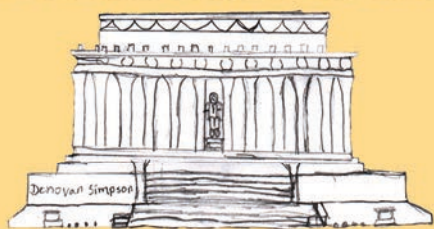


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Washington
Monument
by Taria

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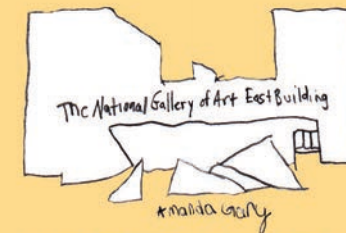


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Called to the Mall

STORIES ABOUT THE NATIONAL MALL

Edited by Louise Parker Kelley



THE MALL

Called to the Mall

An Anthology of Stories about the National Mall

edited by Louise Parker Kelley



Published by Shining Stars Montessori
Academy Public Charter School of
Washington, D.C., and the
National Mall Coalition

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Called to the Mall is an anthology of original essays and graphics about the National Mall in Washington, D.C. by Washington area public school students and adults.

COVER PHOTO: The colorful plan on the cover is the 1901-1902 McMillan Commission Plan for the National Mall, which is the basis for the Mall we know today, stretching from the Capitol Building to the Washington Monument westward to the Lincoln Memorial. This Plan developed and extended the original 1791 L'Enfant Plan for Washington, D.C., with the National Mall at its center. In both visionary plans, the Mall's monuments, public buildings, and open landscape were intended to embody America's founding principles and provide public space for use by the American people. Learn more about these visionary plans and National Mall history at www.nationalmallcoalition.org

*Establishing lasting peace is the work of education;
all politics can do is keep us out of war. –Maria Montessori*

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Introduction

*by Regina Rodriguez, Executive Director of
Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School*

How can we teach children how to be active citizens in a democracy? What can they teach us about what it means to effectively use the rights promised to us under the Bill of Rights? Why is learning about our history and heritage so important?

We can explore some of these questions here at Shining Stars Montessori Academy Public Charter School with the power of story. We read to the students about heroes who pursued justice and peace. We share what we have studied and encourage their curiosity as they plunge into research. Then, if we are wise, we get out of the way so the students can tell their stories about the people and events that matter to them.

And then, because we are fortunate enough to live here in the capital of the United States, we take them to the National Mall.

That's what we did with our young writers in September of 2016, when the Langston Hughes Stars class went to the Lincoln Memorial. The children read their essays, the stories they wanted to tell about the people and events that happened here on our American Acropolis; they were able to display the art they had created. I listened to these students that day and pondered how deeply they inspired me as they exercised the freedom of expression and the freedom of peaceful assembly.

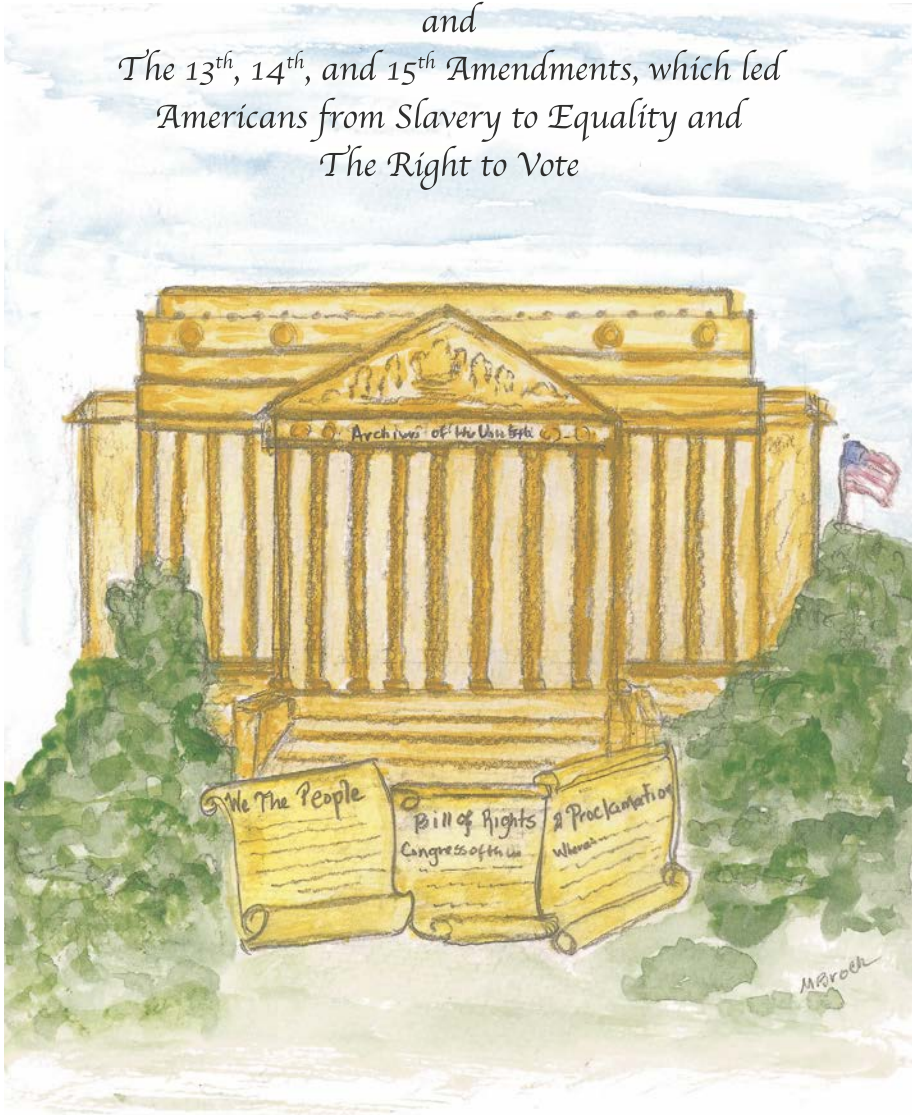
This happened because the students put their talents to work, and also because of the generous support of the National Mall Coalition. We then contacted the National Mall Coalition in the spring of 2017 and asked if we could take it to a higher level, and publish the student work. The answer was a welcome "yes," with a request that other writers from schools in Maryland and Virginia be invited to participate, as well as some adults with their own National Mall stories to tell.

In 2017, on September 25, the date in 1789 that the First Federal Congress of the United States proposed to the states the amendments to the Constitution we know as the Bill of Rights, we were once again Called to the Mall to share the glory of the story. Our Shining Stars spoke again of the National Mall. We came to tell our stories amidst the monuments of American democracy. We came with a book, and now, with this second edition, we tell even more – because there is always more to a story.

Section One

The 1st Amendment (beginning of The Bill of Rights),
with its guarantees of
Freedom of Religion
Freedom of Speech
Freedom of the Press
Peaceful Assembly
Petition the Government;
and

The 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments, which led
Americans from Slavery to Equality and
The Right to Vote



National Mall: Great Place to Be

by Eshan Timberlake, who is 10 years old

Many important things have happened at the National Mall. It looks like a big field with lots of grass, and some trees. Some of the walkways are made of gravel and sand and some of the streets around it have cobblestones. In the middle is something that looks like a giant blinking pencil and the end has a rectangle with a big turnip on it. The pencil is really a monument to George Washington and the rectangle with a turnip is the Capitol dome and the halls of Congress.

Barack Obama was the first African-American president of the United States of America. He gave a speech at his inaugural about everyone uniting in January of 2009. My National Mall was filled with thousands of people for that important day.

Another event on the Mall was called the Million Man March. Yes, a million men came to the Mall in 1995, to show everyone they could take being friends and brothers seriously. October of 2015 was the twentieth anniversary of the Million Man March.

In the future I really want all people to meet there and unite so we can all be peaceful and be friends. If we could do that then the Mall would really be great! Remember that the National Mall is a very, very important place. I want the Mall to be a place with way more than a million men there. I want a March to be called the Million People March this time, because there can't be only men. Women count, too.



National Mall's Freedom Statue

By Lindell Meta Murray, who is 11 years old

I remember when the National Mall was made. I remember being pulled up to my perch, here, on the top of what humans call 'The Capitol Dome,' by freed slaves after what they called 'the Civil War.' I will even remember you gazing at me from the ground next time you visit, 20 years in the future!

Who am I? I am Freedom. I remember when Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., gave his 'I have a Dream' speech in 1963. I remember when Marian Anderson performed at the Lincoln Memorial, in 1939. I could hear her beautiful, deep voice from here. She was supposed to sing at the DAR Constitution Hall but they wouldn't let her because she was African-American.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.? Oh, a great man, great man. He is a personal favorite of mine, because he fought for civil rights peacefully. I like being peaceful and fighting for freedom. It's in my name after all!

It is a shame that Dr. King was shot in 1968. Note to self: Forget the name of the guy who killed him. Sometimes I talk to his statue. Yes, Dr. King has a statue on the Mall too! He says "that means My Dream is finally coming true." Real quote from his statue, humans. Real quote!

Marian Anderson knew segregation was wrong, too. After being rejected by people at DAR Constitution Hall, she and her friend Eleanor Roosevelt got 75,000 people to come to her concert on the National Mall. When she finally got to sing, it was the most melodious voice I had ever heard. And trust me, I hear more voices every day than you can count!

But who was Eleanor Roosevelt? That's a LONG story. She's very famous. To think it all started with her marrying Franklin Roosevelt, who became President! Believe me, she is very interesting. I would tell you more about her if I had time, but it's almost time for me to get taken down from the Dome to get cleaned.

I remember everything from when I was put up here in 1863 to now. I have seen and heard it all. Now hear me. I am Freedom. Hear me roar. *

**Imagine a mash-up of Katie Perry's "Roar" and Helen Reddy's "I Am Woman."*



FREEDOM STATUE

Lindell

Presenting Marian Anderson

By Sydney Cuff, 11 years old

Marian Anderson was a beautiful and strong opera singer. She sang all over America and Europe. She was invited to sing in Washington, D.C., in 1939. At first she was supposed to sing at DAR Constitution Hall, but she couldn't because the man in charge didn't let African Americans sing there.

But then she got to sing at the Lincoln Memorial because Eleanor Roosevelt asked a friend, Harold Ickes, to let Marian Anderson sing there. She thought maybe everyone would not come because of what happened. Many people came. That day she sang the song "My Country 'Tis of Thee" and "Motherless Child" and other great songs she knew.

She sang at the Lincoln Memorial again at the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom.

When she performed, many people heard how proudly she sang and how great her voice sounded. She inspired all the people there that day on the National Mall. Marian Anderson continues to inspire people today. You can hear her sing on YouTube and other websites.



by Sydney Cuff

SSM APC5

Civil Rights Leader Bayard Rustin

By Leina Amah, 8 years old

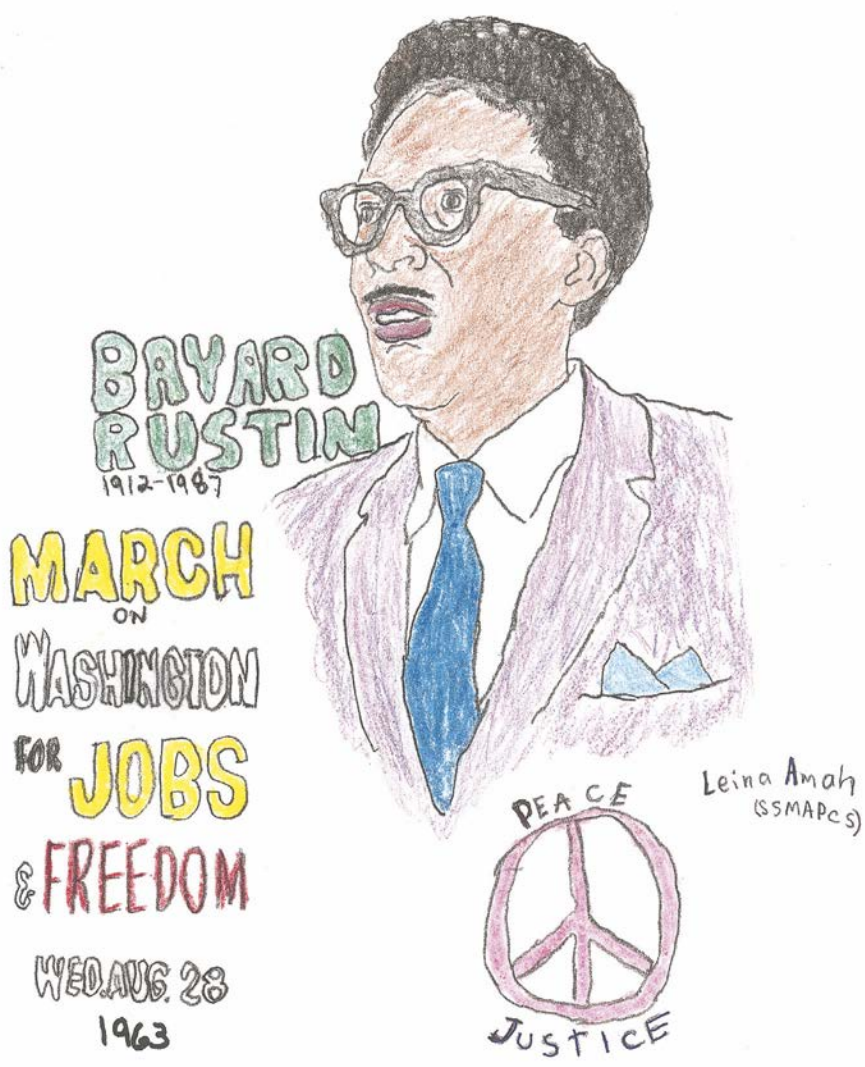
Bayard Rustin was the man who organized the big March on Washington of 1963. Two hundred and fifty thousand people came to the National Mall for the biggest ever yet protest for civil rights in American history. Bayard Rustin was a civil rights leader and peace activist. He is known for advice he gave to Martin Luther King, Jr. They were friends, too, in the 1950s and 1960s. They both worked together to end racism and segregation in America in a peaceful way.

Bayard Rustin was born in Pennsylvania in West Chester on March 17, in 1912. His mother was Florence Rustin. She was from the West Indies.

