Bells for America

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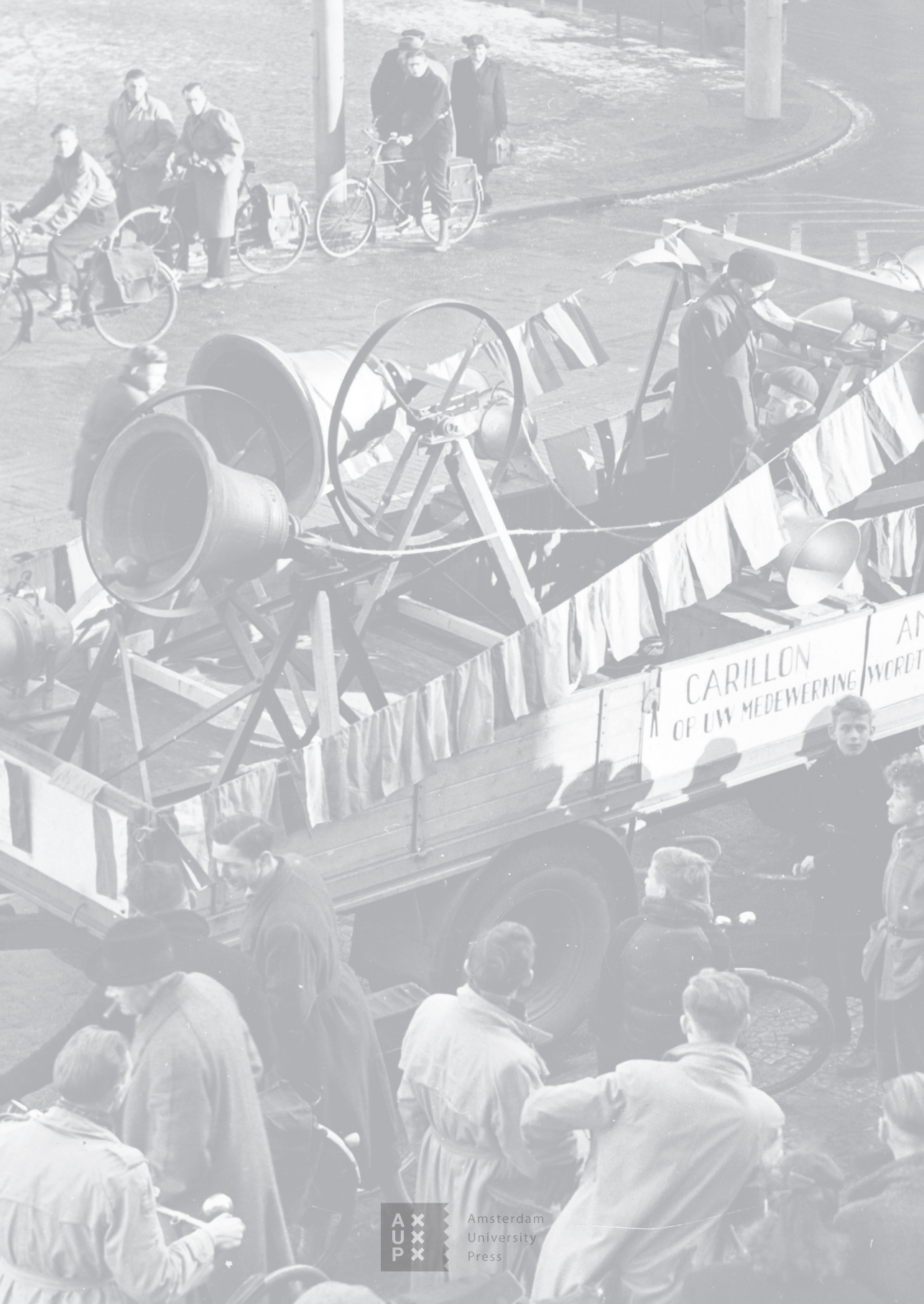

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The Cold War, Modernism, and the Netherlands Carillon in Arlington

