

= Major General George B. McClellan =

Major General George B. McClellan is an equestrian statue in Washington , D.C. that honors politician and Civil War general George B. McClellan . The monument is sited on a prominent location in the Kalorama Triangle neighborhood due to efforts made by area residents . The statue was sculpted by American artist Frederick William MacMonnies , a graduate of the École des Beaux - Arts whose best known work is a statue of Nathan Hale in New York City . MacMonnies was chosen to design the statue following a lengthy competition organized by a statue commission , led by then Secretary of War William Howard Taft . The monument was dedicated in 1907 , with prominent attendees at the ceremony including President Theodore Roosevelt , New York City mayor George B. McClellan , Jr . , politicians , generals and thousands of military personnel .

The sculpture is one of eighteen Civil War monuments in Washington , D.C. , which were collectively listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1978 . The bronze statue , which rests on a tall granite base adorned with emblems and bronze reliefs , is surrounded by a small public park bounded by California Street , Columbia Road and Connecticut Avenue NW . The monument and park are owned and maintained by the National Park Service , a federal agency of the Interior Department .

= = History = =

= = = Background = = =

George B. McClellan ( 1826 ? 1885 ) rose to prominence as a major general during the Civil War who organized the Army of the Potomac . Although he was unsuccessful in early battles , the Union victory at the Battle of Antietam temporarily halted the Confederate invasion of the northern states . He was later removed from his post by President Abraham Lincoln , whom he unsuccessfully ran against in the 1864 presidential election . McClellan ran again for public office after the war , serving as the 24th Governor of New Jersey .

Shortly after McClellan 's death in 1885 , the Society of the Army of the Potomac , a fraternal organization consisting of Union veterans , began plans to erect a monument honoring the general . It wasn 't until March 3 , 1901 , that Congress appropriated \$ 50 @ , @ 000 for the erection of the statue of McClellan . The following month a statue commission , originally led by Secretary of War Elihu Root , Senator George P. Wetmore and General George D. Ruggles , was formed to oversee the project . An advisory committee , composed of sculptors Daniel Chester French and Augustus Saint @ - @ Gaudens , and architect Charles Follen McKim , was also formed to provide recommendations to the commission . A resolution adopted at one of the first commission meetings stated : " That the monument of Gen. McClellan be an equestrian statue , and that this resolution be communicated by the secretary to any commission hereinafter appointed to execute the work . "

In 1902 , a design competition was held at the Corcoran Gallery of Art with a bonus of \$ 500 for each of the four sculptors who submitted the best models of the McClellan statue . Twenty @ - @ three designs were submitted by May 1 , which was later narrowed down to four finalists : Austin Hays , Charles Henry Niehaus , Attilio Piccirilli and Thomas Waldo Story . The four sculptors were later asked to submit larger models for further review by the advisory committee . The model submitted by Story was favored by McClellan 's widow , Nelly . In 1903 , the committee rejected three of the designs , citing a lack of individuality and symbolism . The fourth design , by Niehaus , was reluctantly approved by the committee , though the commission rejected all of the designs stating " no model submitted upon the competition is satisfactory . "

In August 1903 , the commission chose Frederick William MacMonnies ( 1863 ? 1937 ) , an American artist and sculptor who lived in Paris , to create the statue . MacMonnies was a graduate of the École des Beaux @ - @ Arts who had apprenticed with Saint @ - @ Gaudens for four years beginning at the age of seventeen . His previous works included a statue of Nathan Hale in New York City , Columbian Fountain at the World 's Columbian Exposition in Chicago and Bacchante and

Infant Faun at the Boston Public Library . MacMonnies ' other well @-@ known Civil War work is the sculptural groupings on the Soldiers ' and Sailors ' Arch in Brooklyn , New York . After his initial design was rejected due to costs overruns , he submitted a new design to the committee , which was later approved by the officials and Nelly McClellan . The accepted design reflected the influence of MacMonnies ' teacher in Paris , Alexandre Falguière , rather than Saint @-@ Gaudens . James Crocroft was chosen to design the monument while the statue was founded by Edmond Gruet Jeune . The Society of the Army of the Potomac paid for the costs associated with improving the monument site .

The site chosen for the monument changed several times throughout the planning process . Suggested locations included the intersection of Florida Avenue and Massachusetts Avenue NW , Sheridan Circle ( current site of the General Philip Sheridan statue ) and the intersection of N Street and Connecticut Avenue NW ( current site of the Doctor John Witherspoon statue ) . In 1906 , residents of the Kalorama Triangle neighborhood , then called Washington Heights , represented by cartoonist Clifford K. Berryman and Rear Admiral Thomas Oliver Selfridge , Jr . , asked the statue commission to consider placing the monument in their neighborhood . The commission , then led by Secretary of War and future President William Howard Taft , Senator Wetmore and General Horatio Collins King , approved the suggested site at the intersection of Connecticut Avenue and Columbia Road NW , describing it as a " more satisfactory and imposing " location . An additional factor that led to the site 's approval was that the area had been a Union camp during the summer of 1861 when McClellan arrived in Washington , D.C.

= = = Dedication = = =

The dedication of the monument was first planned for October 18 , 1906 , to coincide with the 37th annual reunion of the Society of the Army of the Potomac . A fire at MacMonnies ' polishing works prevented him from finishing the pedestal in time , so the dedication and reunion were rescheduled for the following May . During the delay , MacMonnies exhibited the statue at the 1906 Salon d 'Automne in Paris before shipping it to the United States . The reunion began on May 1 , 1907 , with opening events held at the Belasco Theater ( present site of the Howard T. Markey National Courts Building ) , Corcoran Gallery of Art and Thomas Jefferson Building .