Bayard got into trouble and was punished for his belief in peace. He was jailed for two years when he refused to register for the draft for World War II. He had to work on a chain gang in North Carolina for two weeks in 1947. This was because he was in the protests against the segregation of Black and white people on trains and busses. A man named Gandhi from India inspired Bayard and showed everyone you could change unfair things by protesting in a peaceful and nonviolent way.

The March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom was his idea. He worked to make it happen but he didn't know if it would work. It did and he made the world better. He continued to be an organizer and activist all his life. He died in New York City on August 24, 1987.

Civil rights are *important*. Professor Carolivia Herron told us that when she was in school she was told she could not go on to college because she was Black. I want to be able to have civil rights so I can go to school wherever I want. That is the way it should be. That is what Bayard Rustin wanted for all of us.



The Lincoln Memorial

By Tariq Timberlake, 10 years old

The Lincoln Memorial is an important part of the National Mall. It is in the name of a president of the United States. The Reflecting Pool is in front of the Lincoln Memorial.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., made a speech at the Lincoln Memorial about a dream he had about changing the world so Black people and white people could have the same things. They should both be able to drink out of the same fountains, sit anywhere on the bus or vote for whomever they want. That's what he wanted. I do, too. I don't like it when people call me names and make fun of me. I want to be treated right and respected. I want people to respect everyone else, too.

My mom says that back then some people didn't even think Black people were human beings. I know that that thought is not true and it should never have been that way. Respect is what everyone should have and I think it's time to show respect.



Abraham Lincoln Ended Slavery

By Elijah Murphy, 9 years old

The Lincoln Memorial is an American national monument built to honor the 16th president of the United States, Abraham Lincoln. They started building it in 1915. It took years but it was finally finished in 1922.

The Lincoln Memorial is over on the western end of the National Mall in Washington, D.C. The statue of Lincoln inside it is 19 feet high. It is made of 28 blocks of marble from Georgia.

President Lincoln ended slavery with his Emancipation Proclamation, so his memorial on the Mall is an American symbol of freedom.

I have learned more about slavery by watching the TV show "Roots." My brother told me my great-great-great-grandfather was white and owned slaves, but I am Black. I think slavery was very wrong and I'm glad it is over.



Abraham Lincoln Statue

Elijah Murphy

Marian Anderson on the Mall in 1939

By Cydney Roberts, 8 years old

Marian Anderson was a famous African-American singer. She sang all over the world, starting in 1928 in New York City at Carnegie Hall.

In 1939 they would not let her perform at the Daughters of the American Revolution Constitution Hall in Washington, D.C. She wanted to sing there but she was told “no” by the man in charge. This was because of her race, which he discovered was African-American.

She was very talented and could sing opera, Gospel, and Negro Spirituals.

Eleanor Roosevelt, who was married to President Franklin Roosevelt, found out about what happened to Marian Anderson. Mrs. Roosevelt felt so sad and mad about this because she did not think Marian’s skin color should matter at all. Eleanor wanted to hear Marian sing.

So with help from Mrs. Roosevelt she performed in 1939 on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. Her concert was amazing.

Seventy-five thousand people, including her mom, came to hear her sing at the free concert in front of Lincoln’s statue. This place was picked because President Abraham Lincoln freed the slaves in 1865.* Lincoln was called the Great Emancipator.

Marian Anderson had so much talent in her heart and soul. She went on to great success. She was the first African American to sing for the New York Metropolitan Opera in 1955.

She said, “I have great belief in the future of my people and my country.” I think she was right. I feel this is because first she was not treated right, but then she got her rights.

* The year Congress passed, and the states ratified the 13th Amendment, ending legal slavery in America.

Singer Marian Anderson

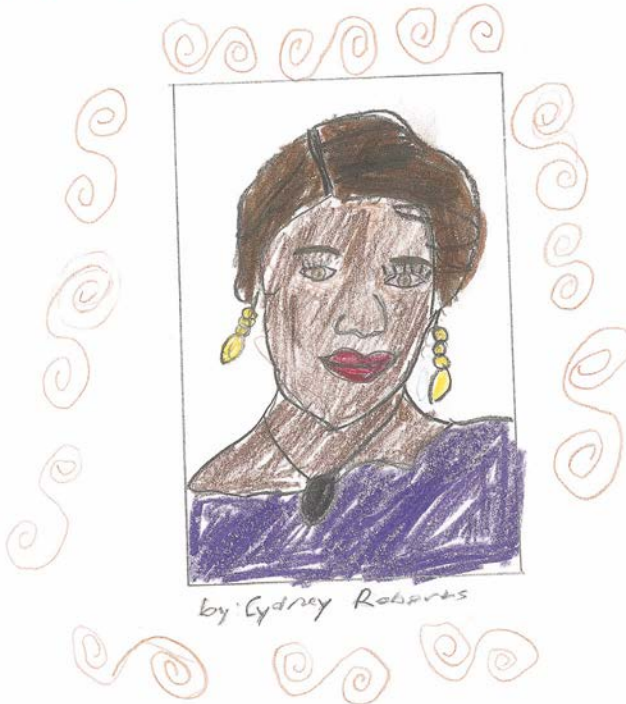
By Christian Alston, 10 years old

Marian Anderson was one of the best singers of her time. But it was hard for her to sing in Washington, D.C., because of the practice of segregation. Eleanor Roosevelt, the president's wife, demanded that she sing here in our city. She was the first Black woman to sing a concert on the Lincoln Memorial stairs.

Some people did not think she could get to sing on the National Mall. But even all the people who doubted her probably loved her voice. It was like a big stick of butter.

My favorite song of hers is "Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child."

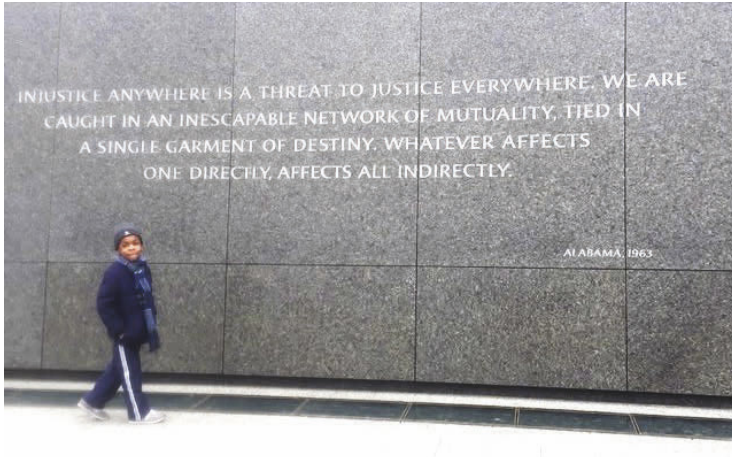
Marian Anderson



Memorial for Martin

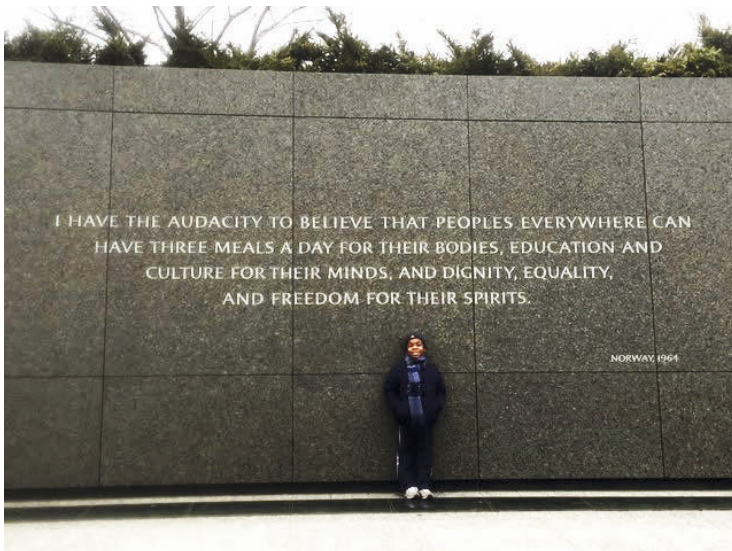
by Moses Jackson, 8 years old

There is a spectacular memorial to Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., with his words on the walls. Martin was a peace leader and stood for equal rights for all people. He was never the president, yet he has a memorial on the National Mall.



When Martin was growing up he saw signs that said “White Only” in stores and restaurants in Atlanta, Georgia. He even had to use different water fountains and a separate school because of racial segregation.

Martin’s dad was a preacher. Martin went to church every Sunday. He became a preacher like his father. He was able to write and give great sermons and speeches.





Martin helped lead the Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1955 and 1956 that helped end segregation on busses in Montgomery. Years later, he spoke at the 1963 March on Washington. In his speech that day, he said that Black and white people could be friends and live and work together.

Martin Luther King won the Nobel Peace Prize for his work on civil rights and for justice in 1964.



Moses at the Martin Luther King Memorial in 2017.

Martin had a big dream. He dreamed that all people could live in a world of freedom with justice for all. When I think about him, I am so impressed. He went to college when he was 15 years old. He even went to jail for his belief about unfair laws. When I think about Martin, he reminds me about peace and justice. The only thing I don't like is that things didn't change enough. There is still racism.

The Martin Luther King, Jr., Memorial in Washington, D.C. can teach people about history so that we can accomplish his dream together.

Rosa Parks: A Brave Black Woman

By Mykia Plummer, 9 years old

There is a statue of Mrs. Rosa Parks in Washington, D.C. Why?

She was a brave leader. She knew it was time to stand up for Black people's civil rights. In 1955 there was segregation. It was the law back in her time, from when she was born in 1913. This was a very NEGATIVE law and don't let anyone tell you that it was good. White people could get in the front of the Black people on the bus or they would always be first in line in stores. Schools were segregated, and that was rude and disrespectful too.

On December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks paid her fare and went in the back door. Then Rosa Parks sat down in the middle of the bus. She sat next to someone she knew in the middle neutral section of the bus. Anyone could sit in the neutral section. The bus got crowded. The bus driver told her she had to get up so a white man could sit down. She said "No." Everyone looked at her. James Blake, the driver, said "I'm calling the police on you."

As she sat there she thought about her mother and grandmother and thought how they would want her to stay strong. So she did. Rosa Parks stayed in her seat. She would not move, she decided.

The driver called the police. Then she was arrested and fingerprinted for breaking the segregation law in Alabama.

The Women's Political Council of Montgomery called a boycott; they told people "Do not ride the bus!" Then the busses were empty. Black people walked instead of riding the bus. And they kept on walking. The people walked for over a year. Finally the Supreme Court of the U.S. said people could sit anywhere they wanted on the bus. They won the civil rights lawsuit!

That boycott started the civil rights movement. Later on Rosa Parks and her husband Raymond Parks kept working for years for civil rights. She died on October 24 in 2005 in Detroit.

So that is why there is an impressive statue to her inside the Capitol on the National Mall. But there could be more about her and what she did. They tell the story of Rosa Parks in the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture. She is important to me and I love to tell her story.



Rosa the Brave Black Woman
-mykia plummer

Martin Luther King, Jr., on the Mall

By Leyah Harris, 10 years old

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was a great and amazing man. He tried to get white and Black people to get along with each other. He went on protests and marched in Montgomery and Selma in Alabama. He made many speeches about civil rights. One was called "I Have a Dream," which he told to the big crowd in 1963, and it was all about overcoming racism. Martin Luther King hoped that his speech could change the world but it did not change everything then. He wanted to have equality for Black and white people and he helped make some of that happen.

There is a monument to Martin Luther King, Jr., now, on the National Mall.

Years later Martin Luther King was in Memphis and people near him heard a gunshot and then they looked and Dr. King had been shot. He died and people were sad and now there is a holiday in his honor. A lot of people celebrate that day. That is my most favorite holiday and it reminds me of many other people. I remember many famous singers that died, and my uncle that died, and I will always remember the holiday and love the Martin Luther King, Jr., holiday for the rest of my life. Also I love the music of the civil rights movement, especially "This Little Light of Mine."



*I love the Martin Luther
King Jr. holiday!
-Leyah Harris*

Shining Stars School Student

The Great Peace Marches

by Amanda Gary, 8 years old

People have marched many times on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., so that wars could end. One of the first was a protest against the war that Americans were fighting in Vietnam. Women were marching because they didn't want their sons, brothers, and husbands to die in a war. The women and men marched because they did not want to have their people kill others.

The first big peace march in D.C. was on October 21, 1967. There were 100,000 people at this peace march. The next one was on November 15, and was called by the Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam. About 500,000 came to the rally on the Ellipse that day.



In London, England, there were peace marches from 1914 to 1919. Back then women were also protesting because they wanted to have peace and they wanted the right to vote. In the early 1900s women did not get as many of the rights or the kind of respect they do now.

Peace is important because kindness makes my life better. War is bad because people die in terrible ways. The Bible says *Thou shalt not kill* and that means war is wrong. I don't think countries should have wars where people get guns and bombs to kill other people. If we can have peace then all countries could be safe and all countries would be great places to have families and to live. Peace is very good!

Peace Be With You

by Charlene Abby, Community Activist

I began using my First Amendment right of peaceful protest when I was in Spingarn High School, in 1973. I did it because my teacher and mentor, Steve, was an inspiring teacher. He got me interested in trigonometry and in marching about an issue that mattered to me. It was important to me to protest racism and the Vietnam War.

It's vital to be civic-minded, to be moved into action by the spirit of civic duty. Democracy is participatory; you can't just watch.

I remember going to the protest against apartheid in South Africa in 1988; I took my eight-year-old daughter to Lafayette Square. In the 1980s I went to marches for women's rights, and to marches protesting homelessness. At that point I was a volunteer for the Community of Hope, which was a program begun by my church, the Church of the Nazarene. Community of Hope provided shelter, food, legal support, therapists, and a clinic for people who were homeless in D.C. We went as a group to the apartheid protest.

The people who went to these protests were a great cross-section of America, folks from across the entire political spectrum, multi-ethnic, families with their children with them, all races together—so many people who opposed injustice, who opposed systemic institutional racism.

