a political bent. On May 1, 1939, May Day festivities at the theater included a production of the pro-

54 "First Lady Backs Working Women," *Evening Star*, July 7, 1933.
55 "Plead for Wives Holding U.S. Jobs," *Evening Star*, July 9, 1933.
56 Hesse, "How the March on Washington shaped the Mall."
57 Savage, *Monument Wars*, 173.
58 "50 Attend Rally to Protest Wage Cuts in Relief Bill," *Washington Post*, July 23, 1939.

labor musical *The Cradle Will Rock*.[59] Charles Hamilton Houston, counsel to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), introduced the play by speaking to the plight of Black workers. Houston maintained that their treatment was a key test for American labor relations. He spoke against "the blindness and prejudice of the white worker who cannot see that ultimately he goes up or down tied to his negro brother."[60]

Houston's comment touched upon the interracial conflict that had plagued the US labor movement throughout its history. Indeed, racial prejudice among both White workers and union leadership often undermined working-class solidarity. Black union activists faced the dual challenge of seeking improved economic conditions as well as an end to racial discrimination in the workplace and in the labor movement. The American Federation of Labor (AFL), one of the most prominent US labor unions in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, initially forbade racial discrimination among its affiliated unions. In 1895, the AFL reversed course and permitted new affiliates to prohibit African Americans from joining their ranks. By the 1930s, millions of Black workers moved north to find work in the expanding industrial economy and placed increasing pressure on unions for inclusion. The AFL granted a charter to the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (BSCP), a union founded by African American workers, in 1935. That same year, the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) was established to compete with the AFL and pledged to organize workers with no distinction to race or color and opposed all forms of segregation.[61]

Women had long faced sexism in the labor movement and workplace amid larger societal attitudes against women in the workforce. Nevertheless, women were central to many of labor's successes in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union (ILGWU) became a particularly powerful union and executed two successful strikes in 1909 and 1910 that won key victories for workers.[62] By the 1930s, a counterproductive narrative developed amid high unemployment: women entering the workforce were selfish and responsible for male unemployment.[63] Women labor activists were undeterred and joined unions and fought for workers' rights in greater numbers over the

59 Clark, "Stepping to the National Stage," 14–15.
60 "War, Health, Labor Topics on May Day: Labor Movement Play," *Washington Post*, May 2, 1939.
61 "A House Divided: African American Workers Struggle Against Segregation," University of Maryland, accessed December 13, 2023, https://exhibitions.lib.umd.edu/unions/social/african-americans-rights.
62 Ella Wagner, "International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union," National Park Service, accessed December 14, 2023, https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/international-ladies-garment-workers-union.htm.
63 Anthony J. Badger, *The New Deal: The Depression Years, 1933–1940* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2002), 23.

course of the 1930s. Union leadership, particularly in the CIO, devoted more effort toward organizing women workers in the 1930s.[64]

In 1939, an act of protest created a new demonstration space on the National Mall. The new demonstration space was not on the historic Mall or Washington Monument Grounds, but instead at the Lincoln Memorial. The memorial to Abraham Lincoln, at the west end of West Potomac Park, was completed only 17 years earlier in 1922. The protest resulted from a decision by the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) to deny opera singer Marian Anderson, who was African American, the opportunity to sing at Constitution Hall in Washington, DC. Howard University had invited Anderson to perform in Washington, DC, as part of a concert series before a venue was identified. By this time, Anderson was a well-known performer in the United States and Europe and regularly sang to large crowds. Charles Cohen, the musical director of the Howard University concert series, applied for use of DAR's Constitution Hall for the Anderson concert. Anderson wrote in her autobiography that her manager, Solomon Hurok, "sought appearances for me in all the places where the best performers were expected and taken for granted. The nation's capital was such a place. I had sung in Washington years before—in schools and churches. It was time to appear on the city's foremost concert platform—Constitution Hall."[65]

Decades after the 1896 Supreme Court decision *Plessy v. Ferguson* upheld legal racial segregation, the District of Columbia's public schools and recreation facilities remained segregated. [66] In this context, the DAR, led by president Sarah Corbin Robert, denied Anderson permission to perform at Constitution Hall on Easter Sunday, April 9, 1939, because the venue maintained a White performers-only policy. Cohen unsuccessfully lobbied the DAR to reverse the policy. Despite fierce public criticism from the NAACP and Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes, Robert and the DAR board reaffirmed the Whites-only policy. Cohen next attempted to book Anderson at Central High School, one of the city's largest White schools. Although DC public schools were segregated, the District school system had been opening its facilities for public use after hours since 1915.[67] The DC Board of Education also rejected Anderson permission to perform at the Whites-only school.

64 McElvaine, *The Depression and New Deal*, 75–76.
65 Marian Anderson, *My Lord, What a Morning: An Autobiography* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002), 184.
66 Jamie P. Chandler and Joy Phillips, *Racial, Education & Income Segregation in the District of Columbia* (Washington, DC: District of Columbia Office of Planning, November 2020), 3.
67 Raymond Arsenault, *The Sound of Freedom*, 118–19.

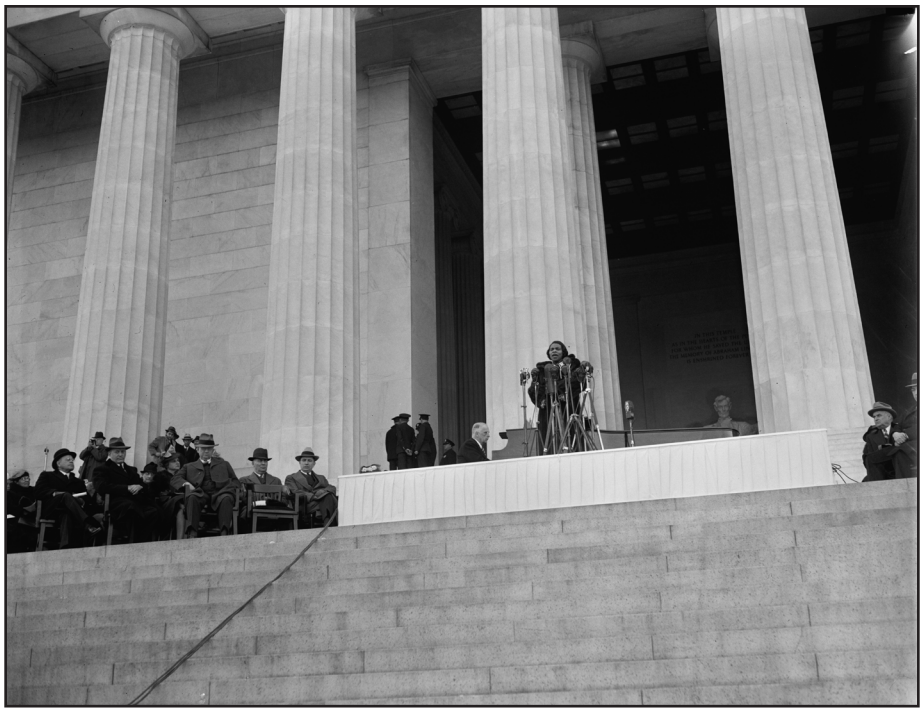

Figure 105. On April 19, 1939, opera singer Marian Anderson sang to an integrated audience at the Lincoln Memorial and inaugurated use of the memorial and the National Mall generally as spaces for civil rights demonstrations (Harris & Ewing Collection, Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division).

First Lady and DAR member Eleanor Roosevelt also communicated her disapproval of Anderson's denial. Roosevelt sent a letter of resignation to the DAR and wrote about the incident in her weekly column, "My Day." NAACP executive secretary Walter White proposed an outdoor concert on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial as an alternative. According to Anderson biographer Allan Keiler, White imagined an open-air performance at the memorial to the Emancipation Proclamation's author would be symbolically powerful and send a forceful message against bigotry and segregation.[68] To White, the choice of the Lincoln Memorial was intended to invoke Lincoln's revered status in African American culture by the 1930s. White also knew that such an important location, in White's words, "would double the news value" of the event.[69] Because the Lincoln Memorial and adjacent public grounds were managed by the National Park Service, Secretary Ickes managed most of the concert's logistics.[70]

The performance space was located on the landing at the memorial's raised terrace steps (Figure 105). Secretary Ickes introduced Anderson and led her onto the stage on Sunday, April 9th. Ickes told the integrated crowd of 75,000 that extended from the Lincoln Memorial to the Washington Monument: "In this great auditorium under the sky, all of us are free. Genius, like justice, is blind. Genius

68 Allan Keiler, *Marian Anderson: A Singer's Journey* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002), 207, 213.
69 Keith R. Eberly, "'To Thee We Sing': Racial Politics and the Lincoln Memorial," *OAH Magazine of History* (January 2009), 55.
70 Susan Stamberg, "Denied A Stage, She Sang For A Nation," *NPR*, April 9, 2014.

Figure 106. The crowd gathered to hear Marian Anderson sing filled the Lincoln Memorial approachway, Lincoln Memorial Circle fronting the memorial, and parkland flanking the Reflecting Pool, 1939 (courtesy DC Public Library, The People's Archive).

draws no color lines."[71] Accompanied by piano, Anderson sang for twenty-five minutes, including "My Country 'Tis of Thee" (also known as "America"). She notably changed the song's third line, replacing "of thee I sing" with "to thee we sing" and making the event's political purpose clear.[72] A 10-year-old Martin Luther King, Jr., was among those listening to Anderson's concert on the radio.[73] The crowd filled the memorial's approachway and extended as far east as the Reflecting Pool's western edge (Figure 106).

Research to date shows that protests on the National Mall slowed during World War II. Most young Americans either were in active service with the military or active service on the home front. After the war, a labor rally occurred at the Sylvan Theater. The US labor movement ended its wartime no-strike pledge and executed a wave of strikes across the United States in 1945–46. In response, a Republican-led Congress passed the Taft–Hartley Act in 1947 over President Harry S. Truman's veto. The Taft–Hartley Act, officially known as the Labor

71 Susan Stamberg, "Denied A Stage, She Sang For A Nation," *NPR*, April 9, 2014.
72 Eberly, "'To Thee We Sing,'" 55.
73 Jennifer Robinson, "AMERICAN MASTERS: Marian Anderson: The Whole World In Her Hands," *KPBS,* February 16, 2022.

Management Relations Act, sharply curtailed the activities and power of labor unions. In June 1949, the American Labor Party responded with a rally of 3,000 members at the Sylvan Theater.[74] Congressman Vito Marcantonio, a leading figure in the party, organized the rally as part of a larger effort that also lobbied Congress and picketed the White House. Marcantonio and the Labor Party called for a broad program of economic, social, and labor reforms, including repeal of the Taft–Hartley Act, increased minimum wage and Social Security benefits, rent control, federal aid to education, and civil rights legislation.[75]

THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE NATIONAL MALL

The success of Marian Anderson's 1939 performance at the Lincoln Memorial showed civil rights leaders what a large gathering at such a symbolically powerful location could accomplish. Historian Scott A. Sandage writes, "With the concert, the civil rights movement began to develop a strategy of mass, symbolic protest that used ritual and appeals to memory to make race a national issue."[76] Inspired by Anderson's recital, one such leader, A. Philip Randolph, decided that another large event in Washington, DC, could focus specifically on civil rights.[77] Randolph was a labor and civil rights leader who had organized and, since 1925, led the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, the first successful African American-led labor union. In 1941, Randolph and civil rights leader Bayard Rustin organized the March on Washington campaign to pressure the US government to guarantee civil rights for African Americans. Specifically, Randolph and Rustin shaped the March on Washington campaign to call for equal access to employment, an end to racial discrimination in defense industries, an anti-lynching law, and the desegregation of US armed forces.[78] Randolph threatened, in his words, "an 'all-out' thundering march on Washington, ending in a monster and huge demonstration at Lincoln's Monument" to "shake up white America."[79] Randolph and Rustin emphasized not only the importance of visibility by choosing the Lincoln Memorial for their demonstration threat but also the element of inconvenience. Both leaders understood that disrupting business as usual in Washington with a mass demonstration was key to getting national leaders' attention. Organizers of earlier demonstrations like the Coxey's Army, the Woman Suffrage Procession,

74 The American Labor Party was a short-lived political party that was active from 1936 to 1956 and mostly in New York State.
75 "ALP Marches 3000 Here As 'Lobbyists,'" *Washington Post*, June 9, 1949.
76 Scott A. Sandage, "A Marble House Divided: The Lincoln Memorial, the Civil Rights Movement, and the Politics of Memory, 1939–1963," *Journal of American History* 80, no. 1 (June 1993): 145.
77 "Making the March on Washington," University of Oregon, accessed June 26, 2023, https://blogs.uoregon.edu/themarch/making-the-march-on-washington/.
78 Eric Foner, *Give Me Liberty!: An American History*, 3rd edition (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2012), 697.
79 Sandage, "A Marble House Divided," 153.

and the Bonus March had couched their tactics in traditional Washington political behavior, such as a petitioning or lobbying. The organizers of the March on Washington campaign, however, were explicit that their event would be confrontational and disruptive.[80]

The Lincoln Memorial was also an important symbolic choice for a march. After 1939, historian Keith R. Eberly writes, use of the Lincoln Memorial as part of a mass demonstration became an emerging civil rights tactic.[81] Leaders like Randolph saw the memorial as a national public space that could be co-opted to highlight ongoing racial injustice.[82] Although the Washington Monument Grounds (including the Sylvan Theater), Pennsylvania Avenue, and the White House had previously served as both spatially practical and symbolically potent spaces for political demonstrations on national issues, African American leaders beginning in 1939 intentionally chose a new space that spoke more to the civil rights cause.

By 1941, President Franklin Roosevelt and Secretary Ickes worried that the Lincoln Memorial was becoming a soapbox for political speech. Ickes wrote in his diary, "If we allow one controversial subject to be discussed" at the memorial "it would be difficult for us to deny its use on other similar occasions."[83] In a letter to Randolph, Ickes explained that such a protest would "dim the glory" of Anderson's historic concert. He added, "I do not believe that even such a meeting as you propose would be in the true spirit of the Lincoln Memorial."[84] To thwart Randolph's planned march, President Roosevelt, in June 1941, issued Executive Order 8806, which established the Fair Employment Practices Committee to prevent discrimination against African Americans in defense and government jobs. Randolph cancelled the rally in response to the executive order.[85]

In addition to providing the venue inspiration, the Anderson concert also demonstrated a format that civil rights leaders could borrow. After 1939, a standardized civil rights protest developed for using the Lincoln Memorial as a demonstration space according to elements of Anderson's concert, including mass rallies that employed both patriotic and spiritual music, inviting prominent guests, and alluding to Lincoln in rhetoric and advertising.[86] Randolph and other civil rights leaders continued to refine this approach through the 1940s and 1950s. While civil rights organizers also employed direct action and civil

80 Barber, *Marching on Washington*, 126.
81 Eberly, "'To Thee We Sing,'" 55.
82 Barber, *Marching on Washington*, 109.
83 Sandage, "A Marble House Divided," 153.
84 Sandage, "A Marble House Divided," 153.
85 Sandage, "A Marble House Divided," 153.
86 Sandage, "A Marble House Divided," 152.

disobedience, they understood that mass marches could mobilize supporters and garner publicity.[87] Two examples of these types of protests that utilized the Lincoln Memorial are described below.

In 1943, Randolph organized a small, interracial, interfaith prayer pilgrimage to the memorial for Lincoln's birthday. Again mixing the political and the religious, the Howard University Glee Club sang "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" and "Go Down, Moses."[88]

Civil rights leaders again turned to the Lincoln Memorial in 1957 as southern states continued defying the integration of public schools three years after the Supreme Court's *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. Although NAACP Executive Secretary Roy Wilkins, Walter White's successor, had been skeptical of Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s direct action tactics in the 1950s, the two leaders agreed that a large event was needed to highlight ongoing southern defiance and federal inaction on civil rights. The NAACP, A. Philip Randolph, and King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) planned the event, titled the Prayer Pilgrimage for Freedom (Figure 107). King had achieved national recognition for his leadership in the Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1955 and 1956. On May 17, 1957, the Prayer Pilgrimage for Freedom brought an interracial crowd of men and women, approximately 30,000 people, to the Lincoln Memorial for a program of songs, speeches, and prayers to challenge the federal government to support civil rights. The format of the event was the latest iteration of what civil rights leaders had borrowed from the 1939 Anderson concert. The roster of speakers included Black and White ministers and civil rights leaders.[89] National Council of Negro Women president Vivian C. Mason spoke at the event. Mason had worked with King on movement strategies, and the two leaders spoke at many civil-rights-related events together. Mason had also been invaluable in raising funds to support the Montgomery bus boycott.[90] Speakers addressed the crowd from a podium at the landing of the raised terrace steps. Photographs from the event capture a mass of Black and White Americans surrounding the speakers from the stylobate steps to the memorial, filling the memorial approachway and Lincoln Memorial Circle east of the memorial, fanning out north and south into West Potomac Park, and ending roughly at the Reflecting Pool's western edge (Figure 108).

87 Barber, *Marching on Washington*, 140.
88 Sandage, "A Marble House Divided," 153.
89 "50,000 Expected Here for Civil Rights Rally," *Washington Post*, May 17, 1957.
90 "National Council of Negro Women (NCNW)," the Martin Luther King, Jr., Research and Education Institute, Stanford University, accessed December 29, 2023, https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/national-council-negro-women-ncnw.

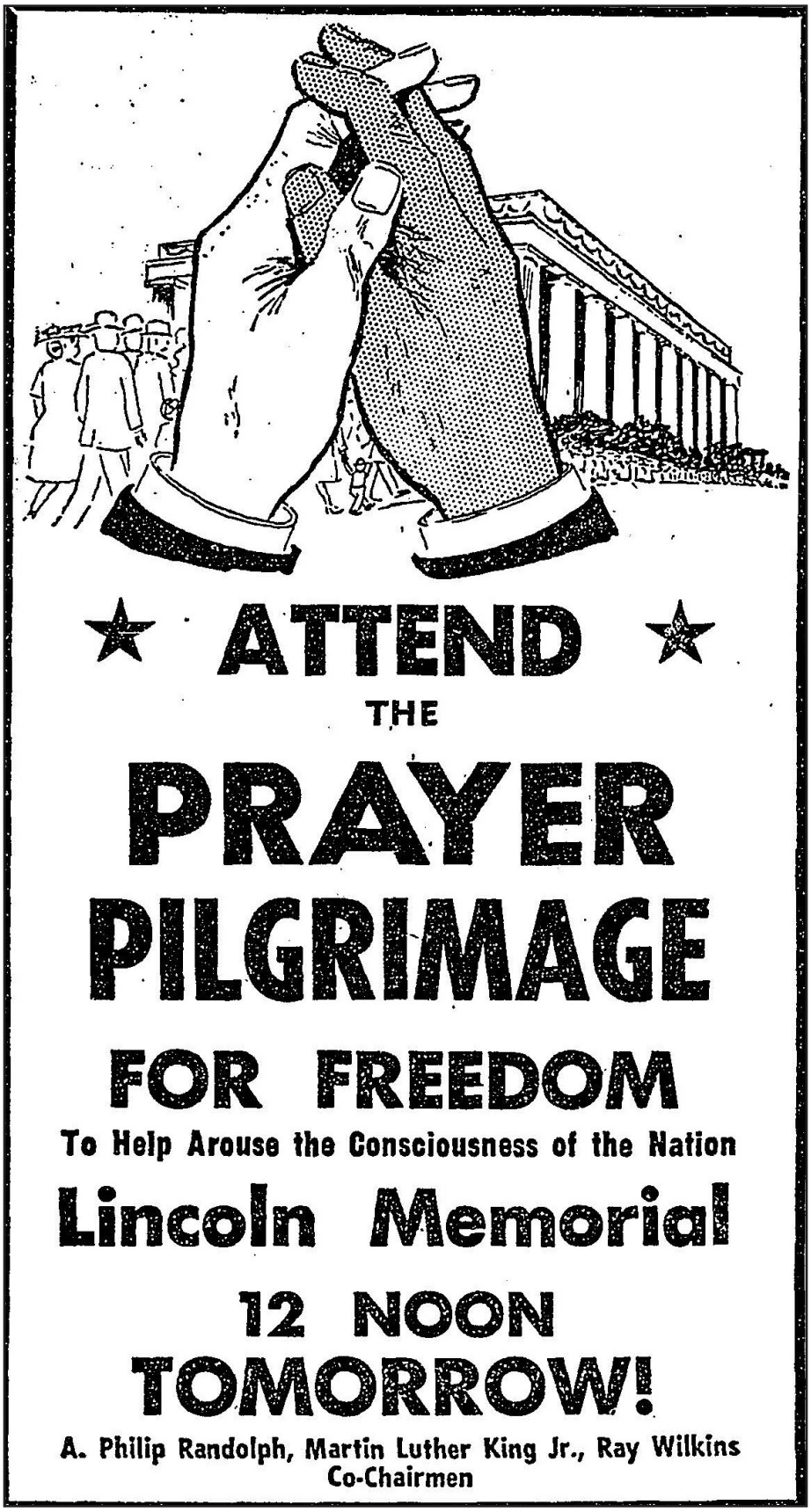

Figure 107. Poster for the Prayer Pilgrimage for Freedom held on May 17, 1957. The event was significant in the Mall's development as a demonstration space for civil rights (reprinted with permission of the DC Public Library, Star Collection © *Washington Post*).

