received 49 percent of the twenty thousand responses. Four others received from 7 to 17 percent of the votes, while Barnard's ranked last with 6 percent. Late in 1918, however, a British centennial committee decided that both statues were acceptable and that each one should be placed in a suitable location. In the summer of 1920 Saint-Gaudens's version was unveiled in London's Parliament Square, to the applause of ranking British and American officials. Ten months earlier, though, Barnard's egalitarian Lincoln was well received in Manchester, a city, as one observer put it, "closer to America in thought than any part of the British Isles." Thus two different representations of American democracy and aesthetic values came to be situated in disparate venues abroad. The dispute at home as to which was preferable persisted. The Saint-Gaudens is moving and more familiar; but Barnard's statue remains an extraordinary work of empathetic art.[35]

Although the idealization of Lincoln in his memorial became consensual within a decade—outside the former Confederacy, at least—it did not forestall a fresh storm forming over a comparable shrine in the later 1930s. The approaching bicentennial of Jefferson's birth in 1943 prompted the organization in 1935 of a memorial commission responsible for selecting a site, an architect, and a design to honor the third president and principal author of the Declaration of Independence. Because Jefferson was considered a founder of the Democratic Party and remained a partisan figure until the early twentieth century, momentum for his memorial and for a suitable site took a while to catch on and get mobilized. Initial proposals in 1936–37 for Hains Point along the Potomac went nowhere, and proponents of the Tidal Basin, also near the Potomac, met with bitter resistance because disciples of Teddy Roosevelt had envisioned that site as a prime location for a memorial to their hero. The Fine Arts Commission (FAC) went to extraordinary lengths in attempting to block the Jeffersonians' bid for Hains Point, even publishing a pamphlet attacking the location as inappropriate.[36]

What helped the FAC succeed on the question of location was the overwhelming grandiosity of the memorial envisioned by the Thomas Jefferson Memorial Commission. Its original plan called for twice the bulk and a structure twenty-one feet higher than the Lincoln Memorial. It would be a case of gigantism yet again. Moreover, the memorial commission had already committed itself to John Russell Pope, a

skilled exponent of classicism who had lost out to Bacon in competition for the Lincoln design in 1912. The Jeffersonians wanted a Roman memorial dedicated to the memory of the father of American classicism and rejected any sort of utilitarian remembrance. They were determined to have a shrine. Early in 1937 the commission accepted Pope's plan for a Pantheon modeled on the Roman temple built by Agrippa and rebuilt by Emperor Hadrian in the second century A.D.[37]

Conservatives in the art world offered moderate support, but modernists took great offense and protested vociferously. Letters and derisive manifestos flooded the FAC.

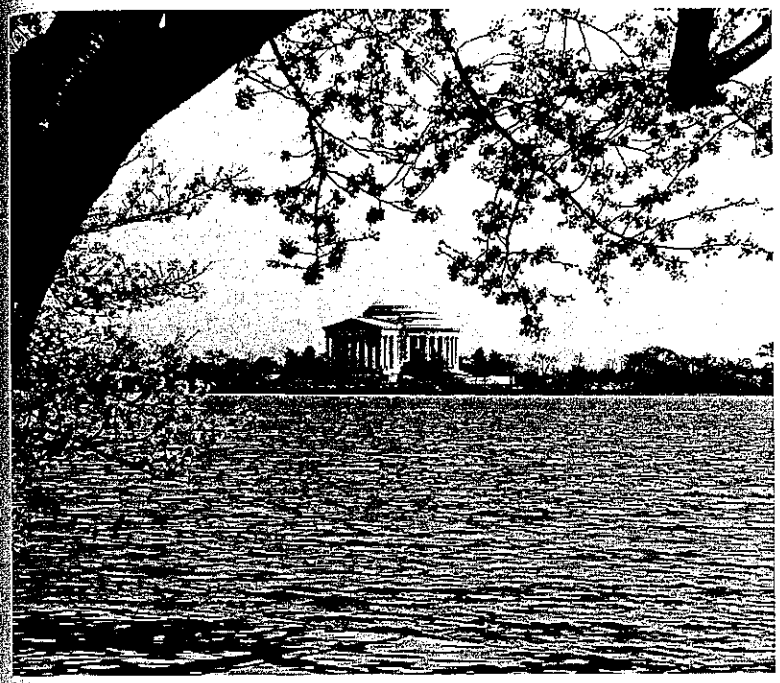
- Milton Horn, president of the American Sculptors Society, wrote: "To Jefferson, to whom simplicity and truth were a motive of life, they have now elected to erect an empty shell which possesses not even the kernel of these; a hollow mockery of a spirit which embodies an ideal; a useless structure to symbolize a useful life. . . . Its growth is not natural to our soil; its derivation is from the dead. Like a cadaver, it cannot function." Echoes of Lewis Mumford on Lincoln's mausoleum.
- Talbot Hamlin and others from the League for Progress in Architecture described a "pompous pile," barren, joyless, and unknown to Jefferson's spirit.
- Frank Lloyd Wright once again provided predictable hostility: "Instead of a monument I advocated a memorial, the difference being that the monument saw life a corpse and the memorial saw the spirit alive, not withstanding. A monument is no real honor to the dead. It is set up to put certain people on good terms with themselves. . . . Thomas Jefferson? Were that gentleman alive today he would be the first to condemn the stupid erudition mistaken in his honor."[38]

