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TITLE

LEE AND JACKSON MONUMENT, 1948

LOCATION

Wyman Park, Art Museum Drive

SCULPTOR

Laura Gardin Fraser (1889–1966)

ARCHITECT

John Russell Pope (1873–1937)

MEDIUM

Bronze

DONOR

J. Henry Ferguson

Robert E. Lee and Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson were childhood heroes of J. Henry Ferguson (1849–1928), a bachelor banker who organized the Colonial Trust Company and served as its president until his death. He left \$100,000 in his will for the creation of a public monument to the two men, whom he wanted held up as good examples for the youth of Maryland. Ferguson had stipulated that the money for the monument could come to the city only after the death of his sister, Mrs. Ella F. Ward. When she died in 1934, the money and very specific instructions were given to the Municipal Art Society of Baltimore City, the organization chosen by Ferguson to organize a design competition and oversee the creation of the monument.

Ferguson's will spelled out exactly what should be represented, what the inscriptions should be, and who should serve as members of the jury for a limited competition. These individuals were also charged with selecting the site for the monument, which had to be within ten miles of City Hall.

Six sculptors were invited to take part in the competition, held in 1935: Lee Lawrie, Paulanship, and Edward McCartan, all of New York; F. William Sievers, of Richmond, Virginia; Hans Schuler, then director of the Maryland Institute in Baltimore; and Laura Gardin Fraser, of Westport, Connecticut. Fraser won. She was one of the very few women who distinguished themselves in the field of sculpture in the first half of the

century. When she won this competition, she was best known as a designer of medals. She was the first woman to receive the Saltus Medal, the highest award for medal designers in the United States. Fraser designed and created more than one hundred medals. Among her most important designs were for the congressional medals honoring George C. Marshall, Charles Lindbergh, Benjamin Franklin, George Washington, and Admiral Richard E. Byrd. Fraser was also known as an *animalier*. She had always had a passion for horses and had created many polo trophies, all portraits of famous horses. She was married to another well-known sculptor, James Earl Fraser, who had been her teacher. She was elected to the National Sculpture Society in 1912, the National Academy of Design in 1931, and the National Institute of Arts and Letters in 1931.

Fraser spent twelve years creating this monument, much to the frustration of the Municipal Art Society and the citizens of Baltimore. It had been announced that the project was expected to take two years. The sculptor commissioned John Russell Pope, the architect of the Baltimore Museum of Art, located across the street from the site, to design the granite base. By 1939 a very impressive base with all the required inscriptions had been completed at a cost of \$50,000. Two of the inscriptions are quotations from one of these men about the other. The quotation from Lee, "STRAIGHT AS THE NEEDLE TO THE POLE JACKSON ADVANCED TO THE EXECUTION OF MY PURPOSE," appears on the side of the base closest to Jackson, and the quotation from Jackson, "SO GREAT IS MY CONFIDENCE IN GENERAL LEE THAT I AM WILLING TO FOLLOW HIM BLINDFOLDED," is inscribed on the side closest to Lee.

The double equestrian monument was not completed until 1948. The delays were due in part to problems in purchasing Italian clay, which was in short supply in the United States during the 1940s. There were also severe restrictions on the use of metal for anything other than national defense. It was clear, too, that the sculptor was working very slowly and carefully on this very important monument. In the bronze, just behind the back hoof of Lee's horse, Fraser left a tribute to the Gorham Company, which had been responsible for

casting the piece: she thanked them for holding to the original contract, "to their own intrinsic loss."

The double equestrian monument represents the parting of Lee and Jackson on May 1, 1863, the eve of the battle of Chancellorsville, one of the most important battles of the Civil War. Lee is shown seated on his famous horse, Traveller, wearing a long overcoat and his well-recognized wide-brimmed hat. To Lee's right, Jackson, seated atop Little Sorrel and dressed in his Confederate uniform, has just signaled to his horse to leave. Little Sorrel holds his head high, and his front left leg is raised to step and turn away. With this sculpture, Fraser depicted four portraits—Lee and Jackson, Traveller and Little Sorrel—and captured the exact moment of the generals' parting, which took place in a clearing much like the one offered by this site at the edge of Wyman Park. The drama of the moment depicted is heightened by the knowledge that Jackson received a mortal wound in the battle that followed.

May 1, 1948, was a glorious day in Baltimore. Three thousand people, including the sculptor and the grandchildren of the two generals, as well as the governor of Maryland, the mayor of Baltimore, and other notable citizens, were in attendance. The marching band from the Virginia Military Institute, where Jackson was teaching at the outbreak of the Civil War, performed. Members of the old Fifth Regiment, the "Dandy Fifth," led the parade.

A letter written to *Time* magazine on April 10, 1948, made note of the installation of this double equestrian monument and stated that it was thought to be the only double equestrian monument in the United States or Europe. Shortly thereafter, on June 14, 1948, a letter and photograph appeared in *Time* documenting the 1936 double equestrian monument *Lee and a Soldier*, by A. Phimister Proctor, in Dallas, Texas, abruptly ending Baltimore's short-lived primacy in this area.

