

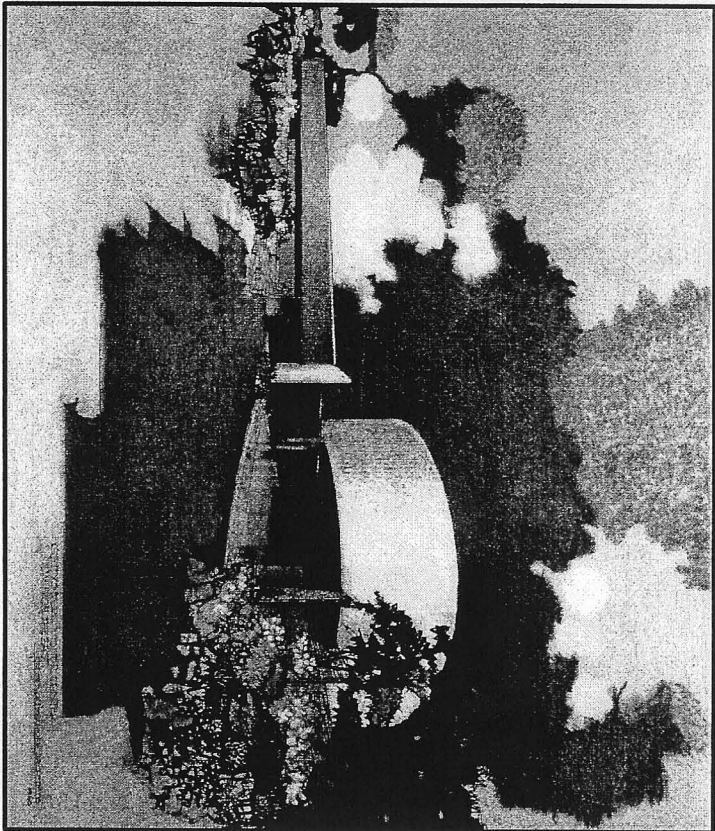
# CYCLORAMA BUILDING

## GETTYSBURG NATIONAL MILITARY PARK

CONSTRUCTED BETWEEN 1959 AND 1962, THE CYCLORAMA BUILDING PROVIDED GETTYSBURG NATIONAL MILITARY PARK WITH ITS FIRST PURPOSE-BUILT ADMINISTRATION BUILDING AND A KEY EXAMPLE OF THE NEW VISITOR CENTER BUILDING TYPE. INTERNATIONALLY-UNKNOWN MODERNIST ARCHITECT RICHARD NEUTRA, WITH PARTNER ROBERT ALEXANDER, DESIGNED A DYNAMIC MID-CENTURY MODERN STRUCTURE OF REINFORCED CONCRETE, GLASS, AND ALUMINIUM, ACCENTED WITH NATIVE FIELDSTONE. THE MAIN STREAMEMBRACE OF MODERNISM IN THE 1950S AND 1960S PROVIDED AN OPPORTUNITY FOR NEUTRA TO DISPLAY HIS MATURE ARCHITECTURAL IDEAS IN AN IMPORTANT PUBLIC BUILDING. THE CYCLORAMA BUILDING WAS ONE OF THE HIGHEST PROFILE NEW VISITOR CENTERS CONSTRUCTED AS PART OF THE MISSION 66 INITIATIVE. MISSION 66 WAS A NATIONAL PARK SERVICE WIDE EFFORT TO UPGRADE VISITOR FACILITIES AND PROVIDE IMPROVED INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMS FOR GROWING CROWDS OF VISITORS. THE PROGRAM LASTED FROM SOUGHT, 1956 TO 1966, CULMINATING WITH THE 50th ANNIVERSARY OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE.