Sensitive to this onslaught of opposition, Congress blocked the appropriation of funds for construction, and the memorial commission had to reconsider its priorities. Republicans who did not want to glorify a Democratic founder evoked still other reasons for opposition. How could millions be spent on this project during such a severe depression? And the eloquent Jefferson could be quoted from 1786 when he responded to a proposed sculpture of George Washington: "I think a modern in antique dress is just an object of ridicule." (No one

seems to have cited that line to Horatio Greenough in 1842.) But the memorial commission observed that if Jefferson had been modern and radical, as the enthusiasts for progressive architecture insisted, he made classicism the "modern" of his own time. As Fiske Kimball, an eminent architectural historian, Jefferson specialist, and strong-minded director of the Philadelphia Museum, put it, let us give Jefferson his due, "and then let us turn to the task of infusing the architecture of Washington with modern character."[39]

The commission found itself caught in a crossfire between opponents of the New Deal who really wanted no memorial at all and modernists who admired Jefferson but wanted something utilitarian and functional to honor this innovative and versatile figure. The weakness in that position emerged from recognition that the history of "living memorials" showed, as Kimball observed, that "the utilitarian side soon dominates over the commemorative, even to the extent of completely effacing it." Bitter backing-and-forthing occurred in 1937–38, but the Jeffersonians had a crucial ally who made all the difference. Franklin Delano Roosevelt liked Pope's Pantheon plan. Once FDR endorsed it in 1937 and the Democratic Congress approved a $3 million appropriation early in 1938, the commission's design succeeded. Although bickering continued, the outcome was no longer in doubt.[40]

So neoclassicism won outright. "Colossal" had to be toned down just a bit because engineers projected that if the proposed memorial was actually built at Pope's intended scale, it would sink into the marshy lip of the Tidal Basin. So it ended up big, but not *that* big (fig. 17). When preparations for construction began, a fierce finale ensued that was largely local in nature yet highly visible because it was so risible. Many people in the Washington area enjoyed the scenic beauty of Potomac Park but particularly the several thousand cherry trees given by a grateful Japanese government after Teddy Roosevelt provided successful arbitration in the Russo-Japanese War of 1905–06. The Tidal Basin had been ringed by those trees, and quite a few—some estimates reached as high as seven hundred—would have to be removed to make room for the memorial. Angry citizens, many of them socially prominent women, actually tied themselves to cherry trees in order to forestall the menacing bulldozers, backhoes, and workmen with shovels. Hotel associations, women's clubs, and civic groups voiced their opposition to the violation of a beloved venue. The *Washington Times and Herald* denounced this act of aggression with the same animus it had aimed against the New Deal.[41]



17. The Jefferson Memorial with cherry blossoms (1946), Washington, D.C.
Division of Prints and Photographs, Library of Congress.

Construction went forward in 1939, and the memorial was dedicated on Jefferson's two hundredth birthday, April 13, 1943. In a very real sense it was a deeply conservative, tradition-bound structure; but the memorial commission and FDR seemed vindicated by its solemn beauty and the serene dignity of Jefferson's statue within. His erect bearing offered the only nod toward modernity. Daniel Chester French's Lincoln is seated, like Greenough's *Washington*. Jefferson stands alone; and he does stand as many Americans had felt their most admired statesmen should. So after all that contestation this memorial became a swift success. The rancor from 1936–39 faded more quickly than such hostilities had previously, perhaps pushed from view by the immediacy of World War II. Whatever the reason, this controversy vanished with few traces, along with the displaced cherry trees.