In the winter of 1991 I went to the march against the first war in the Gulf, when Kuwait was invaded by Iraq. It was huge and so vivid to me because so many people were willing to show up at night, in the cold, and march from the National Cathedral to the White House. I don't object to all wars but that one I definitely did: I didn't think we should go to war over oil!

In 2002, I went to the march against the second Iraq war, the one we're still in 15 years later, and the crowd filled the Mall. There were people there from everywhere, including vets from other wars. They know what a waste war can be. I was interviewed on CNN and told them I thought Bush wanted the war to distract everyone from the problems with the economy. The war profiteers made plenty of money, though.

I've been to over a dozen marches and protests and I felt strongly every time that I had to show up on the Mall. Those memories help me when I worry about how we talk to each other about issues these days. I may not agree with you but I will listen, and be civil. That is *everyone's* civil right.

An Ode to John Lewis, John Lewis

by Louise Parker Kelley, Writer and DC Teacher

When John Lewis was a baby
Had a sit-in on his mama's knee
Lord, Lord he said
Injustice is not all right with me
I *can't* let it continue
Not when there's something I can do
I'm going to organize the people
Make equality for all come true
I dare anything for dignity
I dare anything for sanctuary and safety for all
I dare anything with the discipline of civil
disobedience/nonviolence
I dare anything to make change happen
Yes we can
[What do you know about it old man
Striving while Black
Driving while Black
If you're Black get back
You better know what you lack
When the cops come not to protect but attack]
I know about cops that are led by rage
I found out about it at a very young age
(*Who do you think you are*)

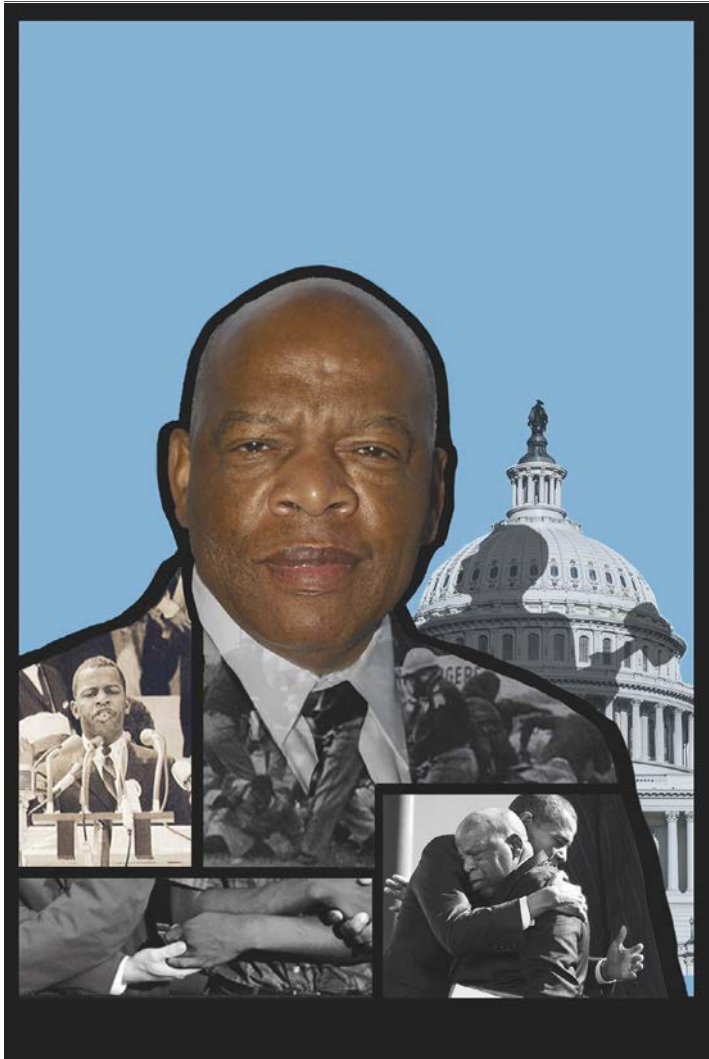
I'm John Lewis
Son of sharecroppers, stuck with a stammer, willing to sue to get
to college at Troy
I'm going to lead sit-ins at segregated lunch counters, serve as a
witness and annoy
Then they will try to stop us with poison gas from a fumigating
machine
I'm going to be a Freedom Rider, ride the bus to a new scene
When they put me in jail for it I'm going to sing my soul free and
quote from Gandhi
I'm going to get beat up over and over and put in the slammer
Get my skull fractured when I lead the march across the bridge in
Selma Alabama
When I march with Americans who just want to vote somehow
Tell you what the voters will do, vote for me for City Council,
send me to Congress too
Oh wait that's just crazy talk now

But no matter what
Ain't nobody gonna turn me round
The firehoses won't work the dogs won't work jail won't work
That won't work

Nothing the bigots try will work
Because I know what to do and I'm going to work
Like when I told the world about it at the March on Washington
at the National Mall
Now I work the other end at the Capitol but I might not follow
protocol!
Because Lord Lord
Injustice is not all right with me

And one day the House Speaker Paul Ryan is going to think
He can get me to shut up and give up
By turning off the lights and the cameras
And accuse me of base motives and not playing by the rules
The Accuser stands there and tells people I've sinned
But I'm the brand plucked from the fire and my light shines
within
Making trouble, hey I'm hotstepping trouble
Well son there is such a thing as good trouble
Nothing is worse than when good people stand there and do
nothing
Or as my friend Martin said, the time is always right to do the
right thing!
That time is now
When the guns keep killing our sisters and brothers we have to do
something about it
In Orlando
In Charleston
In Newtown
DC Navy Yard
Virginia Tech
San Ysidro
Fort Hood
Columbine
Too many places too many funerals too many tears too many
years
Business as usual stops now
Because I say so I am John Lewis and I say we must try
something else
Not resign ourselves to despair and shove our hope up on a shelf
Don't go numb to brutality let's change the reality
I'm the conscience of Congress, I'm calling you out
Again I say it's time to sit down and sing and shout
Until we pass laws to protect innocence
Please don't tell me there is no precedent
I'm always doing things that were never done before
From SNCC to Montgomery to Mississippi Freedom Summer of
1964
Don't wait for permission it's time to act
Yes they'll come after me I know that for a fact
So what? Now what?

And still Lord Lord
Injustice is not all right with me
People everywhere just want to be free
Shame them into action shake them to the CORE
Remember the dancers shot down on the floor
Together we can say it: NOT ONE MORE.
I know we can do it if we try
Take care of all the children
Make this land a better land
I know darn well we can work it out
Si, se puede
Yes we can.



John Lewis art by Jackie Urbanovic.

They Came

*by Carolivia Herron, Ph. D., Author, Community Activist and
Howard University Professor*

Here is a story the news media doesn't tell about itself because it turns out differently from what they say at first, and they are ashamed. You are there with your cousin Shannon. You know what happens on the National Mall during the morning of August 28, 1963, at the March on Washington.

It is the summer before your senior year at Coolidge High School in Washington, DC, August 1963; you go down to the National Mall for the March on Washington. You and Shannon get there very early, taking the J6 bus from Takoma DC to Federal Triangle. The two of you walk up the National Mall toward the Lincoln Memorial and sit between the Reflecting Pool and Constitution Avenue, waiting. You can see the folks up there on the Lincoln Memorial steps setting things up, but the lawns are empty. You wait and wait and nobody comes. You have a transistor radio between you, and the radio announcers say over and over again that no one is coming. They laugh at Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and they laugh at the Black people, and they laugh at you and Shannon sitting there alone in the morning on the National Mall with nobody. They laugh because Black folks hold a march and nobody comes

They don't admit it now, they change their story by the end of the day, but in the morning of that day they mock you.

You and Shannon turn away from each other, teenagers, high school seniors, turn away from each other because you don't want to see tears in each other's eyes. But while you are sitting there sad, they come, all of them.

First a few of them, then more, then a lot, then everyone — they came.

They are carrying signs, they are marching and singing, "We Shall Overcome." Later you find out that when the radio announcers are laughing and saying that no one is coming, the Freedom buses loaded with marchers are coming through the Baltimore Harbor Tunnel at the rate of 30 a minute, 40 a minute, 50 — making their way to the March on Washington. But the radio announcers say no one is coming. They say it on all of the radio stations. You keep turning the dial to find a better story. They make fun of you, that is at first.

Your mother and your brother are not in Washington that day. They are in New York City, listening from a convention far away. Your father is in town. He is at home with all his money in cash on the table, waiting by the telephone, waiting to bail you out of jail in case the violence comes. He stays home to save you with all his money if they try to curse you or jail you or beat you to the ground. He stays home so he can save your life.

There is no curse, or jail or beating that day. He overcomes. You overcome. They overcome. They came. Even your father

comes to the Mall, to the March on Washington later in the afternoon because finally he realizes there is no violence.

It still makes you cry when you remember that moment when they came to the National Mall and join you and Shannon and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Marian Anderson returns that day to sing again in front of the Lincoln Memorial. You and Shannon stand up and join in and you sing, “What do we want?” “Freedom.” “When do we want it?” “Now!” “What do we want?” “Freedom.” “When do we want it?” “Now!” “All of God’s children, Black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro Spiritual: Free at last! Free at last! Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!”

In the evening the radio news reporters never mention the mean things they were saying in the morning. In the evening they talk about the victory and success of the Civil Rights Movement and the Reverend Doctor Martin Luther King, Jr.

As for breaking your hearts in the morning with their cruel words about how nothing was happening, how nobody was coming, how you folks couldn’t do anything right — about that, in the evening, HA!, they never said a mumbling word.

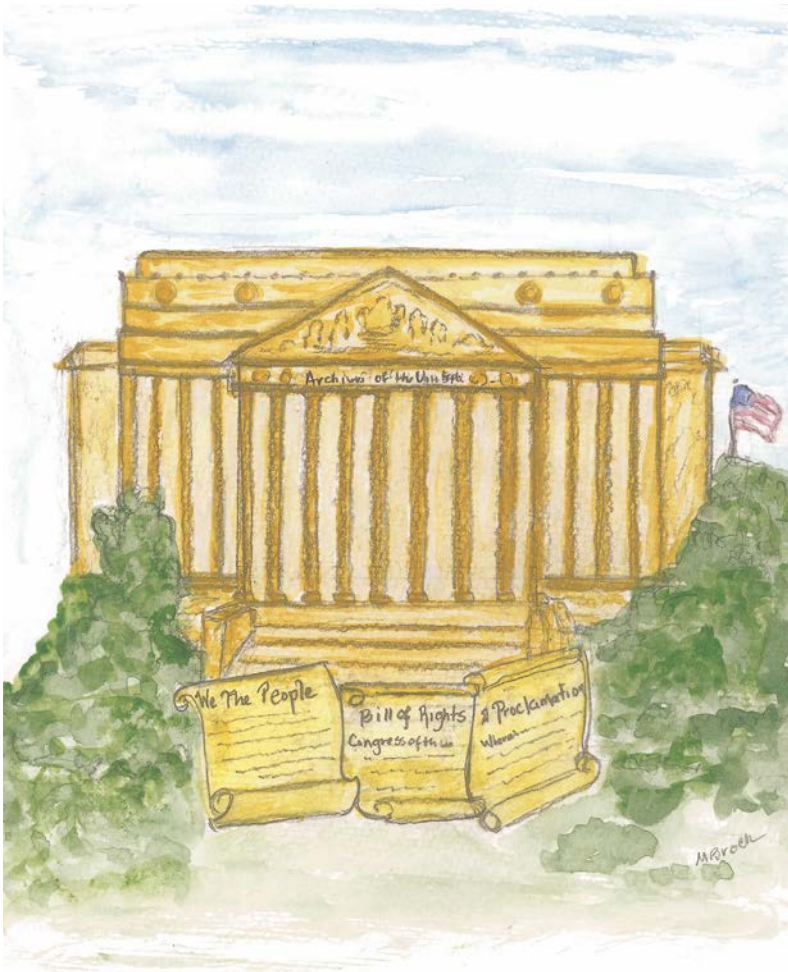


They did overcome: Carolivia Herron, far left, Daniel R. Smith and Shannon K. Lawrence, all veterans of the 1963 March, in Dan’s back yard in Takoma, D.C., in August of 2017.

Photographer: Clinton R. Parker, III

Section Two

19th Amendment: Women's Right to Vote





Suffragists in parade in Washington, D.C., marching for the right to vote.

Source: National Archives, U.S. Information Service

Girls On Fire

By Sia Rosalia Ahmadu, 9 years old

This year in Washington, D.C., at the National Mall, there were girls on fire, marching for equality on January 21, 2017. Women in many countries all around the world, even in Antarctica, were part of it. Twenty-one million six hundred thousand joined the Women's March. The Women's March made me feel like I was a part of something big, like I'm more than what I think I am. It inspired me to be who I really am, to love myself and my gender.

Lots of famous people, like Alicia Keyes, Janelle Monet and Angela Davis, went to the Women's March because they knew that women have been treated poorly, and kept from doing important things in the world. It was time to tell the world about that. People also came to the Women's March because they were upset about the presidential election. America came very close to having its first female president, but once again it didn't happen.

On that day, after the inauguration, we had to stick up for our community. We had to be a unit, even though not everybody knew each other; we had to speak up for our rights *together*.

So just know that no one can tell me who I am and what I can't do. I know who I am: I am a beautiful, intelligent, brave, strong young woman. I just need to say one thing: treat people the way you want to be treated. I am Sia Rosalia Ahmadu and I'm a girl on FI-RE!!



Art by Sia Rosalia Ahmadi

Harriet Tubman on the \$20 Bill

By Aniyah Harris, 9 years old

Right now, in June of 2016, there are no monuments to famous African-American women outside on the National Mall. There are some for white men and one Black man and one of Rosa Parks in Statuary Hall in the Capitol.

In the future, at our Bureau of Engraving and Printing there on the National Mall, they will be honoring a Black woman on the money soon. Her name is:

HARRIET TUBMAN!



Her image will appear on the front of the new \$20 bill.

Andrew Jackson will be put on the back, but they should probably just leave him off. President Jackson was a slave owner! They could have picked someone else for the back, like Rosa Parks or Marian Anderson. Sometime in the future they said they will put singer Marian Anderson and Martin Luther King, Jr., on the back of the \$5 bill, which has President Lincoln on the front. But Harriet Tubman will be first, on the \$20 bill.