Figure 108. View of crowd at Prayer Pilgrimage for Freedom, May 17, 1957. The crowd is shown filling the Lincoln Memorial approachway and Lincoln Memorial Circle (reprinted with permission of the DC Public Library, Star Collection © *Washington Post*).

At the event, Representative Adam Clayton Powell of New York attacked the "basic dishonesty and increasing hypocrisy of our two political parties."[91] He declared that attendees were gathering at the Lincoln Memorial "because we are getting more from a dead Republican than we are getting from live Democrats and live Republicans."[92] For the most part, however, speakers refrained from confrontational rhetoric. As the NAACP declared in anticipation of the event, "There will be no picket lines, resolutions or attempts to call on the [P]resident," only prayers "for deliverance from the cancer of racism."[93] King concluded the program with a powerful address that included a call-and-response demand of "Give us the ballot!" with the crowd chanting the phrase in return.[94]

91 Derek Gray, "'Remaining Awake Through a Great Revolution:' Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Legacy of Activism in Washington, D.C.," *Washington History* 30, no. 2 (Fall 2018): 11.
92 Gray, "'Remaining Awake Through a Great Revolution,'" 11.
93 Sandage, "A Marble House Divided," 154.
94 Gray, "'Remaining Awake Through a Great Revolution,'" 12.

The Prayer Pilgrimage for Freedom only reinforced civil rights activists' belief that the National Mall was the most effective symbolic backdrop to articulate their cause. Encouraged by the 1957 event's success, a committee of civil rights leaders led by A. Philip Randolph gathered in August 1958 to plan a return to Washington. This event would focus more narrowly on continued public school segregation. They collaborated with youth council and college chapters in New York, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey to plan a march. On October 25, 1958, an integrated crowd of 10,000 marched down Constitution Avenue to the Lincoln Memorial for the Youth March for Integrated Schools (Figure 109). The Youth March highlighted the growing importance of young people to the civil rights movement. Young people were heavily involved in the planning, crafted much of the messaging, and provided most of the crowd for the demonstration. The youth who gathered demanded rapid enforcement of desegregation of public school four years after the Supreme Court's *Brown v. Board of Education* decision.[95] Befitting the march's focus on integrated education, young people, mostly high school- to college-age, dominated the crowd. Coretta Scott King delivered a speech at the event. Martin Luther King Jr. served as the march's honorary chair but could not attend, as he was recovering from injuries inflicted by a stabbing while in New York. During the march, singer Harry Belafonte took a small, integrated group of students to the White House to meet with President Dwight Eisenhower. When they approached the White House gate, however, a guard informed them that they would not be allowed to enter. Instead, the students staged a half-hour picket and left a list of demands for the president.[96]

Randolph, King, and other civil rights leaders planned a second Youth March for Integrated Schools in 1959. They aimed to build on the previous year's march with a larger event that would pressure the president and Congress into supporting legislative action on school segregation. Prior to the event, an integrated group of students was finally able to meet with the president. The event itself on April 18 included a march down the National Mall and a rally at the Sylvan Theater, and photographs show demonstrators marching down Washington Drive NW on the Mall.[97] In total, the second Youth March for Integrated Schools drew an integrated

95 Jon M. Hale, *A New King of Youth: Historically Black High Schools and Southern Student Activism, 1920–1975* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2022), 123; V. P. Franklin, *The Young Crusaders: The Untold Story of the Children and Teenagers Who Galvanized the Civil Rights Movement* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2021), 51.

96 "Youth March for Integrated Schools," Martin Luther King, Jr., Research and Education Institute, Stanford University, accessed June 29, 2023, https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/encyclopedia/youth-march-integrated-schools; "Randolph: DC March A Success," *New York Age*, November 1, 1958.

97 Washington Drive NW was replaced with a dirt path in the 1970s. See Chapter 1 of this report. See also Washington Area Spark, "26,000 at Youth March for Integrated Schools: 1959," Flickr, accessed April 9, 2024, https://www.flickr.com/

crowd of approximately 26,000 people. The rally included a panel moderated by Bayard Rustin, remarks by Roy Wilkins, and closing remarks by King.[98] It is not clear why event organizers chose the Sylvan Theater over the Lincoln Memorial.

By the early 1960s, segregation and discrimination continued to plague many facets of life for African Americans, from education to housing to employment. Amid ongoing racial violence in summer 1963 and the Kennedy administration's equivocation on civil rights legislation, prominent African American leaders revived A. Philip Randolph's earlier idea of a march on Washington. Randolph, Wilkins, and King collaborated with Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) president John Lewis, executive director of the National Urban League Whitney M. Young, Jr., James Farmer of the Congress on Racial Equality (CORE), and activist Anna Arnold Hedgeman on a march that would advocate for both a massive jobs program for African Americans and the passage of a federal civil rights bill. Hedgeman was the only woman included on the march's planning committee. Women's groups, however, such as National Council of Negro Women, Women in NAACP (WIN), Black women's sororities, and women from

Figure 109. **Protestors in the Youth March for Integrated Schools in October 1958 are shown marching on Constitution Avenue NW. View facing west. The National Mall is shown at far left of image (National Archives and Records Administration, Record Group 79).**

photos/washington_area_spark/32736059324.

98 "Integration Rally Here Assured Ike Seeks End of Racial Bias," *Washington Post*, April 19, 1959.

Figure 110. Aerial view of marchers at the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, looking east, August 28, 1963. Photograph by Thomas J. O'Halloran (Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division).

Black churches were instrumental in planning, mobilizing, and raising funds for the march.[99]

Viewing the Prayer Pilgrimage and the two rallies for school integration as effective demonstrations that garnered national attention, King became increasingly attracted to protests in Washington as a way to simultaneously pressure national politicians and bring the civil rights message to as many Americans as possible.[100] Aiding the six organizers was a coalition of pastors and presidents of DC chapters of national civil rights organizations known as the Washington Committee on the March, which helped organize DC residents and ensure marchers' safety. The Washington Committee worked with the DC Metropolitan Police Department

99 N'dea Yancey-Bragg and Christine Fernando, "Sexism almost sidelined Black women at 1963 March on Washington. How they fought back," *USA Today*, August 23, 2023.

100 Barber, *Marching on Washington*, 145–48.

Figure 111. This view of the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom shows the speakers' podium surrounded by event attendees on the Lincoln Memorial steps, August 28, 1963 (Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division).

and District transportation planners to ensure the march was both successful and safe.[101]

On August 28, 1963, over 200,000 protestors gathered for the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom (Figure 110 and Figure 111). The march began on the Washington Monument Grounds, and marchers processed to the Lincoln Memorial to hear the events' scheduled speakers and musicians. The interracial crowd filled the Lincoln Memorial approachway and Lincoln Memorial Circle fronting the memorial, flanked the Reflecting Pool, and extended north and south into West Potomac Park (Figure 112 and Figure 113). The Red Cross provided ten hospital tents on the Mall to serve marchers.[102] The six-hour event included musical performances and ten speeches. Appropriately, Marian Anderson opened the event by singing the national anthem. Speakers included organizers Randolph, Lewis, Young, Wilkins, and Farmer; Dorothy Height, president of the National Council of Negro Women; as well as labor union leader Walter Reuther. Perhaps the climactic and best remembered moment of the event was Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech, in which the civil rights leader laid out his vision of a more perfect American society.[103]

Although men comprised a clear majority of the speakers as performers at the event, women dominated the crowd. Historian William P. Jones writes that

101 Gray, "'Remaining Awake Through a Great Revolution,'" 12.
102 *Evening Star*, August 27, 1963, clipping, Pickets & Protests: March on Washington Vertical File, People's Archive, District of Columbia Public Library.; *Washington Daily News*, August 26, 1963, clipping, Pickets & Protests: March on Washington Vertical File, People's Archive, District of Columbia Public Library.
103 "Excerpts from Addresses at Lincoln Memorial During Capital City Civil Rights March," *New York Times*, August 29, 1963.

Figure 112. The observing crowd at the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom are shown sitting along the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool, August 28, 1963. Photograph looking east toward the Washington Monument (courtesy DC Public Library, The People's Archive).

Figure 113. The March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom included an interracial crowd gathered to support civil rights for African Americans, August 28, 1963 (courtesy DC Public Library, The People's Archive).

women's groups and unions representing industries dominated by women (e.g., healthcare) were among those that drew the most participants to the march. Hundreds of young children and teenagers also attended the march.[104]

104 William P. Jones, *The March on Washington: Jobs, Freedom, and the Forgotten History of Civil Rights* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2013), 165; Franklin, *The Young Crusaders*, 98; Yancey-Bragg and Fernando, "Sexism almost sidelined

The local African American press noted the National Mall's trajectory as a civil rights demonstration space since 1939. Writing in the *Washington Afro-American*, Ralph Matthews argued that the Marian Anderson concert, the two Youth Marches for Integrated Schools, the Prayer Pilgrimage for Freedom, and, finally, the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom each built on its predecessor in intensity and crowd size. Matthews referred to the Lincoln Memorial as a "hallowed place" and the ideal setting for these significant milestones in the civil rights struggle.[105]

In addition to the massive in-person turnout, tens of millions of Americans watched the event on television.[106] The powerful roster of speakers and performances effectively framed the importance of the civil rights struggle. In doing so, the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom helped legitimate the mass demonstration on the National Mall in political culture, argues Lucy Barber.[107] The March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, Barber writes, became "both the most familiar and most remembered protest in the United States."[108] The march is also remembered for what followed it—passage of the Civil Rights of Act of 1964.

THE NATIONAL MALL AS A STAGE FOR DEMOCRACY (1964–PRESENT)

The 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom was the watershed moment in the National Mall's use for civil rights and protest generally. Lucy Barber writes that in the decades that followed, protest organizers "increasingly revered" the March on Washington and looked to replicate its success. Diverse populations increasingly came to Washington to claim the National Mall as their own and express their First Amendment rights on a host of issues. The demonstrations that followed the 1963 march, however, did not follow a progressively smooth trajectory that built on their predecessors, but rather each faced its own challenges and tested the limits of the marching on Washington tradition.[109]

POOR PEOPLE'S CAMPAIGN/RESURRECTION CITY (1968)

By 1967, three years after President Lyndon Johnson declared a "war on poverty" and established new federal anti-poverty programs under what he termed

Black women at 1963 March on Washington. How they fought back."

105 Ralph Matthews, "The Cast Has Changed, But the Play's the Same," *Washington Afro-American*, August 31, 1963.

106 Leroy Aarons, "'63 Civil Rights Tide Slows to Trickle," *Washington Post*, August 26, 1973.

107 Barber, *Marching on Washington*, 142.

108 Barber, *Marching on Washington*, 141.

109 Barber, *Marching on Washington*, 179.

the Great Society, millions of Americans remained in poverty. The Johnson administration devoted significant federal funding to anti-poverty efforts but, by 1967, had already reduced such social spending to devote more resources to support the US war in Vietnam. Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. called attention to the fact that poverty cut across race and geography and argued that a massive demonstration was necessary. King stated that a multiracial coalition, what he termed the Poor People's Campaign, would convene on the National Mall in 1968 to demand federal funding for a guaranteed annual income, full employment, housing for the poor, and anti-poverty programs.[110]

Planning for the Poor People's Campaign reflected King's own growing doubts about moderation and a lack of confrontation, both of which had influenced the shaping of the 1963 March on Washington. King hoped the Poor People's Campaign would overcome what he and other outspoken critics like Malcolm X saw as the weaknesses of the 1963 march. King rejected planning the protest with a coalition of leaders and put the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) fully in charge of planning. Instead of bringing in tens of thousands of marchers to Washington, King wanted to a few thousand carefully trained protestors who would echo the Bonus March in building shantytowns in the city.[111] Although the demonstration would be nonviolent, King threatened to "tie up transportation in Washington, jam the hospitals, boycott schools and sit-in at Government offices."[112]

Following King's death in April 1968, the SCLC under Reverend Ralph Abernathy continued advocating for the Poor People's Campaign. In May 1968, Poor People's Campaign demonstrators built what they called Resurrection City, which was comprised of 3,000 wooden tents in West Potomac Park south of the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool (Figure 114). Despite significant congressional opposition to the plans of the Poor People's Campaign, the Department of the Interior granted demonstrators a permit for the encampment. The DC government officially adopted a "hands-off" policy toward the demonstrators while at the same time providing police and fire protection, food, and community services.[113] Local DC churches planned "Solidarity Day" services to show support for the Resurrection City demonstrators. In addition to church services, Plymouth

110 Anna Diamond, "Remembering Resurrection City and the Poor People's Campaign of 1968," *Smithsonian Magazine*, May 2018, accessed July 10, 2023, https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/remembering-poor-peoples-campaign-180968742/.

111 Barber, *Marching on Washington*, 177.

112 Jose Yglesias, "Dr. King's March on Washington, Part II," *New York Times Magazine,* March 31, 1968, 277–93.

113 Carl Bernstein, "City Planning to Aid Marchers and Cope with Any Emergencies," *Washington Post*, May 9, 1968.

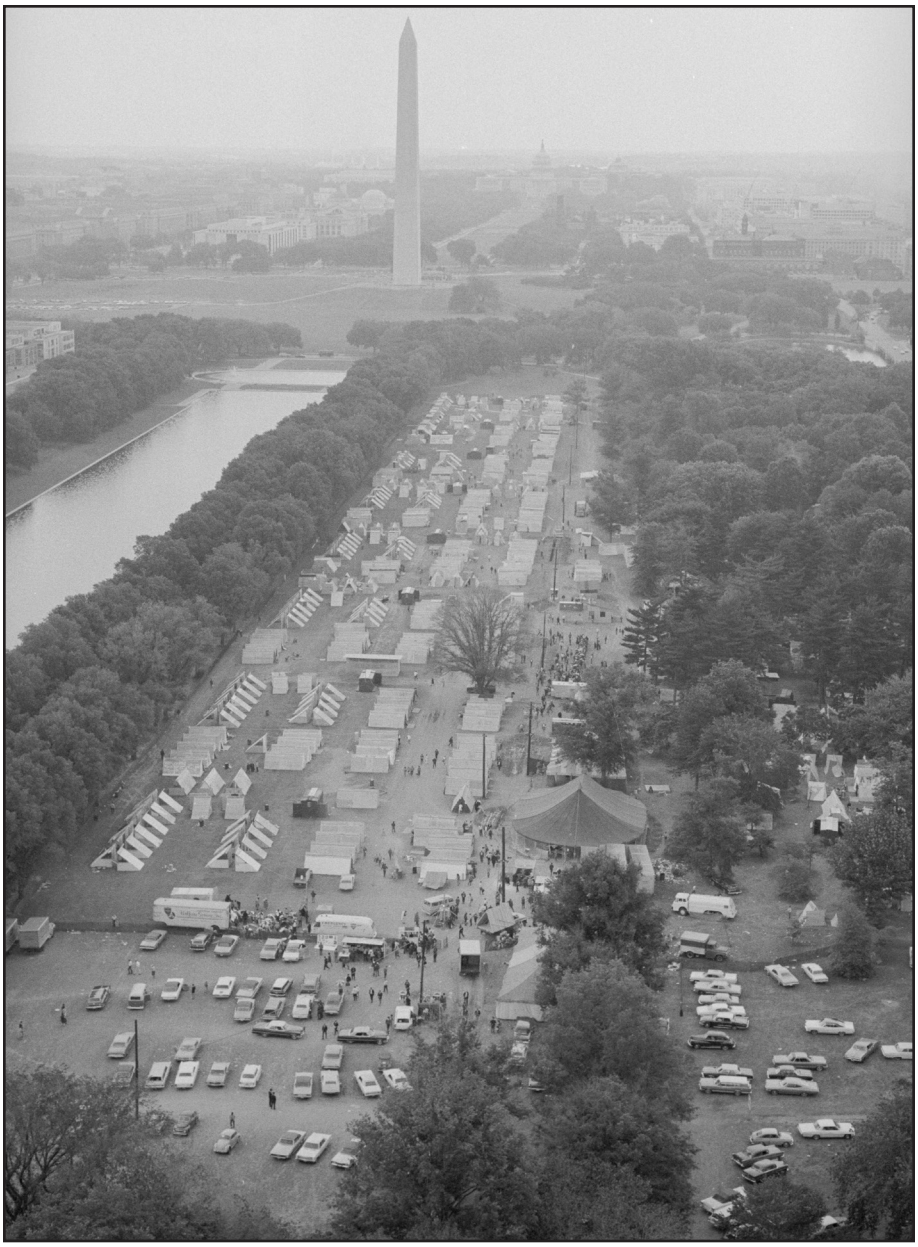

Figure 114. Aerial view of Resurrection City, a community established by the Poor People's Campaign in West Potomac Park, May 21, 1968. Photograph by Thomas J. O'Halloran (Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division).

Congregationalist Church at 5313 North Capitol Street provided their church grounds as a gathering space from which marchers could take a bus to the Mall. At the Episcopal Church of St. Stephen at 16th and Newton Streets NW, worshippers gathered for a church service and then walked to the Mall. The newspaper also noted that St. Stephen offered an "open house" for out-of-town "Solidarity Day" marchers.[114]

The first bus caravan of participants arrived on May 12, 1968. Although gates and a fence secured the campsite, the demonstrators regularly allowed the public to visit them. The demonstrators camped in the tents for 42 days. By

114 William R. MacKaye, "Churches Plan 'Solidarity Day' Rites," *Washington Post*, June 18, 1968.

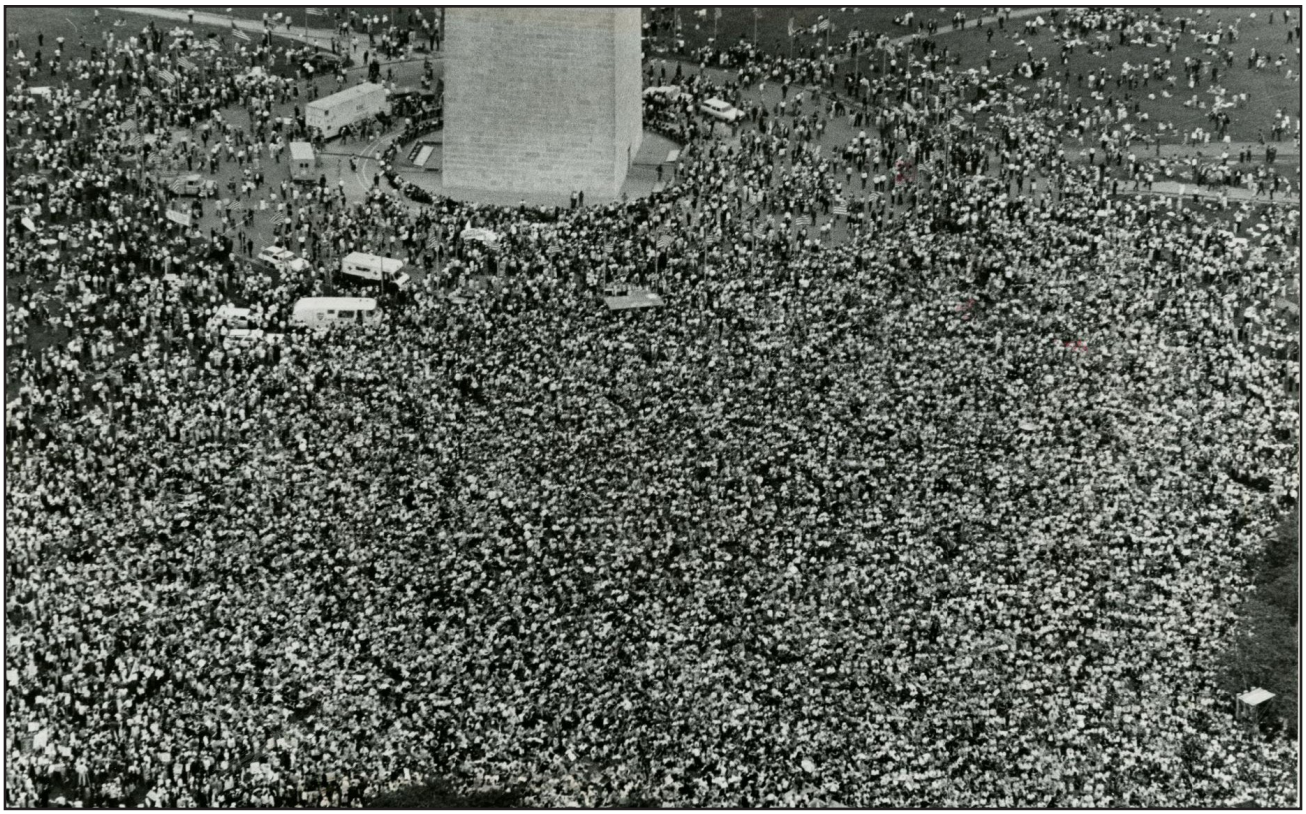

Figure 115. Aerial view of Poor People's Campaign "Solidarity Day" demonstration on the Washington Monument grounds on June 19, 1968 (reprinted with permission of the DC Public Library, Star Collection © *Washington Post*).

