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Report of the Committee on a Monument to the Rhode Island Soldiers and Sailors

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State of Rhode Island, &c.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON A

MONUMENT

TO THE

Rhode Island Soldiers and Sailors,

WHO PERISHED IN SUPPRESSING THE

REBELLION,

MADE TO THE

GENERAL ASSEMBLY,

AT ITS

JANUARY SESSION, 1867.

PROVIDENCE:

PROVIDENCE PRESS CO., PRINTERS TO THE STATE,
1867.

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REPORT.

To the Honorable General Assembly of the State of Rhode Island, &c:

At the May session of your body, the following Resolutions were passed :

Resolved, That His Excellency Ambrose E. Burnside, William Binney, of Providence, William Grosvenor, of North Providence, Rowland G. Hazard, of South Kingstown, James DeWolf Perry, of Bristol, Pardon W. Stevens, of Newport, and John R. Bartlett, Secretary of State, be a committee, to serve without compensation, whose duty it shall be to recommend a suitable site upon which to erect a monument, to the memory of the officers and men in the Army and Navy of the United States, for the State of Rhode Island, who fell in battle, and who died of wounds, or from sickness in the late rebellion ; also to procure designs and estimates for the monument in question.

Resolved, That said committee be directed to report the result of their inquiries to the General Assembly at its January session.

The undersigned ask leave to present this report of their action thereunder.

Conscious of the importance of enlisting for the State, in its noble design, the best available talent in the selected department of Art, the committee at its first meeting issued proposals to artists generally, of which the following is a copy :

The undersigned, a committee appointed by the General Assembly of the State of Rhode Island, invite proposals, with designs and estimates of cost for a monument to the memory of the officers and men in the Army and Navy of the United States from the State of Rhode Island who fell in battle, and who died of their wounds or from sickness in the late rebellion. The estimated cost of the proposed monument must not exceed the sum of \$50,000.

The designs may be for a monument of bronze, marble or granite, or a combination of these materials. Tablets will also be required on the monument to contain about 1,300 names.

The committee deem it proper to state for the information of artists, that neither a tall obelisk nor a column are contemplated; but a monument of moderate height, accompanied by appropriate statues.

The location for the monument is not fixed upon, except that it will probably be placed in some public or open space within the city of Providence, on level ground, and not upon an eminence.

The designs and estimates must be transmitted to JOHN R. BARTLETT, Secretary of State of the State of Rhode Island, on or before the first day of December, 1866.

For the accepted design \$250 will be paid.

A. E. BURNSIDE.	} COMMITTEE.
WM. GROSVENOR.	
WILLIAM BINNEY.	
JAMES DEWOLF PERRY,	
ROWLAND G. HAZARD,	
P. W. STEVENS.	
JOHN R. BARTLETT,	

PROVIDENCE, R. I., *June*, 1866.

This circular was published for the information of artists in this country, and copies were also sent to Rome and Florence.

The time fixed for a response was short, and in the case of artists resident abroad, was still further abridged by the time spent in communicating with them. Your committee was therefore agreeably surprised, by the number, as well as the character of the designs sent for its inspection. It would seem that the generous impulse of the State had called out a kindred sympathy in artists generally, and those who addressed themselves to the work, did so in a spirit of loyalty to freedom and art, which was manifest in all their creations.

Your committee, consulting what they supposed to be the general wish, and also the necessity of furnishing some guide to artists, had imposed at the outset some general restrictions on the design with respect to its form, and the character of its future location. These appear in its proposals above quoted. This unavoidably narrowed the range within which Architecture and Sculpture could combine to commemorate the gratitude of the State to its soldiers and sailors. But in view of what has been accomplished, your committee perceives no just reason for regret.

Its first effort was given to selecting from among all the contributions, those which seemed to best combine beauty and appropriateness in conception, and adaptation to the special meaning of the memorial; and in doing this, it was obliged to pass over several, which, under a different rule of selection, possessed conspicuous merit.

Between the two ultimately thus chosen, a decision was extremely difficult. If, on the one hand, the use of allegorical figures, and the management of the architectural adjuncts in a way rather typical and suggestive, than directly expressive of the sentiment intended, were allowed; one of these had preëminently both beauty and significance: but it yielded to the other, if representative statuary and a more simple and familiar architecture were preferred. This latter view was the one at last adopted by your committee, and its vote settled upon the monument designed by Mr. Randolph Rogers.