This was announced on Wednesday, April 20, 2016. The bill will be out by 2020 when I will be 14 years old.

Because Harriet Tubman was great, she was chosen to be the first African American to appear on our money. She escaped slavery and saved people from slavery using the Underground Railroad. She also worked for women's voting rights. That's why she is being honored this way. I'm glad that her image is finally going to be used, so she will be the first African-American woman to be on our money!

Athletes on the Mall

By Hayden Bailey, 8 years old

The National Mall in Washington, D.C., needs to have a museum dedicated to American athletes. African-American women athletes especially need to be represented because they are very important, they play hard, they win and they *never* give up.

Some of the powerful athletes that deserve to be in this museum are Wilma Rudolph, Serena and Venus Williams, Jackie Joyner Kersee, Lashinda Demus, Mary Wineberg, Gabby Douglas, Dominique Dawes, Ora Washington, Dee Dee Trotter, Ruthie Bolton and so many, many more.

But my point is that African-American women need to be represented because they are important to our country. Wilma Rudolph was the first African-American woman to win three Olympic gold medals in track and field in 1960. I think Wilma Rudolph should be on the \$50 bill, because she is so impressive.

In 1996, Dominique Dawes won Olympic gold with the U.S. women's gymnastics team and also won an individual bronze medal—she was the first African American to win an individual Olympic medal in women's gymnastics. Serena and Venus Williams are sisters who have won dozens of international tennis championships and each of them won four Olympic gold medals! Gabby Douglas is another world-class Olympic gold-medal gymnast. Mary Wineberg is another runner who has set records in track and field events. So did Dee Dee Trotter. Jackie Joyner Kersee won seven Olympic gold medals!

Ora Washington played championship tennis and basketball. Ruthie Bolton helped the U.S. women's basketball team win Olympic gold medals in 1996 and 2000. She went on to a career in the WNBA.

These are just a few. Many more athletes could be honored with their own museum on the mall. It's about time.

Memories of Marching on the National Mall

by Mary Alcuin Kelly, Librarian and Community Activist

For years, I marched for full equality and recognition of women as human beings. In 1977 I marched with the Christian Feminists in support of the Equal Right Amendment (ERA). The march took place in July and we were encouraged to wear white, and to carry a banner that reflected the suffragist colors of purple, gold and white. I remember the sound of feet marching on the sand gravel walkways that border the National Mall and I can hear the first line of *Bread and Roses*: “As we come marching, marching in the beauty of the day . . .” It was like that, with thousands of women marching, so many organizations: political, religious, academic, labor, all marching for the Equal Rights Amendment.

Two years later, in a more subdued moment on the Mall, I found myself holding a sign that read: “Sexism is a Sin.” I was part of a group of women who gathered for the Papal Mass of Pope John Paul II for his first visit to Washington, D.C., in 1979. A memory I have of that protest was that a young boy came up to me and asked: “What is sexism?” I offered him an example: I asked him what he wanted to be when he grew up. He said, a firefighter. I said: “What if there was a rule or a policy that said boys could not be firefighters? That would be sexism. And sexism is wrong, I believe it is a sin. It prevents people from doing the service they may be called to do.”

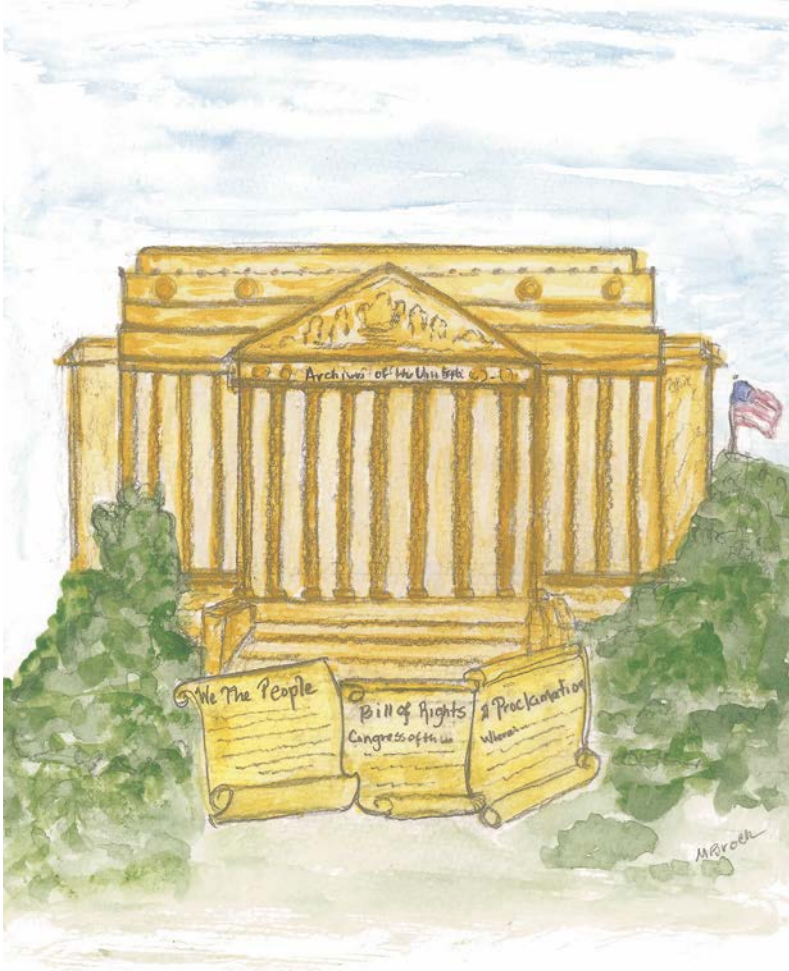
I marched again in 2002 against the Iraq War. It was a very cold day and a group of us from my church, St. Stephen and the Incarnation, gathered at the Mall to protest the decision of the United States government to go to war in that country. We marched from the Mall and went east on Independence Avenue.

My most recent gathering in protest at the Mall was in January 2017, when women from all parts of the country—and ultimately all around the world—joined in cities throughout the U.S. to protest the election results as well as other issues. My memories of the day include the good nature of all the participants, their diversity, the participation of so many men and children, and thousands of hats in all shades of pink. This was a good day for democracy and a vivid example of peaceful protest.

The National Mall is our national gathering place, it is wonderfully big and open with room for everyone. We have the right of freedom of assembly. We all maintain the tradition of protest and celebrate every time any group gathers and proclaims loudly their beliefs without fear and without violence.

Section Three

History and Heritage on the Mall



Barack Obama's Inauguration

By Sa'Man Banks, 9 years old

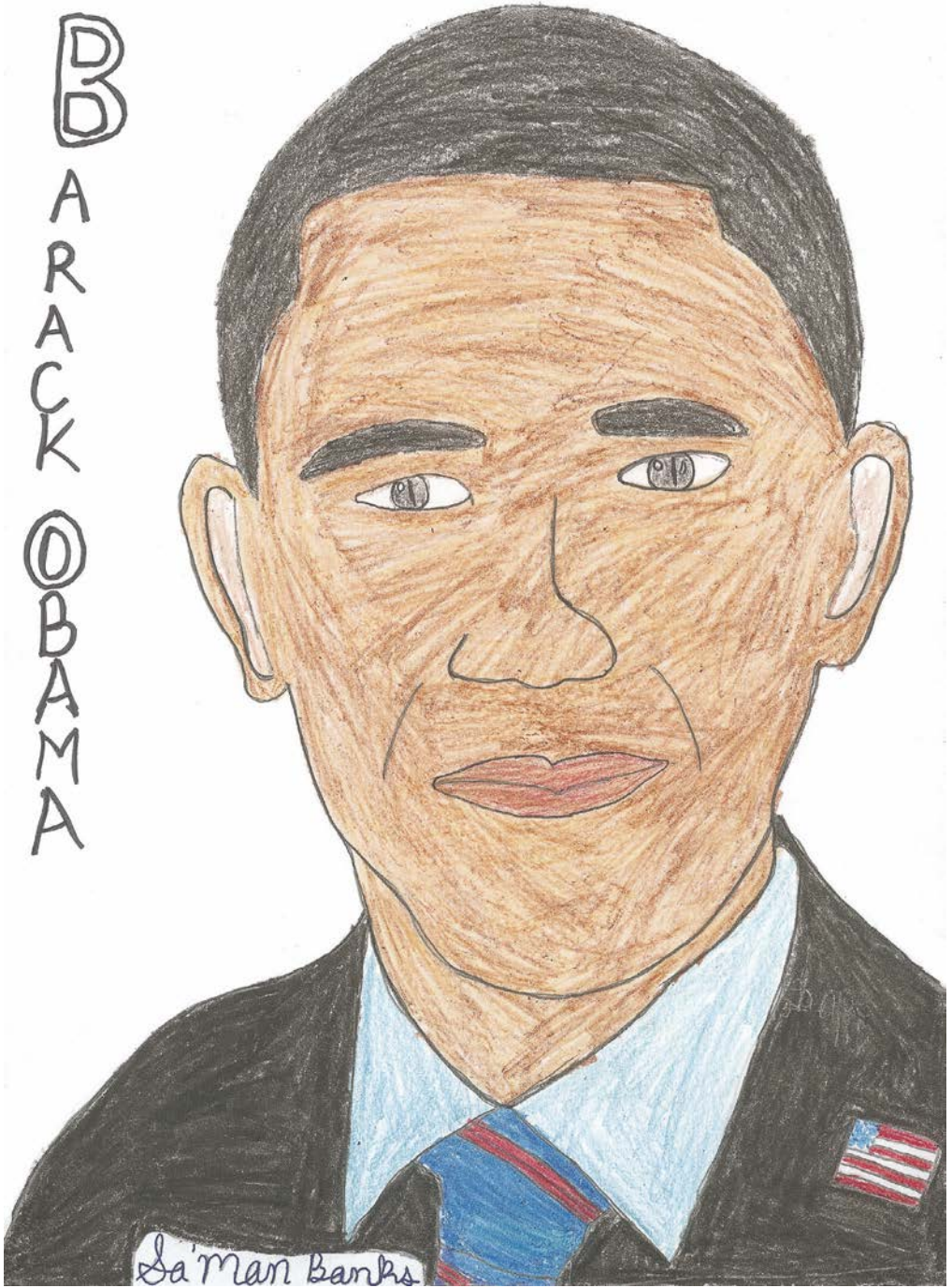
Barack Obama was the first Black president to be elected! What an accomplishment, but why the first? Why? Why did it take so long for a Black person to be president? America's racism is tearing our family apart—*our* American family!

In Barack's speeches to the huge crowd at his inauguration, Barack referred to his ideals, once expressed by President Lincoln, about renewal, continuity and national unity. I feel happy about all this, and disappointed at the same time. I feel happy because he's the first Black president, but I'm also disappointed for that reason. I'm disappointed because he is the first. But he was inaugurated on the National Mall in 2009! That's how LONG it took for a Black person to become president! We've been a country with Black people for hundreds of years. See what I mean?

I'm also disappointed because he could not stay president. You can only be elected twice. I wonder how Mr. Obama feels now. It's been rough, but he pushed through it, he's the best, a real role model for everybody! What an ACCOMPLISHMENT!!! In addition, he has had a great life, and a wonderful family. He is an amazing father and husband. But what I can't believe is that he got so much hate mail! For all he did for people, he got HATE MAIL, seriously, people!! But I should calm down because I understand why there is still racism in America. I want that to change, now, because it's . . . it's bad! No one likes being bullied! Just because the color of your skin is different doesn't make you less than human.

Back to the Barack Obama topic: my thoughts are still about the importance of Black lives. Black lives matter. Now that we have had our first Black president, those lives matter more than ever.

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The Library of Congress

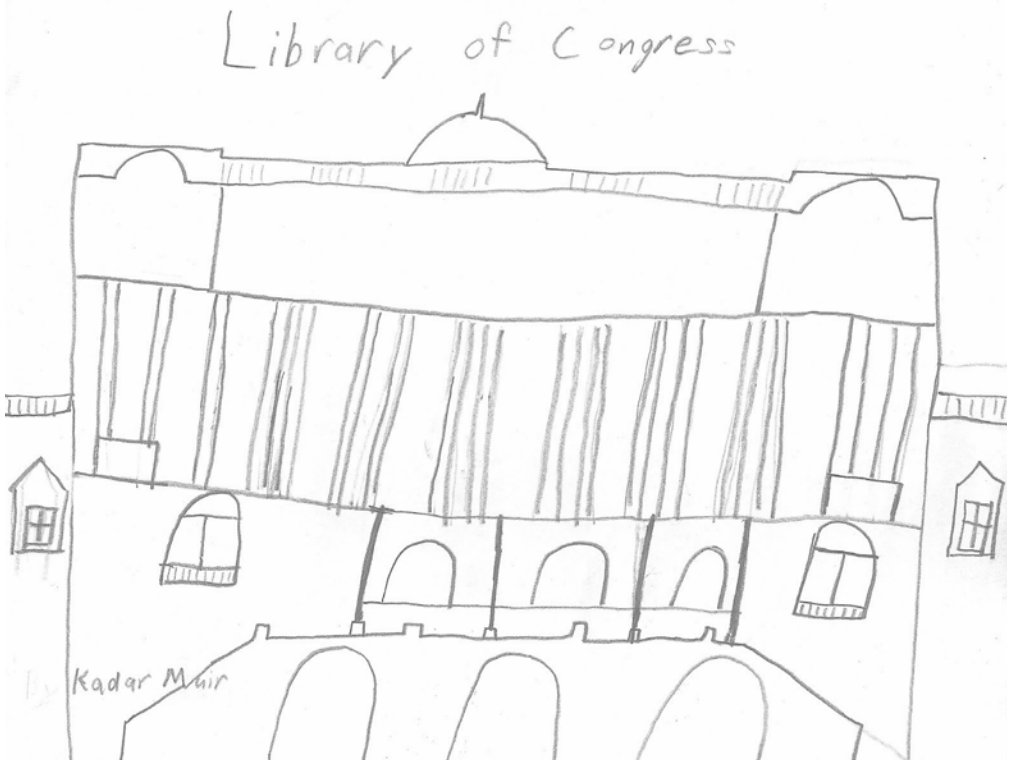
By Kadar Muir, 8 years old

The United States Library of Congress, which is part of the National Mall, was built back in 1800 to be a reference library for members of Congress. The first library for Congress burned down and President Thomas Jefferson gave his books to Congress so they could start over. Now the Library of Congress has every book published in the United States of America! There are over 90 million items in each of the three buildings. Two thirds of the books in the Library of Congress are not in English. There are videos and e-books and music there, too.