DIEDERIK OOSTDIJK

Amsterdam University Press

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introduction

Forestroke

Towering over black oaks, white pines, and spruce trees, the Netherlands Carillon is a perplexing sight. There is no warning given for the presence of this monument. Nestled between the larger-than-life United States Marine Corps War Memorial and the hallowed ground of Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia, the Netherlands Carillon looms suddenly. Situated on a hill overlooking the National Mall, it offers a magnificent view of Washington, D.C. The Netherlands Carillon is much less known than its famous neighbors or the Lincoln Memorial, the National World War II Memorial, and the Washington Monument upon which it looks. A gift bestowed by the Dutch population to Americans in the 1950s to thank them for liberating the Netherlands a decade earlier and for supplying Marshall Plan aid, it is composed of a 127-foot bell tower in an open steel structure reinforced by steel plates. Just outside its quartzite plaza, two bronze lions stand guard, facing toward the nation's capital across the Potomac River. Inside the bell tower, high above the ground and only partly visible to visitors down below, hang fifty bronze bells with a combined weight of 61,438 pounds, cast by three Dutch bell foundries. The bells range in size: the smallest is eight inches in diameter and weighs thirty-five pounds, and the largest is six feet, nine inches in diameter and weighs 12,654 pounds. Each bell is inscribed with a tale from its country of origin, though this intriguing detail is not visible to the public.

The first time I saw the Netherlands Carillon was in November 1997. I had left my native Netherlands to pursue research for my Ph.D. at the Library of Congress and was staying with

Fig. 1 The Netherlands Carillon in Arlington Ridge Park, part of the George Washington Memorial Parkway in Arlington, Virginia, in 2015. The bell tower was designed in 1960 by architect Joost Boks, and the bronze lions by sculptor Paul Koning. Photo: author. Courtesy of the George Washington Memorial Parkway.

two friends in Georgetown. On a foggy Sunday, we drove to Arlington to visit the cemetery. On the way back to the car, I wanted to stop at the United States Marine Corps Memorial, and we suddenly stumbled upon the Netherlands Carillon. I took pictures of the engraving, "FROM THE PEOPLE OF THE NETHERLANDS TO THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES," and of one of my friends standing awkwardly next to the darkling tower. In a letter to my mother that I recently found after her death, I mentioned seeing the carillon and asked whether she had ever heard of it. She had not. Neither the photos nor the letter reflect how this initial encounter with the monument made me feel. I remember that a mixture of pride and embarrassment took

hold of me, with the latter being decidedly stronger. I was surprised that my compatriots had acquired a spot among all these famous monuments, but I was also confounded that I had never heard about or seen this soaring construction. Its lean, modernist demeanor, the sharp-cornered box beams, and the steel cladding plates and round hex screws—which I just had to touch for a moment—resembled an architectural style I knew from my childhood, stirring something strangely familiar (fig. 1). The bell tower of the Netherlands Carillon was built in the same Dutch postwar reconstruction style as the neighborhood where I grew up. The single bell of the modernist church where I was baptized and where the funeral service for my father was held (and which could easily be mistaken for a gas station) hung in a starkly angular building that could have been a miniature version of the Netherlands Carillon. So what was this very Dutch thing doing here?

Like most Dutch people of my generation, I only dimly knew what a carillon was, despite its resounding history in my homeland. Something with bells, right? At my first visit to the monument, the bells, recently returned to the high tower, were silent. It would be more than a decade before I heard them chiming while I walked down from the Arlington Metro station through the cemetery on a summer scorcher. I jubilantly approached the Netherlands Carillon this time, still puzzled by its numinous presence but more mindful that its peals and clangs were oddly familiar to me too. I was beginning to understand that the intonations of bells had been part of my personal soundscape for my entire life. It is how the medieval St. Stephen's Church sounded over the marketplace in war-torn Nijmegen, my hometown. It is also the musical backdrop of Amsterdam, the city where I now live and work. Five Hemony carillons whisper their mellifluous notes throughout the city center every day, and the Eijsbouts bells on top of the main building at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, where I work, do the same on Monday mornings. Like many tourists and locals, I used to filter out these sounds, and they hardly entered my conscious experience. They are, in T. S. Eliot's words, "not known, because not looked for / But heard, half heard, in the stillness," like those in the Netherlands Carillon, standing on an Arlington mound overlooking the capital.[1] The meaning of bells "is manifold," as Henry Wadsworth Longfellow reminds us in "The Bells of San Blas," but in me they always evoke a feeling of nostalgia for a time and place when life seemed more harmonious and less complex.[2] This strange monument is still hiding in plain sight. Its bells beckon to me for understanding. I long to climb the winding staircase to see what sights and vistas the Netherlands Carillon may offer me (fig. 2).