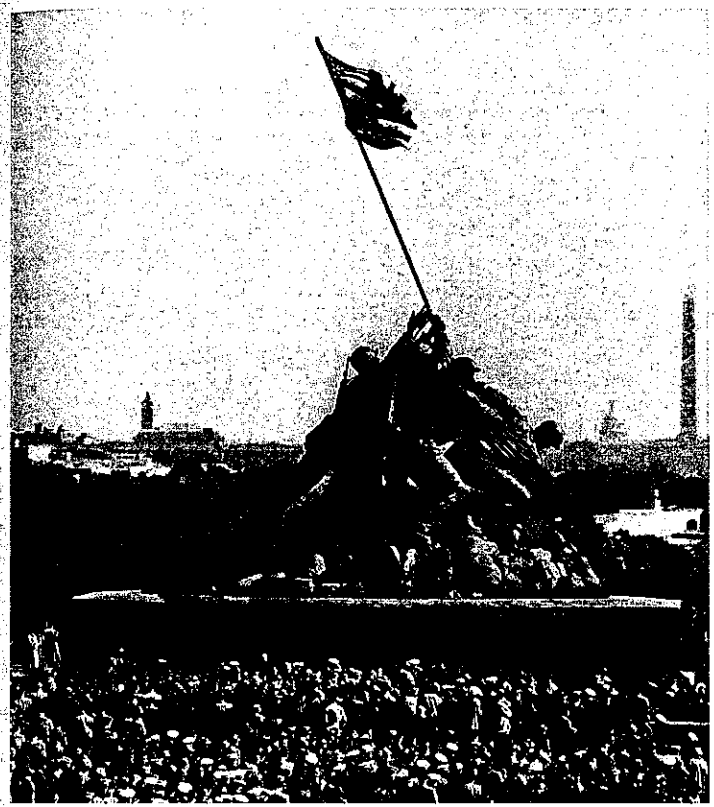
. . .

Just across the Potomac the Marine Corps War Memorial, completed in 1954 on the west flank of Arlington National Cemetery, provoked several of the issues that by now seem so familiar. The most prominent, perhaps, involves a curious kind of reversal. This dynamic depiction of six marines raising the American flag amid bitter fighting early in 1945 on Mount Suribachi, Iwo Jima, and supposedly based upon the famous photograph taken by Joe Rosenthal, was realistic down to the most minute detail, yet a large segment of the art world responded negatively because ultrarealism in monuments had become rather passé by the mid-1950s. More symbolic work was then in vogue. Austrian-born sculptor Felix de Weldon began the project in a classical mode, even modeling all of the servicemen in the nude in order to accentuate their physical strain before adding the details of their uniforms and accoutrements (which he described in academic terms as "drapery").[42]

Once again we have a notable instance of American gigantism. In 1947–48, when few observers not involved with the marines regarded de Weldon's design as appropriate, he decided to double the projected scale. At that point the Fine Arts Commission rejected the plan's "colossal size" as excessive. De Weldon persisted doggedly, however, permitting some stylistic adjustments in the configuration of men and eliminating walks and crypts that he had planned but making no concessions at all about size.[43]

The finalized figures cast in 1953 are aggrandized and idealized on a huge scale, standing thirty-two feet tall and struggling to raise a flagpole seventy-eight feet long (from which an actual cloth flag flies). Taken together with its base, the Marine Corps War Memorial achieves the height of a five-story building. It is the largest piece of bronze statuary in the world (fig. 18). The impression is one of Herculean effort undertaken in battle fatigues. And at the time of dedication in November 1954 the Marine Corps released a promotional film about the statue titled *Uncommon Valor.* As critical art historian Albert Boime has observed, the work "succeeds in entirely occupying consciousness and allowing nothing else to mentally coexist with it at the moment of contemplation."[44]

The Marine Corps Memorial Commission, initiated and promoted by the corps' top command rather than by the civilian side of the federal government, involved two controversial features not yet mentioned, though neither one hinged upon artistic matters. Following World War II serious consideration was given to folding the corps into the regular army or navy. Marines no longer seemed to serve a unique function, and considerable amounts of money could be saved by eliminating the redundancies of an entirely separate administrative structure. The Marine Corps commander, however, aware of deep-seated loyalties to a distinctive institution that had begun with the American Revolution, managed to finesse the issue by energetically pursuing his objective of a highly visible icon that could solidify the marines' place



18. Felix de Weldon, The Marine Corps War Memorial (1954), Arlington, Virginia.
Division of Prints and Photographs, Library of Congress.