June 2, Resurrection City included approximately 2,500 residents. During the encampment, demonstrators participated in rallies near the campsite and protested at government buildings. SCLC national field director Hosea Williams oversaw the campaign's direct-action initiatives. On June 2, for instance, approximately 300 Resurrection City residents, including Williams, walked down the National Mall to the Department of Agriculture building to protest the degree to which Americans wasted food.[115]

Local Black women in Washington became unofficial champions of the campaign. June Fowler, a mother of two teenage sons, gathered seven women in her home to strategize how to support the upcoming SCLC campaign. The group was small but the clubs and organizations to which these women belonged represented thousands of middle-class Black Washingtonians. In May, the National Council of Negro Women sponsored a discussion with middle-class Black women and Resurrection City residents to promote solidarity among economic classes in the District's African American community.[116]

115 Earl Caldwell, "More Militant Poor People's Campaign Is Pledged," *New York Times*, June 3, 1968.

116 Lauren Pearlman, "More than a March: The Poor People's Campaign in the District," *Washington History* 26, no. 2 (Fall 2014): 32–33.

A massive Solidarity Day demonstration was held on June 19, 1968. Organizers held a rally at the Lincoln Memorial featuring speeches by celebrities. The crowd extended across West Potomac Park fronting the Lincoln Memorial and on the Washington Monument Grounds (Figure 115). On June 24, the day after the encampment permit's expiration, police evicted the Resurrection City residents. On the same day, Abernathy marched protestors to the Capitol to continue pushing for anti-poverty legislation. Police arrested 288 protestors, including Abernathy.[117] Congress did not pass new anti-poverty programs or increase social spending as a result of the efforts of the Poor People's Campaign.

VIETNAM WAR PROTESTS (1960S–1970S)

The modern civil rights movement demonstrated how other political and social movements could harness the National Mall's symbolic power to further causes of national concern. Perhaps the most immediate recipient of this legacy was the movement against the Vietnam War. Indeed, the civil rights movement's tactics and organizing strategies greatly influenced the anti-war movement.[118]

US involvement in Vietnam dated to the late 1950s, when the United States began committing military equipment, financial aid, and advisers to train the South Vietnamese army in a war against communist North Vietnam. In 1954, France, which had colonized Vietnam in the 1860s, granted the southeast Asian nation independence but split the nation in half, with a communist-led government leading North Vietnam. US aid to South Vietnam in the 1950s was part of a broader post-World War II US effort to either directly or indirectly prevent foreign governments from embracing communism. The conflict escalated in 1964 when the American government under President Johnson formally declared war and committed US ground forces to Vietnam the following year.[119] American opposition to the war developed immediately and was interracial and intergenerational, although young people tended to dominate much of the protest effort.[120]

At the time of the United States' formal entry into the war, the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), then the nation's best-known radical group, was among the most forceful oppositional voices.[121] On April 17, 1965, SDS organized a massive demonstration that brought approximately 16,000 protestors to

117 Diamond, "Remembering Resurrection City and the Poor People's Campaign of 1968."
118 Maurice Isserman and Michael Kazin, *American Divided: The Civil War of the 1960s*, 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 179.
119 "Vietnam," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, accessed July 3, 2023, https://www.britannica.com/place/Vietnam.
120 Isserman and Kazin, *American Divided*, 178.
121 Isserman and Kazin, *American Divided*, 178.

Figure 116. Anti-Vietnam War protestors are shown marching along the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool. Photograph looking east, October 21, 1967. The Reflecting Pool is out of frame to the right (Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division).

Washington. The protest included a march north of the White House, Treasury Department Building, and Old Executive Office Building and a rally at the Sylvan Theater. The rally featured speakers like Senator Ernest Gruening of Alaska and performances from folk singers Joan Baez and Judy Collins. They called for an immediate end to US bombing campaigns in Vietnam. Some of the most forceful rhetoric came from SDS national president Paul Potter, who charged the US government with committing "cultural genocide" in Vietnam.[122] Following the rally's conclusion, the crowd marched in lines 80-abreast east down the Mall toward the Capitol. As they marched, the crowd chanted "no more war" and "we want peace now."[123]

In November of the same year, demonstrators numbering 20,000–25,000 marched against the war. The *Washington Post* described the protest as "orderly and strangely silent" and the protestors as "surprisingly neat for the most part, many of them middle-aged and middle-class in appearance."[124] In a similar format as the April 1965 protest, demonstrators marched around the White House and then rallied at the Sylvan Theater with speakers and music.[125]

122 "Viet-Nam War Protest is Staged by 16,000," *Washington Post*, April 18, 1965.
123 "Viet-Nam War Protest is Staged by 16,000," *Washington Post*, April 18, 1965.
124 "Throng of 20,000 Marches in Protest of Vietnam War: Marchers Proclaim Pros and Cons of War," *Washington Post*, November 28, 1965.
125 "Throng of 20,000 Marches in Protest of Vietnam War: Marchers Proclaim Pros and Cons of War," *Washington Post*, November 28, 1965.

Figure 117. This October 1968 photograph shows protestors gathered at an anti-Vietnam War event at the Sylvan Theater (American University, Patrick Frazier Political and Social Movements Collection).

Figure 118. To conclude the Moratorium to End the War in Vietnam on October 15, 1969, civil rights leader Coretta Scott King led a group of demonstrators on a candlelit walk from the Sylvan Theater to the White House (Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division).

Over the next decade, protestors against the Vietnam War regularly used the Mall to advance their cause. For instance, historic photographs show protestors marching along the Reflecting Pool to the Lincoln Memorial in October 1967 (Figure 116) and gathered at the Sylvan Theater in October 1968 (Figure 117).

In autumn 1969, as the Vietnam War continued under new president Richard Nixon, anti-war protestors organized what they termed the Moratorium to End the War in Vietnam as a campaign to immediately end the war. Nixon had won the previous year's election largely by balancing harsh criticism of the anti-war movement with a supposed plan for an "honorable" and phased end to the war.[126]

Sam Brown and David Hawk, both former staffers on Senator Eugene McCarthy's unsuccessful 1968 presidential campaign, were not satisfied with a promised phased withdrawal. They planned an October 15 moratorium as a general strike, where Americans would stop work and "business as usual" to support an immediate ceasefire and withdrawal of American forces from Vietnam. While a general strike did not materialize, a series of protests and teach-ins occurred across the country on October 15, from a dramatic reading of names of American casualties at Iowa State University to the planting of 1,500 wooden crosses and four coffins at San Francisco State College.[127] In Washington, DC, approximately 250,000 gathered for a protest on the Washington Monument Grounds, sang folk songs at the Sylvan Theater, and ended the day with a candlelight vigil at the Ellipse. Photographs show a mass of people gathered around the monument grounds. Civil rights leaders Coretta Scott King and Reverend Channing Phillips led a large group on a candlelit walk from the Sylvan Theater to the White House (Figure 118).[128]

The second phase of the moratorium was an even larger demonstration on the National Mall on November 15, with approximately 600,000 people coming to Washington, DC, for the protest. Although anti-war demonstrations occurred throughout the city, the National Mall was the center of activity. Folk singer Pete Seeger led a group in singing protest songs near the Washington Monument.[129]

126 Kent G. Sieg, "The 1968 Presidential Election and Peace in Vietnam," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 26, no. 4 (Fall 1996): 1063.

127 Chalmers M. Roberts, "Millions Set to Join in Moratorium: Millions Set for Moratorium," *Washington Post*, October 15, 1969.

128 Gordon Pettey, "Moratorium Plans Include Teach-Ins and Sleep-Ins," *Washington Post*, October 7, 1969; Chalmers M. Roberts, "Moratorium Activities Peaceful: U.S. Demonstrations Protest," *Washington Post*, October 16, 1969.

129 "Moratorium to End the War in Vietnam," *Histories of the National Mall*, accessed June 16, 2023, https://mallhistory.org/items/show/220; Karlyn Barker and Linda Wheeler, "Hundreds of Thousands March for Gay Rights; People From Across U.S. Converge on Mall," *Washington Post*, October 12, 1987.

The *Washington Post* described the demonstration as a "massive and marvelous outpouring of young people—earnest, orderly, peaceful."[130]

In response to the moratorium, Nixon promised that the war would be over in three years.[131] However, the president did not initiate a phased end to the war as he had promised but instead expanded the conflict into nearby Cambodia in 1970. Nixon's ground invasion of Cambodia, which he announced on April 30, was meant to stop North Vietnamese troops from moving supplies and arms through the northern part of the country. Anti-war protestors responded with a series of demonstrations across the country. One such protest at Kent State University in Kent, Ohio, on May 4 ended in the National Guard killing four students. In reaction to both the invasion of Cambodia and the Kent State massacre, protestors gathered at the Ellipse on May 9 for a demonstration (Figure 119 and Figure 120). The *Washington Post* estimated that the Ellipse crowd numbered 60,000 to 100,000 protestors.[132]

To counter protests against the US invasion of Cambodia, Nixon supporters organized a pro-war, pro-Nixon demonstration known as Honor America Day. The July 4, 1970, event, which coincided with the annual Independence Day celebration on the National Mall, was held at the Lincoln Memorial and hosted by comedian Bob Hope and Christian evangelist Billy Graham. Event organizers billed it as a "pro-America rally" to heal the nation amidst deep divisions over the war. Hope predicted that it would show the world that "Americans can put aside their differences and rally around the flag to show national unity."[133] Organizers intentionally recruited conservative crowds and sent White House advance teams across the country to bring 500,000 Nixon supporters to the capital. Approximately 250,000–350,000 people came to the event. However, thousands of the attendees were not Nixon supporters but anti-war protestors who heckled the conservative crowd. Some stripped naked and waded into the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool (Figure 121).[134] "The two sides eyed each other warily throughout the day," writes historian Kevin Kruse. Park police attempted to maintain separation of the two groups, but, by the evening, a small group began throwing rocks and bottles and police intervened. Police launched tear gas into the

130 Roscoe Drummond and Geoffrey Drummond, "Latest Vietnam Moratorium Shows Majority Opposes Hasty Withdrawal," *Washington Post*, November 22, 1969.
131 Roberts, "Millions Set to Join in Moratorium: Millions Set for Moratorium."
132 Richard Harwood, "Some Eruptions Occur at Nightfall: Throng at Ellipse Anti-war Rally Subdued by Heat, Speeches," *Washington Post*, May 10, 1970.
133 Kevin M. Kruse, "Partisans often try to claim July 4 as their own. It usually backfires," *Washington Post*, July 3, 2017.
134 Ronald G. Shafer, "What could go wrong for Trump on the Fourth of July? In 1970, protests and tear gas marred the day," *Washington Post*, July 2, 2019.

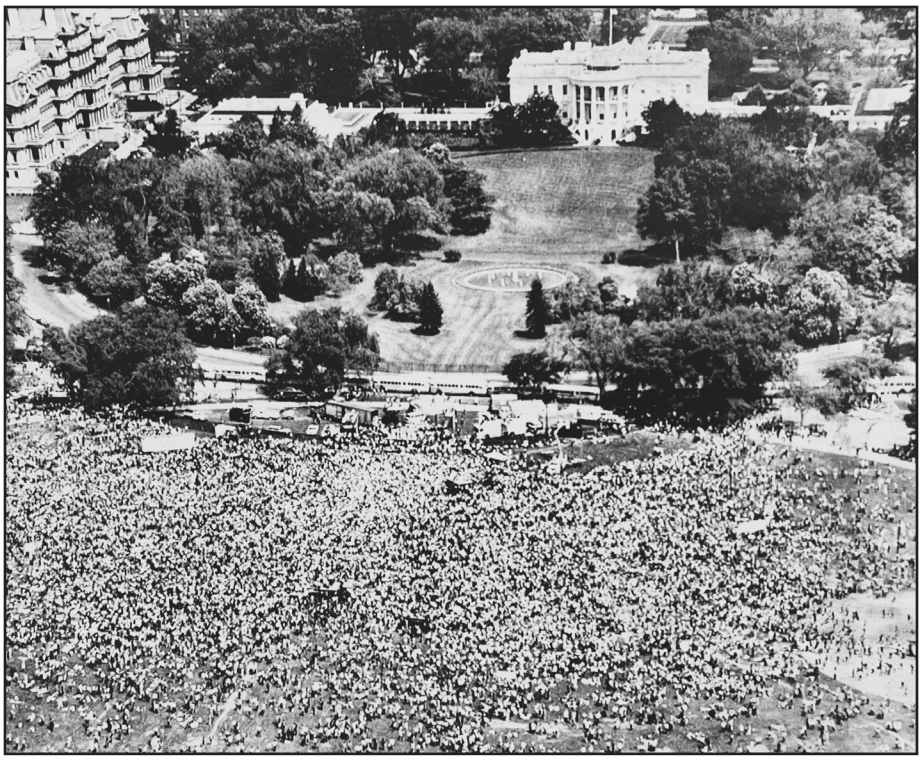

Figure 119. Aerial view of protestors on the Ellipse demonstrating against US expansion of the Vietnam War into Cambodia, May 9, 1970 (reprinted with permission of the DC Public Library, Star Collection © *Washington Post*).

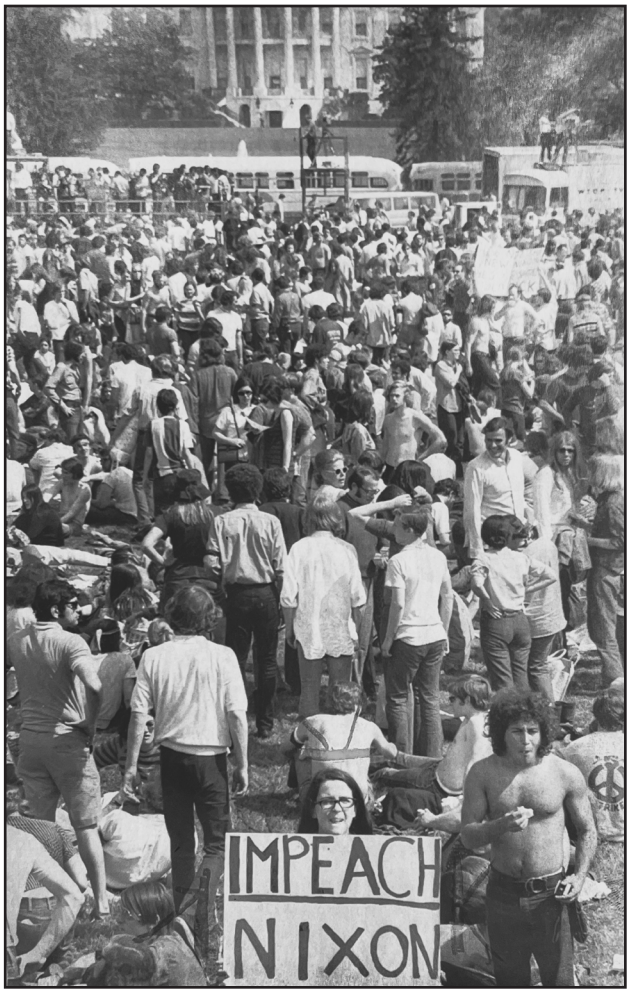

Figure 120. Protestors on the Ellipse, May 9, 1970 (reprinted with permission of the DC Public Library, Star Collection © *Washington Post*).

Figure 121. Demonstrators against the Vietnam War disrupted the pro-Nixon "Honor America Day" event at the Lincoln Memorial, July 4, 1970 (Emil A. Press Slide Collection, DC History Center).

protestors but misjudged the window and sent smoke into both crowds. Rather than uniting Americans, Kruse writes, "the celebration once again served to show how divided the country had become."[135] Despite its outcome, Honor America Day further demonstrated the degree to which use of the National Mall had become necessary to legitimize and elevate a political event.

Anti-war protestors tested this young tradition's boundaries with demonstrations like an April 1971 Vietnam War veteran encampment on the Mall. A group of approximately 900 Vietnam veterans organized as the Vietnam Veterans Against the War planned a five-day demonstration in which they would sleep on the Mall to protest the war. On April 17, however, the US Department of the Interior denied their permit request and threatened a court injunction. The *Washington Post* described the event as part of the anti-war movement's "spring offensive," which included a mass march and rally on the Capitol grounds by the National Peace Action Coalition and an encampment in Rock Creek Park planned by the People's Coalition. The Interior Department denied the National Mall and Rock Creek encampments, stating that departmental regulations forbid overnight camping except in designated locations.[136] On April 19, a US appeals court overruled the Interior Department and granted the veterans permission to camp on the Mall, citing precedents of camping on the Mall that included the 1937 Boy Scout Jamboree and 1968 Resurrection City.[137] The following day, however,

135 Kruse, "Partisans often try to claim July 4 as their own. It usually backfires."
136 Paul W. Valentine, "Veterans Denied Camp on Mall," *Washington Post*, Apr 16, 1971; Ken W. Clawson, "Justice Dept, Admits Misjudgment on Veterans' Camp-Out," *Washington Post*, April 24, 1971.
137 Sanford J. Ungar, "Vets Can Use Mall, Court Quickly Rules," *Washington Post*, April 20, 1971.

Figure 122. As part of a week-long demonstration against the Vietnam War, a group of veterans camped on the Mall, April 1971 (reprinted with permission of the DC Public Library, Star Collection © *Washington Post*).

US Supreme Court Chief Justice Warren Burger overturned the appeals court decision and denied the veterans use of the Mall.[138]

While this legal battle ensued, however, the veterans proceeded with their protest. From April 19–23, the veterans defied the Supreme Court and camped at the Mall's eastern end—on and around the Washington Monument Grounds and the Tidal Basin (Figure 122). They named their encampment Dewey Canyon III, in reference to the Dewey Canyon I and II military invasions of Laos in 1969 and 1971, respectively. The encampment included sleeping bags for the veterans, medical tents, and a field kitchen sponsored by churches to feed the veterans. The *Washington Post* described the demonstration as a "sea of sleeping bags" on the Mall.[139] Senator Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts visited the veterans to show his support.[140] In co-opting national sacred spaces to criticize the war, Lucy Barber writes, the veteran protestors "broadened the ways in which protestors could use the public spaces of the capital."[141]

During their protest week, the veterans attended hearings by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and demonstrations at the Supreme Court, the Pentagon, and Arlington National Cemetery. To conclude their protest on April 23, the

138 "Vets Disobey Court Order, Sleep on Mall: Vets Defy Court Edict, Sleep on Mall," *Washington Post*, April 22, 1971.
139 B. D. Colen, "At Night, Veterans Voice Inner Feelings," *Washington Post*, April 23, 1971.
140 Nicholas von Hoffman, "Keep 'Em Down on the Mall: Poster," *Washington Post*, April 23, 1971; Colen, "At Night, Veterans Voice Inner Feelings."
141 Barber, *Marching on Washington*, 191.

veterans tossed their medals and discharge papers onto the Capitol steps.[142] The People's Coalition moved their encampment to West Potomac Park, an alternative site the Interior Department originally offered the veteran group. A day after the veteran encampment ended, the Justice Department, which sought the court injunction against the encampment, conceded publicly that attempting to prevent it was a mistake. Department officials initially doubted whether most of the participants were actually veterans and predicted that they would be uncivil.[143]

The Vietnam Veterans Against the War encampment prompted several congressional hearings that week devoted to both atrocities committed by the US military in Vietnam and the US media's coverage of the war. Hearings also discussed proposals to end US participation in the war.[144]

MARCH FOR LIFE (BEGINNING 1974)

Witnessing the effectiveness with which civil rights and anti-Vietnam War demonstrators used the National Mall as a symbolically powerful backdrop, promoters of other causes increasingly followed suit. On January 22, 1974, approximately 20,000 anti-abortion protestors participated in the first March for Life on the first anniversary of the US Supreme Court decision *Roe v. Wade* that struck down state laws across the United States that prohibited or restricted abortion.[145]

Abortion was permissible in the United States until the mid-nineteenth century, but opposition brought legislative restrictions in the century's second half. Both historians and political activists have attempted to parse nineteenth-century feminists' varying positions on abortion. Historian Treva B. Lindsey concludes that the "question of whether the architects of women's rights activism in the United States supported or opposed legalized abortion does not have a single, uncomplicated answer."[146] Some nineteenth-century feminists opposed abortion

142 "Dewey Canyon III – Vietnam Veterans protest the War," *Histories of the National Mall*, accessed July 3, 2023, https://mallhistory.org/explorations/show/mall-encampments/item/191.