You can't borrow a book from there to take to your house like a regular public library. Somebody has to go find it and bring you the book you want and you have to read it there. You have to concentrate and be very quiet.

Sometimes students go there to study something that they can't find out about anywhere else.

You can see it if you are on the Capitol side of the National Mall. I like the Library of Congress because of the way it looks so cool, the statues and fountains and columns. I also like it because you can go there and find *any* book.



United States Botanic Garden Conservatory

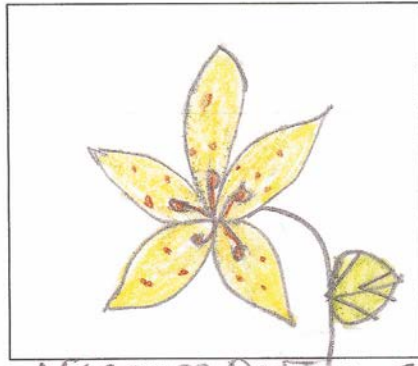
By Hiwot Fentaw, 8 years old

The U.S. Botanic Garden Conservatory is a building made with many glass windows. Inside the building on the National Mall there are many kinds of flowers and trees that come from Africa, Asia, Australia and all over the world. The big glass windows all around are so the sun can come in to help the plants grow all the time. It is very warm inside.

People visit at Christmas to see the flowers called poinsettias that bloom at Christmas time.

I drew a picture of a yellow flower, which is the African potato flower. I recognized it because I have seen it in Ethiopia. My other flower, which is big and pink, is called syngonium macrophyllum. These are not flowers that grow in North America usually. The conservatory is a special place where these kinds of flowers can grow. Otherwise it would be too cold for them in Washington, D.C.

I love flowers!



African Potato flower



Syngonium macrophyllum

The Names Project AIDS Memorial Quilt

By Rashad Robinson, 10 years old

Something terrible happened and then the loss got turned into art. Many people have died of a disease called AIDS. Some people in San Francisco decided to do a tribute to their friends that died by making a cloth panel and putting the name of the person who died on it. Then they sewed the panels together. When they did, it looked like a quilt.

The National AIDS Memorial Quilt was first shown on the National Mall in 1987.

The Names Project AIDS Memorial Quilt is about the people killed by AIDS. It was shown on the National Mall in 1987 and 1993. People make panels about the folks they know who have been killed by the virus that causes the AIDS disease. There is a walkway where people can walk around so they can see the different panels. If you could see it from a plane you would see what all the cloth panels of the Quilt look like together and how it looks like a quilt.

A lot of famous people are on the Quilt, like the actor Rock Hudson and tennis player Arthur Ashe and rock singer Freddie Mercury.

Cleve Jones started The Names Project in 1987 in San Francisco. He began it as a protest and a memorial to his friends who had died. It got bigger as more people made panels.

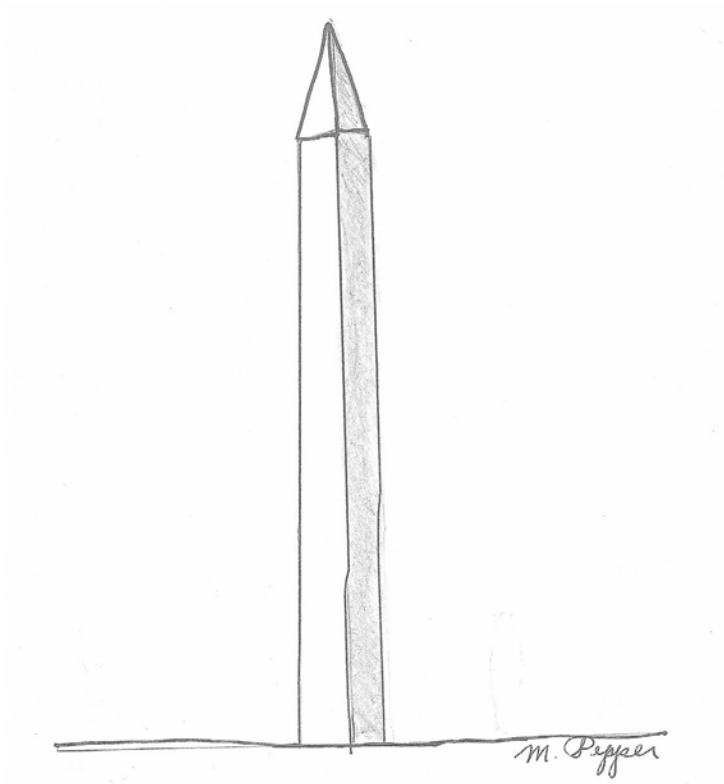
It weighs about 54 tons now. It is considered the biggest folk art project in the world. They keep the Names Quilt stored in Atlanta, Georgia, but they show it in countries all over the world.



Art by Rashad Robinson

The Washington Monument

By Eric Watson, 8 years old



The Washington Monument is a part of the National Mall in D.C.

It was built to honor our first president.

It took many years to finish building it!

The shape is called an obelisk, like they have in Egypt.

The Awesome Air and Space Museum

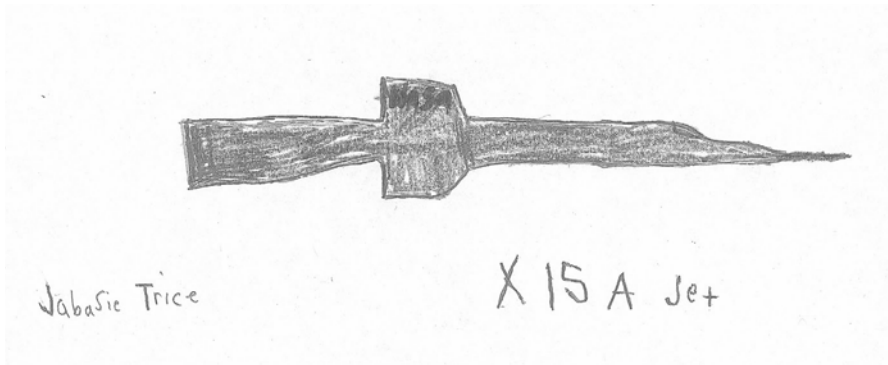
by Jabasie Trice, 8 years old

I know a great place to go. It is the National Air and Space Museum on the National Mall. I have gotten to see it many times. I remember that when I went with my class I saw spacecraft and airplanes and some jets as well. There were fighter jets too.

A fighter jet is a plane that during a war has missiles to shoot down enemy planes. There was a movie in one part of an aircraft carrier and I got to see all these fighter jets taking off from the ship one after the other.

There was a plane you could actually go into and sit where the pilot would be and it sounded like you were really inside a plane. There were really old planes hanging from the ceiling, with two sets of wings, one wing at the bottom and one at the top. Those are called biplanes.

There was a plane that was the very first one to fly on its own. That was the Wright Brothers' plane. The Wright Brothers watched how birds flew and so they made their plane able to fly by putting on wings like a bird. I think many people should go to the Air and Space Museum because of everything you get to see. You get to touch things in the gallery and learn about what makes anything stay up in the air and that is called *How Things Fly*. Check it out.



Reflecting the Mall

By Gavin King, 10 years old

I remember that, on one trip to the National Mall in Washington, D.C., my parents wanted to go up into the Washington Monument. I looked up and thought there is NO WAY I'm going up there! It looked so high and I'm *not* a big fan of heights. I talked my parents out of going up. It wasn't really too hard because actually both of my parents are afraid of heights, too.

I had to decide what we would visit next, so we started walking toward the Reflecting Pool. There was a strange person sitting on the side of the pool and he was all decked out in all American flag clothes, from his shorts and shirt to his socks and hat. He was singing the National Anthem and there were a lot of people who were standing around him cheering him on. It was funny and inspirational all at the same time!

After leaving the Reflecting Pool we walked over to the Lincoln Memorial and I remember being amazed at just how big his Memorial was: it's impressive. There were a lot of security people there because not too long ago some people had vandalized it and they wanted to make sure it didn't happen again. I remember being really annoyed that people would disrespect something that really means a lot to Americans, especially this president. There is no way I would vandalize an American memorial.

It was a lot of walking but it was worth it to see all the cool and important stuff that we have on the National Mall. The next time, my uncle Steve took us and I got to see the Vietnam War Memorial, the Wall, and my cousin and I looked up the names to find out more about the heroes that died there.

I appreciate the Mall. I really should get my parents to take us there more!



Gavin King (right) and his cousin, Christian Marens, at the Vietnam Wall Memorial.

Dinos at the Museum

by Malik Diop, 8 years old

The museums on the Mall are free, but we had to get in a long line to go through security to get in. There were plenty of people who wanted to see what they have in the Natural History Museum. It's worth waiting.

When I went into the Natural History Museum the first thing I saw was a gigantic elephant. After that I saw many triceratops bones. That is a big dinosaur with three horns. Most people know about the Tyrannosaurus Rex, or T. Rex; they are carnivores. They have huge teeth to go with being carnivores.



Then I learned about the mosasaurs. They are called the “T. Rex of the deep” because they lived in the ocean and are so strong one of them could kill a T. Rex! I read about one that weighs 8 tons, almost as much as an icebreaker. Those mosasaurs are kind of like a snake and also like a shark. It had a nose like a dolphin and teeth like a shark. They were the biggest, baddest predators during the Cretaceous period, millions of years ago.

Mosasaurs used echolocation like a killer whale to find prey. Echolocation is when an animal sends out a sound and the sound waves bounce off of an object and come back to the animal. This is how the mosasaur can find and catch its prey. These prehistoric sharks lived in the ocean long before dinosaurs.

During Science and *The Coming of Life* lessons at my school we found out life began in the ocean, and grew from little amoebas into trilobites. Then cells got more complicated and more plants and animals came to be, until there were these reptiles we named dinosaurs.

Every time I go to the museum I learn something new and see something impressive. Those bones of the dinosaurs are the most interesting.





Vietnam Women's Memorial

By Leria Amah, 8 years old

What is the Vietnam Women's Memorial? This memorial is in honor of all American nurses who served in the war in Vietnam. That war happened between 1955 and 1975. The Vietnam Women's Memorial was dedicated on Veterans Day in November of 1993. It shows three nurses and a soldier who is wounded. The nurses are waiting for the helicopter to take them to the hospital. One nurse is holding him.

The statue is on the National Mall near the Reflecting Pool and across from the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. It is the only memorial to women on the National Mall. There is a statue of Eleanor Roosevelt but this one is more like a symbol of all women who do things for our country.

When I look at this statue I feel sad. I'm sorry for the soldier who is hurt. The nurses look worried. I am sorry for the nurses because they can't really fix the hurt man with the bandage on his eyes while they wait for the helicopter.

The nurses could be shot too because they are in a country with a war. War means two countries or maybe more fight with guns and bombs and people get killed. I think war is a bad thing. Also I think it is the wrong thing to do. Still I am glad that the nurses helped the soldiers in Vietnam. I think they were brave and good. The statue shows that they were.

American Indian and Natural History Museums

By Jacob Ryder, 12 years old

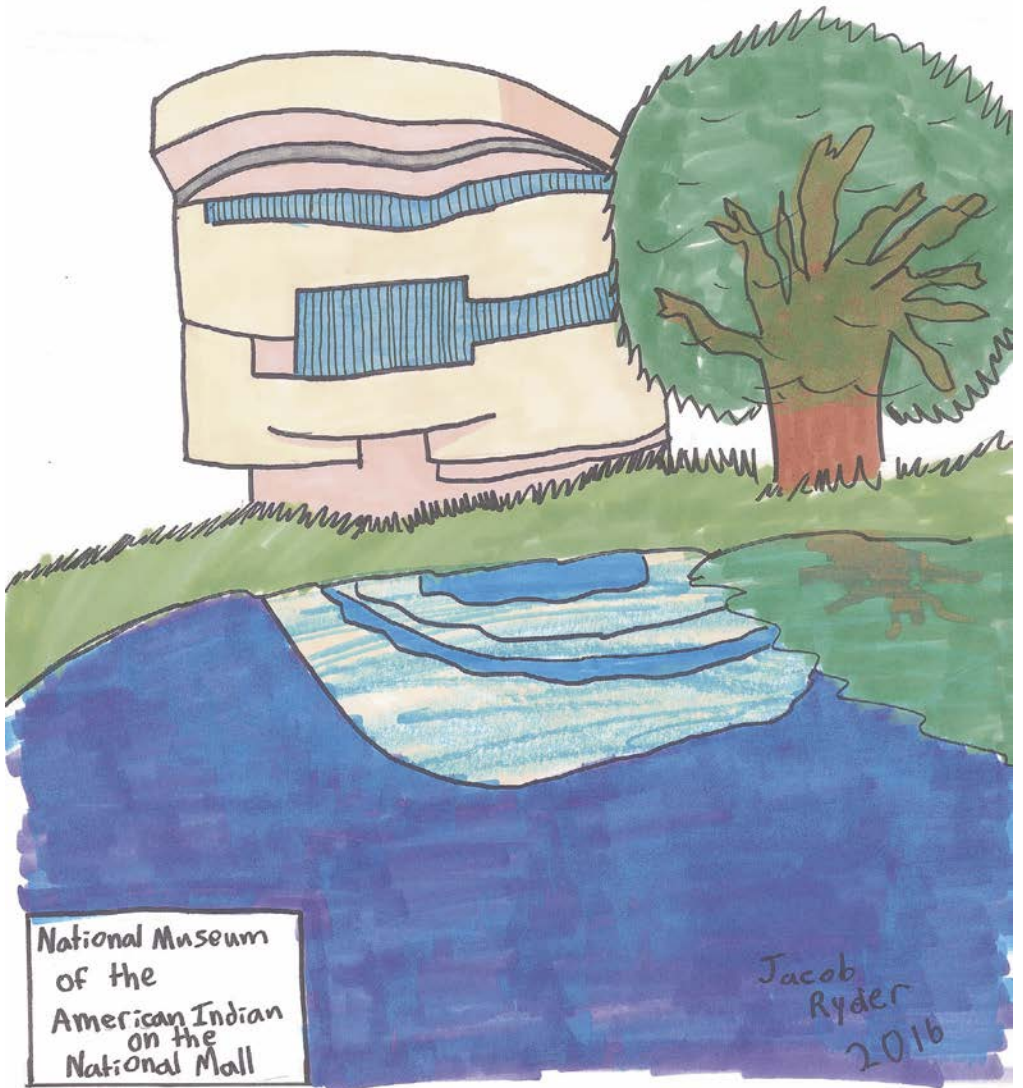
I have always loved living close to the National Mall. It is really cool that I can visit museums, the Washington Monument and even the White House almost whenever I want to. It's especially cool when you think about how people travel from all over the country to see the National Mall. My favorite two museums are the National Museum of the American Indian and the Natural History Museum.