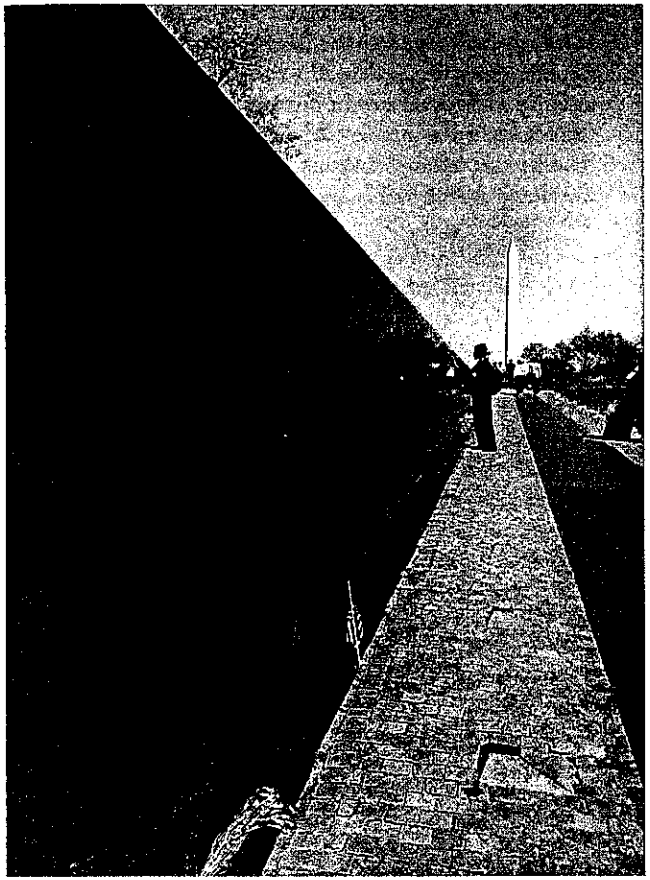
as a historically discrete and heroic component of the nation's fighting force.[45]

Even though the private War Memorial Foundation raised the necessary funds and paid for the entire project (the $850,000 cost of actual construction was largely gleaned from members of the corps), the prime site location still required congressional approval. That would be tricky to obtain for historical reasons of sectional chauvinism. The statue's black rectangular base is ringed with the inscribed names of every American conflict in which the marines have been participants, including some rather minor ones. But southern congressmen were not about to let the words *Civil War* appear in the narrative sequence because that was not what southerners called that event. They preferred War Between the States and successfully blocked approval until they got their way.[46]

At some point, apparently during the 1960s and 1970s, the notion of "heroic art" came to seem outdated to many artists. That would contribute significantly to the contretemps between those who admire Maya Lin's austere, minimalist Vietnam Veterans Memorial and those who demanded (and prefer) Frederick Hart's *Three Servicemen* (1984), which was meant to provide representational balance. Some critics have found it curious that instead of being involved in some sort of patriotic or military activity, like the marines on Iwo Jima, Hart's soldiers seem to be engaging the viewer, almost in confrontation but perhaps in conversation (fig. 5). Others, however, have stressed the essential complementarity of the two projects, viewing each one as completing the other.[47]

In at least one important respect, sentiments prominently engaged by the Vietnam Veterans Memorial hark back to a central motive underlying the Lincoln Memorial: a felt need to bind up bitter divisions. The dedication day invocation on November 11, 1982, highlighted these words: "Let the Memorial begin the healing process and forever stand as a symbol of our national unity." Corporal Jan Scruggs, the army veteran of that war who in 1979 initiated the successful campaign to have a privately funded memorial, assured veterans' organizations during the money-raising campaign the following year that the memorial "will stand as a symbol of our unity as a nation and as a focal point for all Americans regardless of their views on Vietnam."[48]

Now that the Vietnam Veterans Memorial has become the most



19. Maya Lin, The Vietnam Veterans Memorial (1982), Washington, D.C.
Division of Prints and Photographs, Library of Congress.

popular in Washington, it is easy to forget just how bitterly it was contested at the outset—far more than the Marine Corps War Memorial. One veteran described the design as "the most insulting and demeaning memorial to our experience that was possible . . . a degrading ditch." Some actually found the dark stone humiliating: "Black is the universal color of shame, sorrow and degradation in all races, all soci-

eties worldwide" (fig. 19). For others the fact of sinking the memorial into the earth seemed an admission that the United States had committed crimes in Vietnam. The wall was also reviled as "an open urinal," "a wailing wall for anti-draft demonstrators," a "tribute to Jane Fonda," and a "perverse prank." Those determined to memorialize women who had served in Southeast Asia also felt aggrieved and did not achieve the satisfaction of a separate monument until 1993.[49]

Friction and disputes generated by the prospective Korean War Memorial in 1989–92 were somewhat less noisy yet no less nasty. Political maneuvering and bureaucratic infighting persisted but remained relatively less visible to the general public than the standoff of a decade earlier. More than 54,000 Americans lost their lives in the inconclusive Korean conflict (1950–53) that left the peninsula divided following a cease-fire. By the later 1980s it had come to be called the "forgotten war," but Congress finally remedied that embarrassment by approving a 7.5-acre site near the Lincoln Memorial southwest of the reflecting pool, a kind of symmetrical pendant to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial located on the opposite side.[50]