143 Ken W. Clawson, "Justice Dept, Admits Misjudgment on Veterans' Camp-Out," *Washington Post*, April 24, 1971.

144 John Kerry and Vietnam Veterans Against The War, *The New Soldier* (New York: Collier Books, 1971), 28–31.

145 "Roe v. Wade," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, accessed April 29, 2024, available at https://www.britannica.com/event/Roe-v-Wade; Emily Langer, "Nellie Gray, March for Life founder, dead at 88," *Washington Post*, August 14, 2012; Tara Isabella Burton, "The March for Life, America's biggest anti-abortion rally, explained," *Vox*, January 18, 2018, accessed April 17, 2024, available at https://www.vox.com/identities/2018/1/18/16870018/march-for-life-anti-abortion-rally-explained.

146 Treva B. Lindsey, "What Did the Suffragists Really Think About Abortion?," *Smithsonian Magazine*, May 26, 2022, accessed May 3, 2024, available at https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/what-did-the-suffragists-really-think-about-

and led education efforts about embryo development to encourage public opposition. *The Revolution,* a weekly women's rights newspaper published by Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, ran articles, letters, and editorials condemning it.[147] Amid growing medical concerns about the risk of injury or death to those undergoing an abortion and emergent arguments about when life begins, states passed laws restricting or prohibiting abortion in the 1850s through the rest of the century. By 1900, abortion was a felony in every state, with a few legal exceptions for extenuating circumstances.[148]

In the 1960s, some second-wave feminists, such as Betty Friedan, argued that abortion rights were central to the broader women's movement. In 1967, the National Organization for Women (NOW), founded by Friedan, adopted a "Bill of Rights for Women" that included a call for repealing anti-abortion laws across the country. NOW membership adopted the document despite division within the organization about wading into the abortion debate.[149]

Some states granted exceptions to their abortion bans by the 1960s. By 1972, 13 states permitted abortions if the pregnant's woman's life or physical or mental health were endangered or the pregnancy was the result of rape or incest. Four states, meanwhile, repealed their abortion bans. Abortion remained illegal in the remainder of the states.[150] The anti-abortion movement, meanwhile, gained momentum with an effective strategy change by the early 1970s, explains historian Daniel K. Williams. Williams writes, "because the pro-life movement grounded its arguments in the language of human value and constitutional rights, it was able to attract a politically and religiously diverse coalition that actually gained strength over time."[151]

In the aftermath of *Roe*, Washington, DC, attorney Nellie Gray organized the first March for Life in January 1974 to call for congressional action to reverse the

abortion-180980124/.

147 "Anthony's Newspaper: *The Revolution,"* Susan B. Anthony Birthplace, accessed April 29, 2024, available at susanbanthonybirthplace.com/therevolution; "Abortion...Was It Legal?," Susan B. Anthony Birthplace, accessed April 29, 2024, available at https://www.susanbanthonybirthplace.com/abortionwasitlegal.

148 Lindsey, "What Did the Suffragists Really Think About Abortion?"; "Abortion Is Central to the History of Reproductive Health Care in America," Planned Parenthood, accessed April 29, 2024, available at https://www.plannedparenthoodaction.org/issues/abortion/abortion-central-history-reproductive-health-care-america.

149 Suzanne Staggenborg, *The Pro-choice Movement Organization and Activism in the Abortion Conflict* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 20–21.

150 Rachel Benson Gold, "Lessons from Before Roe: Will Past be Prologue?," *Guttmacher Policy Review* 6, no. 1 (March 1, 2023).

151 Daniel K. Williams, "What You Don't Know About the Abortion Fight Before *Roe v. Wade*," *Time*, January 4, 2016, https://time.com/4154084/anti-abortion-pre-roe/.

decision (Figure 123). Demonstrators totaling approximately 20,000 gathered in front of the US Supreme Court Building and on the US Capitol steps.[152] By January 1975, the second anniversary of the *Roe* decision, protestors returned in larger numbers. Washington, DC, police estimated a crowd of 25,000, and March for Life organizers stated that the total was closer to 50,000. The demonstrators gathered on the west Capitol grounds.[153]

In 1976, March for Life organizers moved the event to the Ellipse (and thus, to this report's study area), from which demonstrators marched to the Capitol (Figure 124). District police estimated that 50,000 demonstrators attended the event. For the 1977 march, the Washington, DC, police estimated 40,000 attendees, but organizers counted closer to 100,000.[154] In 1985, 1987, and 1988, then-president Ronald Reagan spoke to the crowds on the Ellipse remotely from the Oval Office.[155] President George H. W. Bush addressed the March in 1989 and again in 1991.[156] By the late 1990s, the March for Life moved to the National Mall. Gathering points on the Mall varied from the Washington Monument Grounds to farther east near 10th Street as well as near 7th Street. From these points, the group marched down Constitution Avenue past the Capitol to the US Supreme Court.

The March for Life has continued as an annual demonstration into the twenty-first century. After the Supreme Court overturned *Roe* in the *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* decision in 2022, organizers continued the protest to convince states to pass laws prohibiting abortion. The March for Life organization reports that its annual demonstration on the National Mall is the largest human rights demonstration in the world and attracts tens to hundreds of thousands of participants from across the country each year.[157]

152 Burton, "The March for Life, America's biggest anti-abortion rally, explained."
153 Richard M. Cohen and Kenneth Bredemeier, "Thousands Protest Abortion Decision," *Washington Post*, January 23, 1975.
154 B. D. Colen, "40,000 March in Abortion Protest: 40,000 Stage Abortion Protest," *Washington Post*, January 23, 1977.
155 "Remarks to Participants in the March for Life Rally," January 22, 1988, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, accessed April 17, 2024, available at https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/archives/speech/remarks-participants-march-life-rally-1.
156 "Remarks to Participants in the March for Life Rally," January 23, 1989, The American Presidency Project, accessed April 17, 2024, available at https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/remarks-participants-the-march-for-life-rally-1. President George W. Bush spoke remotely via telephone in 2003. In 2008 and 2009, Pope Benedict XVI sent messages to be read to the crowds, and, in 2014, Pope Francis tweeted his support and blessing. Vice President Mike Pence became the highest ranking government official ever to address the march in person in 2017. In 2020, President Donald Trump became the first sitting president to address the march in person.
157 March for Life, *Annual Report (2017–2018)*, 7, accessed January 17, 2024, https://marchforlife.org/annual-reports/.

Figure 123. Founder and pro-life activist Nellie Gray addresses the demonstrators at the March for Life Rally on the Ellipse, ca. 1985 (courtesy of the March for Life Education and Defense Fund. All rights reserved).

Figure 124. Anti-abortion demonstrators gathered on the Ellipse for a rally before the annual March for Life, January 1996. Photograph by Terry Adams (National Capital Region, Communications & Community Engagement, Photo 96002).

EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT MARCH (1978)

In the decades after the Woman Suffrage Procession, women continued to play a principal role in the Mall's development as a protest space. On July 9, 1978, tens of thousands of women, along with children and men, gathered on the Mall to support ratification of the ERA, a proposed amendment to the US Constitution, written by Alice Paul and Crystal Eastman of the NWP in 1923, that would guarantee legal gender equality for women and men.

Since its formal introduction, the ERA had garnered bipartisan support as recently as the early 1970s, and both houses of Congress approved the amendment in 1972. The legislation approving the amendment included a seven-year ratification deadline. The amendment quickly garnered approval from a majority of states but

by 1978 had not yet received the three-fourths required for ratification. Despite earlier broad support, the amendment struggled for survival under growing conservative opposition by 1978.[158]

Indeed, the ERA campaign became entangled in a number of culture wars issues in the 1970s.[159] Opponents, represented formally by the Stop ERA campaign, argued that, at best, the amendment was redundant with protections already guaranteed under the Constitution. Further, they warned that the amendment would be dangerous to the traditional family and would compromise special legal protections afforded to women. Historian Andrew Hartman summarizes the Stop ERA campaign's defining parameters: "if men and women were legal equals, fathers had no obligation to provide for mothers."[160] Critics also warned that the ERA would indirectly initiate legal protections for LGBTQ+ persons.[161] Finally, the Stop ERA campaign charged that the amendment would supersede any anti-abortion state laws left intact after *Roe v. Wade*, essentially enshrining abortion rights in the Constitution. The push to approve the ERA at the state level occurred at roughly the same time abortion politics intensified after the *Roe* decision.[162] Proponents of the amendment countered that the ERA text did not include any of these issues. Alice Paul considered such issues a distraction from the ERA fight and lamented that they ultimately thwarted her cause.[163]

With opposition mounting, ERA supporters went to the Mall in July 1978 to pressure Congress to extend the deadline. They gathered on the Mall, where a number of prominent speakers, including Gloria Steinem, addressed the group. The demonstrators marched down Constitution Avenue to the Capitol.

158 Henry Kokkeler, "The 1978 Equal Rights Amendment March," Boundary Stones, WETA, April 12, 2022, accessed January 2, 2024, https://boundarystones.weta.org/2022/04/13/1978-equal-rights-amendment-march.

159 "Culture wars" is the broadly accepted term used by historians and sociologists to describe the heated political debates over issues like abortion, gay rights, civil rights, separation of church and state, and feminism after the 1960s and continuing into the twenty-first century.

160 Andrew Hartman, *A War for the Soul of America: A History of the Culture Wars* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 89.

161 James Davidson Hunter, *Culture Wars: The Struggle to Define America* (New York: Basic Books, 1991), 183.

162 Amélie Ribieras, "Abortion and Phyllis Schlafly's Pro-life Contribution to the Culture Wars from the 1970s to the 1990s," in "Mapping the Landscapes of Abortion, Birth Control, and Power in the United States: Body Politics since the 1960s," eds. Christen Bryson, Anne Légier, and Amélie Ribieras, *La Revue de Recherche en Civilisation Américaine* 8 (2018): 1–3.

163 Alice Paul, interview with Amelia R. Fry, Conversations with Alice Paul: Woman Suffrage and the Equal Rights Amendment, Suffragists Oral History Project, Online Archive of California, accessed May 15, 2024, available at https://oac.cdlib.org/view?docId=kt6f59n89c&brand=oac4&doc.view=entire_text; J. D. Zahniser and Amelia R. Fry, *Alice Paul: Claiming Power* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 322–23.

The *Washington Post* declared it the "largest parade for feminism in history."[164] Demonstrators held banners and shouted rallying cries like "we're here to stay, and ERA won't go away" and "ERA now!"[165] Many marchers dressed in all white in a gesture to the Woman Suffrage Procession marchers. US Park Police estimated that the crowd numbered 90,000 to 100,000, but other police estimates were 40,000 to 55,000.[166] The crowd was largely White. Gloria Ridley, a Black nursing teacher at the University of the District of Columbia, was among those gathered that day and noticed the lack of racial diversity. Although it left an impression on her, she was not discouraged from the greater cause. Meanwhile, 200 ERA opponents held a prayer meeting at the Lincoln Memorial to protest the pro-ERA demonstration.[167]

The Stop ERA campaign, effectively harnessing culture wars issues to its advantage, ultimately killed momentum toward the amendment's passage. Congress granted an extension to 1982, but a three-fourths majority of states still did not approve ratification of the amendment.

FIRST AND SECOND TRACTORCADE (1978–79)

The National Mall's use as a protest space further expanded to other groups in the late 1970s. In 1978 and 1979, American farmers executed two unique demonstrations on the Mall to protest federal agricultural policies. The protests derived from what has been termed the American Agricultural Movement (AAM), which reached its peak of influence in the late 1970s. The AAM stemmed from farmers' reaction to falling farm prices in 1976 and 1977, after usually high profits earlier in the decade.

In 1971, the secretary of agriculture revised farm policies that supported farmers who did not plant a certain percentage of land, instead requiring them to plant "fence row to fence row" to increase production. At the time, new foreign markets had been established, high inflation increased land values, and low interest rates encouraged farmers to increase their land holdings and purchase new equipment. By the late 1970s, high interest rates, a decline in foreign markets, and a trade embargo on the Soviet Union decreased farm income.[168] The Food and Agriculture

164 James Lardner and Neil Henry, "Over 40,000 ERA Backers March," *Washington Post*, July 10, 1978.
165 Karen De Witt, "100,000 Join March for Extension of Rights Amendment Deadline," *New York Times*, July 10, 1978; "Thousands March for ERA," *Baltimore Sun*, July 10, 1978; James Lardner and Neil Henry, "Over 40,000 ERA Backers March," *Washington Post*, July 10, 1978.
166 James Lardner and Neil Henry, "Over 40,000 ERA Backers March," *Washington Post*, July 10, 1978.
167 Rick MacArthur and Adrienne Washington, "Like the Suffragettes of 1913, They Came Here by the Thousands," *Evening Star*, July 10, 1978.
168 "1979 Tractorcade, Protest Pin," National Museum of American History,

Act of 1977, passed by Congress and signed by President Jimmy Carter, further dropped commodity prices to a level lower than the cost of production.[169]

In summer 1977, wheat and cattle farmers from Oklahoma, Colorado, New Mexico, Texas, and Kansas commiserated over the issues they faced. Burdened with low prices and heavy debts, farmers organized AAM to improve their economic condition. On September 22, 1977, 2,000 farmers drove their tractors and trucks around an auditorium in Pueblo, Colorado, where a speech by Secretary of Agriculture Robert Bergland was underway. Soon, similar demonstrations, what the AAM farmers called Tractorcades, emerged around the nation. Hundreds of farmers drove tractors to President Carter's hometown in Plains, Georgia, and to Amarillo, Texas. They drove their tractors to the Georgia state capitol in Atlanta.[170]

Nearly 3,000 farmers from the West and Midwest brought the Tractorcade into Washington, DC, on January 18, 1978, to pressure Congress and the Carter administration for legislation to raise farm prices. They drove their tractors into the city every day, parked on and near the National Mall, and gathered for rallies at sites like the Washington Monument (Figure 125 and Figure 126). The farmers stored their tractors at a local stadium between protests.[171] The tractors clogged streets on their way into the city, as they could only achieve speeds of up to 15 miles per hour.[172] The demonstration applied the tactic of inconvenience as protest. Like the organizers of the March on Washington campaign in 1941 and the Poor People's Campaign in 1968, the Tractorcade organizers determined that disruption would be more effective than the peaceful assemblies like the 1963 March on Washington and the many other marches it inspired that emphasized visibility.

The farmers remained in Washington from January through April, although only roughly one third of the original cohort stayed. Despite traffic disruptions, however, the protest remained non-violent, and members of Congress regularly

Smithsonian Institution, accessed June 30, 2023, https://americanhistory.si.edu/collections/search/object/nmah_1378177.

169 "1979 Tractorcade, Protest Pin," National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, accessed June 30, 2023, https://americanhistory.si.edu/collections/search/object/nmah_1378177.

170 Gilbert C. Fite, "American Agricultural Movement," *Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture*, accessed June 30, 2023, https://www.okhistory.org/publications/enc/entry?entry=AM003.

171 William P. Browne and John Dinse, "The American Agriculture Movement, 1977–79," *Great Plains Quarterly* 5 (Fall 1985): 227.

172 Rick Perlstein, *Reaganland: American's Right Turn, 1976–1980* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2021), 429; Blaine Harden and Ted Gup, "The Farmers—and Their Tractors—Are Coming Again," *Washington Post*, February 2, 1979.

Figure 125. As part of what was termed the Tractorcade, farmers parked tractors on the National Mall in protest of federal agricultural policies, January 1978 (American University, Patrick Frazier Political and Social Movements Collection).

Figure 126. US farmers lead a demonstration on the Washington Monument Grounds during the Tractorcade demonstration, January 1978 (American University, Patrick Frazier Political and Social Movements Collection).

Figure 127. During the second Tractorcade, farmers lit tractors on fire on the Mall, February 1979 (American University, Patrick Frazier Political and Social Movements Collection).

received AAM representatives.[173] Secretary Bergland maintained that the farmers' demonstration would have no impact on federal policy but welcomed the farmers back to Washington. Carter's administration raised federal farm subsidies, and net farm income increased $5 billion from 1978 to 1979. However, AAM farmers still argued that the actions were not sufficient and demanded that increases in farm prices be cemented in federal legislation.[174]

After failing to achieve their desired results, farmers organized a second, larger Tractorcade in early 1979. One Georgia farmer told the *Washington Post*, "Folks are three times as determined this year as last 'cause we're twice as deep in debt."[175] On February 5, approximately 560 tractors arrived in Washington and parked and barricaded on the Mall. The second Tractorcade caused more agitation among police and legislators than had the first, as the protestors would not return their tractors to a local stadium as they had during the previous year's demonstration. Instead, the demonstrators barricaded their tractors, trailers, and pickup trucks at 3rd Street and Constitution Avenue.[176] The second Tractorcade also featured more dramatic antics, in some cases resulting in damage to the National Mall. The *Washington Post* reported a variety of "street theater scenes" on the Mall. The farmers burned a tractor, let the air out of all four tires of police officer's car, and drove three tractors into the Capitol Reflecting Pool on Union Square (Figure 127).[177] The tractor tires damaged sod on the Mall lawn.[178]

On February 6, a caravan of 135 tractors left their National Mall encampment and paraded around the White House to rally at the Department of Agriculture building at 14th Street and Independence Avenue. Although they initially aimed for a larger caravan, the farmers negotiated with District police for a smaller cohort of tractors.[179] By February 10, police had arrested 23 demonstrators.[180] Although residents and members of Congress complained about the farmers'

173 Browne and Dinse, "The American Agriculture Movement, 1977–79," 225.
174 Gay Cook, "A Fat Crop Year, But Tractorcade Is Coming Back," *Washington Post*, December 14, 1978.
175 Blaine Harden and Ted Gup, "The Farmers—and Their Tractors—Are Coming Again," *Washington Post*, February 2, 1979.
176 Browne and Dinse, "The American Agriculture Movement, 1977–79," 227; Douglas B. Feaver, "Police Compromise: Tractors Disrupt Some Traffic After Agreement Allows Parade, *Washington Post*, February 7, 1979.
177 Feaver, "Police Compromise: Tractors Disrupt Some Traffic After Agreement Allows Parade."
178 Blaine Harden and J. Regan Kerney, "Mall Damage Estimated at $2 Million: Farm Tractors Chew Up Sod on Mall," *Washington Post*, February 10, 1979.
179 Feaver, "Police Compromise: Tractors Disrupt Some Traffic After Agreement Allows Parade."
180 Harden and Kerney, "Mall Damage Estimated at $2 Million: Farm Tractors Chew Up Sod on Mall."

occupation of the Mall and traffic disruption, some became more sympathetic after a blizzard hit Washington on President's Day and farmers helped the city by plowing streets and rescuing stranded residents.[181] Only a few days into the protest, the US Park Police counted damages costing $2 million. Mall "kiosks were overturned, wooden benches damaged, and even a young tree knocked down, apparently by a tractor," the *Washington Post* reported. Damage to the Mall lawn required re-sodding. The farmers accused police of purposefully inflating the cost of damages.[182] The second Tractorcade ended after approximately three weeks, after its central leadership splintered over strategy decisions. Largely in response to the protests, Congress passed some measures to help farmers, but the AAM faded in influence.[183]

By 1982, the *Washington Post* reported that the AAM's actions did not result in improved conditions. "The Tractorcade got them some attention but it didn't change things," *Post* reporter Ward Sinclair wrote.[184] Prices were still low, and interest rates and the cost of fuel were still high.[185]

ANTI-NUCLEAR RALLY (1979)

The 1970s also featured environmental advocates seizing on the National Mall's enhanced status as a protest space. On May 6, 1979, around 65,000 protesters called for an end to US dependence on nuclear energy. Organizers planned the event in response to the Three Mile Island accident, a partial meltdown of the Three Mile Island Unit 2 nuclear reactor on the Susquehanna River in Londonderry Township, Pennsylvania, near Harrisburg.[186]

Hoisting banners and chanting refrains like "no nukes, no nukes" and "no more Harrisburgs," the demonstrators crowded the Ellipse. Photographs show protesters surrounding a giant inflatable, undefined figure (Figure 128). Prominent environmental advocates, including California governor Jerry Brown, consumer advocate Ralph Nader, and actor Jane Fonda, spoke at the protest.[187] The

181 "Tractorcade Occupies the Mall," *Histories of the National Mall*, accessed June 30, 2023, https://mallhistory.org/items/show/242.
182 Harden and Kerney, "Mall Damage Estimated at $2 Million: Farm Tractors Chew Up Sod on Mall."
183 Gilbert C. Fite, "American Agricultural Movement," *Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture*, accessed June 30, 2023, https://www.okhistory.org/publications/enc/entry?entry=AM003.
184 Ward Sinclair, "Tractorcade Protest a Memory But Farmers' Anger Lingers On," *Washington Post*, January 4, 1982.
185 Sinclair, "Tractorcade Protest a Memory But Farmers' Anger Lingers On."
186 Paul W. Valentine, Karlyn Barker, and Thomas Morgan, "The Protesters," *Washington Post*, May 7, 1979.
187 Paul W. Valentine, Karlyn Barker, and Thomas Morgan, "The Protesters," *Washington Post*, May 7, 1979.