As a plaster cast of this design has been for some time in the office of the Secretary of State, and is accessible to the members of the Assembly; it is not thought necessary to describe it in this report. It can hardly fail to commend itself to the popular taste, and meet the popular wish. Some alterations in its detail and accessories, which can easily be made, and are even in a measure, already suggested by the artist, can improve it still further.

The details of material, cost, &c., being best set forth in the letter of the artist, are left to be read in that; which the committee annexes hereto, and asks leave to make a part of its report.

The selection of a site was scarcely separable from a decision upon the design, since the point of view is of primary importance in passing judgment upon a work of this sort. Your committee decided that the proper place for such a monument was the city of Providence, and that the best site was the small triangular park, at the head of Exchange Place. This decision presupposed that the city would cheerfully dedicate it to this use, and of this, the committee entertains no doubt.

Your committee therefore completes its duty by recommending to this Honorable Assembly to appropriate fifty thousand dollars, for the erection of the monument designed by Mr. Rogers, as a memorial of the Rhode Island soldiers and sailors, who perished in defence of her liberties; to appoint a committee to order and superintend its erection; and to procure from the city of Providence, a proper transfer of the proposed site, and have inscribed upon the monument the names of all our gallant dead. To carry out this object they ask leave to append some appropriate resolutions.

In concluding, your committee ventures to enforce its recommendation, by a few words, which it believes will meet a response in your Honorable Body.

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A few years ago, the men of this State were peaceful, industrious men, filling their various places in life with credit and profit to the State. Fathers, sons, brothers, husbands, they were bound by every domestic tie, and they were in the daily enjoyment of the blessings which peace and honest industry can alone bring. Rebellion burst out in a portion of our common country, war began to blaze in its path, the nation felt the shock, and trembled under it. Each loyal State awoke to its responsibilities, and Rhode Island among the first. She called her citizens, and they gathered at her voice. In no spirit of ambition, or of rapine, but sadly though unflinchingly they laid down the implements of peaceful labor, parted from wives and children and parents, and, invoking a noble principle, and relying on a protecting Providence, they offered their lives to the nation, and entrusted their memories to their State. What they did is not to be told here. It constitutes a noble chapter in the history of Rhode Island. The awful storm of war has passed. Peace, at least in our borders, has resumed her gracious sway; but the men who called her home from the bloody field, and the stormy wave, are not all here. Their resting-places are on distant battle-grounds, or rebel prison-yards, or under the unmarked and remote sod; but here are their empty places; here are those to whom, when in life they were dear, and who now cherish their memories with a proud sorrow; here is the State for which they sacrificed themselves; here, if anywhere, must the record of their deeds be preserved. When the danger was imminent, the State sent forth her summons; it is no wonder that now, when that danger is past, she should remember their devotion, and should resolve to erect for the coming ages, a memorial of their self-sacrifice, and an incentive to imitative patriotism.

To such a purpose who would not say God speed? Who would not open the purse of the State to honor her patriot dead? Who would not invoke the grandest of arts, to commemorate the noblest of virtues?

All of which is respectfully submitted by your committee.

A. E. BURNSIDE,
WILLIAM GROSVENOR,
R. G. HAZARD,

By John R. Barilett.

JOHN R. BARTLETT,
WILLIAM BINNEY,
JAMES DEW. PERRY.

REPORT ON MONUMENT.

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LETTER OF RANDOLPH ROGERS.

ROME, November 5th, 1866.

John R. Bartlett, Esq., Secretary of the State of Rhode Island:

SIR:—Having received through William Grosvenor, Esq., a circular issued by authority of the State of Rhode Island, asking for designs for a monument to the memory of the officers and men in the Army and Navy of the United States, I immediately set to work upon a design, and I am happy to say that the result of my labor will soon be before the committee, in the form of a model in plaster of Paris, about six feet high. The model, in three packages, left my studio on the 29th of October, to go by Messageries Imperial, via Paris and Havre, from thence by steamer to New York. Packages marked M., P. and H., Nos. 1,400, 1,401, 1,402, and sent to the care of Anthony & Hall, New York, to be forwarded to John R. Bartlett, Secretary of the State of Rhode Island, at Providence. The bill of lading and U. S. Consul's certificate of citizenship will be sent to Anthony & Hall, New York. I beg the authorities of Rhode Island to arrange with the functionaries at the New York Custom House to pass the cases unopened, for the models will be ruined if they attempt to remove them from the boxes. The articles are encased in double boxes, and baled. On their arrival in Providence, the largest package, which is the base, should be opened first. A box or stand should be prepared, about three feet three inches high by two feet square. After removing the baling, take out all the screws and separate the pieces of the case as much as possible, then remove the packing of paper cuttings—then lift the base slate and board lining on the pedestal. Then unpack the next piece, and so on, and put the whole thing together according to the photographs which you will find attached to the inside of the cover of the box.

With the model before you, a lengthy explanation of the design will not be necessary. The small model is made on a scale of one inch and a half to the foot, consequently the work when finished will be forty-two feet high. The statue of America (America militant) will be ten feet high. I have attempted to represent America as at the close of the war, with one hand resting on her sword; in her right hand she holds a wreath of laurels, and in her left a wreath of immortelles. Beneath the plinth upon which she stands are stars and

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wreaths of oak and laurels. Upon the face of the next section are the arms of the State of Rhode Island ; at least as near as I could do it from recollection. In the rear are the arms of the United States. On the angles are the fasces, indicating that in union there is strength. On the next section is the dedication—Erected by the people of the State of Rhode Island, to the brave men who died that their country might live. The above may be rejected by the committee, who, no doubt, will find a better. There are three other panels on this section to be filled ; perhaps it would be well to use them for the names of officers. Upon the next section stand the representatives of the Army and Navy. These statues are to be seven feet in height, representing the infantry, cavalry, artillery, and the sailor for the navy. On the next section are four bassi-relievi, size of life, representing WAR, VICTORY, PEACE and HISTORY. On the projecting abutments are twelve panels for more than fifteen hundred names.

I propose to make the architecture of this monument in granite and marble, or all granite provided the expense will not be too great to allow it to come within the sum stipulated by the committee. I propose that the base, from the cannon balls downwards, shall be of granite ; and that from the cannon balls, upwards it shall be of white veined marble.

The statues, bassi-relievi, arms, fasces and ornaments, such as stars, wreaths &c., shall be of bronze, for in my opinion marble will not stand our climate a year. Bronze is at least one-third more expensive than marble, but it is eternal. I will now give you my estimate for the entire work, with the exception of the cannon balls, the cost of which I have no idea.

Statue of America in bronze, 10 feet high,	- - -	\$8,000
4 statues representing Army and Navy, each \$5,000,	- - -	20,000
4 bassi-relievi, life size, representing War, Victory, Peace and History, each \$2,000,	- - - - -	8,000
1 coat of arms of State of Rhode Island,	- - -	500
1 coat of arms of United States,	- - -	500
Stars and wreaths,	- - - - -	500
Fasces, each \$100,	- - - - -	400
Architecture,	- - - - -	9,000
Foundation,	- - - - -	1,000
Packing, insurance and transportation,	- - - - -	2,100
Total,	- - - - -	<u>\$50,000</u>

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The whole work to be completed within two years and four months from the time I receive the commission.

I shall require payments according to my contract with the State of Virginia for the completion of the Washington monument, and all other public works which have been entrusted to me, viz.: one-half the price of each statue or basso relievo, to be paid on presentation of the U. S. Consul's certificate that a certain statue or basso relievo has been finished in plaster and ready to be cast in bronze. The other half on delivery of the statue in bronze to the committee in Providence.

The committee will understand that the statuettes which I send you are simply rough sketches, done in haste and without the aid of materials, and no doubt are faulty in costume as well as in other respects. When the figures are executed on a large scale, the costumes will be done from nature, and the other defects remedied by careful study.

It has been with great difficulty that I have been able to squeeze in the above amount of work for the sum named by the committee. The statues I put at a much lower value than anything I have ever executed, but shall be content to make less on each, as there are many.

Should the committee entrust this work to me, they may be assured that it will be finished within the time specified, and to the best of my ability.

Hoping for a favorable report, I remain,

Your obedient servant,

RANDOLPH ROGERS.