THE BUILDING'S SIGNATURE ROTUNDA WAS INSPIRED BY THE NEED TO DISPLAY FRENCH ARTIST PAUL DOMINIQUE PHILIPPEAU'S MASSIVE CYCLORAMA PAINTING, APPROXIMATELY 27 FEET TALL BY 350 FEET IN CIRCUMFERENCE, DEPICTING HICKETS CHARGE, THE HIGH POINT OF THE CIVIL WAR BATTLE OF GETTYSBURG ON 3 JULY 1863. A POPULAR FORM OF ENTERTAINMENT IN THE LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY, CYCLOGRAM PAINTINGS SURROUNDED THE VIEWER WITH LIFE-LIKE REPRESENTATIONS OF DRAMATIC HISTORICAL EVENTS. PHILIPPEAU, WORKING WITH A LARGE GROUP OF ASSISTANTS, VISITED GETTYSBURG AND STUDIED PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE LANDSCAPE TO RECREATE THE HISTORIC SCENE. THE SECOND OF FOUR GETTYSBURG CYCLOGRAMS DONE BY THE ARTIST, THIS PAINTING WAS COMPLETED IN 1864 AND EXHIBITED IN BOSTON, NEWARK, NEW YORK CITY, BALTIMORE, AND WASHINGTON, D.C., AFTER SITTING IN STORAGE FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS, IT WAS BROUGHT TO GETTYSBURG FOR THE FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE IN 1875 AND DISPLAYED IN A SITE-LIKE STRUCTURE. THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE ACQUIRED THE PAINTING FROM PRIVATE OWNER FRANK AND BEGAN DISCUSSING THE NEED FOR A NEW BUILDING FOR ITS DISPLAY.

EVER SINCE IMMEDIATE POST-CIVIL WAR YEARS, PRIVATE AND GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS STRUGGLED TO SIMULTANEOUSLY PRESERVE AND PROVIDE ACCESS TO THIS IMPORTANT BATTLEFIELD AND COMMEMORATIVE LANDSCAPE. THE GETTYSBURG BATTLEFIELD MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION, A PRIVATE ORGANIZATION, PRESIDED OVER THE MESSEVATION OF THE BATTLEFIELD FROM 1863 UNTIL THE WAR DEPARTMENT TOOK OVER MANAGEMENT IN 1895. GETTYSBURG NATIONAL MILITARY PARK, INCLUDING THE PRESERVED SECTIONS OF THE BATTLEFIELD AND THE NATIONAL CEMETERY WHERE PRESIDENT ABRAHAM LINCOLN GAVE THE GETTYSBURG ADDRESS, WAS TRANSFERRED FROM THE WAR DEPARTMENT TO THE DEPARTMENT OF



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DOCUMENTATION OF THE CYCLORAMA BUILDING WAS UNDERTAKEN BY THE HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY / HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD / HISTORIC AMERICAN LANDSCAPES SURVEY (HABS/HAE/HALS) DIVISION OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE (NPS). JOHN A. BOHRS, ARCHITECT, LEAD THE PROJECT HAS SPONSORED BY GETTYSBURG NATIONAL MILITARY PARK (GNMP), NPS. OTHER ARCHITECTS SUPERINTENDING THE PROJECT INCLUDE: JOHN A. BOHRS, ARCHITECT, LEAD ARCHITECT; AND BY ARCHITECTS BRIAN CANNANAN (UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS), ROBYN CHARABASCT (ROGER WILLIAMS UNIVERSITY), AMANDA LONGJUN (KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY), AND HOELLE MGRANUS (EDMUNDBURG COLLEGE OF ART, ICOMOS / GREAT BRITAIN). THE HISTORICAL REPORT WAS WRITTEN BY HABS HISTORIAN USA FRIEDELER DAVIDSON. THE LARGE-FORMAT PHOTOGRAPHY WAS UNDERTAKEN BY HABS PHOTOGRAPHER JACK E. BOUCHER. ASSISTANCE WAS PROVIDED BY THE STAFFS OF GNMP AND OF EASTERN NATIONAL

THE INTERIOR IN 1953, WHEN THE MISSION 66 PROGRAM MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR GETTYSBURG NATIONAL MILITARY PARK TO CONSIDER THE ROTUNDA FOR CENTER. THE ROTUNDA WAS PLANNED TO BE A BALCONY BRIDGE THE LOCATION OF THE UNION LINE DURING THE BATTLE THIS LOCATION OFFERED THE SAME LOCATION AS PHILIPPEAU'S PAINTING AND AN OPPORTUNITY TO IMPROVE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE INTERPRETATION OF NEARBY LANDMARKS SUCH AS THE BLOODY ANGLE AND THE NATIONAL CEMETERY.