Despite its lack of renown, the Netherlands Carillon is unique for three reasons. First, the bell tower, which was erected in 1960, is the first modernist design on the monumental axis, visually connecting the memorial ground

Fig. 2 View from the Netherlands Carillon. Flanking the Lincoln Memorial are the four Italian equestrian statues at the two main bridges leading to Arlington. The Washington Monument, the Capitol Building, and the Jefferson Building of the Library of Congress are visible behind the Lincoln Memorial on the right. Photo: Luc Rombouts, with permission. Courtesy of the George Washington Memorial Parkway.

of Arlington with the Mall in Washington on the other side of the Potomac. Designed by the Dutch architect Joost Boks, the austere, angular design of the unadorned steel structure has a distinctly industrial feel. Reminiscent of work by Boks's earlier contemporaries, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and Philip Johnson, the Dutch memorial embodies a style that had only recently caught on in 1950s America in commercial and residential housing but was not yet employed for monuments. The stripped-down design of the Netherlands Carillon predates Maya Lin's arresting and nonfigurative Vietnam Veterans Memorial—a favored tourist attraction—by more than two decades. "Public monuments are an inherently conservative art form," Kirk Savage argues in *Monument Wars*.[3] Monuments in and around the capital generally stay faithful to neoclassical designs, as exemplified by the recent addition of the National World War II Memorial from 2004, or to a more figurative approach, as evident in the Korean War Memorial and Glenna Goodacre's Vietnam Women's Memorial, which were both dedicated in 1995, the year the fiftieth bell was completed for the Netherlands Carillon. The modernism of the

Netherlands Carillon added a dissonant and revolutionary note to the mostly neoclassical memorial landscape of the capital and its immediate surroundings. The Netherlands Carillon tries to convey memory primarily through abstract form and sound, trusting that the viewer and listener will grasp the underlying story viscerally.

The second reason why the Netherlands Carillon is an exceptional monument is that it is not just a sight for us to gaze at. It is also a fully working musical instrument that we can listen to, making it a complex sensory experience. An analysis of the Netherlands Carillon as a visual object will not sufficiently grasp the complex spatial landscape that it occupies in Arlington. Rather than "trading in sight for sound," I want, as Andrew M. Shanken proposes, to see how our senses can "work in unison" to perceive this elusive memorial.[4] Few of the approximately 1.5 million visitors to Arlington Ridge Park come specifically to view the Netherlands Carillon, but the sounds and reverberations of its bells affect their experiences nonetheless; visitors may hear the bells at summer concerts while gazing at the capital's skyline or when passing by to see the Marine Memorial or the graves of Arlington National Cemetery on the other side of Marshall Drive, as I originally did many years ago (fig. 3).