Washington Post noted that the protest "marked the largest national protest to date by the growing anti-nuclear movement."[188]

MARCH FOR LESBIAN AND GAY RIGHTS (1979 AND 1987)

The LGBTQ+ community was among those social movements that claimed the Mall as a protest space. Marches occurred throughout the summer of 1979 to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the Stonewall riots, a landmark event in the LGBTQ+ movement's development that occurred after a police raid of the Greenwich Village's Stonewall Inn on June 28, 1969. The 1979 marches that summer also expressed anger at the murder of openly gay San Francisco politician Harvey Milk the prior autumn. Although the assassination of Milk was not related to his sexual orientation, the LGBTQ+ community mourned the loss of such an important public figure in their cause.[189]

On October 14, 1979, approximately 25,000 LGBTQ+ persons marched from the Capitol, down Pennsylvania Avenue, and concluded with a rally at the Washington Monument Grounds (Figure 129). Organizers intended for the event, known as the National March for Lesbian and Gay Rights, to pressure Congress to amend the 1964 Civil Rights Act to protect lesbian and gay people from discrimination in employment, the military, and legal proceedings. The march corresponded with

Figure 128. View of anti-nuclear demonstration on the Ellipse, May 6, 1979, looking south toward the Washington Monument (American University, Patrick Frazier Political and Social Movements Collection).

Representative Ted Weiss of New York introducing a separate bill in Congress that advanced similar aims. Weiss's bill prohibited denying use of public facilities and discrimination in employment and housing because of one's sexual orientation.[190]

188 Valentine, Barker, and Morgan, "The Protesters."
189 "Gays Mark Riot That Sparked Movement," *Washington Post*, June 25, 1979.
190 House Resolution 2074, Civil Rights Amendments Act of 1979, 96th Congress.

The *Washington Post* described the demonstration as the "first national gay rights march."[191] Although marches had occurred in other cities that year, the March for Lesbian and Gay Rights's occurrence in Washington presumably elevated it to national importance. One attendee, Claudia Collins, commented, "We're finally being recognized as people." Although no violence occurred, some observers heckled the marchers. DC mayor Marion Barry was originally scheduled to speak at the march but sent a liaison in his place. Barry declared October 10–17 as Gay Rights Awareness Week.[192]

Activists returned to the National Mall for the Second March for Lesbian and Gay Rights on October 11, 1987. By the 1980s, the legacy of the social movements of the 1960s and 1970s was firmly established on the National Mall. The Mall had become the place Americans sought to voice their opinions on a range of topics. The second march was organized in response to the AIDS crisis, the Reagan administration's late and limited response to the crisis, and the Supreme Court decision *Bowers v. Hardwick* that upheld the illegality of sodomy between two consenting men in the privacy of a home.[193] The march advocated for passage of a comprehensive lesbian and gay rights bill, legal recognition of lesbian and gay relationships, an end to discrimination against people with AIDS or those who tested positive for the virus, increased federal funding for AIDS research, repeal of all laws that considered sodomy between consenting adults a crime, and signing an executive order to ban discrimination against lesbian and gay people in the federal government.[194]

AIDS MEMORIAL QUILT (1987–96)

Organizers planned other events to correspond with the Second March for Lesbian and Gay Rights in October 1987. On October 11, the same day as the march, the NAMES Project, an organization founded by AIDS and LGBTQ+ rights activist Cleve Jones, debuted a quilt composed of 1,920 individual 3' x 6' fabric panels that contained the names of individuals who had died of AIDS. Friends and relatives of AIDS victims submitted names to Jones and a team of roughly 60 volunteers, who then assembled the quilt in a San Francisco factory.[195]

191 Courtland Milloy and Loretta Tofani, "25,000 Attend Gay Rights Rally At the Monument," *Washington Post*, October 15, 1979.

192 "Gay Rights Marchers Gather Parade, Rally Scheduled for Today," *Washington Post*, October 14, 1979.

193 Amin Ghaziani, *The Dividends of Dissent: How Conflict and Culture Work in Lesbian and Gay Marches on Washington* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 162.

194 Karlyn Barker and Linda Wheeler, "Hundreds of Thousands March for Gay Rights; People From Across U.S. Converge on Mall," *Washington Post*, October 12, 1987.

195 Ghaziani, *The Dividends of Dissent*, 119; Sandra G. Boodman, "A Somber Crowd Dedicates Quilt to AIDS Victims," *Washington Post*, October 12, 1987.

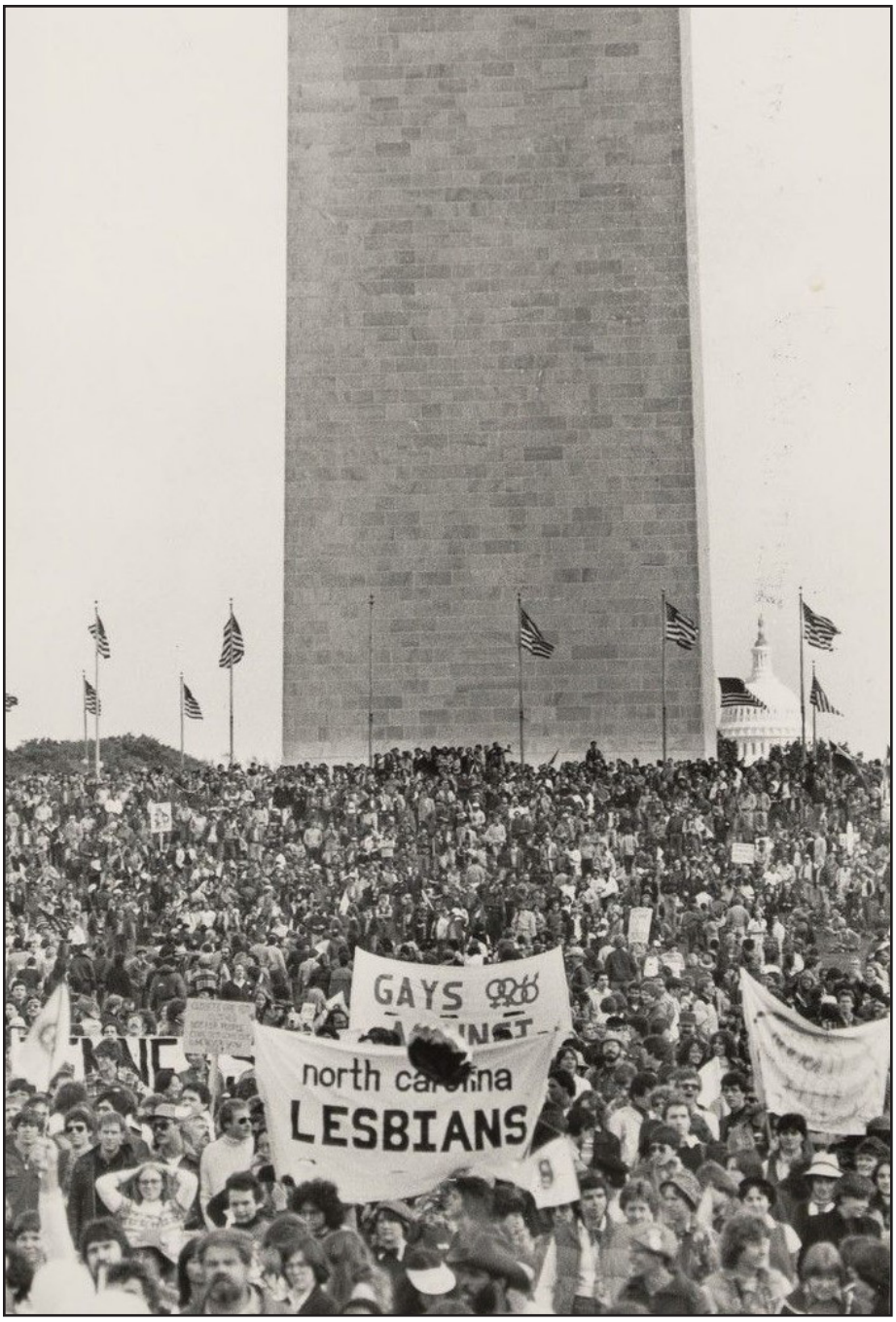

Figure 129. Demonstrators taking part in the National March for Lesbian and Gay Rights are shown on the Washington Monument Grounds, October 1979 (Harvard University, Schlesinger Library).

The quilt extended on the National Mall from 7th to 9th Streets NW–SW (Figure 130).

Approximately 1,500 people attended a sunrise ceremony initiating the quilt's unveiling. According to the *Washington Post*, "Except for the sounds of weeping, the crowd was hushed" during the event.[196] The *Post* noted that many of those who saw the quilt that day were gay men who wore lavender triangles on their clothes

196 Sandra G. Boodman, "A Somber Crowd Dedicates Quilt to AIDS Victims," *Washington Post*, October 12, 1987.

as a reference to the badges Nazis forced homosexual persons to wear in the 1930s and 1940s. Additionally, the newspaper observed, visitors to the quilt included "suburban couples pushing strollers, joggers, tourists and a noticeable contingent of conservatively dressed parents whose children have died of AIDS."[197] "The quilt was a breathtaking memorial of the loss of human life," writes sociologist Amin Ghaziani.[198]

Cleve Jones and the NAMES Project brought the quilt back to the Mall the following year. In the year since its debut, the quilt had achieved international recognition and Jones's team of volunteers expanded and added significantly more panels—totaling 8,288. At the time of its second unveiling in October 1988, the quilt represented all 50 states and 12 countries and had been expanded to cover the equivalent of seven football fields. It had also been displayed in New York, San Francisco, Baltimore, and Kansas City. The second quilt unveiling was located on the Ellipse. As in 1987, the quilt debuted during a sunrise service. In the evening, NAMES Project volunteers folded the quilt, and parents of children who had died from AIDS participated in a candlelight walk past the White House and to the Lincoln Memorial for a memorial service.[199]

The ever-growing quilt was subsequently displayed in 1989 at the Ellipse, in 1992 on the Washington Monument Grounds, and 1996 on the National Mall from 3rd

Figure 130. The NAMES Project debuted their AIDS quilt in 1987, commemorating the lives lost to AIDS. Project volunteers spread the quilt out across the National Mall. In the subsequent decade, the quilt was expanded several times (Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division).

197 Boodman, "A Somber Crowd Dedicates Quilt to AIDS Victims."
198 Ghaziani, *The Dividends of Dissent*, 119.
199 Joe Brown, "The Quilt. A Battle Flag In the War On AIDS," *Washington Post*, October 2, 1988; Sandra G. Boodman, "AIDS Quilt, Larger Than Last Year, Returns to Mall," *Washington Post*, October 7, 1988.

to 14th Streets NW–SW. When displayed for the final time in October 1996, the quilt included 40,000 panels.[200]

MILLION MAN MARCH (1995)

On October 16, 1995, African American leaders convened a rally (not a march, despite the event's name) of African American men on the National Mall. Minister Louis Farrakhan, leader of the Nation of Islam, called for a gathering on the Mall that would be a "holy day of atonement and reconciliation" for African American men.[201] Minister Farrakhan aimed for the rally to emphasize the condition of Black men in American society, encourage higher African American voter turnout and political participation, and encourage Black men to reflect on their relationships with their families, churches, and communities.[202] The principal organizing group was the Million Man March Organizing Committee, formed by the National African American Leadership Summit that included the Nation of Islam, civil rights organizations, and local chapters of the NAACP (although not the national NAACP).

The Million Man March featured a program of prayers and speakers from a stage built on the west Capitol grounds. The rally began at 5:00 am with prayer services followed by African drumming, an ecumenical service, and a series of speakers that included civil rights icon Rosa Parks and DC mayor Marion Barry.[203] Photographs show that the crowd filled the west Capitol grounds, Union Square, and much of the National Mall from 3rd Street to the Washington Monument Grounds and spilled over to Pennsylvania and Maryland Avenues (Figure 131). The event also included 22 tables at which attendees could register to vote.[204] A map published in the *Washington Times* captured the layout of medical stations, vendors, and other amenities.

As the event name suggested, the organizers aimed to draw one million marchers. Event organizers were aware that, as the National Mall had developed into a space of protest over the twentieth century, journalists typically used turnout as a key marker for an event's success.[205] The National Park Service estimated that 400,000 participants attended the Million Man March. The *Washington Afro-American*

200 "History," National AIDS Memorial, accessed July 6, 2023, https://www.aidsmemorial.org/quilt-history.
201 "The Million Man March: Questions and Answers About Today's Event," *Washington Post*, October 16, 1995.
202 "The Million Man March: Questions and Answers About Today's Event."
203 "The Million Man March: Questions and Answers About Today's Event"; Janice Frink Brown, "Over 150,000 Black registered to vote at Million Man March," *Washington Afro-American*, October 21, 1995.
204 Janice Frink Brown, "Over 150,000 Black registered to vote at Million Man March," *Washington Afro-American*, October 21, 1995.
205 Barber, *Marching on Washington*, 226.

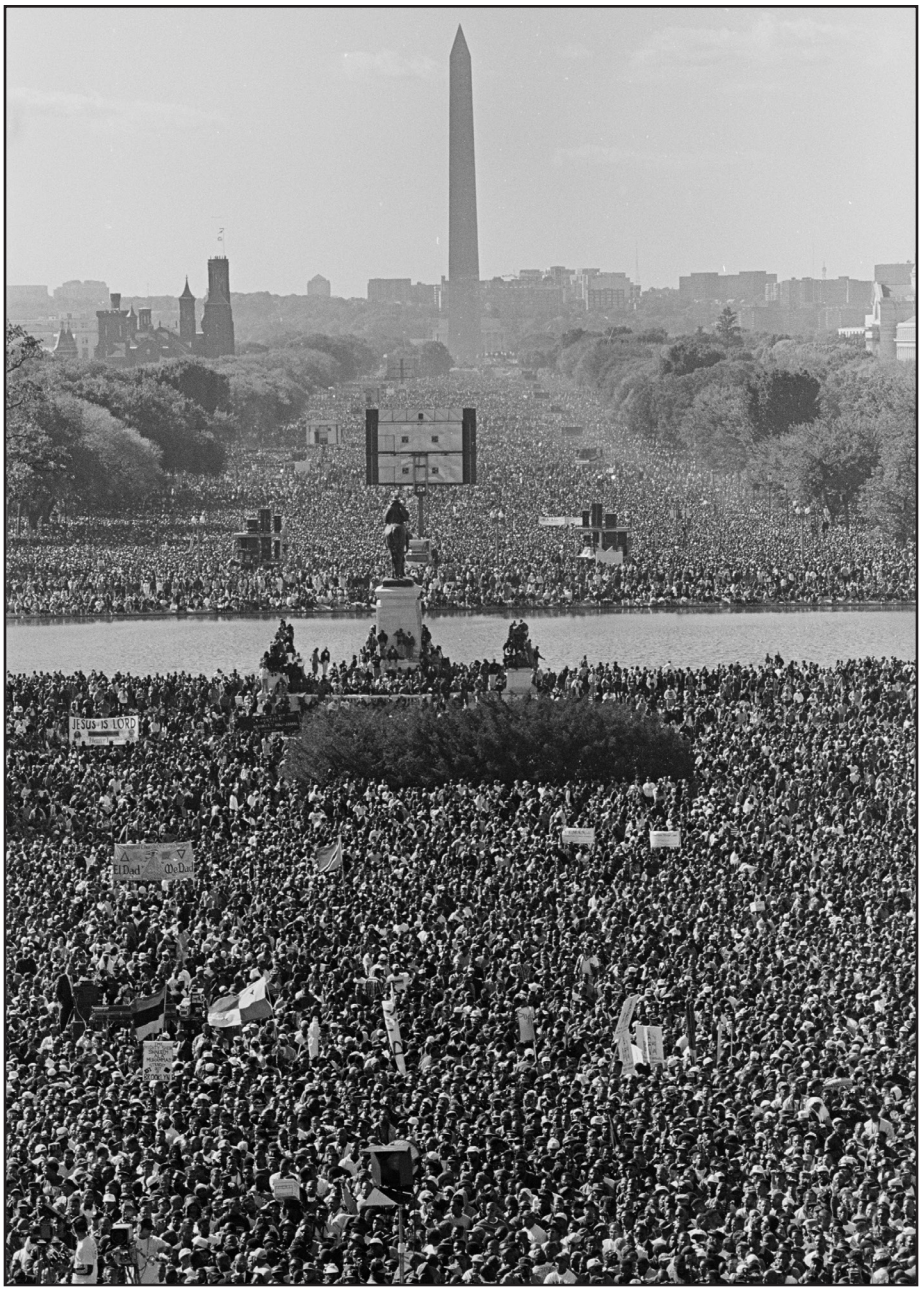

Figure 131. Birds-eye view of Million Man March, October 16, 1995. Looking west from Capitol. Photograph by Maureen Keating (Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division).

counted 1.5 million attendees. Amid controversy over their attendance count, NPS hired an independent study group from Boston University that counted 870,000 attendees. The *Washington Afro-American* described the Million Man March as "the largest First Amendment and civil rights demonstration in U.S. history."[206]

A week after the Million Man March, Farrakhan announced that over 150,000 African Americans registered to vote at the rally.[207] Sociologist Michael Eric Dyson

206 James Wright, "New count due on MMM," *Washington Afro-American*, October 28, 1995.

207 Janice Frink Brown, "Over 150,000 Black registered to vote at Million Man

describes the event as a "dramatic testament to the magnitude of black male hunger for racial rescue and moral requirement."[208] Journalist Hamil R. Harris wrote one year later that the Million Man March organizers and participants were a "fragile coalition" and charged that they did not seize the opportunity to use the march as a foundation for change. Harris added, however, that such a mass demonstration need not be viewed only in terms of political success. Instead, the profound impact it had on attendees and television viewers as a powerful demonstration of African American solidarity mattered more.[209] Journalist Robert E. Pierre similarly wrote in 1996 that the march's true legacy was a "spiritual awakening" among Black men.[210]

WOMEN'S MARCH ON WASHINGTON (2017)

Less than a full day after President Donald Trump took office, approximately 500,000 protestors staged a demonstration against his administration on the National Mall.[211] The January 21, 2017, event was part of a worldwide day of protest known as the Women's March and featured 3.3–4.6 million marchers in US cities like Chicago, New York, Los Angeles, and Seattle. Political scientists determined the Women's March was the largest single day of protest in US history.[212]

A group of women in disparate locations across the United States organized the protest following Trump's election over Democratic rival Hillary Clinton in November 2016. The organizers objected to the incoming president's misogynistic rhetoric and his positions and policy plans regarding abortion rights, affordable health care, equal pay, and action on climate change. The organizers of the DC march named it the Women's March on Washington in reference to the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom.[213]

March," *Washington Afro-American*, October 21, 1995.

208 Michael Eric Dyson, "The Legacy of the Million Man March," *Washington Post*, October 13, 1996.

209 Hamil R. Harris, "A Look At . . . The Legacy of the Million Man March," *Washington Post*, October 13, 1996.

210 Robert E. Pierre, "Assessing the Million Man March," *Washington Post*, October 11, 1996.

211 Ellen McCarthy, Lavanya Ramanathan, and Maura Judkis, "Many find solidarity -- and catharsis -- at the Women's March on Washington," *Washington Post*, January 22, 2017.

212 "Matt Broomfield, Women's March against Donald Trump is the largest day of protests in US history, say political scientists," *Independent*, January 23, 2017.

213 "The new March on Washington," *Washington Post*, January 22, 2017; Perry Stein, Steve Hendrix, and Abigail Hauslohner, "Voices resonate for rights—and against Trump—all over the world," *Washington Post*, January 22, 2017.

The organizers requested a permit for 200,000 demonstrators, but around 500,000 arrived on the day of the event.[214] The massive turnout dwarfed the size of the crowd gathered for the inauguration. Marchers, who spanned gender, race, and age, dominated the historic Mall (3rd Street to 14th Street NW–SW), the Washington Monument Grounds, West Potomac Park fronting the Lincoln Memorial, and the Ellipse (Figure 132). The demonstrators also filled the west Capitol grounds, Union Square, and Pennsylvania Avenue between the White House and Capitol. Speakers at the event included a range of actors, musicians, politicians, and activists.[215]

The Women's March, however, did not necessarily represent all women. Some women, including both conservatives and liberals, criticized the organizers' explicit endorsement of abortion rights as potentially alienating to women who opposed abortion but might otherwise support the march's platform. As journalist Emma Green wrote in *The Atlantic*, "Although a number of self-described pro-life feminist groups signed up to be sponsors and march alongside the original Women's March, they were removed from the march's official list of supporters because of their anti-abortion views."[216]

Figure 132. During the Women's March on Washington, approximately 500,000 demonstrators protested President Donald Trump and his administration the day after his inauguration. Protestors are shown here on the Ellipse, January 21, 2017 (available through Creative Commons at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Women%27s_March_White_House_2017b.jpg).

214 Stein, Hendrix, and Hauslohner, "Voices resonate for rights—and against Trump—all over the world."
215 Claire Landsbaum, "Here's the Official List of Speakers for the Women's March on Washington," *New York Magazine*, January 18, 2017.
216 Emma Green, "Women Are Not a Monolith," *The Atlantic*, January 19, 2019.