A team of structural and landscape architects from Pennsylvania State University won an open competition against 540 other entries, selected by a jury comprised of ten Korean War veterans. The design envisioned thirty-eight soldiers moving calmly across a remote and semiwooded mountain ridge toward an American flag. Rather than appearing battle ready, their work is apparently done and they are peacefully homeward-bound. The flag represents that goal: patriotic duty has been fulfilled and they are leaving warlike imperatives behind. That winning schematization was displayed at the White House during the summer of 1989, then turned over for implementation to the Cooper-Lecky architectural firm in Washington, the same group that had handled the realization of Maya Lin's design in 1981–82.[51]

This time, however, Cooper-Lecky made major changes at the behest of the American Battle Monuments Commission, a group of retired military officers who had become increasingly aggressive in lobbying for their goals, which emphasized artistic realism and glory for the U.S. armed forces. Consequently an imperfectly landscaped but thoughtful allegory gave way to a highly realistic scene in which thirty-eight fully equipped and battle-ready "grunts" (the number

being emblematic of the thirty-eighth parallel) are prepared for imminent danger and action against the backdrop of a long wall on which the faces of actual participants, found in the archives, were to be etched. From the perspective of most critics, the only way in which this design represented an improvement involved modestly superior landscaping and numerous pathways to make the memorial more accessible to large numbers of visitors. Some called it a "G.I. Joe battle scene" that glorified war![52]

Those who disapproved of such an intensely militarized configuration regarded the multiple pathways as reminders of an interchange on a major interstate highway. At the close of 1990 the winning design team brought a $500,000 lawsuit in federal court against Cooper-Lecky and the American Battle Monuments Commission in an unsuccessful effort to have their original concept restored. Meanwhile no less than half a dozen federal agencies and commissions passed judgment on both proposals, finding fault with each and vindicating in the process those who had been wondering ever since the 1970s whether

20. Cooper-Lecky architects, The Korean War Memorial (1995), Washington, D.C.

public art could be successfully created in a democracy whose avenues were so clogged with special interest groups and bureaucratic bodies.[53]

Ultimately the Fine Arts Commission, still chaired by J. Carter Brown, reluctantly approved a scaled-down version of the Cooper-Lecky plan. Now nineteen stainless-steel soldiers wearing wind-blown ponchos over full battle gear remained, wary of the enemy though ready for combat and larger than life at seven feet tall—but with the backdrop of actual vignettes faintly visible across a black billboard wall. The FAC had criticized the Cooper-Lecky design for its lack of focus and excessive sprawl. The version approved early in 1992 did achieve greater cohesion than either of the two competitors that had engaged in bitter combat in 1990–91. Even so, the finalized version dedicated on July 27, 1995, still appeared more like an outdoor museum than a proper memorial and received many unfavorable comparisons with the Vietnam Veterans Memorial (fig. 20). The dissenting member of the FAC complained that the design "looks like a football game in the rain."[54]

While this protracted duel between competing firms passed through its most intense phase, observers called the sticky situation a "political quagmire." Funding never became an issue, however, because in 1986 Congress passed the Commemorative Works Act, which requires groups not only to receive site and design approval but to find most of the money they need on their own. The requisite $15 million was raised privately, mainly from Korean War veterans and from Hyundai, the Korean automobile manufacturer. This controversy had been a struggle over how an inconclusive war in an alien land should be presented to the public and remembered by posterity. Because so many other memorials were being proposed and considered at the time, astute observers realized that much was at stake, above all a precedent for future monuments and how they would be chosen.[55]

More than a few authorities began to express doubts about the logic and desirability of open competitions such as the one held in 1989. Perhaps invited competitions limited to a few prestigious firms might be more viable, or else a flat-out commission to one eminent architect with a distinguished track record regarding the objective at hand. By the early 1990s it seemed as though the devotees of totally open, democratic procedures were having second thoughts about the merits of inclusiveness and transparency. In the case of the Korean War Memorial, those qualities, effectively compromised by special interests

and multiple commissions, had caused nothing but trouble and left no one fully satisfied.[56]

Model designs for a Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial in Washington first appeared in 1961, seven years after Congress approved the idea, but then received a long series of rejections. Once again a familiar story unfolded: its supporters argued that a great president belonged somewhere on or very near the Mall so that the only man elected president four times would be honored in a manner physically proximate to Washington, Lincoln, and Jefferson. Admirers succeeded in gaining approval for a strip of land along the Potomac quite near the Tidal Basin. Questions of design, however, became more complicated and generated decades of conflict. Everyone finally seemed prepared to move beyond neoclassicism toward modernism, but just *how* to do so would not be easy to determine because innovative work normally lacks the clear criteria that are used to assess customary architecture.

