



# African American Monument



In March 1999, Vicksburg Mayor Robert M. Walker proposed placement of a monument in Vicksburg National Military Park recognizing the contributions of African American soldiers during the Vicksburg campaign. In August of that year, the concept was approved, and specifications for design, text, and site plan were developed and submitted to the National Park Service. Along with the initial \$25,000 appropriated by the City of Vicksburg towards the design and construction of the monument, an additional \$250,000 was requested and funded through the State of Mississippi. Final approval to erect the memorial was received in 2002 and in November of that year, the design submitted by Dr. J. Kim Sessums of Brookhaven, Mississippi, was selected for the bronze monument.



The nine-foot tall sculpture depicts three figures - two Union soldiers representing the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>d</sup> Mississippi Infantry, African Descent, that participated in the Vicksburg campaign, and the third a civilian laborer. The soldier on the left looks toward the future that he helped secure through force of arms. The civilian looks to the past and the institution of slavery that he has left behind. Between them they support a wounded comrade, representing the sacrifice in blood made by African American soldiers on the field of battle.

Of the more than 1,300 monuments in the park, this memorial is the first to honor black troops, and the first tribute of its type honoring African American soldiers placed on any of the Civil War battlefields administered by the National Park Service.

Groundbreaking for the monument was held on September 20, 2003, with dedication of the memorial on February 14, 2004.

*“Commemorating the Service of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>d</sup> Mississippi Infantry, African Descent and All Mississippians of African Descent Who Participated in the Vicksburg Campaign.”*



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