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Our America

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### African Burial Ground

Seeing the African Burial Ground Memorial was a very touching experience. With all the memories that the memorial brings and shows, it is all so shocking to see. From artworks to images, the story of this memorial can go from tragic to a glimmer of hope in people. I have not been to many memorials or monuments so this was interesting to experience. The history of this memorial began in 1991 with the discovery of more than 400 male and female bodies, where construction for a new federal office building had started. It was a 6.6 acre burial ground of enslaved and freed Africans that was made outside of Amsterdam. At the time of the discovery was deeply felt through the community and with the significant rise in cultural awareness at the time was even given national help. With many parties involved, this discovery went from being a National Historical Landmark to being named a National Monument.

There are three sections connected with the African Burial Ground Memorial, these being the exterior, interior, and the art exhibit connected to the memorial. For me, the one that stood out was the outside memorial of the monument. While it may seem small, it has such history with it that we might not get. The interior of the ring shows symbols of the many cultures that came to America and which were found in the burial ground. Even the granite memorial symbolizes something, that being the many stories effected by the passage. This part of the memorial was touching to me because of the significance that was placed in such amount of space and I was able to have a grasp at what had happened here. Not only does the memorial contain the

monument and memories of what had happened, but they even celebrate events like Kwanzaa yearly, which is great to know happens. I did not speak to much staff there but I was gladly able to speak to a few visitors there. They were kind enough to speak on their thoughts and were able to give me insight on what I missed. I learned much more of the story of the burial ground by looking at the timeline at the same time.

Being there was challenging for me because I had never heard of this memorial and seeing it for the first time was a bit of a shock for me. Having many remains of past Africans enslaved or freed was challenging to witness. I am sure that others would feel more about the memorial but I was glad to have an emotion of understanding the meaning behind the memorial. In the end, I was glad to see that this was through the power of the community and wanting to show others what had occurred and what should not be forgotten, and they were able to do so by having the monument built. Truly, a great experience worth going to.

## Works Cited

<https://www.nps.gov/afbg/index.htm>