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Second Museum Visit

The African Burial Ground Museum Paper Reflection

Professor: Dr. Nathaniel B. Perez

1: What is the history of this museum, and what was the reason it was placed in this community?

The African Burial Ground National Monument visitor center is located on the first floor of the Ted Weiss Federal Building located at 290 Broadway, in Lower Manhattan. In 1991-1992 when the site of Burial Ground was preparing for the construction of a federal office building archeologists start excavation. Preliminary archeological research excavation found intact human skeletal remains located 30 feet below the city's street level on Broadway. During survey work the largest and most important archeological discovery was made. Under the "Negroes Burial Ground" there is a 6-acre burial ground containing of 15000 intact skeletal remains of enslaved and free Africans who lived and worked in colonial New York. The history of the Burial Ground is from the middle 1630s to 1795. Currently, the burial ground is the nation's earliest and largest African burial ground rediscovered in the United State.

The burial ground's skeletal remains were negotiated extensively between the General Services Administration, the African American descendant community, historian, archeologists, and anthropologists, including city and state political leaders. Civic engagement led to the ancestral remains' reinterment with the original site of discovery. An outdoor memorial, an interpretive center, and research library were constructed to commemorate the financial and physical contribution of enslaved Africans in colonial New York and honor their memory. ¹

¹ <https://www.nps.gov/afbg/learn/historyculture/index.htm>

2: What stood out as most prominent among the museum's exhibits? What made this the case for you?

The most prominent exhibition was the film that was shown in the museum. The film was about an African funeral in 18th century New York. The film shows the life of African slaves in New York. It also shows their culture during the funeral, what was their prayers and how they were engraved their dead ones. Another prominent exhibition was a scene that was showing a funeral similar to the film titles "some of bones are my mother's bones. Come to gather to rise and shine..." This scene is portraying people who are grieving over a dead person. The yard of the museum (the burial ground), pictures and other artifacts were all prominent exhibitions.

3: Do the staff represent the topic or group of people exhibited in the museum? why or why not?

The staff was not representing any topic in the museum because every artifact was with its description. And every exhibited topic was very clear, only the information desk of the museum was announcing when the film was started to show. I was there with my professor and received lots of information about the burial ground itself.

4: what is something you learned or was challenging to you about the visit?

I learned lots of things and received lots of information that as an international student I had no idea about. I learned about the history of slavery in New York. I learned about the life, culture, and challenges that African were faced with in the United State. I learned about the area itself and how the burial ground had been discovered. But still there are lots of things that I should search about the burial ground such as when the first building was started in the site? How was the situation of the site when it was used for residence. Before visiting this museum, I had no idea about slavery in New York and the history of this state, but now I know many things about it. I

also want to visit the Burial Ground Museum later this year because the palaces that were leading to underground was closed.