

= Dupont Circle Fountain =

The Dupont Circle Fountain , formally known as the Rear Admiral Samuel Francis Dupont Memorial Fountain , is a fountain located in the center of Dupont Circle in Washington , D.C. It honors Rear Admiral Samuel Francis Du Pont , a prominent American naval officer and member of the Du Pont family . The fountain replaced a statue of Du Pont that was installed in 1884 . Designed by Henry Bacon and sculpted by Daniel Chester French , the fountain was dedicated in 1921 . Prominent guests at the dedication ceremony included First Lady Florence Harding , Secretary of War John W. Weeks and Secretary of the Navy Edwin Denby .

The fountain is one of eighteen Civil War monuments collectively listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1978 . The marble fountain , which is adorned with three allegorical sculptures , rests on a concrete base and is surrounded by an open plaza . The fountain and surrounding park are owned and maintained by the National Park Service , a federal agency of the Interior Department .

= = History = =

= = = Background = = =

In 1871 , the United States Army Corps of Engineers began constructing Dupont Circle , which at the time was called Pacific Circle since it was the western boundary of the city 's residential areas . On February 25 , 1882 , Congress renamed the circle and authorized a memorial to Samuel Francis Du Pont (1803 ? 1865) to honor his services during the Mexican ? American War and Civil War . He played a large role in the modernization of the Navy , and during the Civil War he was responsible for making the Union blockade effective against the Confederacy , though his failed attempt to attack Charleston in 1863 tarnished his career record . The bronze statue was sculpted by Launt Thompson and dedicated on December 20 , 1884 , at a cost of \$ 20 @, @ 500 . Attendees at the ceremony included President Chester A. Arthur , Senator Thomas F. Bayard , Admiral David Dixon Porter and General Philip Sheridan . The circle was landscaped with exotic plants and hundreds of trees .

In the early 20th century , members of the prominent Du Pont family wanted a memorial of greater artistic value and lobbied for a replacement . The family had always disliked the statue and by 1909 , the base of the statue had begun to sink and tilt , resulting in jokes being made that Du Pont and sailors were alcoholics . Senator Willard Saulsbury , Jr . ' s wife , who was a niece of Du Pont , led efforts to replace the statue . The family asked that no government funds be used for the new memorial and that the Commission of Fine Arts (CFA) approve the design . On February 26 , 1917 , Congress approved the replacement of the statue and insisted on construction beginning within three years .

The Du Pont family chose architect Henry Bacon and sculptor Daniel Chester French to design a fountain that reflected the Beaux @-@ Arts and neoclassical styles that were popular in the neighborhood at the time , such as the Patterson Mansion , located on the northeast edge of the circle . Bacon is best known for designing the Lincoln Memorial while French 's best known work is the statue of Abraham Lincoln inside the memorial . French 's other works in Washington , D.C. include the Butt @-@ Millet Memorial Fountain , the First Division Monument and the Thomas Gallaudet Memorial . The total cost of the commission was \$ 77 @, @ 521 . The CFA approved the design in 1917 and work began on the fountain shortly thereafter .

Congress wanted recognition for its earlier attempt to honor Du Pont , so the inscription on the fountain had to include the fact that a statue erected by Congress was replaced . An early model included plans for a fountain emitting water at the top , but this wasn 't incorporated into the final design . The fountain was carved by the Piccirilli Brothers , who also carved French 's statue of Abraham Lincoln at the Lincoln Memorial . The contractor was the George A. Fuller Company , whose other projects include the Flatiron Building and the Plaza Hotel in New York City . In 1920 ,

the statue was moved to Rockford Park in Wilmington , Delaware , the hometown of the Du Pont family . Later that year , the fountain was installed using pipes that were placed in 1877 for a potential fountain that had never been built . After the installation , mature trees and thick vegetation were planted in the surrounding park .

= = = Dedication = = =

The fountain was formally dedicated the afternoon of May 17 , 1921 . The ceremony , which was supervised by Lieutenant Colonel Clarence O. Sherrill , was described as " simple , yet impressive . " A temporary stand decorated with flags and shields was built for prominent guests including First Lady Florence Harding , Secretary of War John W. Weeks and Secretary of the Navy Edwin Denby . Chairs were placed along the walkways surrounding the fountain and sailors served as ushers for the event . While invited guests were being seated , the Navy Band performed music . Following the concert , members of the public were allowed to enter the area and soon filled the surrounding park .