I remember the National Museum of the American Indian especially because of the outside. It looks different from any other museum. I think it looks like rocks carved out of a cliff face. My favorite part of this museum is all of the arrowheads and spears on display. There is also a place where you can learn all kinds of old Native-American legends. Even the restaurant, which is called Mitisam, is interesting, with food from all throughout the Western Hemisphere, including food from Native Americans of the Northern Woodlands, the Great Plains and Central America. It is the best place to eat when you are downtown on the Mall.

My number one museum is the Natural History museum. There is so much to look at. There are tons of skeletons of dinosaurs, saber-toothed tigers, and all sorts of other prehistoric animals. They also have (one of my personal favorites) a giant squid in a huge glass case! The cool thing is that, if the squid wasn't dried out, it would be even bigger.

I've visited it a bunch of times on school field trips and with my family and I always learn something new.

All in all, this is why I feel so lucky to live so close to the National Mall.



Cherry Blossom Festival in D.C.!

By Jalen Gabriel, 10 years old

I get to live in Washington, D.C., where the Cherry Blossom Festival happens every year. This is because the people of Japan gave Americans thousands of cherry trees in 1912. These cherry trees grow near the National Mall in D.C. The people of Japan were nice to do this for the USA. These trees also are symbols that honor the connection and friendship between the USA and Japan. In 1915, the USA gave Japan flowering dogwood trees. The Japanese people were great and gave us the cherry trees three years earlier.

They are so generous and their music and food are so interesting. And I love Anime!

I would say the Cherry Blossom Festival and Parade is very beautiful and it's good to see what happens when all the people come to see the Blossoming of the Trees. They come to see the Cherry Blossom Parade too, which has hundreds of children and adults singing and dancing.

In 1981 the Japanese were given cuttings from our trees to replace some cherry trees in Japan that were wiped out by a flood. First Lady Michele Obama planted a new cherry tree in West Potomac Park in 2012. Hillary Clinton, when she was First Lady in 1999, was part of a new tree-planting ceremony, too. American leader Eliza Scidmore was the one who first got Japan to give some cherry trees to the USA, with help from Dr. Jokichi Takamine. He was a famous Japanese scientist.

I would like to learn Japanese. My family speaks Spanish and English. We are from the Dominican Republic. That is an island, just like Japan.

I really want to visit Japan someday. When I go I want to look at all the cherry trees there. Perhaps I'll get to see our Dogwood trees, too.



Holocaust Museum of Washington, D.C.

By Kortezy Murphy, 9 years old

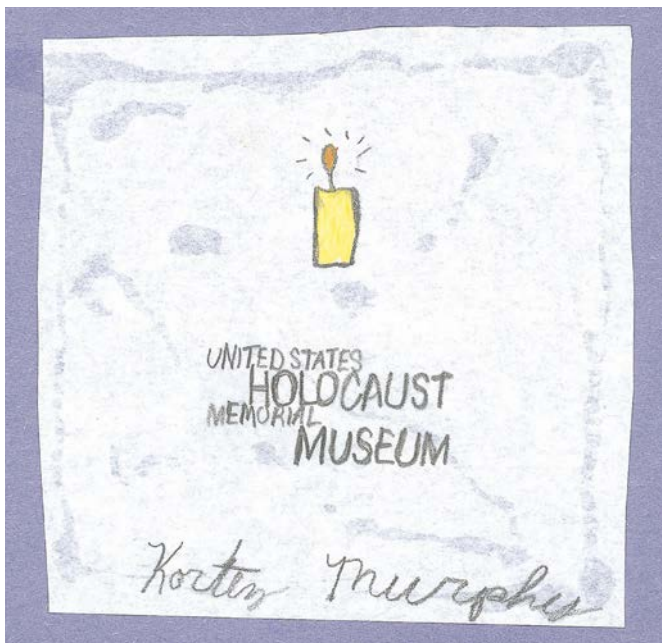
What happened to the Jews of Europe in World War II?
You can find out at the Holocaust Museum on the National Mall in Washington, D.C.

What Was the Holocaust?

In 1933 there were over 9,000,000 Jewish people in Europe. Most Jews lived in countries that the Nazis of Germany would conquer during World War II. The Nazis and the people who helped them by 1945 killed two out of every three European Jews as part of their awful "Final Solution of the Jewish Problem." The Nazis tried to kill all the Jews of Europe. They killed 6,000,000 Jews and 6,000,000 more people besides. This kind of killing is called genocide.

The German Nazis started death camps and concentration camps for the Jews. They made the Jews go there. When the Jews got there the Nazis tricked them by telling them they had to work there. The Nazis told them to go to the showers because they needed to get clean. But really the showers had poisonous gas so then the Jews died. This included women, men and children who were babies and little children and teenagers. One of them was Anne Frank. She wrote a diary about how badly Nazis treated Jewish people and how her family had to hide. Her family got caught and then sent to the camps to die. Her father made it, but she didn't survive. It makes me very angry and sad to know this.

The National Holocaust Museum is there so people will know what happened and make sure it never happens again.



Mason on the Mall, Setting the Sundial at the Castle

by John Cleary Bonsby, *Mason and Tile Setter for the
Smithsonian Operational Plants*

In 1992, over twenty years ago, I got a federal job as a mason and tile setter at the Smithsonian. I got to work on all kinds of masonry at the Mall, from the concrete repairs on the sidewalks to the tiles on the floor and in the bathrooms at the museums. That's why I was in the right place at the right time to do the coolest thing: I got to help install the special sundial in the Enid Haupt Garden behind the Smithsonian Castle.

One day I was just sent over to install the sundial and I met the man from England who was going to help set the sundial to Greenwich time: this means you have to have it placed dead level, plumb and precisely east.

The sundial was carved from the same red sandstone (from Seneca, Maryland) as the Castle. This sandstone stone was actually re-cycled from the old D.C. Prison—when the prison was demolished, the Smithsonian saved all of the stone that they could.

They delivered the sundial in three large pieces to the front of the Castle. I met the other Smithsonian Operations staff there, these three African-American men. We got the job done pretty quickly. They were great guys. We were supposed to use a big engine hoist, but instead we figured out that we could use a wheeled cart and take one piece at a time. The Englishman set the dial, and we all stepped back to look at it.

Then this guy came up just as we finished and yelled, "Stop, stop!" He was with the *Smithsonian Magazine* and he was supposed to take pictures of the whole installation. Well, nobody told me or the rest of the crew. We just wanted to get the job done—carefully—and we weren't going to take it apart again for a photo op!

So he just took a picture of all us around the sundial . . . it was very significant that we were able to have the sundial made from the same stone as the original Smithsonian building. Back when the Castle was first built on the Mall in 1855, there was *no* electricity so most people depended on sundials to tell time. Clocks and watches were expensive and sundials were used more by poor people. So now the traditional way to measure time is represented at the oldest Smithsonian building!



Jack Bonsby, pictured next to the sundial he helped to install, continues to work to this day as a tile setter and mason for federal buildings on or near the National Mall.

Gowns of the First Ladies

By Solveig Brennan, 8 years old



Michele Obama's Inaugural Gown from 2013 is part of the Exhibit about First Ladies at the Smithsonian Museum of American History in Washington, D.C.

"First Lady" is the title used for the wife of the President of the United States. The gowns are the part of this museum that I liked the best.

Hilary Clinton's Inaugural gown is different because it has sleeves and is blue, not red. Both dresses are interesting.



This is Hilary Clinton's gown that she wore to the first inaugural balls of President William Clinton in 1993.

Mary Todd Lincoln's Mourning Dress



Mary Todd Lincoln's indigo dress is made from velvet and has a hoop skirt. It has big buttons. She could only wear dark clothes for a long time after her husband was assassinated because she was a widow and that was the custom.

The dress I really want to wear is Hilary Clinton's. I love the sparkly sleeve part and the long cape around the skirt, which is called an overskirt.

Magnificent Mall

By Lauryl King, 15 years old

The first time I went to the National Mall was on a field trip in eighth grade. At the time I was just looking forward to a day off from classes, hanging out with my friends. Looking back on it, I should've taken better advantage of that trip. I did end up seeing and learning so much while I was there. We climbed up the stairs of the Washington Monument; it was a challenge but a very cool experience. We also visited the Air and Space Museum and got into the zero gravity simulator. You don't have any weight. It's so different.

After we were finished at the National Mall we got to take a tour of the White House. Seeing the White House was a pretty intense experience, one that I will never forget.

Another really inspiring experience I got to enjoy was *The Concert for Valor* on Veterans Day in 2014. I felt a personal connection to it. My mother is an Air Force veteran, so is my Uncle Pete, and my cousin Lucas just enlisted in the Air Force; my uncles Johnnie and Jim served in the Navy, my Aunt Mez was in the Army. My Uncle Dave and Uncle Joe both served in combat zones (Vietnam, Kuwait), so you can see we have many veterans in our family.

Before the concert began we got to hear war stories from the vets and I was very humbled. This really gave me a whole new appreciation for the people who fight for my country so we can keep our freedom. Along with that I felt so grateful for all the historical events that led up to our obtaining that freedom, and for all the brave and brilliant people who created and fought for the freedom for our people.

I hope to be able to visit again and see a lot more of the sites that are on the National Mall.



Left to right, are Kenzie, Kawal, Lauryl and Charlie at the Concert for Valor in 2014.

The Fourth of July at the National Mall

By Donovan Simpson, 10 years old

On the Fourth of July I spent time with my big brother watching the fireworks on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. We celebrate the Fourth of July because that's the day the United States became an independent country. It also celebrates Washington, D.C., as the capital of the United States and the freedom that people have here.

This year for the first time I visited the National Mall with my cousin. I got to stand right in front of the White House, too. Also I'm very grateful I have the opportunity to be what I want and do what I want. That is what the 4th of July represents to me.

Maybe I'll be the president someday, be the first Hispanic one.

The 4th of July celebrates the independence of our country. Many other countries respect the United States, and people visit our monuments for the freedom they represent.

The first time I saw the fireworks I was amazed by all the pretty colors: they make lots of shapes and patterns and I think that's very beautiful.

I wanted to write about this celebration because it's the day we remember when America became independent and free, and because I feel that even now some people don't have equal rights. Everyone should be free in America.

The Fourth of July at the National Mall

Donovan Simpson



Folklife Festival at Fifty

by Jessica Weissman, Writer and Educational Software Developer

Most of the time the huge expanses of grass and gravel that make up the Mall are empty except for a few joggers and tourists. When they're filled up, it's usually with demonstrators or inaugural crowds or another bunch of people bent on some important purpose. It's one dignified and serious place.

But once a year, in the steamy midsummer, the Mall gets to host the Smithsonian Folklife Festival. The spotlight falls on three or four cultures and the Mall fills up with tents and pavilions and programs celebrating them. There is always music; exhibitions of crafts and occupations by real live practitioners; cooking demonstrations, and talks – and food tents where you can buy food that fits the festival's theme. You might see a dance performance from Senegal or hear a group of grandmothers from Louisiana talk about how they raised their children, or learn how circus performers live on the trains that take them around the country.

It's like a living, breathing museum without walls. You can talk to the people who have come to Washington representing their culture, without barriers. And the best part is that everything is authentic and real, nothing cleaned up or dumbed down or reshaped for entertainment. There's no need. The crowds of families who attend the festival are proof that the real thing is more than good enough.

The most wonderful thing out of many wonderful things I've seen at the festival is the glacier that was part of the 1984 celebration of Alaska. Along with Yupik crafts and assorted Alaskan food and musical traditions, some genius came up with the brilliant idea of displaying icebergs from a real Alaskan glacier. Every day they brought out a fresh iceberg from some freezer somewhere, and you could stand right in front of it and watch it melt.

This was curiously compelling, and I had plenty of company as I watched. The iceberg was large, maybe the size of a car. The ice itself was a clear pure blue, but also full of interesting bubbles and imperfections. Here was a stark, strange, and wonderful reminder of just how different Alaska was from the rest of the country.

Over its 50 years on the Mall the Festival has given visitors insights into everything from Peru to Wisconsin to the music of struggle (luckily the food concessions did not offer the food of struggle) to the folkways of American trial lawyers (sponsored by the American Trial Lawyers Association) to Gallaudet students reliving the Deaf President Now movement for an audience of hearing people. You never know what might turn out to be magic, and you never know just how gorgeous the souvenir T-shirts will turn out to be.

The Most Glorious Kite Rescue

By James Parker, retired Federal Worker, Husband and Father

One May, my family went for a stroll on the Mall after visiting some different Smithsonian museums. We headed to the Tidal Basin to see the cherry trees. We passed by the Washington Monument, and then I noticed there was a kite stuck in an oak tree. I remembered the Peanuts comic strip where a tree always seems to grab Charlie Brown's kite and I thought, wouldn't it be great if I could get that kite out of there and give it some life again?

My little daughter Erin was all for it and my dear wife, Kathy, was pleased to watch me storm the oak castle. So we collected some twigs and sticks and began our assault. Sure enough, after a good half hour the kite had moved two inches and we discovered that a major league baseball contract was not in my future. It appeared that this colorful kite might live out its days in much the same manner as many pairs of shoes I have seen tossed up on an electrical power line. My wife saw our predicament and asked if we would like to go see the Lincoln Memorial, but no, no, no, it was now Me vs. That Tree and I had a mission: that kite would fly free!