Gigantism emerged yet again as the dominant impulse in an open design competition. A model for what seemed the successful entry in 1961 showed eight concrete steles finished in white marble 172 feet high, elliptically arranged, on which extracts from FDR's speeches and Fireside Chats could be displayed. Besides the predictable complaint that the configuration suggested a surreal vision of "instant Stonehenge," the megaliths looking ready to shield some hapless Flintstones from their foes, a familiar question was heard: Why not honor the president with something useful rather than symbolic—perhaps a totally new kind of playground for children (possibly handicapped children), or a specialized reference library devoted to the Four Freedoms, or a modern recreation building of some sort?[57] Those suggestions went unheeded because by then the laudatory pattern had been too well established: Americans might admire utility, but they honored great leaders with expensive symbolic structures better suited for contemplation than for social improvement.

In 1962 the federal Fine Arts Commission rejected the huge steles, despite warm praise from many architectural critics. In 1964 it approved a revised version, by which time the memorial commission chose to solicit an entirely new plan. In 1966 the pattern of contested success persisted. Marcel Breuer and Herbert Beckhard submitted a scheme using rough granite slabs seventy-three feet high flanked by water. There would be a central cube thirty-two feet high made of

21. The Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial (1997). FDR with Fala, Washington, D.C.
Division of Prints and Photographs, Library of Congress.

black polished granite with a profile of FDR cut into one side. Visitors would be able to hear recordings of Roosevelt's speeches and chats. One hostile critic called the design a "transistorized FDR." Another declared in hearings before the memorial commission that the architects had "scattered granite to the winds and sown a crop of grossness." Although the memorial commission approved this plan, the Fine Arts Commission rejected it, thereby reversing the sequence of ups and downs four years earlier.[58]

The notion of a small "campus" had been planted, however, dividing the seven acres into a series of defined spaces devoted to phases of FDR's presidency, such as providing for the jobless and hungry during the Depression and winning World War II. That concept would eventually be realized in the successful design by Lawrence Halprin in 1978, though Congress did not actually appropriate funds to implement it until 1990, thirty-six years after it first created the FDR Memorial Commission and planning began (fig. 21). Yet another common denominator: these matters move very slowly in a democracy. Wolf von Eckardt, an architectural and design critic, observed in 1982

that "no democracy can function without its experts. Experts, or professionals, are the gears that keep democracy in motion."[59] Yet they and the people's representatives seem to perpetrate a kind of perpetual slow motion.

One other intense issue arose. Disabled Americans protested bitterly because they hoped that this memorial might make FDR a symbolic figure for their cause, one that might win more sympathetic legislation for the disabled from Congress. The finished plans did not show FDR in a wheelchair. In fact, there was no visual cue of any sort acknowledging his crippled condition resulting from polio. The memorial commission rejected such appeals, citing the dilemmas of cost and delay if changes were to be made. Architect Halprin, on the other hand, insisted that cost was not the real issue. "Roosevelt was very desirous of keeping his disability out of the limelight," he explained. "We're not trying to hide it, but it would be going against his desire to evidence it in a sculpture." Disappointed authorities on Roosevelt's life expressed their dismay, agreeing that to depict FDR in several sections of the memorial without ever indicating his disability at all would amount to a denial of history. They lost initially, but at the very last "minute," in July 1997, Congress responded to pressure from the "disability lobby" and passed a joint resolution requiring that Roosevelt be shown in a wheelchair. That statue was unveiled and dedicated in January 2001.[60]

The most recent commemorative controversy centered, once again, on familiar issues: site, scale, and design. Although the challenges offered were heartfelt and hard fought, approval for the World War II Memorial by several different commissions and the president ultimately occurred with somewhat less delay than usual because plausibly worthy venues did not come to mind readily or recommend themselves as alternatives to the midway point on the Mall between the Washington Monument and the Lincoln Memorial, just at the east end of the Reflecting Pool and surrounding the so-called Rainbow Pool.[61]

A member of Congress first proposed the memorial in 1987 when a constituent who happened to be a veteran inquired wistfully about the absence of any monument to the sixteen million who served and the 400,000 who died between 1941 and 1945. Eight years later the idea finally began to receive serious consideration, and four hundred

ican dream that World War II veterans, and civilians, fought and worked to preserve.[65]

Once the National Park Service and President Bill Clinton added their approval, however, charges of "ugly triumphalism" and "aesthetic travesty" became less common because the battle had been lost; but one final issue remained and emerged in 2001. News leaked out in June that one of the two companies selected to build the memorial, Tompkins Builders of Washington, D.C., a subsidiary of J.A. Jones, Inc., of Charlotte, N.C., is actually owned by a German construction giant that used workers from concentration camps during the war and had agreed to contribute to a $4.5 billion fund to compensate slave and forced laborers during the Nazi era. The president of Tompkins, Edward Small, offered a vigorous response: "Let me tell you this—it's awful. Me being Jewish, it upsets me to no end. We're hard-working loyal Americans and these complaints are not only inappropriate, they're un-American. I wonder how many of the people making the complaints are driving Volkswagens and Mercedeses and BMW's." A spokesman for the Battle Monuments Commission explained that the

