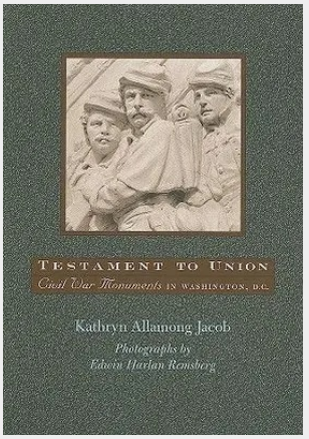
Jacob

Testament to Union

Civil War Monuments in Washington, D.C.



31,50 €
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Nicht mehr lieferbar

Kathryn Jacob's fascinating guide to Washington's many Civil War monuments—featuring the work of Maryland's Vanishing Lives photographer Edwin Remsberg. Although the monuments of Washington, D.C., honor more than two centuries of history and heroes, five years of that history produced more of the city's public commemorative sculpture than all the others combined. The heroes of the Civil War command Washington's choicest vantage points and most visible parks, lending their names to the city's most familiar circles and squares—Scott, Farragut, Logan, Sheridan, Dupont, and others. In Testament to Union, Kathryn Allamong Jacob tells the stories behind the many District of Columbia statues that honor participants in the Civil War, predominantly Union, and testify to their sacrifice and valor. In her introduction, Jacob puts these monuments in historical context, describing the often bitter battles over control of historical memory, the postwar monument business (a lone soldier-in-granite model could cost a community as little as $1,000), and the rise of the "city beautiful" movement that transformed Washington. She then offers individual descriptions of forty-one sculptures, providing a lively and informative guide to some of Washington's most beautiful and moving works of art. Organized geographically for easy use on walking or driving tours, the entries begin by listing the subject or title of the memorial along with its sculptor, medium, date, and location. Jacob describes its various elements and symbols, and she notes who commissioned the sculpture, who paid for it (or failed to pay in several cases), and who approved its design and placement. She also includes anecdotes and controversies that bring the monuments and their colorful history more fully to life. Admiral David Farragut's statue, for example, is cast from the propeller of his ship the U.S.S. Hartford, from whose rigging he shouted, "Damn the torpedoes! Full speed ahead!" during the battle of Mobile Bay. At the dedication of Lincoln Park's Emancipation Monument in 1876, the largest assembly of African-American to date, speaker Frederick Douglass shocked white listeners with thinly veiled criticism of the martyred Lincoln. Edwin Remsberg's photographs of the monuments capture striking images of war and sacrifice—the straining horses and terrified men of the cavalry grouping at the Grant Monument; the vivid tomb effigy of young John Meigs, depicting him as he was found dead in a field; the Pension Building frieze with its hundreds of finely detailed terra cotta soldiers and sailors marching and rowing across the face of the building. Along with swashbuckling generals atop pedestals bristling with cannon, unexpected subjects appear. A statue of John Ericsson, the Swedish-American who designed the Monitor and perfected the screw propeller for the Union Navy, is hidden in a circle of shrubbery beside the Potomac. A bas-relief of twelve nuns dedicated to the memory of various religious orders who nursed the wounded during the Civil War sits beside noisy Rhode Island Avenue. In addition to the enormous white temple to Lincoln on the Mall, four smaller statues of that president can be found in the city where he was assassinated. Washington's Civil War sculptures bear silent witness to the struggle to preserve the Union. They are the fruit of conscious efforts to shape the nation's memory of that struggle. For tourists and long-time residents, and for anyone interested in the Civil War or public art, Testament to Union is a wonderful guide to these tangible connections to the nation's past and an era when public monuments packed powerful messages.

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Artikelnummer: 9780801890956
Medium: Buch
ISBN: 978-0-8018-9095-6
Verlag: Johns Hopkins University Press
Erscheinungstermin: 01.04.2009
Sprache(n): Englisch
Auflage: Erscheinungsjahr 2009
Produktform: Kartoniert
Gewicht: 386 g
Seiten: 208
Format (B x H): 175 x 249 mm

Kundenservice Verlag Dr. Otto Schmidt KG
Neumannstraße 10, 40235 Düsseldorf | kundenservice@otto-schmidt.de | 0221-93738-997 (Inland)