PHYSICAL INSTALLATIONS (2010S–2020S)

Beyond its impact in drawing attention to the AIDS epidemic, the AIDS quilt's other legacy was inspiring physical installations on the National Mall as an act of political demonstration. Although mass demonstration populated with people remained the preferred format, a few notable political art installations demonstrated the power of using the Mall's vast central lawn as a giant canvas.

On June 8–10, 2013, a political action group known as the Art of Revolution placed one million handcrafted figures designed to resemble bones. The organizers intended the event, titled "One Million Bones," to be a call to action against genocide in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burma, Somalia, Syria, Sudan, and South Sudan. Students, educators, artists, and volunteers across the United States created the bones.[217]

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, in August 2020, a group called Live Events Coalition placed 48 empty tables on the National Mall to highlight the 12 million workers, including caterers, engineers, and planners, they estimated the pandemic had affected to that point. The pandemic had an overwhelmingly negative impact on many businesses across the country, particularly businesses dependent on people gathering. Titled the "Empty Event," the installation consisted of tables arranged to form a large "12" on the Mall near 12th Street NW. Live Events Coalition intended the physical demonstration to pressure Congress to provide federal support to their industry. Other installations also highlighted the impact of COVID-19. In September 2021, more than 600,000 white flags filled the Mall to symbolize the lives lost to the pandemic. Suzanne Brennan Firstenberg, a Washington, DC, social practice artist designed the exhibition, titled "In America: Remember."

BLACK LIVES MATTER DEMONSTRATIONS (2020)

Also in summer 2020, a series of demonstrations occurred throughout Washington, DC, including the National Mall, in response to the Minneapolis police killing of George Floyd. The protests occurred primarily in June and August as part of a national wave of demonstrations both against the killing of Floyd and in support of the Black Lives Matter movement. The movement emerged in 2013 after the acquittal of George Zimmerman in the 2012 death of Trayvon Martin, an African American teenager in Florida.[218] According to Black Lives Matter's official

217 Lonnae O'Neal Parker, "'Million Bones' will cover the Mall to raise genocide awareness," *Washington Post*, June 8, 2013.

218 "A Brief History of Civil Rights in the United States: The Black Lives Matter Movement," Vernon E. Jordan Law Library, Howard University, accessed April 10, 2024, https://library.law.howard.edu/civilrightshistory/BLM.

website, the movement's mission "is to eradicate white supremacy and build local power to intervene in violence inflicted on Black communities by the state and vigilantes. By combating and countering acts of violence, creating space for Black imagination and innovation, and centering Black joy, we are winning immediate improvements in our lives."[219]

Black Lives Matter protests spread across the country in early June 2020 after the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis. Floyd, an unarmed Black man, died after a White police officer knelt on his neck for nearly nine minutes on May 25, 2020, in Minneapolis.[220]

On June 6, tens of thousands of people demonstrated in Washington to support the Black Lives Matter movement and protest racism, police violence, and the killing of George Floyd. The demonstrators gathered in spaces throughout the city, including the Chinatown area and the U Street area, a longtime hub of African American culture in the city. Closer to the monumental core, they gathered at Lafayette Square, 16th Street NW north of the White House, and Pennsylvania Avenue NW. On the Mall, the protestors assembled at the Lincoln Memorial and along the Reflecting Pool. A crowd near the National Museum of African American History and Culture prayed for justice in the United States.[221] Although the demonstrations were largely peaceful, some of the protestors vandalized spaces on the National Mall. These acts of vandalism included graffiti on the Lincoln Memorial steps and on the World War II Memorial.[222]

A follow-up protest event that August named the Commitment March occurred at the Lincoln Memorial. The demonstration called for an overhaul of the country's criminal justice system and pushed for racial equality. Speakers included Martin Luther King III, who addressed the crowd from the same steps his father did 57 years earlier. John Lewis, a congressman from Georgia and the last surviving speaker from the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, and family members of Black Americans killed by police or in racially charged incidents also spoke.[223]

219 "About," Black Lives Matter, accessed April 10, 2024, https://blacklivesmatter.com/about/.
220 "Fact check: Lincoln Memorial steps vandalized during George Floyd protests," *Reuters*, June 9, 2020.
221 NBC Washington Staff, "Peaceful Demonstrators Flood DC to Call for Racial Justice," *NBC Washington*, June 6, 2024, accessed April 10, 2024, https://www.nbcwashington.com/news/local/live-updates-day-of-demonstrations-underway-in-dc/2324841/.
222 "Fact check: Lincoln Memorial steps vandalized during George Floyd protests," *Reuters*, June 9, 2020.
223 Brakkton Booker, "Thousands Gather For March On Washington To Demand Police Reform And Racial Equality," *NPR*, August 28, 2020.

SAVE AMERICA RALLY AND JANUARY 6TH CAPITOL ATTACK (2021)

A recent political demonstration that began on the National Mall on January 6, 2021, led to an attack on the US Capitol. The demonstration, organized by Women for America First (WFAF) and held on the Ellipse, was in response to the outcome of the 2020 presidential election. On November 3, 2020, former Vice President Joe Biden defeated then-President Donald Trump in the presidential election. President Trump refused to concede the election, asserting that he had won and that there was widespread election fraud. From November 2020 through January 2021, demonstrations occurred in multiple US cities related to the results of the presidential election.[224]

The January 6 demonstration, titled "Save America," coincided with Congress's procedural role in certifying the election and included a speech by President Trump. Several times during his speech, President Trump called for the crowd to march to the Capitol at the conclusion of the demonstration.[225]

Following Trump's speech, thousands of rally attendees, some of whom were armed, marched east down the National Mall to the Capitol and breached security to enter the building as Congress began the electoral vote count. Photographs suggest the crowd was largely male and White. The rioters shattered windows, vandalized and looted the Capitol interior, and ransacked congressional offices. Capitol and District police made multiple arrests, and the US House of Representatives The landscape's redesign in the 1930s greatly encouraged this gradual shift toward use of the National Mall for political purposes. impeached Donald Trump for his role in encouraging the insurrection.[226]

CONCLUSION

By the twenty-first century, what was once novel—Americans airing their grievances on national issues in the nation's capital—was commonplace. The National Mall was not designed intentionally to host protests or political events. Neither Pierre Charles L'Enfant, Andrew Jackson Downing, nor the Senate Park Commission envisioned this function in their plans for the Mall. Rather, organizers and attendees of protests and political events cumulatively transformed the National Mall into a public square. This often involved challenging political

224 Office of Inspector General, US Department of the Interior, *Review of the U.S. Department of the Interior's Actions Related to January 6, 2021* (Department of the Interior, December 2023), 1, 8.
225 Office of Inspector General, US Department of the Interior, *Review of the U.S. Department of the Interior's Actions Related to January 6, 2021*, 1, 8, 18.
226 "January 6 U.S. Capitol Attack," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, accessed July 11, 2023, https://www.britannica.com/event/January-6-U-S-Capitol-attack.

and social norms and, in some cases, directly defying the law. In the process, Americans learned what the First Amendment truly provided—the right to assembly in person and *en masse* at the center of government.

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Chapter 5

Conclusion

Chapter title page: Workers set up for the January 2021 inauguration of President Joe Biden. They installed 200,000 flags to represent the thousands who could not attend because of the COVID-19 pandemic (NPGallery).

Chapter 5: Conclusion

The National Park Service issues over 4,000 permits a year for events and demonstrations at National Mall and Memorial Parks.[1] These demonstrations and activities represent the ideals, aspirations, and expressions of the American people. As expressed by Richard Kurin, former director of the Smithsonian Institution's Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage:

> The American people clearly recognize the importance and significance of the Mall, given its symbolic centrality, its proximity to institutions of power, and its perceived connection to memorialized history. If something happens on the Mall, it must be important, it must be meaningful, somehow, to our national life…[2]

The National Mall as we know it today is the result of a 200-year evolution from a "public walk" and "nature preserve" to the "center of a grand capital" and "the people's gathering place."[3] The various plans for and physical changes to the National Mall and the multitude of events that have taken place there over the course of its existence have influenced and continue to influence its use and symbolism. These events, such as the annual Fourth of July celebration, First Amendment demonstrations, and presidential inaugurations, all tell the story of our nation's history and identity. It is the American people who have given the National Mall new meaning.

As the National Mall continues to evolve and diversify with new museums and memorials, it also continues to attract more visitors and serve as a public space for demonstrations and special events. While the original designers of the National Mall did not have these functions in mind, they are a significant part of its modern use and are what makes the National Mall both "America's front yard" and a "Stage of Democracy." The story of the National Mall emphasizes that it is not static—it is a dynamic space—and that unexpected, organic uses often supersede or improve formal plans. As this story continues in the twenty-first century and

1 National Mall and Memorial Parks, "Permits & Reservations," accessed 20 June 2024 at https://www.nps.gov/nama/planyourvisit/permitsandreservations.htm.
2 Richard Kurin, "Culture of, by and for the People," in *The National Mall: Rethinking Washington's Monumental Core*, eds. Nathan Glazer and Cynthia R. Field (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), 113.
3 Edith L. B. Turner, "The People's Home Ground," in Glazer and Field, *The National Mall*, 70.

beyond, Americans will likely adapt the National Mall in new, unforeseen ways that reflect this ever-changing nation.

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Section Cover photo: Washington Monument at sunrise, surrounded by cherry blossoms, date unknown (NPGallery).

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Select Chronology

Appendix A

Chapter title page: Fireworks over the Washington Monument, July 4, 2022 (NPGallery).

Table 1. Select Chronology of Key Events on the National Mall

YEAR	DATE	EVENT	DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	THEME	SOURCE
1791		L'Enfant Plan	President George Washington hires Pierre Charles L'Enfant to create a plan for the new federal city.	National Mall	History of the Mall	Judith H. Robinson, Daria Gasparini, and Tim Kerr, National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, "National Mall Historic District – Boundary Increase/Additional Documentation" (August 2016), 102.
1841	February 1841	Inauguration of William Henry Harrison	President-elect William Henry Harrison's inauguration is the first time an official committee of citizens plans the events.	East Portico of the Capitol	Inaugurations	"Inauguration of President William Henry Harrison." Histories of the National Mall, n.d. Accessed July 20, 2023. https://mallhistory.org/items/show/345
1848	July 4, 1848	Washington Monument Cornerstone	The Washington Monument Society lays the first cornerstone of the Washington Monument. The festivities include a parade, orations, and a fireworks display. The celebration on the monument site was the precursor to the annual Fourth of July celebration held on the Washington Monument Grounds today.	Washington Monument Grounds	Events/Celebrations	John Milner Associates, Washington Monument Grounds Cultural Landscape Report, prepared for National Park Service, Denver Service Center and National Capital Region, December 2003 (revised August 2011 and January 2015), 2-6.
1865	July 4, 1865	Colored People's National Lincoln Monument Association Fourth of July celebration	The Colored People's National Lincoln Monument Association holds a Fourth of July celebration that began on the "grounds immediately south of the President's Mansion" and later moved to the Ellipse. An 1865 pamphlet commemorating the significant event stated that it was "the first time that the colored people have attempted any celebration of a national character."	White House Grounds and Ellipse	Events/Celebrations	"Celebration of the Fourth," Evening Star, July 5, 1865; National Lincoln Monument Association, Celebration by the Colored People's Educational Monument Association in memory of Abraham Lincoln, on the Fourth of July, in the Presidential grounds, Washington, DC.
1887	May 23–30, 1887	National Military Drill	The national military drill was a drill competition between volunteer soldiers of the National Guard across the country. The event, held on the "White Lot" south of the White House and held May 23-30, 1887, brought more than 70 companies and 3,000 men to Washington. The participants camped on the grounds in what was called "Camp George Washington." More than $25,000 was distributed in prizes and thousands of spectators, including President and Mrs. Grover Cleveland, watched the events.	Ellipse and Washington Monument Grounds	Events/Celebrations	"A History of the Drill," *Washington Post*, May 23, 1887.
1892	September 21–22, 1892	Grand Army of the Republic National Encampment	The Grand Army of the Republic, a fraternal organization of veterans of all branches of the United States military who served during the Civil War, commemorates the country's reunification by holding its annual national encampment on the Washington Monument Grounds.	Washington Monument Grounds	Events/Celebrations	Henry Ford Museum, "Members of the Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.) Visiting Mount Vernon, September 21, 1892," accessed 28 July 2023 at https://www.thehenryford.org/collections-and-research/digital-collections/artifact/422785.; Souvenir program, G. A. R., 26th national encampment, Washington, D. C., September 20th, 1892, https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=loc.ark%3A%2F13960%2Ft9d50s27h&seq=19. ; "The Sky Filled with Stars," Washington Post, September 21, 1892, 12
1896	July 8-13, 1896	Fifteenth International Christian Endeavor Convention	The Christian Endeavor Society holds its annual convention in Washington, DC. The society erects three large tents on the Ellipse for the event.	Ellipse	Events/Celebrations	"Putting Up Tents," Evening Star, July 1, 1896; Library of Congress, "Endeavorers' Tents and Washington Monument," https://www.loc.gov/item/96511073/; Library of Congress, "Endeavor Convention, July 8-13, 1896," https://www.loc.gov/resource/g3850.ct004447/.
1902	October 9–10, 1902	Grand Army of the Republic National Encampment	The Grand Army of the Republic once again holds their 36th annual national encampment on the Washington Monument Grounds.	Washington Monument Grounds	Events/Celebrations	"Local Celebration," Evening Star, May 19, 1903, 10.; "Rousing Celebration," *Evening Star*, 3 July 1903, 7.

YEAR	DATE	EVENT	DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	THEME	SOURCE
1903	July 4, 1903	First Organized Independence Day Celebration by District Commissioners	The Commissioners of the District of Columbia develop the first organized Independence Day celebration. While celebrations by the entire community had occurred in the past," more recently, organizations held several separate events. Commissioner Henry MacFarland believed that the nation's capital should have an annual celebration worthy of the nation's birthday for the entire District of Columbia. Funds for the fireworks are raised by subscription. The event includes a military parade, an event on the northeast lawn of the White House, and concludes with fireworks on the Washington Monument Grounds.	Washington Monument Grounds	Events/Celebrations	"Rousing Celebration," *Washington Evening Star*, July 3, 1903.
1910	November 6, 1910	War on Profanity March	Organized by the Holy Name Society, 7,000 Catholics march silently from the Capitol down Pennsylvania Avenue, past the White House, and down 17th Street NW to hold Mass at the Washington Monument Grounds to protest widespread use of profanity.	Washington Monument Grounds	First Amendment Events	"Big Addition to Roll," *Evening Star*, March 21, 1910.
1911	May 29, 1911	Field Mass	30,000 people attend a field Mass on the Washington Monument Grounds, honoring those killed in the Spanish–American War.	Washington Monument Grounds	Events/Celebrations	"Taft at Field Mass," *Washington Post,* May 29, 1911, 1.
1912	October 26, 1912	Second War on Profanity March	On October 26, 1912, the Holy Name Society organizes a second march and rally against profanity at the Washington Monument Grounds.	Washington Monument Grounds	First Amendment Events	"Catholics to March," *Evening Star*, October 26, 1912.
1915	September 30–October 1, 1915	Grand Army of the Republic National Encampment	The Grand Army of the Republic holds its 49th National Encampment in Washington, DC, on the Washington Monument Grounds.	Washington Monument Grounds	Events/Celebrations	Library of Congress, "Grand Army of the Republic and Kindred Societies: A Guide to Resources in the General Collections of the Library of Congress," accessed 31 July 2023 at https://guides.loc.gov/grand-army-of-the-republic/national-encampments#s-lib-ctab-26926157-3.
1915	October 11, 1915	Third War on Profanity March	The Holy Name Society organizes a third march and rally against profanity at the Washington Monument Grounds on October 11, 1915.	Washington Monument Grounds	First Amendment Events	"Success Scored by Holy Name Parade," *Washington Times*, October 11, 1915.
1916	May 27, 1916	Performance at the Washington Monument	In the spring of 1916, artist Alice Pike Barney persuades the husband-and-wife Shakespearean actors R. D. Shepherd and Odette Tyler to perform scenes at Dumbarton Oaks in honor of the 300th anniversary of the Bard's death. The performance takes place on May 26, and the funds raised provide for a free performance the following night at the base of the Washington Monument. The crowds there grow so large that many could not see the two actors, which prompts Barney to seek a permanent outdoor venue for Shakespeare and other classical theater.	Washington Monument Grounds	Events/Celebrations	Judith H. Robinson and Tim Kerr, National Register Nomination, Washington Monument and Grounds Historic District (Washington, DC: Robinson and Associates, 2016), 51.
1916	May 31, 1916	First Movie on Washington Monument Grounds	A film is shown on the Washington Monument Grounds, with the marble wall of the monument itself acting as the backdrop.	Washington Monument Grounds	Events/Celebrations	"Movies on Monument," *Washington Post*, May 31, 1916, 12.
1916	Summer 1916	Construction of Sylvan Theater	In the late summer of 1916, Office of Public Buildings and Grounds staff begins constructing a theater site southeast of the monument at the base of the knoll. Work continues through the fall. The sod stage—5 feet above grade, 30 feet deep, and 80 feet across—matches the size of the stage of the Metropolitan Opera in New York.	Sylvan Theater	Events/Celebrations	"15,000 at Sylvan Play," *Washington Post*, June 3, 1917, 4.

YEAR	DATE	EVENT	DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	THEME	SOURCE
1917	March 5, 1917	Second Inauguration of Woodrow Wilson	For the first time, women participate in the inaugural parade and a woman serves on the inaugural committee.	East Portico of the Capitol	Inaugurations	Makenzie, Shelly. "A History of Presidential Inaugural Celebrations and Events of Public Expression at the White House and President's Park." National Park Service, Office of White House Liaison, July 1999.
1917	June 2, 1917	Sylvan Theater Opens	15,000 people attend the first performance at the Sylvan Theater, which includes a musical performance by the Marine Band and the performance of "The Drama Triumphant."	Sylvan Theater	Events/Celebrations	"15,000 at Sylvan Play," *Washington Post*, June 3, 1917, 4.
1917	June 4–7, 1917	Confederate Reunion	In the evening of June 6, participants of the Confederate Reunion gather on the Washington Monument Grounds for a concert and the display of a human flag by 2,300 children. On the last day of the event, veterans of the Confederacy and "Grand Army men" march together up Pennsylvania Avenue and are reviewed by President Woodrow Wilson. The program ends with a presentation of "The Continental Congress" at the Sylvan Theater.	Washington Monument Grounds	Events/Celebrations	"The Confederate Reunion," *Washington Post*, April 16, 1917, 6.
1917	October 24, 1917	Liberty Loan Bonfire	A bonfire on the Washington Monument Grounds calls on citizens to support World War I by purchasing library bonds. The event includes fireworks and music by the Marine Band.	Washington Monument Grounds	Events/Celebrations	"Beacon for Bonds Illuminates the Skies," *Evening Star*, October 24, 1917; "Fires to Tell of Loan," *Washington Post*, October 21, 1917: 12; "Mammoth Bonfire on White Lot," *Washington Post*, October 14, 1917.
1923	February 12, 1923	First Celebration of President Lincoln's Birthday	After the completion of the Lincoln Memorial in May 1922, thousands visit the Lincoln Memorial on February 14, 1923, to celebrate the anniversary of President Abraham Lincoln's birth.	Lincoln Memorial	Events/Celebrations	"Young and Old Pay Tribute to Lincoln," Washington Post, February 13, 1923.
1923	December 24, 1923	First National Christmas Tree Ceremony	President Calvin Coolidge dedicates the first National Christmas Tree on the Ellipse.	Ellipse	Events/Celebrations	"The White House Week," Time Magazine, January 7, 1924; National Park Service, "History of the National Christmas Tree," accessed January 2, 2024 at https://www.nps.gov/whho/learn/historyculture/national-christmas-tree-history.htm#:~:text=The%20tree%2C%20donated%20by%20Middlebury,Ellipse%20and%20expanded%20its%20focus.
1924	September 21, 1924	President Coolidge Speaks to Catholics	President Calvin Coolidge gives a speech to over 100,000 Catholics of the Holy Name Society on the Washington Monument Grounds. The event takes place amid widespread anti-Catholic sentiment promoted by the Ku Klux Klan.	Washington Monument Grounds	First Amendment Events	
1925	August 8, 1925	Ku Klux Klan Rally at Washington Monument Grounds	The Ku Klux Klan leads a massive march down Pennsylvania Avenue to a rally at the Washington Monument Grounds. As part of the Monument Grounds event, a Klan leader addresses the crowd from the Sylvan Theater stage. Estimates of the Klan marchers range between 30,000–35,000 and 50,000.	Washington Monument Grounds	First Amendment Events	George E. Clark, "Stepping to the National Stage: Protesting Injustice, Producing Shakespeare, and Claiming Black Space at the Sylvan Theater" (master's thesis, Harvard University Division of Continuing Education, 2022), 13.
1927	June 11, 1927	Charles Lindbergh Welcome	President Calvin Coolidge welcomes American aviator Charles Lindbergh home after his first successful transatlantic flight before a crowd estimated at 200,000 on the Washington Monument Grounds.	Washington Monument Grounds	Events/Celebrations	"Cheering Thousands Hail Lindbergh in Triumphal Parade Along Avenue," *Evening Star*, June 11, 1927, 1-2
1927	June 16–23, 1927	National 4-H Camp	The first annual National 4-H Camp is held June 16–23, 1927 on the grounds of the Department of Agriculture. The national camp is held in Washington, DC, 26 times before being replaced by the National 4-H Conference in 1957 (no 4-H Camps are held during World War II).	Department of Agriculture	Events/Celebrations	Tyler Archer, "The History of the National 4-H Camp, 1927-1956," National 4-H History Preservation Program, accessed online August 14, 2023 at https://4-hhistorypreservation.com/History/Events/4-H_Camp/; Sue Benedetti, "National 4-H Camp Comes to DC," National 4-H History Preservation Program, accessed online August 14, 2023 at http://news.4-hhistorypreservation.com/2015/06/15/national-4-h-camp-comes-to-d-c/.

