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Monument Wars Washington Transformation Landscape Book Preview

The National Mall in Washington, D.C., is “a great public space, as essential a part of the American landscape as the Grand Canyon,” according to architecture critic Paul Goldberger, but few realize how recent, fragile, and contested this achievement is. In *Monument Wars*, Kirk Savage tells the Mall’s engrossing story—its historic plan, the structures that populate its corridors, and the sea change it reveals regarding national representation. Central to this narrative is a dramatic shift from the nineteenth-century concept of a decentralized landscape, or “ground”-

heroic statues spread out in traffic circles and picturesque parks-to the twentieth-century ideal of “space” in which authority is concentrated in an intensified center, and the monument is transformed from an object of reverence to a space of experience. Savage's lively and intelligent analysis traces the refocusing of the monuments themselves, from that of a single man, often on horseback, to commemorations of common soldiers or citizens; and from monuments that celebrate victory and heroism to memorials honoring victims. An indispensable guide to the National Mall, *Monument Wars* provides a fresh and fascinating perspective on over two hundred years of American history.