The production of a sound, Bissera V. Pentcheva argues, "triggers early and then late reflections/echoes."[5] This function enables visitors "to experience through [sound] a sense of space."[6] A carillon consists of at least twenty-three tuned bells forming two or more chromatic octaves attached by wires to a baton-type clavier or an automatic device. The Netherlands Carillon has both options and sounds its fifty bells daily, subtly and ephemerally filling the soundscape of Arlington Ridge Park and much of the cemetery. Visitors may not know from where these sounds come, and they may not even register them consciously, but the bells are part of their phenomenological experience. The Netherlands Carillon is not the only monumental carillon in and around Washington. The Robert A. Taft Memorial on the Capitol grounds consists of an eleven-foot statue of the Republican senator who passed away in 1953. The backdrop to the figure is a twenty-seven-bell, automatically operated carillon in an almost fully enclosed bell tower. During the dedication ceremony in April 1959, a year before the Netherlands Carillon was unveiled, President Hoover argued that the carillon chimed with the senator's upstanding character: "When these great bells ring out, it will be a summons to integrity and courage."[7] As Longfellow wrote, bells produce "one sound to all," but "each / lends a meaning to their speech."[8] Whereas I associate bells with nostalgia, Hoover hears righteousness.

In addition to these idiosyncratic connotations, however, it is also possible to hear echoes of the varying Dutch and American relations of the twentieth century in the bell's chimes. These relations were primarily shaped by World

Fig. 3 The Netherlands Carillon looming behind trees and the familiar white gravestone markers on the northernmost tip of Arlington National Cemetery. Photo: Luc Rombouts, with permission. Courtesy of the George Washington Memorial Parkway.

War II and the Cold War, and although only dimly remembered, the bells also helped shape the cultural memory of these historic events. The forceful confiscation of bells in the Netherlands by Nazi Germany and the destruction of carillons through aerial warfare made my parents' generation venerate bells in a patriotic and nonreligious way that is alien to my generation. Bells were also symbolic weapons to fight communism during the Cold War. Although it has become increasingly clear how types of classical, jazz, operatic, and avant-garde music were used as political instruments on both sides of the Iron Curtain, the way in which bells and carillons were gifted by Western nations for political reasons during that era has never been studied extensively.[9]

The third reason why the Netherlands Carillon is so extraordinary is that it is the only truly transnational monument that occupies a central spot in the American memorial landscape among commemorative sites that are staunchly nationalistic. Outside the D.C. area, there are other, more famous monuments that were bestowed by foreign nations. Most notable is the Statue of Liberty in New York Harbor. The statue, a gift from France in 1886, was conceived by the French architect Frédéric Auguste Bartholdi as a symbol of American national identity.[10] It was paid for by "the French people—by the workingmen, the tradesmen, the shop girls, the artisans—by all, irrespective of class or condition," as an editorial in Joseph Pulitzer's newspaper summarized.[11] Yet the French gift came without a base, and the *World* successfully "mobilized American citizens" to pay for it, making the Statue of Liberty "the first national monument 'owned' or generated by 'the people.'"[12] It is a perfect example of what Lauren Berlant calls "the National Symbolic," as it embodies America's most exalted ideals.[13] Whereas the Statue of Liberty was carefully designed to match America's self-chosen identity as a beacon for immigrants, the Netherlands Carillon has been much less successful in resonating with American values, even though it too is exemplary of how the National Symbolic works.

Washington, D.C., also has its fair share of international monuments to commemorate friendship between the United States and other countries. Embassy Row, for instance, contains many of these memorial gifts, and Meridian Hill Park, close to the former Dutch embassy where the Netherlands Carillon was originally envisaged, has a 1922 statue of Joan of Arc given by French women to their American counterparts and a sculpture of Dante Alighieri given by Italian Americans in 1920.[14] The four bronze, gilded statues that make up the *Arts of War* and the *Arts of Peace* at both sides of Arlington Memorial Bridge—connecting Washington and Arlington—were cast in Italy, financed, intriguingly, with money provided by the Marshall Plan. The history of the Netherlands Carillon is also connected to the postwar aid program. Although the bronze equestrian statues by the bridge were manufactured in Italy, their designs in a neoclassical style with a hint of art deco were thoroughly American. James Earle Fraser and Leo Friedlander designed them decades before their eventual unveiling in 1951, during which the Italian opera singer Ezio Pinza sang from Giuseppe Verdi's *Simon Boccanegra* as well as the Italian and American national anthems, while President Harry S. Truman thanked Italian prime minister Alcide De Gaspari for his country's gift. In front of a large crowd, Truman vouched that he would "continue to resist the Soviet Union's constant vetoes of Italy's membership in the United Nations."[15] Harboring one of the largest Communist parties in Western Europe, Italy was a crucial ally for the United States during the Cold War.[16] A similar mixture of culture, economy, and Cold War politics underpins the Netherlands Carillon.

