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SOC 147

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Museum Visit Reflection Paper

African Burial Ground is the oldest and largest known excavated burial ground in North America for both free and enslaved Africans. In the 17th and 18th centuries, this place was called the "Negroes Burial Ground" with a 6-acre size. More than 15000 African Americans are buried there. Because the trinity church banned black people from being buried in the public cemetery, this place was the only site for them to memory the deceased. Due to the city expansion, the "Negroes Burial Ground" was permanently covered until 1991. Construction workers excavated 419 human remains when building Ted Weiss Federal Building 30 feet below the city street level. Eventually, the city government accepted the proposal to make space for African Burial Ground. That's why it was located here in this community.

When I arrived there and took an in-depth look at this monument, I was surprised by the numerous details. I noticed the tiny ditch surrounding the monument with water running inside then it settled into a tranquil pool. I believe the rapid water symbolizes the tortuous and painful journey of the slave trade. Eventually, those innocent souls can rest here. In the ancestral libation court, there's an arrow carved on the floor, pointing to the direction of Africa, where enslaved black people came from. It could be the detail that most people ignore. Right next to the monument, seven

crypts are buried underneath the grass. Instead of exposing the coffins, this way makes visitors acknowledge the truth more comfortably.

I haven't let any staff introduce the exhibition to me. However, the most important thing I learned was the brutality of the slave trade and the creativity of Africa Americans. They brought their culture to the U.S. and are proud of their ethnicity. The slave trade didn't tear down their pride anyhow.