Erin found a few more sticks. I thought we might have a better chance if we threw all the sticks at once. I could not believe that we were here on the National Mall and that that kite was so close yet so far away . . . then it happened, the sticks made the kite move a good six inches and it fell to another branch. That caught the attention of another couple and they joined us in tossing sticks.

That tree wanted to retreat but, alas, was rooted to the ground.

Five minutes later there it was, fluttering all the way down, safe in our hands.

That day there wasn't much wind and not too much string, but the freed kite was lifted from our run down the Mall and the sight made it worthwhile for all.



Left to right: Kathy, Erin and James Parker. James Parker, a Navy veteran, was born and raised in Washington, D.C.

How to Have Fun at the National Mall

By Mikaela Ryder, 8 years old

I know how to have fun at the National Mall. When I go, I go with my family. I've been to different places around the Mall and that's the best way: go with your parents or grandparents.

One day we went to the Jefferson Memorial, which was a long walk. That day I was there with my brother Jacob, my grandmother Susan and my grandfather Bill. When we finally got to the building we saw the statue of Jefferson. It was hard to read the words on the walls. The words were written in old-fashioned English and hard to understand. It was the Declaration of Independence and it starts: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal." My grandfather made Jacob and me read the whole thing out loud, even though we didn't understand all of it, and then we talked about it so we could get what it meant.

Thomas Jefferson wrote most of the Declaration of Independence a long time ago. He was the third President of the United States and before that he was the Vice-President.

After we left the Jefferson Memorial, we went to the Washington Monument near the flag circle and had a picnic. We sat on a blanket on the grass to keep too many ants from coming. Some ants came anyway. We had chips, popcorn, bottled water, rice cakes and granola bars. We didn't buy hot dogs or ice cream, we brought everything ourselves.

It was a warm and sunny day, either in September or October.

I remember another day when my dad took me around the outside of the White House. I always wanted to go see the White House. My dad told me that some of the people in the crowd where we were walking were disguised as regular people just looking around but really they were security.

When we got around to the back of the White House, my dad put me up on his shoulders and I could see the Washington Monument and the flag circle all around it. It was a great view. That's one way I know to have fun at the National Mall. Have a tall dad let you look at it from on top of his shoulders.

Jefferson Memorial in Washington D.C.



Father and Son at the Smithsonian



Officer Carter, of the Metropolitan Police Department and his son, Antoine Carter, of the Smithsonian staff, at the Castle on the National Mall in December of 2016. Behind them is the Christmas Tree installed by the Smithsonian staff every year, reflecting a German tradition that goes back centuries.

Vietnam Vet on the Mall

by Dave Wachter, Vietnam War Veteran, Husband and Father

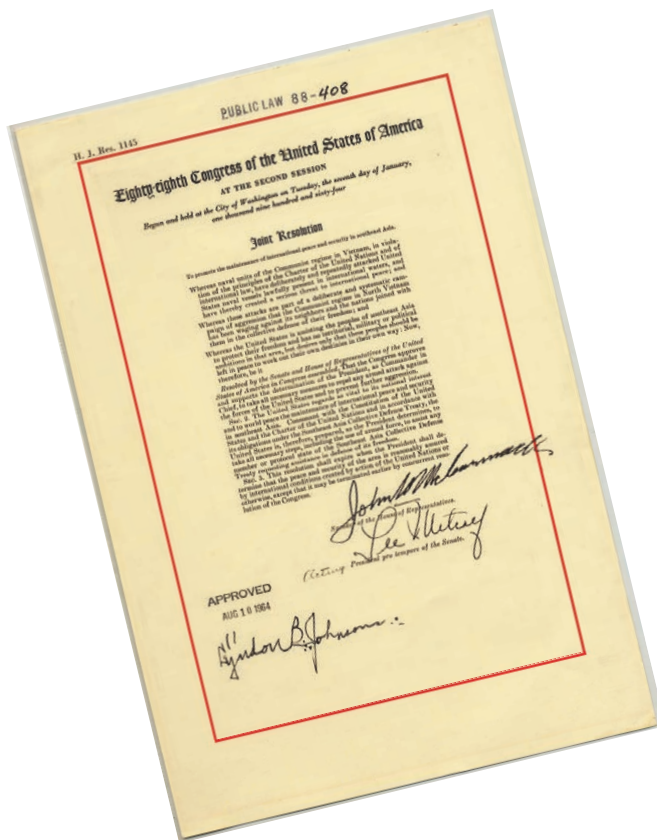
May 30, 2016: It was Memorial Day, and I'd spent the weekend thinking about those who had died because of the war but aren't on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall. So my son Tom (he's 17) and I went to the National Mall, to the Wall on Rolling Thunder Day, and we took the walk past the names, past all the names; and for a few minutes time went backwards and it was the time of war and death; and when we came out at the other end Tom said he really was not prepared for how intense this place is and how the war becomes a reality he had not experienced until that moment at the Wall.

At the end of the Wall a small group was collecting names and stories for those who died from things like Agent Orange, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, or failure to adjust as a legless, scarred, one-armed civilian. You know: the ones who died because of the war but are not recognized as casualties of the Vietnam War. My heart ached when I realized what this group was doing, and I wanted to tell them about one such war casualty: my friend Red Blanket, a Lakota from Pine Ridge. One day he couldn't take it any more and on a cold winter Dakota night he walked towards the Bad Lands with too many memories he wanted to forget, and he died.

Tom and I kept walking until we arrived at the sculpture of the nurses, the Vietnam Women's Memorial. This is the sculpture my wife describes as the *Pieta*. It reminds me of when my sister Christine wrote back to me after I had sent her a letter, had bragged about the battle at Dak To. She wrote back about how sad she felt for the mothers of both the American soldiers and the Vietnamese soldiers. So as I stared at the sculpture I thought about how sad the moms of all the Vietnam war dead must have been, if they wished they could have held their son or daughter in their arms as their last breath slipped away.

Whenever a soldier dies, there is grief. I still grieve for the comrades I lost.

That's who I remember on Memorial Day. That's the Wall we've already built, and we don't need any others.



The Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, enacted 10 August 1964, by Congress, authorized the escalation of the Vietnam War.

National Museum of African American History and Culture, the Newest Museum in D.C.

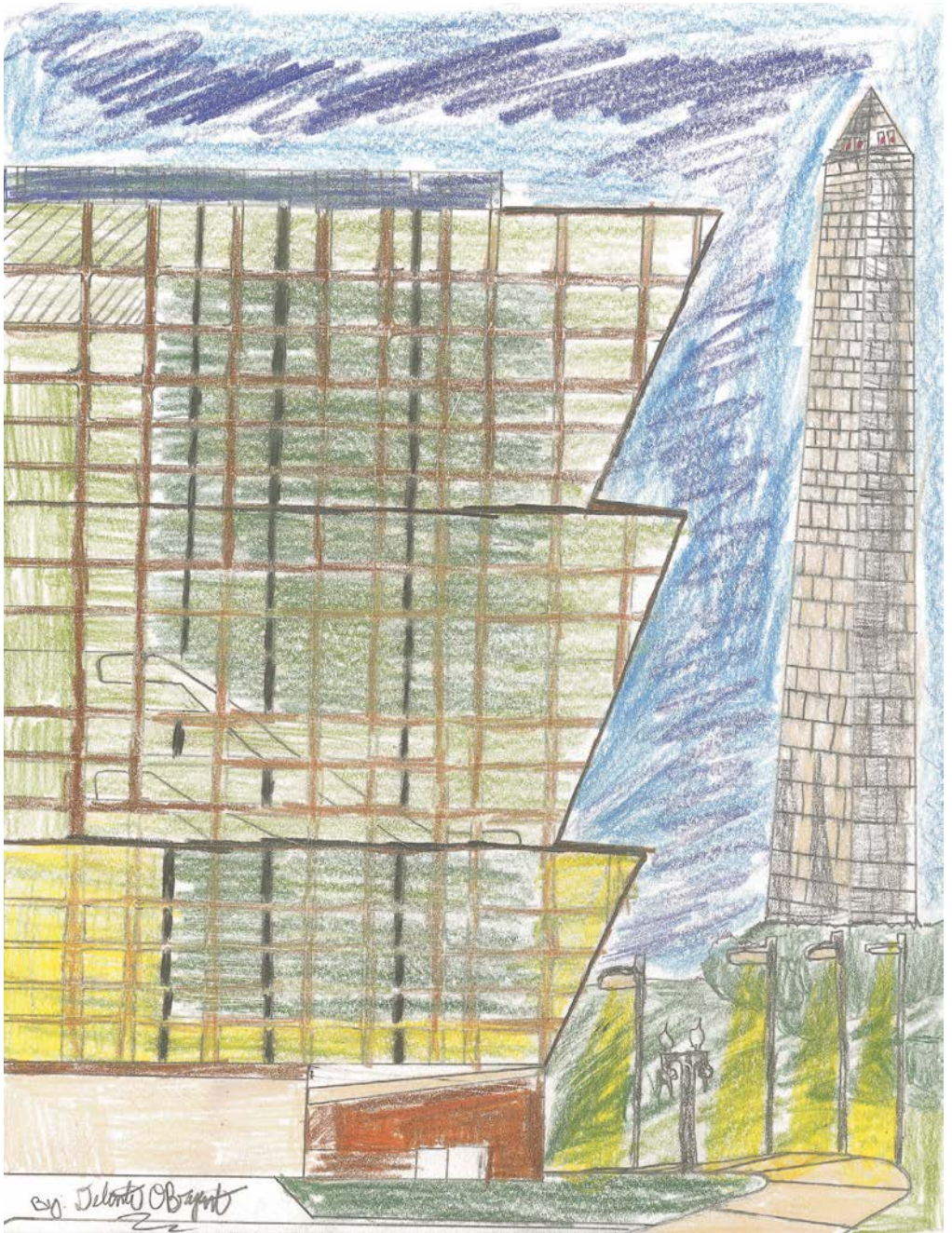
by Noah Bryan, 10 years old

Say hello to our newest museum, the National Museum of African American History and Culture! This newest addition to the Smithsonian museums on the National Mall is made with a bronze lattice outside, except the first floor, which is made with all glass windows. The building is very unusual; it is supposed to be like a woven African basket. I know that this whole museum about great African Americans will have a big impact on America. I am very excited about it and recently I got to see what they put in the NMAAHC. It was fascinating to see how they presented this unique museum on our National Mall.

There was a big display of videos, showing great African Americans and important events in politics and music. There were athletes and writers. The part called “Musical Crossroads” was excellent. I remember seeing Michael Jackson doing the Moonwalk and singing. The Godfather of go-go, Chuck Brown, was featured, and I learned how he began go-go music. Then there was this spaceship. A musician called George Clinton used it when he played concerts. They would actually fly it above the crowd! It’s right there, and it’s really big, the P-Funk Mothership. George Clinton’s band was called *Parliament-Funkadelic*—they had a lot of hits about 30 years ago.

There were tributes to world-class athletes too, like Serena Williams and Arthur Ashe, and another to Michael Jordan and many more.

There was so much to see and hear at the museum I can hardly remember all of it, so I have to go back again sometime. This museum is the best one I have ever gone to see.



My Trip to the Museum of African American History and Culture

by Fern Hunt, Ph.D., Mathematician and Musician

It was a bright winter Sunday in March when I, along with family members, got to visit the Museum of African American History and Culture. We passed through the lines winding through the front door and eventually we were led to the elevators because, you see, the beginning of the story the museum has to tell starts several floors below, out of view of the busy light-filled main entrance and exhibit. About 50 of us were herded into a box-shaped elevator. As it moved slowly downward a large sign showed the years 2017, 2016, ...2000,1945,1860.... Like a ship taking us to a strange and distant land, the elevator traveled downward until the numbers stopped at 1500. The door opened and there we began with the story of Africa: before slavery, and finally the beginning of slavery and the struggle of the African-American people to survive and resist. The display cases show maps, bills of sale, ship manifests, jewels, diaries, shackles and other objects illustrating a story that is really beyond any account your history teacher could tell. Imagine all the crowds of people moving slowly by—many staring for minutes on end at what is displayed.

What we can say is that the exhibits carefully made the case: that the wealth of Europe and America had its foundation in the slave trade and later pillage of the African continent. But it is really much more than that. For me the standout exhibits were just there, with, surprisingly, no large sign announcing them.

“Nat Turner’s Bible.” That’s what the small sign says. Below there is a yellowing book.

In 1831 Turner led a slave rebellion in Virginia that shocked and terrified slaveholders throughout the South and supporters of slavery everywhere. He was a deeply religious man, immersed in scripture. He had learned to read as a young child (unusual at that time).

The rebellion failed and Turner was captured and killed. In the aftermath it became a crime in Virginia to teach a slave to read.

I stare at the book: is this the Bible he pored over; what verses did he return to over and over again? What parts of the Bible spoke to him—can I tell?

The other exhibit that struck me was much better marked and more vivid if only because it was so beautiful.

The large case was easy to see and the shawl on display was a pearl white. Elaborate and elegantly embroidered silk, the shawl was draped over a mannequin of a small woman. There was a sign and a photo of Harriet Tubman wearing the shawl. It belonged to her—a gift from Queen Victoria. I always imagined Harriet Tubman as a strong, stern determined female foe of slavery. She helped dozens of slaves, including her own family, escape slavery and travel to freedom along a route now known as the Underground Railroad. During the Civil War, she was a nurse and cook, but eventually successfully led troops in battle. After the Civil War, she worked to give women the right to vote. Now I saw her anew as a woman of the 19th century, small and delicate appearing, elegant like Jane Austen with the unbending will of a Napoleon.



John Lewis: He Changed the World

by Byron Johnson, 10 years old

John Lewis, the civil rights leader, was born February 21, 1940. He is 77, and was born in Troy, Alabama. He has a large family, including six brothers, named Edward, Grant, Freddie, Sammy, Adolph, and William. He also has three sisters named Ethel, Rosa and Ora. He married Lillian Miles in 1968. Their son is named John-Miles Lewis.

He is the U.S. representative for Georgia's 5th congressional district. His district includes seventy-five percent of the city of Atlanta.