Yet the Netherlands Carillon is more unusual. It is the only monument bestowed by another country of which the conception, design, and manufacture were carried out by non-Americans abroad and which received such a central place in the memorial landscape of the capital of the United States. In contrast, the recent Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial was made in China by the Chinese sculptor Lei Yixin from Chinese granite, but the initiative and the photograph that inspired this memorial are thoroughly American.[17] From the Netherlands Carillon, you can survey all the principal monuments on the National Mall, and the monument is almost in a direct line with the Lincoln Memorial, the Washington Monument, and the World War II Memorial, which symbolize defining events in America's first three centuries: the Civil War, the Revolutionary War, and World War II. In the late nineteenth century and beyond, the Mall was conceived as "a national symbolic space," as Kristin Ann Hass notes, applying the term Berlant had coined.[18] The monuments situated in that sacrosanct space are indeed "a communally held collection of images and narratives" that constitute "the 'objective' official political reality of the nation."[19] It is a little known fact, however, that Arlington Ridge Park, where the Netherlands Carillon and the United States Marine Memorial are situated, was conceived in the 1950s by the National Park Service and the Department of the Interior as an optical extension of the Mall across the Potomac. Why and how the Netherlands Carillon came to stand among these nationalist monuments that reify what the United States represents are the key questions I explore in this book.

The Netherlands Carillon looks outlandish, as if a foreign object has landed in America's symbolic sculpture garden. You can catch a glimpse of its streamlined steel structure when crossing the Theodore Roosevelt Bridge from Washington, and you may see it whisk by when driving along Jefferson Davis Highway. You may not even register that this factory-made object comprises a monument. It pops up unexpectedly behind the familiar white grave markers of Arlington National Cemetery's northern tip, where sounds of cars are drowned out by a solemn silence, only occasionally interrupted by planes landing at or taking off from nearby Ronald Reagan Airport. With its slender, perpendicular beams and blocky steel plates bearing its massive weight, no visitor to Netherlands Carillon can fail to notice its incongruity. Yet, for me, this deviant monument has taken on a stark dignity. Lit up after dark, its swarthy, looming presence has an august quality, as showcased in Abbie Rowe's iconic, nocturnal photograph taken a few days after the Netherlands Carillon was presented in May 1950. This Dutch modernist artifact differs so strikingly from its surroundings and neighboring iconic monuments that it commands attention for its sheer audacity. My ambivalence when appraising the Netherlands Carillon at first sight was due to this jarring context.

Contrary to the well-known military figures portrayed in Felix de Weldon's design of the flag planting on Iwo Jima or the rows of simple, white gravestones in the country's most famous cemetery, Americans are unacquainted with the origin story of the Netherlands Carillon. De Weldon's statue is itself an echo of Joe Rosenthal's seemingly staged but historic photograph *Raising the Flag on Iwo Jima*, taken after American marines and navy corpsmen had captured the Japanese island in February 1945. This story of American victory has been repeated so often—from the heroic movie *Sands of Iwo Jima* (1949) starring John Wayne to Peter La Farge's mournful folk song "The Ballad of Ira Hayes" about the tragic fate of one of the heroic flag raisers after World War II—that the Iwo Jima Memorial has become familiar to all Americans. Compared to the sprawling site of Arlington National Cemetery—with its imposing marble Tomb of the Unknowns, the neoclassical Robert E. Lee Mansion linking the cemetery's history to the Civil War, and its thousands of white headstones—the Netherlands Carillon is literally and figuratively a black box. Opening it will not only reveal its own unique story but also show how its history resonates with neighboring sites as well as with the principal monuments it looks out over and, perhaps most significantly, with the historical era of the Cold War.

