

"How anyone could object to making an auditorium in the Center a memorial to a President of the United States, with his greatest words engraved, not on some outdoor stones for a comparative few to see, but on the walls within where hundreds would see them at one time, is hard to understand.

"Each section of the Center could be devoted to a President's memorial. The beautiful outer terrace facing Roosevelt Island could be Theodore Roosevelt's memorial. The grand salon in the center of the building might be F. D. R.'s memorial. The concert hall could be Mr. Truman's. And one of the sweeping plazas Mr. Eisenhower's."

The Chairman of the Committee of 100 on the Federal City, Neill Phillips, in a recent letter to Horace M. Albright, a member of the Theodore Roosevelt Association, noted that living memorials are becoming more and more popular, and he pointed to the National Cultural Center as "a most important example of a living memorial" and suggested one of the Center's units be named in honor of President Theodore Roosevelt.

THE PARK OF THE PRESIDENTS

Mr. Speaker, it would be only fair to report here that there is a second proposal to commemorate our Presidents, and this plan would rename Lafayette Square "The Park of the Presidents."

The proponents of this plan are powerfully influenced by the tremendous financial support which the Federal Government has given and is giving to the famous Independence National Historical Park in downtown Philadelphia.

Over 100 bills were introduced in both the House and the Senate during the 85th Congress which would have preserved Lafayette Park.

During the 86th Congress, many distinguished Members of Congress also introduced bills to preserve the historic buildings on Lafayette Square.

President-elect John F. Kennedy introduced S. 3280 on March 24, 1960, and he was quickly joined by Senators Paul Douglas, Wayne Morse, Ernest Gruening, Michael J. Mansfield, Thomas C. Hennings, Jr., and Hubert H. Humphrey. Companion bills were introduced by a number of Members of the House of Representatives, and Senators Eugene J. McCarthy and John Sherman Cooper worked hard to save these buildings.

President-elect Kennedy said at that time that "the Dolly Madison House, the Benjamin Tayloe House, and the Belasco Theatre have long served as an inspiration to generations of Americans who have visited their Capital City."

If Lafayette Square were renamed "the Park of the Presidents," if it were extended the same protective care which the Federal Government has extended to Independence National Historical Park, if the buildings on Madison Place and Jackson Place were preserved for the benefit of future Americans, then, indeed, according to this plan's proponents, this would be a worthy memorial in perpetuity to all our past Presidents.

I include here as part of my remarks articles which indicate the lively interest of the major newspapers in the Nation's Capital in this subject of living memorials to our past Presidents:

[From the Trenton (N.J.) *Trentonian*, Jan. 6, 1961]

LETTER TO CONGRESSMAN THOMPSON

DEAR CONGRESSMAN: Undoubtedly it has come to your attention, as it has to ours, that the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial Commission is considering plans to decorate an acre of precious Washington, D.C., land with a cluster of eight concrete slabs as a memorial to President Roosevelt. The slabs would serve to preserve, in a way, famous quotations from his speeches.

The respect you enjoy as a leading advocate of our country's cultural advancement has been well and justly earned. In view thereof, it is our conviction that your keen sensibilities may well be as offended as are those of others by this proposal, which already has been described as ridiculous and worse.

We feel sure that it is hardly necessary to point out to you that such pretentiousness is not in keeping with the late President's personality, nor with his humanitarian concern for those afflicted as he was, nor with the high place he holds as a great wartime leader of this Nation and the free world.

It may also have occurred to you that selection of an appropriate memorial to President Roosevelt might be tabled for a while in order to avoid having it become bogged down in controversy. With good reason, history usually does not pass judgment upon a man until he has been dead for at least 25 years.