



BARTHOLDI, Frédéric-Auguste

Colmar, Haut-Rhin 1834 - Paris 1904

Maker: Durenne

Fontaine de l'Eau et de la Lumière

Fountain of Water and Light

1876

cast-iron (fountain) and marble (basin)

type: other

fountain: approx. H. 30 ft; basin: approx. diam. 35 ft.; weight: 15,000 lbs.

Inscription plaque in front of the fountain reads: The Bartholdi Fountain / This fountain was created by Frederic / Auguste Bartholdi / for the International / Centennial Exhibition in / Philadelphia in 1876, where it was placed at a focal point on / the grounds. It was illuminated with gas lights, / later replaced with electric globes. Painted to / look like bronze, the fountain was designed / in three identical sections with classical forms / and symbols. The aquatic monsters, shells, / fish, sea nymphs and youthful tritons all refer / to the ocean. The fountain was intended to / represent the elements water and light. / In 1877 the fountain was purchased / from Bartholdi by the United States / government and placed on the Botanic / Garden grounds, then located at the center of / the mall. The fountain, moved to its present / location in 1932, was restored in 1986.

Acc. No.:

Credit Line:

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Washington, D.C., District of Columbia, Outdoor sculpture

Provenance

- 1876, the fountain was first exhibited at the International Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia
- 1877, Congress bought it for \$6,000
- 1878, the marble basin was ordered by Congress for \$3,000
- 1878-1926, its first location was at the base of Capitol Hill
- 1926-1932, it was removed and stored to facilitate completion of the George Meade Memorial, and for landscaping improvements around the Grant Memorial
- 1932, the sculpture was placed at its current location near the U.S. Botanic Garden

Bibliography

- Save Outdoor Sculpture! website: <http://siris-artinventories.si.edu>, 31 May 2011

Save Outdoor Sculpture, District of Columbia survey, 1993

<http://e-monumen.net/patrimoine-monumental/fontaine-bartholdi-washington/>, accessed 15 January 2015

1974 Goode

James M. Goode, *The Outdoor Sculpture of Washington, D.C., A Comprehensive Historical Guide*, Washington, D.C., Smithsonian Institution Press, 1974, p. 250-251

1978 Capitol

Art in the United States Capitol, prepared by the Architect of the Capitol, under the direction of the Joint Committee on the Library, Washington, United States Government Printing Office, 1978, p. 352, ill.

1999 Fontes

publiée ds Fontes, avril 1999, n° 33

2002 Washington Post

Washington Post, Aug. 11, 2002, B-8

Exhibitions

- 1876 Philadelphia
International Centennial Exhibition (International Exhibition of Arts, Manufactures, and products of the Soil and Mine), Philadelphia, 10 May-10 November 1876
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