THE FIRST COMPLETE PROPOSAL, PREPARED BY NEUTRA AND ALEXANDER WAS DATED 28 APRIL 1958 AND FEATURED A BUILDING WITH A CONCRETE ROTUNDA AND LONG RECTANGULAR OFFICE WING, SIMILAR IN FORM TO THE CYCLORAMA BUILDING AS SUBSEQUENTLY COMPLETED. KEY DIFFERENCES INCLUDED A NINE-STORY OBSERVATION TOWER ON THE EAST AND A BALCONY ON THE WEST SIDE. THE SITE ORIENTATION WAS ALSO REVERSED. WITH THE CYCLORAMA ROTUNDA AT THE SOUTH END OF THE BUILDING, NEUTRA AND ALEXANDER, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE ARCHITECTS AT THE EASTERN OFFICE OF DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION IN PHILADELPHIA, REVISED THESE PLANS SEVERAL TIMES BEFORE AGREING UPON A FINAL SCHEME EARLY IN 1959. THE CONSTRUCTION DRAWINGS, SPECIFICATIONS, AND DETAIL DRAWINGS WERE COMPLETED ON 1 JUNE 1959. CONSTRUCTION BEGAN AT THE END OF THE YEAR, AND THE CYCLORAMA BUILDING WAS DEDICATED ON 17 NOVEMBER 1962, THE 99th ANNIVERSARY OF LINCOLN'S GETTYSBURG ADDRESS.

THE CYCLORAMA BUILDING IS BOTH UNIQUE IN FORM AND CHARACTER. THE ROTUNDA IS A MAJOR ARCHITECTURAL FEATURE, A BALCONY WITH CIRCULAR RIBBING AND A RECESSED BASE. PANELS OF LOCAL FIELDSTONE WITH VERTICAL RIBBING AND A SPARKLING WHITE SEALANT IS SET ON THIN CONCRETE PIERS AND A RECESSED BASE. PANELS OF LOCAL FIELDSTONE ON THE ROTUNDA PIERS AND SOUTH WALL PROVIDE A SUBTLE LOCAL ACCENT. THE LONG RECTILINEAR FORM OF THE OFFICE WING EXTENDS TO THE SOUTH AND FEATURES METAL SLASH WINDOWS, CONCRETE PANELS, CANTILEVERED LEDGES, ALUMINIUM LOUVERS, AND A CONCRETE SPIDER LEG, EMPHASIZING THE STRENGTH OF THE MODERN MATERIALS AND THE BUILDING'S ABSTRACT GEOMETRIC LOGIC. A LOWER FAN-SHAPED WING CONTAINING THE AUDITORIUM, CORRIDORS, AND UTILITY ROOMS CREATES AN ANGULAR RIBBED CONCRETE FORM LINKING THE ROTUNDA AND OFFICE WING. TRANSPARENT AREAS OF FULL-HEIGHT WINDOW WALLS AT THE EAST BASE OF THE ROTUNDA AND AT THE LOBBY AREA OF THE OFFICE WING CONTRAST WITH THE SOLIDITY OF THE ADJACENT CONCRETE WALLS. AS PART OF THE ORIGINAL CONCEPTION OF ADJOINING THE BUILDING TO THE SURROUNDING HISTORIC LANDSCAPE, THE CYCLORAMA BUILDING INCLUDED ROOFTOP AND GROUND LEVEL REFLECTING POOLS, RETRACTABLE WALLS EXPANDING THE MUSEUM AND AUDITORIUM GATHERING SPACES TO THE OUTDOORS, AND AN EXTERIOR RAMP LEADING TO THE BATTLEFIELD OVERLOOK ON THE ROOF OF THE OFFICE WING.