23. Wreath of honor beneath a baldachin, World War II Memorial.

selection of contractors had been based on bid level, experience on comparable projects, and past performance. After that the work proceeded without interruption.[66]

When the completed memorial opened to the public in late April 2004, a full month prior to the official dedication day, initial accounts barely mentioned any history of controversy. Media reports focused on the responses of placated veterans and curious tourists who appeared on the initial days and were available for quick interviews and sound bites. One elderly veteran confessed to feeling mixed emotions: pride in his military service but bewilderment at what the memorial might mean to younger generations lacking knowledge of the war. But complaints about St. Florian's "classical vocabulary" were gone, and so were court challenges.[67] Because St. Florian had, in fact, lowered his granite plaza into the ground and reduced the height of his pillars, the vista up and down the length of the Mall might be considered interrupted but not obstructed. As quickly as the Jefferson Memorial had gained acceptance, so did the one to those who served in World War II (fig. 23). Well, it won acceptance perhaps, but with tepid praise.

Just when the memorial was becoming a fait accompli, Michael Kimmelman, chief art critic for the *New York Times,* declared that "memorials are intended, even if not explicitly, to stimulate debate. Otherwise they aren't doing their job, which is to keep the subjects memorialized on the public's front burner."[68] A provocative observation, but is it valid? Those who commission memorials expect to feel that they made a wise choice, and those who design them understandably aspire to success. They may very well seek to innovate, but iconoclasm is highly risky in the realm of commemorative memorials. If it backfires, new commissions may not be coming along anytime soon.

Robert Mills, George Grey Barnard, Lawrence Halprin, and Maya Lin all designed monuments quite radical and unexpected for their time and assigned place. Horatio Greenough, Henry Bacon, John Russell Pope, and Felix de Weldon fell back on tradition-oriented types of designs. Yet all eight of them knew full well that they would almost inevitably prompt political as well as artistic debate. Nevertheless, each one hoped the controversy would be brief and that his or her work would enjoy speedy acceptance. Essentially, each design did just that, except for Greenough's and perhaps Barnard's (beyond Cincinnati). Greenough's *Washington* seems to have violated just too many taboos. And as a hybrid—the president's head on a Roman body, and an Italian

work for an American place of honor—it seems to have been destined for dispute and exile from its preassigned place. Precedents and parameters of possibility had thereby been established.

Meanwhile an unresolved dispute involving the possibility of an underground visitors' center for the Washington Monument continued to simmer. The idea was initially debated in 1966 in the context of a landscaping overhaul for the Mall, then resurfaced in 1973 as part of a National Park Service (NPS) proposal. Following two decades of quiescence the concept reemerged in revised form in 1993 but was rejected by congressional budget drafters. In 2001 the NPS introduced its plan once again, this time with guidance from an architectural firm, and won conceptual approval from the National Capital Planning Commission. In the wake of the terrorist attack on September 11, 2001, however, the designation changed from a Washington Monument Visitor Center Plan to a Washington Monument Permanent Security Improvement.[69]

Critics have offered many objections, claiming that the Park Service was hoping to realize a pet project by invoking anxiety about national security. They also argue that an underground center intended to bring tourists by bus from an off-site security screening facility could destabilize soil beneath the monument and clutter the Mall with above-ground structural accessories. Between 2001 and 2003 local engineers testified at hearings that the risks of structural disaster to the monument's fifteen-foot-thick walls from hand-carried explosives are slight given proper security measures, and they have said that adding a tunnel would create greater hazards than it would solve. The National Coalition to Save Our Mall, the same group that led the fight against the World War II Memorial, rejected the notion that the underground proposal really had anything to do with security—insisting that that served only as a pretext, citing the fact that the current proposal is virtually the same as the 1993 version.[70]

Subsequent soil-settlement surveys suggested that building a seventeen-foot-wide tunnel, if done properly, would not adversely affect the stability of the monument. Opponents responded in 2003 by pointing out that the Park Service had issued no detailed plans for an independent expert review and has no intention of doing so. The underground concourse was part of a larger scheme that included stone walls encircling the monument and is intended to replace a temporary ring of concrete barriers erected in the wake of 9/11 that are meant to prevent explosive-laden vehicles from approaching too near.