YEAR	DATE	EVENT	DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	THEME	SOURCE
1932	May to July, 1932	Bonus March	World War I veterans, organized in a group called the Bonus Expeditionary Forces (BEF), arrive in Washington, DC, to collect on bonuses promised to them after the war's end. They camp in several locations around the District. On the Mall, some marchers camp among the nineteenth-century buildings on Missouri Avenue NW (part of the Mall reservation). A photograph also shows that the marchers use the Washington Monument Grounds to gather at one point.	Washington Monument Grounds and National Mall	First Amendment Events	Senate Historical Office, "The Senate and the Bonus Expeditionary Force of 1932," US Senate, November 9, 2023, accessed December 13, 2023, available at https://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/senate-stories/senate-and-the-bonus-expeditionary-force-of-1932.htm.
1933	July 8, 1933	National Woman's Party event	The National Woman's Party, led by Alice Paul, hosts a rally of 5,000 people at the Sylvan Theater to petition President Franklin Roosevelt to support the Equal Rights Amendment and "end the continued discriminations against married women in the [G] overnment service."	Washington Monument Grounds	First Amendment Events	"Plead for Wives Holding U.S. Jobs," *Evening Star*, July 9, 1933.
1934	April 19, 1934	First Cherry Blossom Festival	First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt and a delegation from the Japanese embassy lead the sunrise ceremony that opens the first annual Cherry Blossom Festival. The festival includes a parade, a ball, fireworks, and a performance of The Mikado, an English operetta set in Japan, at the Sylvan Theatre.	National Mall	Events/Celebrations	"500,000 Cherry Fete Visitors Set Record," *Washington Post*, April 23, 1934, 1
1937	June 30–July 9, 1937	Boy Scout Jamboree	The 1937 Boy Scout National Jamboree is held on the National Mall. 25,000 Scouts from around the country attend the event, camping for more than a week around the Washington Monument, Tidal Basin, and other locations.	Washington Monument Grounds and West Potomac Park	Events/Celebrations	"28,000 Cheering Scouts and Leaders Open Jamboree," *Washington Post*, July 1, 1937; "Boy Scouts Will Come Here From All Over World for Jamboree," *Washington Post*, 6 June 1937, B2. ;
1939	April 9, 1939	Marian Anderson Concert at Lincoln Memorial	Singer Marian Anderson performs to a crowd from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. Her performance occurs after the Daughters of the American Revolution denied Anderson performing to an integrated audience at Constitution Hall.	Lincoln Memorial	First Amendment Events	Susan Stamberg, "Denied A Stage, She Sang For A Nation," *NPR*, April 9, 2014.
1939	July 22, 1939	Labor Rally against WPA Wage Cuts	At a July 1939 rally at the Sylvan Theater, demonstrators rally against wage cuts for Works Progress Administration (WPA) workers. William Taylor, president of the National Negro Congress, appears alongside labor activist Phillip Bonosky to protest wage reductions.	Washington Monument Grounds	First Amendment Events	"50 Attend Rally to Protest Wage Cuts in Relief Bill," *Washington Post*, July 23, 1939.
1941	December 24, 1941	National Christmas Tree Lighting Moves to South Lawn of White House	The National Christmas Tree Lighting continues during World War II but moves to the south lawn of the White House.	White House South Lawn	Events/Celebrations	The White House and President's Park, "1941-1953 National Christmas Trees," accessed December 19, 2023 at https://www.nps.gov/whho/learn/historyculture/1941-1953-national-christmas-trees.htm.
1943	April 13, 1943	First President Jefferson's Birthday Celebration	The completion and dedication of the Jefferson Memorial on April 13, 1943, begins the annual tradition that includes speakers, laying of wreaths, and a musical performance. The 1943 dedication coincides with the 200th anniversary of President Jefferson's birth and includes the reading of the Declaration of Independence and a performance by the US Marine Band.	Jefferson Memorial	Events/Celebrations	"Jefferson Shrine Ceremony Set for Noon Hour Tomorrow," *Washington Post*, April 12, 1943, B1; "25 Organizations Will Mark Jefferson Anniversary Today," *Washington Post*, April 13, 1948, B1.
1943	September 9, 1943	Back the Attack	The Back the Attack war bond rally is held on the Washington Monument Grounds in support of World War II. The event spans 17 days and attracts over 1.7 million people.	Washington Monument Grounds	Events/Celebrations	"Officials Break Ground Today On Site of 'Back the Attack,'" *Washington Post*, August 18, 1943, 1; "Army Show To Open Here On Sept. 9," *Washington Post*, August 16, 1943, B1.

YEAR	DATE	EVENT	DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	THEME	SOURCE
1944	June and July 1944	Shot from the Sky	Army Air Forces hold Shot from the Sky on the Washington Monument Grounds for the Fifth War Loan drive. The show, which opens on June 12 and closes on July 8, 1944, consists of approximately 2,600 pieces of captured equipment from enemy forces. Shot from the Sky continues through early July and overlaps with the annual Fourth of July event at the Washington Monument.	Washington Monument Grounds	Events/Celebrations	"Parade Opens 'Shot From Sky' Exhibit," *Washington Post*, June 11, 1944, M2.; " DC 'Liberation' Loan Drive For 107 Million Opens Today," *Washington Post*, June 12, 1944, 1.
1944	July 4, 1944	Cavalcade of Freedom	After a hiatus during World War II, the Fourth of July celebration returns, coinciding with the war bond rally Shot from the Sky exhibit. In addition to fireworks, the 1944 celebration, called Washington's Cavalcade of Freedom, includes a concert by the Marine band, the massing of the colors by 30 organizations, and a program by several Hollywood stars.	Washington Monument Grounds	Events/Celebrations	"DC to Have Spectacular July 4 Show," *Washington Post*, June 30, 1944 ; "325,000 Here Attend War Bond 'Cavalcade,' At the Monument," *Evening Star*, July 3, 1944 ; "325,000 Here Attend War Bond 'Cavalcade'," At the Monument," *Evening Star*, July 5, 1944.
1946	July 19, 1946	Jewish Vets Group Meets President Truman	Over 3,000 Jewish war veterans gather on the Washington Monument Grounds for a mass protest against British Policy in Palestine.	Washington Monument Grounds	First Amendment Events	"Jewish Vets Group Meets Truman," *Atlanta Daily World*, July 19, 1946.
1947	April 1, 1947	Cherry Blossom Festival Returns After World War II	The National Cherry Blossom Festival returns after a five-year hiatus during World War II.	Tidal Basin	Events/Celebrations	"Blossom Fete Theme Called World Peace," *Washington Post*, March 19, 1947; "1947 Cherry Blossom Fete Breaks Attendance Marks," *Washington Post*, April 14, 1947.
1947	June 29, 1947	NAACP Event at the Lincoln Memorial	Members of the NAACP gather at the Lincoln Memorial for a final session of their 38th annual convention to hear President Harry Truman and other speakers urge the expansion and strong enforcement of civil rights legislation. More than 5,000 people attend the event.	Lincoln Memorial	First Amendment Events	"U.S. Must Show Way in Equal Civil Rights, Truman Tells NAACP," *Evening Star*, June 30, 1947.
1947	July 4, 1947	First Televised Broadcast of Fourth of July Celebration	DuMont, one of the pioneering commercial television networks, broadcasts the Fourth of July celebration on television for the first time. Over 225,000 people attend the celebration on the Washington Monument Grounds, which includes "oratory, music, pageantry," and fireworks.	Washington Monument Grounds	Events/Celebrations	"Television Broadcasts July fourth Program for First Time Here," *Washington Post,* July 5, 1947
1948	December 24, 1948	National Christmas Tree Lighting Televised	In 1948, President Harry Truman does not attend the tree lighting ceremony in person, but he gives a signal to turn on the lights from his home in Independence, Missouri. Four major networks broadcast the event on television for the first time.	White House Grounds	Events/Celebrations	"Button to Set Nation's Tree Aglow at 5:16," *Washington Post*, December 20, 1948.
1949	June 8, 1949	American Labor Party Rally	The American Labor Party (a short-lived political party active mostly in New York State) leads a rally of 3000 at the Sylvan Theater to advocate repeal of the Taft-Hartley Act (1947) that curtailed labor unions' activities and power.	Washington Monument Grounds	First Amendment Events	"ALP Marches 3000 Here As 'Lobbyists,'" *Washington Post*, June 9, 1949.
1954	September 22, 1954	Emancipation Pilgrimage at Lincoln Memorial	More than 600 people gather at the Lincoln Memorial for prayer and song for progress of African Americans since the Emancipation Proclamation. The exercises coincided with National Prayer Day and the 92nd anniversary of the announcement of the Emancipation Proclamation by President Abraham Lincoln.	Lincoln Memorial	Events/Celebrations	"600 Attend Emancipation Ceremonies," *Washington Post*, September 23, 1954, 36.

YEAR	DATE	EVENT	DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	THEME	SOURCE
1954	December 1954–January 1955	First Pageant of Peace	On December 17, 1954, President Dwight D. Eisenhower kicks off a new, "more extensive holiday observance" known as the "Pageant of Peace." The event, starting earlier in December and relocated to the Ellipse, continues through January 6, 1955.	Ellipse	Events/Celebrations	"Ike to Light Yule Tree Night of December 17," *Washington Post*, November 5, 1954; "7,500 on Hand at Opening of Peace Pageant," Evening Star, December 18, 1954.
1955	March 29, 1955	National ROTC Drill Competition	More than 20 colleges compete in the first National ROTC Drill Competition at the Washington Monument Grounds on March 29. The Washington Board of Trade sponsors the event as part of the annual National Cherry Blossom Festival.	Washington Monument Grounds	Events/Celebrations	"Two Howard Univ. Air Force Units Enter Festival Drills," *Atlanta Daily World*, March 29, 1955: 3.
1957	May 15, 1957	Prayer Pilgrimage for Freedom	Around 25,000 demonstrators gather at the Lincoln Memorial on the third anniversary of Brown v. Board of Education. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), and labor leader A. Phillip Randolph planned the demonstration. The event features three hours of spirituals, songs, and speeches, the last given by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. It is one of the first civil rights events on the National Mall.	Lincoln Memorial	First Amendment Events	"Prayer Pilgrimage for Freedom." The Martin Luther King, Jr., Research and Education Institute. https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/prayer-pilgrimage-freedom
1958	October 25, 1958	Youth March for Integrated Schools	On October 25, 1958, an integrated crowd of 10,000 marches down Constitution Avenue to the Lincoln Memorial to demonstrate against persistent school segregation despite the Brown v. Board of Education decision declaring it unconstitutional. A. Phillip Randolph, Martin Luther King, Jr., and other civil rights leaders planned the event.	Lincoln Memorial	First Amendment Events	"Youth March for Integrated Schools," Martin Luther King, Jr., Research and Education Institute, Stanford University, accessed June 29, 2023, available at https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/encyclopedia/youth-march-integrated-schools; "Randolph: DC March A Success," *New York Age*, November 1, 1958.
1959	April 18, 1959	Second Youth March for Integrated Schools	On April 18, 1959, an integrated crowd of approximately 26,000 people march down the National Mall and hold a rally at the Sylvan Theater to protest continuing school segregation. A. Phillip Randolph, Martin Luther King, Jr., and other civil rights leaders planned this follow-up to the previous year's march.	Sylvan Theater	First Amendment Events	"Integration Rally Here Assured Ike Seeks End of Racial Bias," *Washington Post*, April 19, 1959.
1963	August 28, 1963	March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom	More than a quarter million people participate in the historic March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, gathering near the Lincoln Memorial. The NAACP, SCLC, National Council of Negro Women, and numerous other civil rights leaders planned the event. Participants include Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who delivers his stirring "I Have a Dream" speech.	Lincoln Memorial	First Amendment Events	Evening Star, August 27, 1963, clipping, Pickets & Protests: March on Washington Vertical File, People's Archive, District of Columbia Public Library.; *Washington Daily News*, August 26, 1963, clipping, Pickets & Protests: March on Washington Vertical File, People's Archive, District of Columbia Public Library.
1964	April 27–May 2, 1964	Filibuster for Civil Rights	As the US Senate debate the passage of the Civil Rights Act, college students lead a week-long "filibuster for Civil Rights" at the Sylvan Theater. Students organize the event to pressure senators to pass the legislation.	Sylvan Theater	First Amendment Events	Mark S. Greek, Washington, D.C. Protests: Scenes from Home Rule to the Civil Rights Movement (Charleston, SC: History Press, 2009).
1965	January 20, 1965	Inauguration of Lyndon B. Johnson	Marked increase in security and restricted public access to the inauguration follow the assassination of John F. Kennedy. The First Lady plays a role for the first time in the oath.	East Portico of the Capitol	Inaugurations	Makenzie, Shelly. "A History of Presidential Inaugural Celebrations and Events of Public Expression at the White House and President's Park." National Park Service, Office of White House Liaison, July 1999.
1965	April 17, 1965	Protest against Vietnam War at Sylvan Theater	On April 17, 1965, 16,000 protestors come to Washington and call for an immediate end to US bombing campaigns in Vietnam. The demonstration includes a rally at the Sylvan Theater.	Washington Monument Grounds	First Amendment Events	"Viet-Nam War Protest is Staged by 16,000," *Washington Post*, April 18, 1965.

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1967	March 25, 1967	First Annual Smithsonian Kite Festival	The First Annual Smithsonian Kite Carnival (later referred to as the Kite Festival) takes place on the National Mall on March 25, 1967. Individuals compete in contests with homemade kites as well as ready-made ones.	National Mall	Events/Celebrations	Diana Baird N'Diaye, Olivia Cadaval, Sojin Kim, eds., Curatorial Conversations: Cultural Representation and the Smithsonian Folklife Festival (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2016).
1967	July 1–4, 1967	First Annual Smithsonian Folklife Festival	Fifty-eight traditional craftspeople and thirty-two musical and dance groups from throughout the United States demonstrate and perform at the first open-air event. Mountain banjo-pickers and ballad singers, Chinese lion dancers, Indian sand painters, basket and rug weavers, New Orleans jazz bands, and a Bohemian hammer dulcimer band from east Texas combine with a host of participants from many rural and urban areas of the US.	National Mall	Events/Celebrations	Diana Baird N'Diaye, Olivia Cadaval, Sojin Kim, eds., Curatorial Conversations: Cultural Representation and the Smithsonian Folklife Festival (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2016).
1968	May–June, 1968	Poor People's Campaign/ Resurrection City	To protest persistently high rates of poverty in the United States, organizers form the Poor People's Campaign and build what they call Resurrection City, which is comprised of 3,000 wooden tents in West Potomac Park south of the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool. A massive Solidarity Day demonstration is held on June 19, 1968. Organizers hold a rally at the Lincoln Memorial featuring speeches by celebrities. The crowd extends across West Potomac Park fronting the Lincoln Memorial and on the Washington Monument Grounds.	West Potomac Park, Lincoln Memorial, and Washington Monument Grounds	First Amendment Events	Anna Diamond, "Remembering Resurrection City and the Poor People's Campaign of 1968," *Smithsonian Magazine*, May 2018, accessed July 10, 2023, available at https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/remembering-poor-peoples-campaign-180968742/.
1969	November 15, 1969	Moratorium to End the War in Vietnam	On November 15, roughly half a million people gather in Washington for anti-war activities. Folk singer and activist Pete Seeger leads a large group in singing protest songs near the Washington Monument. Speakers include Coretta Scott King. In the evening, King and Rev. Channing Phillips leads a large group on a candlelit walk from the Sylvan Theater to the Ellipse.	Washington Monument Grounds and the Ellipse	First Amendment Events	Chalmers M. Roberts, "Millions Set to Join in Moratorium: Millions Set for Moratorium," *Washington Post*, October 15, 1969. Gordon Pettey, "Moratorium Plans Include Teach-Ins and Sleep-Ins," *Washington Post*, October 7, 1969; Chalmers M. Roberts, "Moratorium Activities Peaceful: U.S. Demonstrations Protest," Washington Post, October 16, 1969.
1970	June 19, 1970	Black Panther Rally	A rally promoting the proposed "Revolutionary People's Constitutional Convention," which would rewrite the Constitution to ensure equal rights for oppressed groups including Black people, women, and young people, takes place at the Lincoln Memorial. Roughly 1,000 people attend.	Lincoln Memorial	First Amendment Events	"Black Panther Rally," Histories of the Mall, accessed January 4, 2024, available at https://mallhistory.org/items/show/500.
1970	July 4, 1970	"Honor America Day"	President Nixon holds "Honor America Day" on the National Mall to gather support for his failing administration and the unpopular Vietnam War. The event is spearheaded by Bob Hope, Reverend Billy Graham, and billionaire hotelier J. Willard Marriott along with members of Nixon's administration and promoted as a day to "put aside differences" and "rally around the flag." Instead, it highlights the country's deep divisions and ends with nude anti-war protesters, tear gas, and a mass stampede.	National Mall	First Amendment Events	Kevin M. Kruse, "Partisans often try to claim July 4 as their own. It usually backfires," *Washington Post*, July 3, 2017.
1971	August 19–23, 1971	Veterans Encampment to Protest Vietnam War	Vietnam War veterans camp on the Mall near the Capitol to protest the war. A group known as the Vietnam Veterans Against the War planned the event.	National Mall	First Amendment Events	Paul W. Valentine, "Veterans Denied Camp on Mall," *Washington Post*, Apr 16, 1971; Ken W. Clawson, "Justice Dept, Admits Misjudgment on Veterans' Camp-Out," *Washington Post*, April 24, 1971.

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1974	January 22, 1974	March for Life	The first March for Life occurred on the US Capitol west steps on January 22, 1974, a year after the US Supreme decision Roe v. Wade struck down states laws throughout the country that either prohibited or restricted abortion, rendering it legal throughout the country. Attorney Nellie Gray founded the march and established a non-profit organization to advocate for overturning the decision. In the 1976, event organizers moved the march to the Ellipse. The annual march, ongoing since 1974, regularly draws tens to hundreds of thousands of participants. Since the late 1990s, the March for Life has occurred on the National Mall.	Ellipse (after 1976); National Mall (after late 1990s)	First Amendment Events	Nancy Hicks, "Both Sides Press Abortion Views," New York Times, January 23, 1974; Marjorie Hyer, "Abortion Issue Foes March," *Washington Post*, January 23, 1974; "America's Civic Stage: The First Amendment on The National Mall," Trust for the National Mall, available at https://nationalmall.org/freedom-of-speech.
1976	July 4, 1976	Bicentennial Celebration	On the 200th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, an estimated 1 million people flock to the National Mall to celebrate America's birthday.	National Mall	Events/Celebrations	Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, "FG 75 (American Revolution Bicentennial Commission) (White House Central Files: Subject Files)," accessed June 16, 2023 at https://www.nixonlibrary.gov/finding-aids/fg-75-american-revolution-bicentennial-commission-white-house-central-files-subject. The Gerald R. Ford Presidential Digital Library, "American Bicentennial Celebration," accessed June 20, 2023 at https://www.fordlibrarymuseum.gov/library/exhibits/bicentennial/bicentennial.asp.
1977	January 20, 1977	Inauguration of Jimmy Carter	In a significant shift from previous inaugural celebrations, President Carter's inaugural committee planned to "open up the city" with a week of festivities with the main events completely open to the public. The morning of the inauguration, the committee held a nondenominational prayer service and concert for the public at the Lincoln Memorial (although Carter himself and the future First Lady Rosalyn Carter did not attend). Martin Luther King Sr. spoke to a crowd of roughly 5,000 people, along with two renowned opera singers and other religious leaders. The swearing-in takes place on the East Portico of the Capitol.	East Portico of the Capitol; Lincoln Memorial	Inaugurations	Shelly McKenzie, "A History of Presidential Inaugural Celebrations and Events of Public Expression at the White House and President's Park," 103.; Kenneth A. Briggs, "Plea by Dr. King's Father Adds Touch of Revivalism to the Day," *New York Times*, January 21, 1977, https://www.nytimes.com/1977/01/21/archives/plea-by-dr-kings-father-adds-touch-of-revivalism-to-the-day.html.
1978	January–April, 1978	First Tractorcade	Thousands of farmers descend on the National Mall to lobby Congress for a new farm bill to increase crop prices and influence agriculture policy.	National Mall	First Amendment Events	William P. Browne and John Dinse, "The American Agriculture Movement, 1977–79," Great Plains Quarterly 5 (Fall 1985): 227.
1978	February-July 1978	The Longest Walk	Twenty-four Native Americans walk from California to Washington, DC. Conceived as both a spiritual and political demonstration, the Longest Walk protested eleven pieces of legislation then being considered by Congress that would violate various treaty rights, particularly concerning Indian land, fishing, and mineral rights. On July 15, 1978, the group arrives in Washington, DC, and is accompanied by some 2,000 supporters. A group of 200 to 300 religious leaders maintain a four-day vigil at a spiritual camp in West Potomac Park near the Lincoln Memorial. The week of demonstrations conclude with a powwow on the Ellipse on July 22.	West Potomac Park and Ellipse	First Amendment Events	National Park Service, "The Longest Walk, 1978," accessed January 11, 2024, at https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/longest-walk.htm.
1979	February 5, 1979	Second Tractorcade	The second Tractorcade has goals similar to its first iteration. This time, however, the tractors cause major damage to the National Mall.	National Mall	First Amendment Events	Blaine Harden and J. Regan Kerney, "Mall Damage Estimated at $2 Million: Farm Tractors Chew Up Sod on Mall," *Washington Post*, February 10, 1979.