The invocation was given by Episcopal bishop Alfred Harding followed by presentation of the colors while the band performed " The Stars and Stripes Forever " . The cloth screens concealing the fountain were then removed by Du Pont 's granddaughter , Sophie Du Pont Ford , and the band performed the national anthem and " Narcissus " by Ethelbert Nevin . The fountain was formally presented by Rear Admiral Purnell Frederick Harrington , who had served alongside Du Pont . Weeks received the fountain as a gift from the Du Pont family on behalf of the government . A speech was then given by Denby who praised Du Pont 's services to his country . He stated : " Du Pont 's hereditary background had justified the hope so meritoriously fulfilled in that officer 's career , while his service as a midshipman on the then active Constitution must have proved an inspiration for his later activities . " Denby also praised Du Pont 's attitude toward his fellow sailors and his willingness to put the country 's needs above his own . He concluded his speech by noting how proud the Navy was of the new memorial and expressed hopes that it would always be well maintained . Following Denby 's speech , three young girls that were descendants of Du Pont , Ann Andrews , Emily Du Pont and Mary Harvey , placed laurel wreaths in the fountain water . The ceremony concluded with the band performing " Columbia , the Gem of the Ocean . "

= = = Later history = = =

The fountain was a frequent target for vandals who would repeatedly break off fingers or hands from the sculptures . New hands were later carved and attached to the sculptures . In 1948 , the fountain was temporarily removed when a streetcar underpass was built beneath Dupont Circle . When it was moved back to its original location two years later , the fountain 's pumping system was replaced . When the new system was installed , workers forgot to connect the pipes to the fountain . The issue was corrected the following year and the fountain became operational .

The fountain 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 one of the few Civil War monuments that is not an equestrian sculpture . The others are the Stephenson Grand Army of the Republic Memorial , Nuns of the Battlefield , the Peace Monument , and statues of Admiral David G. Farragut , Brigadier General Albert Pike and General John A. Rawlins . The fountain is designated a contributing property to the Massachusetts Avenue Historic District , listed on the NRHP on October 22 , 1974 , and the Dupont Circle Historic District , listed on the NRHP on July 21 , 1978 . In the late 1990s , the fountain was restored by sculptor Constantine Seferlis . The fountain and surrounding park are owned and maintained by the National Park Service , a federal agency of the Interior Department .

= = Design and location = =

The fountain sits in the center of Dupont Circle , a park , traffic circle and neighborhood in the northwest quadrant of Washington , D.C. The park is located at the convergence of 19th Street , P Street , Connecticut Avenue , Massachusetts Avenue and New Hampshire Avenue NW .

The double @-@ tiered , white marble fountain rests on a concrete base . The upper basin of the fountain , which is approximately 3 feet (0 @.@ 91 m) high and 11 @.@ 6 feet (3 @.@ 5 m) wide and weighs 15 tons , is supported by a 8 @-@ ton shaft adorned with three allegorical figures , the Arts of Ocean Navigation . The figures , which are approximately 8 feet (2 @.@ 4 m) tall and 4 @.@ 5 feet (1 @.@ 4 m) wide and weigh 12 tons , represent the Sea , the Stars and the Wind . The Sea is represented by a female figure with long hair holding a boat in her right hand while caressing a seagull on her shoulder with her left hand . Her left foot rests on a dolphin . The Stars is a nude female figure with long hair holding a globe in her left hand and is faced downward . The Wind is a nude male figure draped with a ship sail . He is holding a conch shell with his left hand to use as a horn and is facing right . The water pours over the upper basin into a large lower basin that is approximately 1 @.@ 8 feet (0 @.@ 55 m) tall . The inscription on the outer rim of the lower basin states : " THIS MEMORIAL FOUNTAIN REPLACES A STATUE ERECTED BY THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES IN RECOGNITION OF HIS DISTINGUISHED SERVICES . SAMUEL FRANCIS DUPONT UNITED STATES NAVY 1803 - 1865 . " The circular concrete base features four sets of three steps that lead to the surrounding plaza . Six radial paths corresponding to the surrounding streets lead from the plaza to the edges of the park .