

Shemar Johnson

Our Americas

African Burial Ground National Monument Museum

I went to the African Burial Ground National Monument Museum with my fellow classmates and my professor. This museum is located in the lower part of Manhattan between Broadway and Duane St. The burial ground is the largest African American cemetery rediscovered in the United States. It is also the first National monument which was dedicated to the Africans of early New York and Americans of African descent.

Visiting this museum, I was in shock not in a good way. Slavery goes back hundreds of years and just to know this is the small building where so many lives have been taken, people were not being treated as humans. We weren't equal, we were considered property. Once African Americans were at the age to pick a broom to sweep, they were considered valuable. Now they can be taken advantage of to be sold as a property. Children didn't get the chance to have a childhood, they were just pushed into slavery. I'm just hurt as an African American just to know that one small building is what they try to explain the hardship of what my ancestors had to go through just for me to be able to have somewhat an equal opportunity, have a job, education as everyone else, but racism and slavery still exist. This museum is not even half of the history of slavery, it was only explaining the burials of the slaves. There was nothing in regards to Martin Luther King, or the civil rights movement, slavery in the Caribbean and much more. I am very disappointed.

I enjoyed my time at the museum but I was hopeful to learn more. Thousands of Africans buried their loved ones during the 1600 and 1700s, slave traders also bought men, women and children from the Caribbean and Africa. Some of their bones and belongings were uncovered in 1991. In 1991, the Archaeologist conducted test and uncovered many untouched humans remains. The Africans also used

different tools and instruments. One in particular, that I liked was the Casamance fishing weights. I liked this tool because this was how the fishermen nets catch the food that they will later prepare for their families which is such a smart technique.

However, I am happy I was able to have the experience in visiting this museum. The burial ground is indeed the final resting place for ancestors of the African American culture. Their legacy is what makes New York the place it is today.