That is the "clutter" that could violate the integrity of the monument as it has existed since its completion in 1885, which appeals to traditionalists and purists. Hence the beat goes on, and so does conflict concerning the Mall and its memorials as sacred space that should not be violated by change, even in response to new challenges. It's a familiar story, and the antecedent issues deserve much broader attention than they have received.

Believe it or not, a brand-new statue of Abraham Lincoln could cause considerable consternation as recently as 2003, and once again the National Park Service was directly involved. How and why? Because the venue for this monument is the main visitor center at the historic Tredegar Iron Works in Richmond, Virginia. The idea seems to have been conceived by a black historian who supports Confederate heritage groups, but it was implemented, promoted, and paid for by the U.S. Historical Society, a private organization that raised money for the project by selling replicas of the life-size statue, which shows Lincoln seated on a bench with his son Tad. The president made a very brief visit to Richmond on April 4, 1865, just one day after the Confederate government evacuated the city, as a deliberate gesture of reconciliation. The NPS agreed to accept the donation "to be used as outdoor interpretive exhibitry." It would sit on a 2,800-square-foot plaza in front of a granite wall into which words from Lincoln's second inaugural address would be carved: "To bind up the nation's wounds."[71]

Needless to say, when the Sons of Confederate Veterans (SCV) got wind of this enterprise in 2002, the organization protested bitterly, asking whether anyone could imagine a statue of Hitler being placed in Paris, or for that matter one of Churchill being erected in Moscow. Those opposed to the statue explained that they considered its placement at a major Confederate landmark "a gratuitous measure of disrespect to people of Southern heritage." Ron Wilson, national commander of the SCV, declared, "We are going to fight these people everywhere they raise their head." The state's lieutenant governor (and a former mayor of Richmond) responded that the opponents were largely not from Richmond. "They feel they have a right to tell us in Richmond how to do our business. They are wrong. We claim Abraham Lincoln as a brother. We claim Abraham Lincoln as a Virginian."[72]

Many southerners regarded such words as nothing less than treason, of course. On April 5, 2003, while New York sculptor David Frech's statue was being unveiled and dedicated, one hundred members of the SCV went to the Hollywood Cemetery in Richmond, where many of the Confederacy's politicians and civic leaders are buried, as well as eighteen thousand Civil War soldiers. Bragdon Bowling, the Virginia division commander of the SCV, protested that "they have no concept of history and how it might be the wrong place to put the statue. As a Southerner, I'm offended. . . . What's next, a statue of Sherman in Atlanta?" Harold Holzer, a prominent scholar based at the Metropolitan Museum of Art who specializes in Lincoln iconography, found the image entirely appropriate and explained that the statue should serve as a historic symbol of unity and national reconciliation. Well, perhaps one day it will, but not quite yet.[73]

At year's end the principal Richmond newspaper ran a review of the year's most important local news—in verse. The lead item addresses our concern.

> The Southern partisans were in a funk
> Not seen since Reconstruction;
> They hadn't dreamed such awful junk
> Would get a Richmond introduction.
> Yet there it was, that heap of slag—
> A piece of "art" so ugly that you
> Would buckle at the knees and gag—
> The city's own **Abe Lincoln statue.**[74]

The designers of monuments and memorials, most often architects, tend to dream and think big. By the early twentieth century, one could not design and build without winning some sort of competition. The countervailing reality, however, is that funds are never sufficient to fulfill these dreams; and therefore compromises become necessary. More often than not, they result in an improvement. The unavoidable process of negotiation has its positive aspects.

CHAPTER 2

Nudity, Decency, and Morality

Nudity, sexuality, and related matters that might be considered under the catch-all category of "decency" have been pervasive and persistent problems for quite some time in American visual culture. As we have seen, a sculpture of George Washington unclothed from the waist up became a source of public consternation and derision. The issue of decency was neither new nor even distinctively American, though it seems to have been considerably more provocative here than in Europe. A powerful cardinal and his allies at the Vatican accused Michelangelo of immorality and intolerable obscenity because naked figures with their genitalia showing appeared in *The Last Judgment.* When the pope responded that his jurisdiction did not extend to hell, the famous fresco survived untouched—until the Council of Trent, at least, almost a century later. But a cast of Michelangelo's *David* given to Queen Victoria in 1857 had fig leaves discreetly placed over the genitals when the statue was displayed at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London so that visits by aristocratic ladies would not become awkwardly indecorous. That practice ceased only in 1953.

When word reached the board of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in January 1886 that Thomas Eakins had removed the loincloth from a male model during an anatomy lecture attended by women, he was summoned to appear before the Committee on Instruction, interrogated, and then asked to resign his prestigious teaching position as principal instructor at the Life School. Although students there seem to have been deeply divided during this crisis, the