As Patrick Hagopian argues, "A memorial must 'take' with the public; if a memorial is never visited, sinking unremarked into the background of a landscape or cityscape, studying it would contribute little to our understanding of a society's confrontation with the past."[20] Granted, the Netherlands Carillon has only partly taken with the American public. Joggers do rest underneath the bell tower, children climb on the lions, and couples lounge on the grass in the summer, taking in the sounds of the carillon whenever it is played. Yet the American (and Dutch) engagement with the Netherlands Carillon is considerably less active than with other memorial sites. The way in which the American public has engaged with, for instance, the second modernist memorial on the monumental axis, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, shows the other extreme.[21] Visitors collect rubbings of the names of the more than fifty-eight thousand dead American servicemen that are displayed on the wall, but they also leave assorted offerings—ranging from flowers, poems, and teddy bears to bottles of booze, cigarettes, and medals—at the monument.[22] Each of these acts reflects a personal engagement with Maya Lin's abstract monument, which help explain why hers has become "the most talked-about, most written-about monument in American history" and why she has been credited with revolutionizing ideas about public monuments.[23] It is my belief that telling the story of the forgotten Netherlands Carillon will deepen our understanding of how two societies tried to reinvent their collective identities during the Cold War.

In this book I look at the Netherlands Carillon as a sight in two senses of the word, borrowing Kirk Savage's definition of sight as "a thing to be seen and a lens through which to see."[24] In the original plans for the Netherlands Carillon, visitors could climb the narrow, spiral staircase inside the tower. Like all other visitors today, I was blocked from climbing those stairs by a heavy door with a large, locked chain on it during my first two trips to the Netherlands Carillon. The National Park Service cannot guarantee the safety of visitors who want to make their way to the top, so it has been closed off for decades. Years after my initial visit, I learned that the spiral staircase leads to a booth about a hundred feet above the ground, where the pedals of an oak keyboard sound the fifty bells that hang above and below the carillonneur's perch. Outside the booth, on a cramped observatory landing, the view of the impressive surroundings is even grander than from below and inspires a look into the historical past as well. This book aims to evoke the sights the Netherlands Carillon offers, both literally and metaphorically. Looking east, we can gaze at Washington, D.C., past the Lincoln, Washington, and World War II memorials, discerning the governmental seat of what by the 1950s had become one of the two most powerful nations in the world. Looking south, beyond the endless white gravestones of Arlington National Cemetery, we stare in the direction of the Netherlands, a once-powerful empire that by the 1950s had lost its most valuable colonial possession in Indonesia and was seeking to find its place in the world after a devastating war and Nazi occupation.

Peeking beneath the steel plates of the Netherlands Carillon, we can inspect the rusty bells from up close and hear the echoes of the Netherlands' postwar past. By listening to the bells' historical reverberations, we can answer that central question of this book: How did a modernist monument produced by another country become part of the American memorial core? Although the Netherlands Carillon was ostensibly offered as a gift to the United States for helping to liberate the Netherlands and for the Marshall aid granted the country to rebuild its economy, it is possible to detect other, less obvious meanings. Gratitude is a complex concept in terms of monuments, as Erika Doss has argued. While it may be a reflection of genuine appreciation, giving could also stem from a sense of "social consensus and obligation" or even "collective feelings of inferiority."[25] As the history of the Netherlands Carillon will reveal, the Dutch population was deeply ambivalent about the United States during the Cold War, and the Dutch gift was to a large degree political, self-serving, economically motivated, and more related to the Dutch need to reimagine its own past, present, and future than to thank the United States.