The dedication took place on Thursday , May 2 , at 2 : 30 pm . Prior to the ceremony , around 700 veterans gathered at the intersection of 18th Street and Columbia Road NW , and marched down Columbia Road in a military parade to the dedication site . Veterans who were unable to march were seated in reviewing stands . The area surrounding the monument included a temporary stand and viewing boxes decorated with bunting , large flags , flowers and shields , while the statue was draped with two American flags . Prominent attendees at the ceremony included the main speaker , President Theodore Roosevelt , New York City mayor and McClellan 's son , George B. McClellan , Jr . , William Howard Taft , New Jersey governor Edward C. Stokes , Generals George Lewis Gillespie , Jr . , Frederick Dent Grant and Wallace F. Randolph , and Nelly McClellan . Additional attendees included members of Congress , foreign diplomats , members of the president 's cabinet and thousands of citizens . The event was led by Brigadier General Henry C. Dwight , president of the Society of the Army of the Potomac .

Following an invocation by Episcopal bishop Henry Y. Satterlee , a brief history of the statue was given by General Horatio Collins King . McClellan , Jr. then unveiled the statue to cheers and applause from the crowd . After the unveiling , the Fourth Battery of the Field Artillery saluted as " The Star @-@ Spangled Banner " was played by the Marine Band . After a military parade consisting of thousands of troops led by General J. Franklin Bell passed the statue and the reviewing stands , the main speech by Roosevelt was given . Roosevelt 's remarks , which covered various topics including war , peace , national pride and family , included the following : " Modern statuary has added a new terror to death . But I wish on behalf of those who live in the capital of the nation to express my very profound acknowledgment to those who had the good taste to choose a great sculptor to do this work . I thank them for having erected here in so well a chosen site a statue which , not only because of the man it commemorates , but because of its intrinsic worth , adds to

the nobility and beauty of the capital city of the country . " Following the president 's remarks , an overture from Semiramide , " On the Field of Glory " , was played . General Oliver O. Howard then spoke about his interactions with McClellan and General Grenville M. Dodge read a letter from General Daniel Sickles ( who was ill at the time ) that discussed his personal experiences with McClellan General Dwight 's speech included the statement : " Statues may crumble to dust . Veterans ' graves will be obliterated by time , but the grandest monument of the service of valor of the soldiers and sailors of the Civil War , the United States of America , the hope and joy of the world , consecrated to liberty by the blood and treasure of the nation , the undying testimonial of the patriotism of her people , will continue years and years . " The benediction was given by William R. Jenvey , Episcopal archdeacon of Jersey City , followed by the band closing the ceremony with " My Country , ' Tis of Thee . "

= = = Later history = = =

The statue is one of eighteen Civil War monuments in Washington , D.C. that were collectively listed on the National Register of Historic Places ( NRHP ) on September 20 , 1978 , and the District of Columbia Inventory of Historic Sites on March 3 , 1979 . It is also designated a contributing property to the Kalorama Triangle Historic District , listed on the NRHP on May 4 , 1987 . The monument and surrounding park are owned and maintained by the National Park Service ( NPS ) , a federal agency of the Interior Department .

In 2009 , the monument underwent a \$ 114 @, @ 000 restoration by Kreilick Conservation supervised by NPS architectural conservator Catherine Dewey . It was the first major conservation of the statue since its dedication in 1907 . Scaffolding and nylon mesh were installed around the monument for several months during the restoration , which included cleaning , painting and waxing the statue . Damage to the monument that was repaired during the process included removing spray paint from the base , removing water leakage inside the horse 's legs and stomach , and replicating a bronze shield that was missing from the pedestal .

= = Design and location = =

The monument is sited on a prominent location at the intersection of California Street , Columbia Road and Connecticut Avenue NW , on the southern edge of the Kalorama Triangle Historic District . The statue faces south down Connecticut Avenue toward Dupont Circle and downtown Washington , D.C. It is surrounded by a small public park . Adjacent landmarks include the Churchill Hotel to the west , Lothrop Mansion to the north and Washington Hilton to the east .

The bronze statue is 13 @. @ 6 feet ( 4 @. @ 1 m ) tall . It depicts McClellan dressed in his Union Army military uniform , including gauntlets , a hat , sash and sword , while riding a horse . He is holding the horse 's reins with the left hand while the right hand is placed on his hip . The granite pedestal , which measures 18 ft ( 5 @. @ 5 m ) tall and 9 @. @ 5 ft ( 2 @. @ 9 m ) long , rests on a base measuring 44 ft ( 13 m ) long and 30 ft ( 9 @. @ 1 m ) wide . Near the top of the pedestal are eight shield @- @ shaped emblems noting Civil War battles McClellan led : Antietam , Fair Oaks , Gaines 's Mill , Malvern Hill , Mechanicsville , South Mountain , Williamsburg and Yorktown . On the east and west sides of the pedestal are bronze reliefs composed of cannons , eagles , flags and swords . A bronze oak and laurel garland runs along the base of the pedestal between bronze eagles on each corner .

Inscriptions on the monument include the following :

( front of the pedestal ) MAJOR GENERAL / GEORGE BRINTON MCCLELLAN / 1826 @- @ 1885

( rear of the pedestal ) ERECTED BY THE / GRAND ARMY OF THE POTOMAC / AND THE / CONGRESS OF THE VNITED STATES / 1907

( relief on proper left side ) MAC MONNIES / E. GRUET JNE FONDEUR