Over fifty years ago, he was one of the people who started the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). Lewis led sit-ins at segregated lunch counters in 1960 in Nashville, Tennessee. Bigots threw food on top of him and his friends. They never gave up even after that. He was one of the first freedom riders, and rode with black and white people to stop all the segregated busses in the South. He was violently attacked for doing that, and their bus was burned.

Besides helping to organize The March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, he spoke at it, on August 28, 1963. He talked about how he was for civil rights and against racism.

Then came the voting rights march in Selma, Alabama, in 1965. John Lewis attended the Selma March on March 7, 1965. All the marchers wanted was to be able to register to vote. The Alabama state troopers beat him so bad that they fractured his skull. The first day of the Selma March was called Bloody Sunday, because it was so violent and bloody. The second march for voting rights was on March 9, but that time the marchers turned back.

The third time, on March 21, the marchers were protected by Alabama state troopers and the FBI. The news media was watching. They marched all the way to Montgomery: peacefully.

In 1986 he got elected to Georgia's 5th District and has been re-elected 14 times.

Representative Lewis led the 2016 House of Democrats sit-in demanding that the House take action on gun control.

He did it because of the shooting on June 12, 2016, in Orlando, Florida. 40 Democrats joined him on the floor of the House of Representatives on June 22 for the sit-in.

He said, "There comes a time when you have to say something. You have to make a little noise. This is the time."

John Lewis changed the world and he's still doing that work.



American Indian Warrior

By Damian Melendez, 9 years old

This Indian fighter is on his horse and going to fight a battle. I know this because he has a spear in his hand and from the look on his face. He is wearing a big long feathered headdress and moccasins on his feet. He looks ready to fight for his tribe, for justice. He is going to protect his people.



Or maybe he is going hunting because his people are hungry and need food. He looks very tough and brave.

This warrior was made in 1913 by an American named Alexander Phimister Proctor. It is a sculpture made out of bronze metal that is in the National Gallery of Art. The warrior used to be in the Corcoran Gallery in D.C. If you look around the National Gallery, you can find it on the main floor in a hallway.

Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor

by Mia Gaile, 8 years old



Behind the Capitol building on the National Mall is the Supreme Court. Now there is a woman who is Latina, who is a judge, on the Supreme Court. Sonia Maria Sotomayor is an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States. She is the first Hispanic woman to be on the Supreme Court. President Barack Obama was the one who nominated her to the Supreme Court.

She was born June 25, 1954 in the Bronx in New York City. Her parents were Puerto Rican. When she was growing up, one of her favorite T.V. shows was Perry Mason and she decided to become a judge because of that. Later she went to college to be a lawyer.

She believes in justice for all. She said, "As you discover what strength you can draw from your community in this world from which it stands apart, look outward as well as inward. Build bridges instead of walls."

Photo: WhiteHouse.gov

This Sculpture Tells the Story of the 54th Massachusetts Regiment in the Civil War

By Naod Samuel, 9 years old



*The Shaw Memorial, by Augustus Saint-Gaudens,
at the National Gallery.*

This great sculpture, called the Shaw Memorial, is in the National Gallery of Art on the Mall in D.C. It shows the 54th Massachusetts Regiment marching in 1863. These men are African Americans who want to help the Northern Army to win the war and end slavery in our country. This is what the Civil War was about for them.

When I look at this, I see the black soldiers all around the white officer on the horse. The drummers are drumming and I think the drums are saying that they are ready to go. All the people have rifles and the leader, the man on the horse, has a sword and a pistol. Everyone is carrying bags and bedrolls and they have water canteens. There is a lady floating over their heads. I think she's an angel, a symbol of God looking out for all of them.

The man who made this is Augustus Saint-Gaudens. He made the first version, a bronze sculpture, for 21 important men who lived in Boston. He did it in honor of the officer in the middle, who was named Colonel Shaw, and his brave regiment. That sculpture got put up in Boston. Then he did a slightly different version of the same story. He did this one himself. He wanted to get all the details right. It took him more than ten years to finish it. Then this version was given to the Buffalo Fine Arts Academy (later the Albright-Knox Art Gallery). The Buffalo Fine Arts gallery gave it to the Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site in 1949. Finally, it was donated to the National Gallery of Art, and that is where you can see it today.

Photo: Jarek Tuszyński

Great National Mall Buildings

By Malakai Randolph, 9 years old

The U.S. Capitol, the Supreme Court, the Library of Congress, the National Archives, the Lincoln Memorial and the National Gallery of Art are some of the best-designed buildings on the National Mall. These are the kind of design known as Neoclassical architecture with tall white columns and a decorated roof that has a triangle shape.

Other cool buildings are the U.S. Botanical Gardens and the Smithsonian Castle. On the east side of the Mall is the Supreme Court building.



The Supreme Court building in Washington, D.C.

The Supreme Court building has many steps and a statue on each side of the steps.

The Botanical Gardens is a greenhouse. It is made out of panes of glass and metal and so it stays warm all year, and the sun can shine in on the plants growing inside.

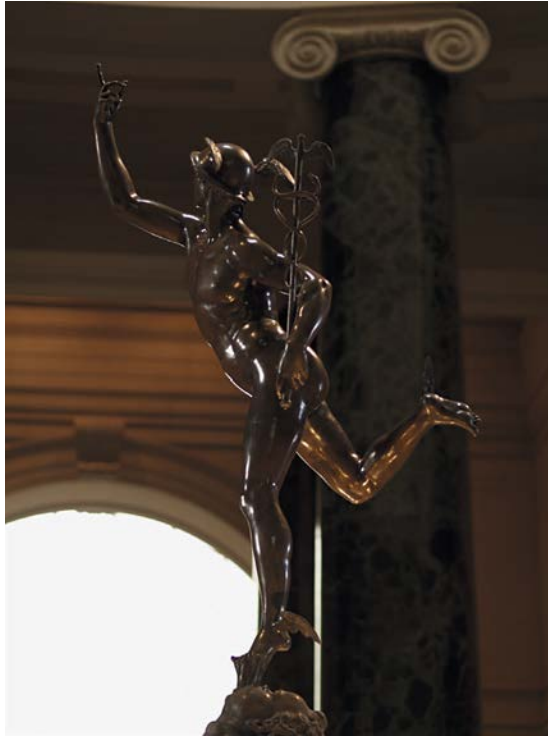
The Smithsonian Castle looks like one because it has turret towers like a castle. It is made out of red stone.

The Washington Monument is on the west side of the Mall. The Washington Monument is made out of a stone called marble. It is a tall obelisk with four flat sides and a pointed top. Tariq did a picture of it that is on the cover, and there is another drawing of it on page 45.



My favorite building is the U.S. Capitol. It is located on Capitol Hill. I really like the curves and the shape of the dome. Did you know it is 289 feet high and part of it is made out of cast iron? The outer dome is topped with a 19 foot bronze statue known as “Freedom.” The Capitol looks impressive because of the columns and shapes. The people who work there have lots of power to make the laws for our country. The Capitol is in a drawing by Sia on the cover of this book and a drawing by Lindell on page 11.

I am lucky I live near the U.S. Capitol and I get to see it almost every day.



Mercury on the Run

By Darrell Carey, 9 years old

Mercury is a statue in the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. You can find him in the middle of the National Gallery in the Rotunda part. He is part of a fountain. Mercury is six feet high. This statue is made of bronze. The staff that Mercury is holding in his hand is a symbol of peace. Mercury was the messenger of the gods in Ancient Rome. He was also the god of learning. I think he's an athlete. He has strong arms and legs and he has wings on his ankles and his helmet. You can tell he's moving fast because he's up on the ball of his foot.

The artist who created this is not known but they know it was cast around 1780 and sent to Rome. That makes it about 237 years old.

A rich man named Andrew Mellon bought it and brought it to America. After Mellon died, Mercury was donated to the National Gallery.

I don't know where he is headed but he sure is on the run.



Rio de Luz (River of Light)

by Rori Davis, 10 years old

There are a lot of beautiful paintings in the National Gallery of Art. My favorite one is called Rio de Luz. It was painted by Frederic Edwin Church. He painted this in 1877 in America. He lived from 1826 to 1900. I like the painting, Rio de Luz, which means “River of Light,” because of how Frederic Edwin Church zoomed it out so we would be able to see a full picture of the river. It feels like it is alive. It looks like it was taken with a camera, but he did it all without technology.

The painting shows a place that looks like it is very peaceful. The river looks like a place that is warm and safe. He used his imagination to make the picture, because it isn't a real place. I want to just step in it and sit down and relax.

There are three things I enjoyed about it. I like his perspective, it feels like it's a camera, zooming in. I like how you can see the entire place and great details. For example, you can see the birds are small and red, and the flowers and plants are big and bright.

The second wonderful thing is the reflection of light in the river. It is really like a river of light, the way it shimmers and shines.

Third, I can tell he put a lot of effort into it. He had to work really hard to put in all those details. He drew it first with a pencil and then he used oil paint on top of that. He had to be very careful and I think it took a long time.

Save This SPACE!

By Levi, Kellis, Zyquan, Adams and Antonio

...for playing on the mall...



Save this space for...



Save this space for...

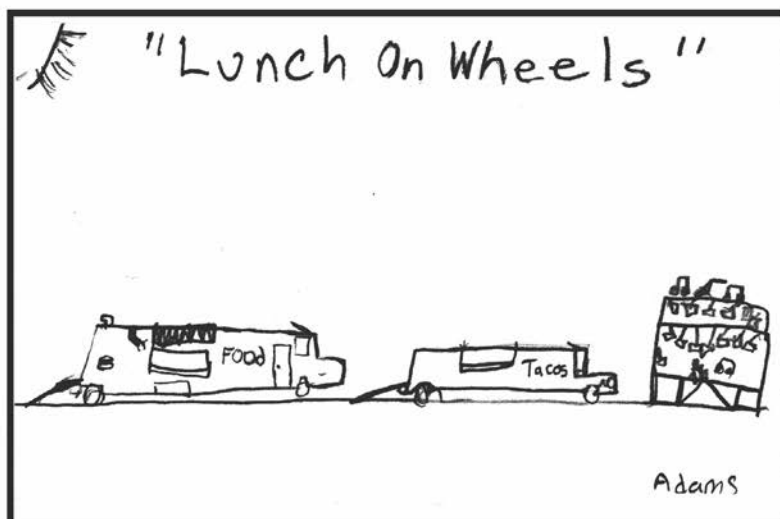
...Soccer... Kicking it on the Mall.



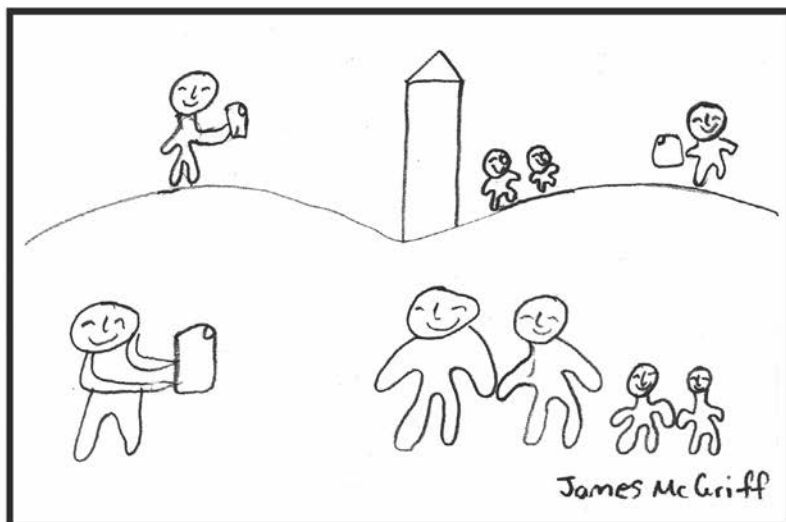
Antonio
Garcia



Save this space for...



Save this space for...



Last Word

by Judy Scott Feldman, Ph.D., Chair, National Mall Coalition

The National Mall belongs to all of us. It is the Stage for American Democracy. No matter who you are, what you believe, what direction you want our country to go, you have a place in our nation's capital to speak out and exercise your First Amendment freedoms. We can all trust that on the Mall our point of view will be heard, be protected, be respected.

The National Mall Coalition is an all-volunteer, DC-based nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing visionary planning for the Mall to ensure its continued vitality, beauty, and active role in the capital and in American life. We sincerely appreciate the wondrous work these talented students of Washington, D.C., Maryland, and Virginia, along with their teacher Louise Parker Kelley, have done on this civics project. Their deeply personal essays and drawings reveal the many ways the Mall touches and inspires hearts and minds: a place where history happens every day, where we can explore our national heritage, art, and science, where we can simply walk or play in the majestic landscape amid our national museums and monuments.

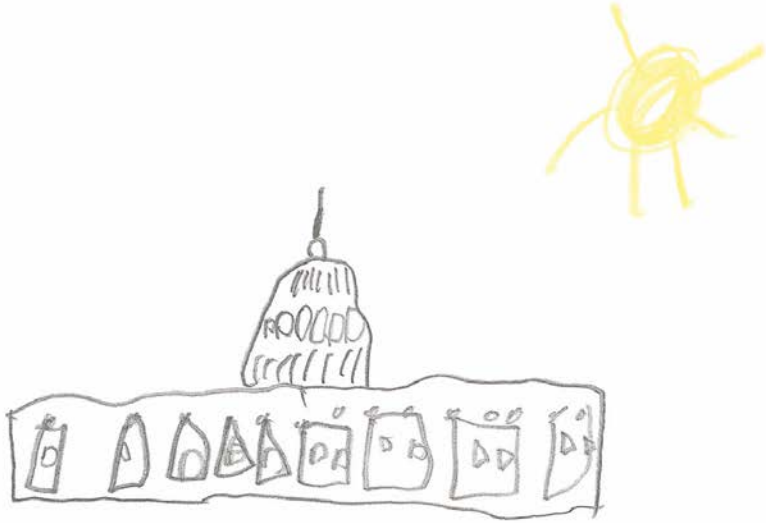
We are all called to the Mall, and we are committed to protecting and preserving it for everyone.

You can find out more about us at: www.nationalmallcoalition.org.

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Called to the Mall Once Again!



by Edwin Acevedo,
10 years old