The United States accepted the gift and offered it a prime spot in the American memorial landscape because it resonated with its political agenda and with the grandiose plans of the National Park Service (NPS) to optically

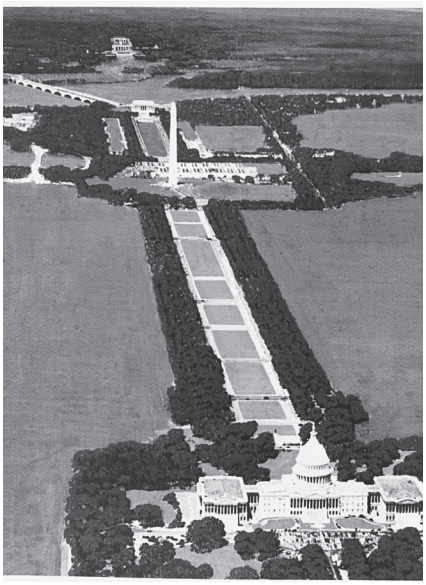

Fig. 4 Aerial rendering of the Mall axis, which the National Park Service planned to extend from the U.S. Capitol across the Potomac to the Nevius Tract in 1954. The Lincoln Memorial and the Washington Memorial are visible in the center, but the Freedom Shrine at the end of the line was never realized. Photo: NPS / U.S. Commission of Fine Arts. Courtesy of the George Washington Memorial Parkway.

connect the memorial sites of the National Mall and Arlington. While the Mall officially extends from the Capitol to the Lincoln Memorial and is rightfully considered a different kind of memorial space from Arlington, the NPS proposed a new national monument dedicated to the Bill of Rights on the central axis of the Capitol, the Washington Monument, and the Lincoln Memorial (fig. 4). The Freedom Shrine, as it was nicknamed, would be flanked by two World War II monuments—the United States Marine Memorial and the Netherlands Carillon. This grouping would finalize the Mall on the other side of the Potomac and announce to the world that, as the undisputed leader of the Free World, the United States would fight for freedom and democracy across the globe. Architecturally, the neoclassical colossus of the Freedom Shrine would form a disharmonious symphony with the other two Virginian monuments, but it chimed ideologically. Furthermore, the Freedom Shrine would echo the "patriotic chauvinism" and the "burgeoning American imperialism" of the Washington obelisk and the Lincoln Memorial.[26] Although the Freedom Shrine was never created, the Netherlands Carillon owes its place to these magniloquent plans and the uneasy harmony created by two allies during the height of the Cold War.

The idea for the Netherlands Carillon was conceived by a press officer, Govert Verheul, from the Ministry of Economic Affairs in 1951, allegedly while doing the dishes.[27] The Netherlands Carillon was completed after Prime Minister Wim Kok offered the fiftieth bell of the carillon to President Bill Clinton in 1995, on the fiftieth anniversary of the liberation of the Netherlands.

This book covers the Cold War history in five chapters, each focusing on a significant stage of the carillon's completion and, with its fifty sections, harmoniously echoing the number of bells of the Netherlands Carillon. The first chapter, "Bells for America," reflects on how bells have always been associated with the passage of time but were also read as symbols of joy and hope. As bells were captured as war booty and melted down to be converted to cannons or artillery, bells and carillons became symbols of Dutch identity. In the United States, the bell became synonymous with liberty, an idea that began to reverberate throughout the world in the twentieth century. Carillons have inherited many of these meanings of bells, but they have added connotations of wealth and power. They were prestige objects that, after World War I, gained an additional function of commemorating wars and individuals.

The second chapter, "The Smallest Bell," centers on the first bell of the carillon that Queen Juliana of the Netherlands brought to America to give President Truman. The bell, a representation of Dutch children, bore the text, "I am the smallest, / the purest." To underscore this meaning, the youngest of Queen Juliana and Prince Bernhard's children, Princess Marijke, had previously presented it to her mother on Valentine's Day 1952. The Netherlands Carillon as a whole was intended to symbolize how harmoniously Dutch society chimed together, with the royal family at Soestdijk Palace as the crowning emblem of that unity. For most Dutch people, the royal couple and their four daughters embodied the hope that peace and prosperity could return to the Netherlands after the hardships of World War II. I argue, however, that instead the smallest bell of the carillon symbolized a cognitive dissonance, since there were visual and audible tensions between Juliana and Bernhard as well as between the queen and the Dutch cabinet, which became palpable during the state visit. In truth, a monarchical crisis and a political scandal were imminent.