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1979	April 15, 1979	First Annual Easter Sunrise Mass at the Lincoln Memorial	Capital Church sponsors the first Easter Sunrise Service with a small gathering of 120 people on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial.	Lincoln Memorial	Events/Celebrations	Elizabeth O'Gorek, "National Community Church to Lead 2023 Easter Sunrise Service," *Hill Rag*, March 31, 2023.
1979	May 6, 1979	Anti-Nuclear Rally	On May 6, 1979, around 65,000 protesters call for an end to US dependence on nuclear energy. Organizers plan the event in response to the Three Mile Island accident.	National Mall	First Amendment Events	Paul W. Valentine, Karlyn Barker, and Thomas Morgan, "The Protesters," *Washington Post*, May 7, 1979.
1979	October 9, 1979	Pope John Paul II Mass	Pope John Paul II celebrates Mass on the National Mall on October 9, 1979. Roughly 175,000 people attend.	National Mall	Events/Celebrations	Valentine, Paul W. and Douglas B. Feaver, "A How-to Guide for Seeing the Pope Next Weekend," *Washington Post,* Setember 30, 1979, C1; Maraniss, David A., "John Paul's Farewell Mass Celebrates Life: Pope's Farewell Mass Offers Celebration of Life," *Washington Post*, October 8, 1979, A1; Mark Jones, "DC's First Papal Visit, 1979," Boundary Stones, accessed July 31, 2023 at https://boundarystones.weta.org/2015/09/23/dcs-first-papal-visit-1979.
1979	October 14, 1979	National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights	The march supports the end of anti-homosexual laws and a push for a ban on discrimination in the federal government based on sexual orientation. Thousands of people attend, and the event nationalizes the movement for gay rights, which was previously fragmented and focused on problems in individual communities.	National Mall	First Amendment Events	Courtland Milloy and Loretta Tofani, "25,000 Attend Gay Rights Rally At the Monument," *Washington Post*, October 15, 1979.
1981	January 20, 1981	First Inauguration of Ronald Reagan	The first inauguration on the west side of the Capitol takes place, perhaps to save money and to make it more TV-friendly with views of the Mall. More of the festivities are televised than ever before, including previously closed events like the inaugural luncheon.	West Front of the Capitol	Inaugurations	Shelly McKenzie, "A History of Presidential Inaugural Celebrations and Events of Public Expression at the White House and President's Park," 103.
1985	January 20, 1985	Second Inauguration of Ronald Reagan	Ronald Reagan becomes the only president to be inaugurated in the Capitol Rotunda. The ceremony was moved inside due to temperatures that ranged from -4 to 7 degrees above zero, the coldest Inauguration Day on record.	Capitol Rotunda	Inaugurations	Makenzie, Shelly. "A History of Presidential Inaugural Celebrations and Events of Public Expression at the White House and President's Park." National Park Service, Office of White House Liaison, July 1999.
1986	September 12–14, 1986	First National Black Family Reunion	The National Council of Negro Women (NCNW) holds the first National Black Family Reunion on the National Mall. The event celebrates Black community, church, and family values.	National Mall	Events/Celebrations	"Black Festival Celebrates Family Life," *Washington Post,* September 14, 1986, B1
1987	October 11, 1987	AIDS quilt	Organized by the NAMES Project, a team of 48 volunteers carefully unfolds 1,920 panels of the AIDS Memorial Quilt on the National Mall. Displayed in sections, the quilt covers more ground than a football field. On each of the panels are names of those who died of AIDS.	National Mall	First Amendment Events	Ghaziani, The Dividends of Dissent, 119; Sandra G. Boodman, "A Somber Crowd Dedicates Quilt to AIDS Victims," *Washington Post*, October 12, 1987.
1987	December 1987	National Menorah Lighting	The annual National Menorah Lighting moves from Lafayette Park to the ellipse. President Jimmy Carter participated in the first event in 1979 when, on the first night of Hanukkah, he walked from the White House to a public menorah constructed in Lafayette Park.	Ellipse	Events/Celebrations	Michael Kranish, "Carter would make history lighting a Hanukkah menorah. But first, he needed a longer match," *Washington Post*, December 10, 2020; The White House Historical Association, "Lighting the Menorah: Celebrating Hanukkah at the White House", accessed January 4, 2024 at "https://www.whitehousehistory.org/lighting-the-menorah-celebrating-hanukkah-at-the-white-house
1988	May 30, 1988	First Rolling Thunder Rally	The Rolling Thunder Rally is organized by Vietnam War veteran Ray Manzo to bring national attention to the plight of prisoners of war and soldiers missing in action in Southeast Asia.	National Mall	First Amendment Events	"First Rolling Thunder Rally," Histories of the National Mall, accessed January 4, 2024, available at https://mallhistory.org/items/show/500.

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1989	January 20, 1989	Inauguration of George H.W. Bush	George H.W. Bush is inaugurated in front of 200,000 spectators on the West Front of the Capitol.	West Front of the Capitol	Inaugurations	Makenzie, Shelly. "A History of Presidential Inaugural Celebrations and Events of Public Expression at the White House and President's Park." National Park Service, Office of White House Liaison, July 1999.
1989	July 1, 1989	Latino Festival	The 1989 Latino Festival marks the first time that the DC Latino immigrant community is given a permit to occupy a public space so sacred to national history—the National Mall and Washington Monument Grounds.	National Mall and Washington Monument Grounds	Events/Celebrations	DIGDC, "History of the First Latin American Festival on the Mall: 1989-1990," accessed January 2, 2024 at https://digdc.dclibrary.org/islandora/object/dcplislandora%3A297063.
1991	June 8, 1991	National Victory Celebration	On June 8, 1991, 800,000 people flock to the National Mall to participate in the National Victory Celebration to honor veterans and celebrate the end of Operation Desert Storm and the Persian Gulf War. It is the largest military celebration in Washington since World War II.	National Mall	Events/Celebrations	"Desert Storm Celebration," Washington Post, June 3, 1991; "A Capital Thank-You," *Washington Post*, June 9, 1991; CBS News, "How CBS Report the Last National Military Parade in 1991, February 7, 2018, accessed 7 December 2023 at https://www.cbsnews.com/amp/news/how-cbs-news-reported-the-last-national-military-parade-in-1991/
1991	August 18, 1991	India Independence Day	The Indian-American community celebrates India's Independence Day at the Washington Monument Grounds with a cultural program, food bazaar, and sports activities. It is the first time that the community organized such an event on the National Mall.	National Mall and Washington Monument Grounds	Events/Celebrations	Ramesh P. Ravella, "Praise for the National Park Service," *Washington Post*, September 7, 1991, A20.
1991	August 24, 1991	National Park Service 75th Anniversary Celebration	The National Park Service invites visitors to a celebration on Saturday, August 24, 1991, to commemorate its 75th Anniversary on August 25. The celebration took place on the National Mall between 14th and 15th Streets and featured exhibit tents and performances by musicians and living history interpreters.	National Mall	Events/Celebrations	"National Park Service Plans Birthday Festival," *Washington Post*, August 22, 1991.
1993	January 20, 1993	Inauguration of William Jefferson Clinton	Clinton's swearing-in took place at the West Front of the Capitol in front of 250,000 people.	West Front of the Capitol	Inaugurations	Makenzie, Shelly. "A History of Presidential Inaugural Celebrations and Events of Public Expression at the White House and President's Park." National Park Service, Office of White House Liaison, July 1999.
1995	October 16, 1995	Million Man March	A civil rights march is organized to promote unity and personal responsibility among African American men. Estimates for attendance range from 400,000 to 870,000.	National Mall	First Amendment Events	"The Million Man March: Questions and Answers About Today's Event," *Washington Post*, October 16, 1995.
1996	August 10–11, 1996	Smithsonian's 150th Birthday Party on the Mall	The Smithsonian kicks off its 150th birthday in 1996 with numerous special events and exhibitions held throughout the year. On August 10 and 11, 1996, the Smithsonian holds a two-day birthday celebration on the National Mall that stretches from the Capitol at 3rd Street to the Washington Monument. The event includes 23 pavilions, exhibit tents, and performance stages.	National Mall	Events/Celebrations	Lynda Schmitz Fuhrig, "Looking Wayback on the Smithsonian's Sesquicentennial" Smithsonian Museum Archives, accessed August 1, 2023, https://siarchives.si.edu/blog/looking-wayback-smithsonian%E2%80%99s-sesquicentennial.
1997	January 20, 1997	Second Inauguration of William Jefferson Clinton	The second inauguration for President Bill Clinton is notable for the number of public events on the National Mall, with tents set up and programming for kids, workshops, and entertainment for the public.	West Front of the Capitol	Inaugurations	Makenzie, Shelly. "A History of Presidential Inaugural Celebrations and Events of Public Expression at the White House and President's Park." National Park Service, Office of White House Liaison, July 1999.
1997	December 1997	Islamic Star-And-Crescent Display on the Ellipse	An Islamic star and crescent is displayed on the Ellipse alongside the National Christmas Tree and National Hanukkah Menorah for the first time.	Ellipse	Events/Celebrations	"Islamic Star Vandalized on Ellipse," *Washington Post* December 29, 1997.

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1999	July 1, 1999	First Annual Screen on the Green Festival	HBO sponsors the first annual Screen on the Green starting at the Washington Monument Grounds. The summer outdoor film festival is usually held on Monday nights in July and August and films are later projected onto a portable screen on the National Mall between 4th and 7th Streets and 7th and 12th Streets NW. The last year of the event is 2015.	Washington Monument Grounds	Events/Celebrations	Jaqueline Trescott, "On the Mall, Star-Filled Nights," *Washington Post*, June 24, 1999.
1999	December 31, 1999	America's Millennium: A Celebration for the Nation	Leading up to midnight, the National Mall between the Washington Monument and the Lincoln Memorial features a number of appearances and performances by popular musicians and literary and scientific figures. The evening concludes with an extensive fireworks and lights display over the Washington Monument.	National Mall and Washington Monument Grounds	Events/Celebrations	"Yearlong Millennium Party Planned for DC," *Washington Post*, March 31, 1999.
2001	January 20, 2001	Inauguration of George W. Bush	George W. Bush was sworn-in as the 43rd President of the United States at the West Front of the Capitol.	West Front of the Capitol	Inaugurations	"54TH INAUGURAL CEREMONIES." The Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies. https://www.inaugural.senate.gov/54th-inaugural-ceremonies/
2002	September 26–October 6, 2002	First Solar Decathlon	The first Solar Decathlon competition takes place on the National Mall in early fall of 2002. The inaugural event includes 14 teams that "designed, built, transported, and showcased zero energy houses powered entirely by renewable energy."	National Mall	Events/Celebrations	Department of Energy, "Solar Decathlon Turns 20!" January 20, 2022, accessed online July 7, 2023, at https://www.energy.gov/eere/articles/solar-decathlon-turns-20#:~:text=The%20first%20Solar%20Decathlon%20competition,unheard%20of%20at%20the%20time.
2003	October 4, 2003	National Book Festival	The Library of Congress holds the 2003 event, founded in 2001, solely on the National Mall between 7th and 14th Streets NW. The annual literary event brings together bestselling authors, poets, and illustrators with thousands of readers for book talks, panel discussions and book signings. As the festival grows and evolves, the event becomes the nation's premier literary event. It continues on the National Mall until 2013.	National Mall	Events/Celebrations	Library of Congress, "National Book Festival, History," accessed online July 7, 2023, at https://www.loc.gov/programs/national-book-festival/history/#:~:text=The%20National%20Book%20Festival%20was,first%20Festival%20was%20held%20Sept.
2004	April 25, 2004	March for Women's Lives	Roughly 500,000 to 800,000 people march on the National Mall rallying for abortion rights.	National Mall	First Amendment Events	Cameron W. Barr and Elizabeth Williamson, "Women's Rally Draws Vast Crowd," *Washington Post*, April 26, 2004.
2004	May 2004	National World War II Reunion	The four-day celebration, produced by the Smithsonian Institution, Washington National Cathedral, Military Performing Units, and the American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC) invites World War II veterans and their families to the Mall to reunite, reminisce, and witness the dedication of the National World War II Memorial.	National Mall	Events/Celebrations	The White House, President George W. Bush, "World War II Memorial," accessed August 1, 2023, at https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/ww2/events.html; Library of Congress, National World War II Reunion and the Veterans History Project" accessed August 1, 2023, at https://guides.loc.gov/world-war-ii-reunion.
2004	September 21–26, 2004	First Americans Festival	The First Americans Festival took place over six days in September 2004, coinciding with the opening of the National Museum of the American Indian. The event began with a Native Nations Procession with more than 20,000 members of 500 tribes from all over the American hemisphere. The festival included several stages and pavilions erected on the National Mall between 4th Street and 9th Street NW that held music and dance performances, storytelling events, and featured 300 performers representing 50 native communities. The dedication and procession alone drew 55,000 spectators to the National Mall.	National Mall	Events/Celebrations	Paul Schwartzman, "With Pride, Native Americans Drawn to the Mall," *Washington Post*, September 21, 2004.
2005	January 20, 2005	Second Inauguration of George W. Bush	George W. Bush's second inauguration is the first inauguration after 9/11 and has a major increase in level of security and restriction of public access.	West Front of the Capitol	Inaugurations	"55TH INAUGURAL CEREMONIES." The Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies. https://www.inaugural.senate.gov/55th-inaugural-ceremonies/

YEAR	DATE	EVENT	DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	THEME	SOURCE
2009	January 18, 2009	We are One Celebration	Approximately 400,000 people gather on the Mall for an event celebrating the inauguration of Barack Obama as the United States's first African American president. Titled We Are One, the celebration features a roster of musicians and actors who speak from the Lincoln Memorial steps.	National Mall	First Amendment Events	Richard Leiby and DeNeen L. Brown, "The Stars Align, With Egos in Check; Celebrity-Studded Concert Offers Heady Mix of History & Hollywood," *Washington Post*, January 19, 2009.
2009	January 20, 2009	Inauguration of Barack Obama	An estimated 1.8 million people come to the National Mall to witness the swearing in of the first African-American president. This is the first time the entire length of the National Mall is used as a public viewing area for the ceremony to make it "the most open and accessible in history".	National Mall	Inaugurations	Zongker, Brett. "National Mall will be open for Obama inauguration," Foxnews.com, December 4, 2008 at http://origin.foxnews.com/wires/2008Dec04/0%2C4670%2CInaugurationMall%2C00.html.
2010	March 3, 2010	March for Immigration Reform	Activists gather on the National Mall for the March for Immigration Reform and urge President Barack Obama to keep his campaign promise of comprehensive immigration reform.	National Mall	First Amendment Events	Julia Preston, "At Rally, Call for Urgency on Immigration Reform," New York Times, March 21, 2010.
2010	October 30, 2010	Rally to Restore Sanity and/or Fear	On October 30, 2010, comedians Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert lead a satirical rally on the National Mall called the Rally to Restore Sanity and/or Fear.	National Mall	First Amendment Events	Andrea Seabrook, "'Sanity/Fear' Rally A Protest Of The Absurd," NPR, October 31, 2010.
2013	June 8–10, 2013	One Million Bones	The Art of Revolution stages the "One Million Bones" exhibit on the central green space of the National Mall. The event lays out one million hand-crafted "bones" as a call to action against genocide in places such as Sudan, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Myanmar, Somalia, and Syria.	National Mall	First Amendment Events	Lonnae O'Neal Parker, "'Million Bones' will cover the Mall to raise genocide awareness," *Washington Post*, June 8, 2013.
2016	August 25, 2016	National Park Service Centennial Celebration	National Mall and Memorial Parks celebrates the 100th anniversary of the National Pak Service with a week-long celebration. On August 25, the date of the 100th birthday, more than 1,000 participants assemble into a "living Arrowhead" using brown, green, and white umbrellas on the Washington Monument Grounds	Washington Monument Grounds	Events/Celebrations	National Mall and Memorial Parks, "Centennial Celebration," accessed January 2, 2024 at https://www.nps.gov/nama/planyourvisit/centennial-celebration.htm.
2017	January 21, 2017	Women's March on Washington	On January 21, 2017, around 500,000 people participate in a demonstration against the incoming Trump administration and its policies regarding abortion rights, affordable health care, equal pay, and action on climate change.	Ellipse and National Mall	First Amendment Events	Ellen McCarthy, Lavanya Ramanathan, and Maura Judkis, "Many find solidarity -- and catharsis -- at the Women's March on Washington," *Washington Post*, January 22, 2017.
2019	July 4, 2019	Salute to America	President Trump holds the Salute to America event on July 4th, 2019, to coincide with Independence Day celebrations. The event, held on the National Mall and at the Lincoln Memorial, includes an address by President Trump, presentations of military vehicles, flyovers, and a fireworks display. It is the first time a US president addresses a crowd at the National Mall on Independence Day in 68 years.	National Mall	Events/Celebrations	National Park Service, "Secretary Bernhardt Announces Events for 2019 Independence Day Celebration in the Nation's Capital" Press Release, June 19, 2019, accessed December 7, 2023, at https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1207/secretary-bernhardt-announces-events-for-2019-independence-day-celebration-in-the-nation-s-capital.htm.
2020	August, 2020	The Empty Event	A group called the Live Events Coalition sets up 48 empty tables on the National Mall Wednesday evening to highlight how the COVID-19 pandemic has pummeled its members' businesses.	National Mall	First Amendment Events	Andrew Beaujon, "48 Empty Tables on the Mall Will Represent How the Pandemic Has Clobbered the Live Events Business," *Washingtonian*, August 5, 2020.

YEAR	DATE	EVENT	DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	THEME	SOURCE
2021	January 6, 2021	Save America Rally and January 6th Capitol Attack	After former Vice President Joe Biden defeats President Donald Trump in the presidential election of 2020, Trump supporters hold a rally at the Ellipse on January 6, 2021, the day Congress is scheduled to certify the election. President Trump refuses to concede the election, asserting that he had won and that there was widespread election fraud. The crowd marches to the Capitol in an attempt to stop the certification. The rioters shatter windows, vandalize and loot the Capitol interior, and ransack congressional offices.	Ellipse and National Mall	First Amendment Events	"January 6 U.S. Capitol Attack." Encyclopedia Britannica. https://www.britannica.com/event/January-6-U-S-Capitol-attack.
2021	January 20, 2021	Inauguration of Joe Biden	The inauguration of Joe Biden takes place during COVID-19 pandemic with an extremely limited live audience, just weeks after the Capitol was stormed by a mob on January 6. Despite significant security concerns, the ceremony is held outside. The National Mall is closed to the public. Instead, the Mall holds a public art display of 191,500 flags and 56 pillars of light, representing COVID-19 deaths and the 50 states, five territories, and the District of Columbia.	West Front of the Capitol	Inaugurations	Adam Edelman, "Biden Plans 'America United' Inauguration Theme," NBC News, January 11, 2021, https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/white-house/biden-plans-america-united-inauguration-theme-n1253715.; Paul D. Shinkman, "National Guard at Capitol Authorized to Use Lethal Force in Aftermath of Mob," U.S. News, January 14, 2021, https://www.usnews.com/news/national-news/articles/2021-01-14/national-guard-at-capitol-authorized-to-use-lethal-force-in-aftermath-of-mob.
2021	September 17, 2021	Installation "In America: Remember"	For more than two weeks, starting September 17, 2021, more than 600,000 white flags fill the National Mall, symbolizing the lives lost to COVID-19. The art installation, titled In America: Remember, is created by Suzanne Brennan Firstenberg, the Washington, DC, social practice artist.	Washington Monument Grounds	First Amendment Events	Jonathan Franklin, "More Than 600,000 White Flags On The National Mall Honor Lives Lost To COVID," NPR, September 17, 2021.

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