In 1954, forty-nine more bells were ceremoniously bestowed upon the American people by Rad Kortenhorst, the speaker of the Dutch parliament, and accepted by his American counterpart, the speaker of the House of Representatives, Joseph William Martin Jr. The third chapter, "Casting the Carillon," exposes the trials and tribulations of the Bells for America Committee, led by Kortenhorst, in its attempts to gather sufficient funds for the carillon and to solicit a poet, artists, and bell foundries to aid in the construction of the monument. The committee was barely able to scrape together enough money for the bells and was internally discordant. This lack of harmony reverberated in its fraught political compromises. Although cast by three eminent Dutch bell foundries, the carillon they produced as a whole was disharmonious since each bell foundry had its own working method and used slightly different materials. The enforced unity exerted by the Bells for America Committee

likewise led to tensions between the three artists working on the decorations. The Netherlands Carillon was a political gift, which implied that the aesthetic dimensions were of secondary importance.

The fourth chapter, "A Modernist Tower on the Monumental Axis," resolves the main question of how the Netherlands Carillon acquired such a prominent place in the memorial landscape of the United States. It details how ambassador Herman van Roijen, through his excellent contacts with the State Department and the National Parks Service, was able to claim a spot for the Netherlands Carillon in Arlington as part of the larger Freedom Shrine. The erection of the bell tower faced many financial obstacles, as the Bells for America Committee had left no funds. Additionally, the renowned Dutch modernist architect, Gerrit Rietveld, who had made the initial design, had to be removed because of his supposed communist leanings. Moreover, Van Roijen had to contend with a Dutch minister of foreign affairs, Joseph Luns, who was waging his own war with the Americans over the inevitable annexation of New Guinea by Indonesia. Despite a reluctant Fine Arts Commission and strong opposition from the American Veterans (AMVETS), the Netherlands Carillon held on to its assigned spot. The Netherlands Carillon maintained sufficient political support from the National Park Service and the executive branch because the Dutch gift resounded so well with the American Cold War message that the United States was a defender of small democratic nations everywhere in the world.

The fifth and final chapter, "A Cold War Relic," traces how the Netherlands Carillon fell into disrepair almost immediately after its dedication. With the exception of the first director carillonneur, Frank P. Law, neither the Dutch nor the American authorities seemed particularly interested in maintaining the Netherlands Carillon or using its ideal location and music to promote a message of hope, friendship, and peace. During the years the bells and the bell tower were neglected, and the Netherlands Carillon became an embarrassment to both countries. When the fiftieth anniversary of the end of World War II loomed, the Dutch finally got their act together. Initiated by Berend Boks, the son of the architect, and Kersen de Jong of the Netherlands Chamber of Commerce in New York, a renovation process began that required the majority of the bells to be retuned in the Netherlands. Carried out by Davis Construction and Royal Eijsbouts and financed by the Dutch government and twelve Dutch multinationals, the renovation resolved most of the carillon's disharmony but not all of it, as the twelve largest bells remained in the tower for practical and financial reasons.

In the conclusion, I reflect on the current renovation, which will eliminate the remaining dissonance of the Netherlands Carillon and restore the tower's unique, modernist luster. Although I welcome the fact that the Netherlands

Carillon will chime in full harmony for the first time in history, more effort is needed to ensure that the monument will not forever remain a dissonant note on the American memorial landscape. "Neglect," as Shanken writes, "is difficult to study, and even harder to historicize," as "the same forces that cause memorials to disappear from view obscure their history and meaning."[28] The people of the Netherlands and the United States can only see the Netherlands Carillon properly when they hear how it resonates with the Cold War, its neighbors—the United States Marine Memorial and Arlington National Cemetery—and with the most significant American memorials on the other side of the Potomac, the Lincoln Memorial, the Washington Monument, and the World War II Memorial. In order to see the Netherlands Carillon, we need to tune our ears to a cacophonous Dutch story of war and recovery.