

Undergraduate Project Prize 2016
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Jean Gimbel Lane Prize - Best Digital Humanities Project

The Blessings of *Res Publica*

by

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Course: Ancient Rome in Chicago (HUM 325-6)

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The Blessings of *Res Publica*

Link to my final video on the Statue of the Republic in *Ancient Rome in Chicago Story MapJS*
(first stop):

<https://s3.amazonaws.com/uploads.knightlab.com/storymapjs/783a09de8300e1b5f74b99b99acb08ef/ancient-rome-in-chicago/index.html>

Link to the Canvas e-Portfolio that collects the results of the research I conducted on the history, style and reception of the Statue of the Republic throughout the fall quarter 2015 (clickable sections are listed on the left side of the screen, clickable pages for each section are listed on the right side of the screen]:

<https://canvas.northwestern.edu/eportfolios/346?verifier=dNlpqj8X72Aw8FURNkKFYkkFlgNANKoIdxDX1YLL>

Video Script:

If you've ever driven around the Hayes-Richard traffic circle in Jackson Park, Chicago, then you've seen the shining figure of the Statue of the Republic. Though imposing in appearance, it is actually a much smaller replica of a statue displayed during the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition, which Chicago had won the honor of hosting.

Resting on a booming economy and explosive urban growth, it was the city most emblematic of America's rising status. However, this rapid expansion also earned Chicago a reputation as uncultured and inhumane, a hell of a city. The exposition, through the neoclassical majesty of the White City, would provide Chicago with the opportunity to rehabilitate its image, while also demonstrating the legitimacy of America's claim to hold a place in the genealogy of Western civilizations and empires. Though the accouterments of Roman imperial grandeur seemed antagonistic to the spirit of a republic proud of its liberty, the Statue of the Republic evidenced the nation's attempt to combine the two.

Sculpted by Daniel Chester French, and drawing inspiration from the Athena Parthenos and the Statue of Liberty, the *Republic* served as the focal point of the fair. Having stood over 100 feet tall, it towered over the Court of Honor. Settled on the east end of the Grand Basin, it faced the figure of Columbia perched on the Columbian fountain at the west end. The placement seemed to suggest that, Columbia, America personified, was sailing towards a more perfect republic as the country reached new heights. The statue of the Republic infused the imperial opulence of the White City with the guidance, or at least veneer, of America's founding principles.



Like many of the buildings at the expo, the statue was not meant to last long. In 1896, it perished in a fire. However, neither it nor the fair was forgotten. The inspiration of the White City and the efforts of director of works Daniel Burnham launched the City Beautiful Movement, a campaign reflecting Chicago's hope that progress was still compatible with beauty.

In 1916, the president of the Art Institute, commissioned French to sculpt a bronze replica of the statue to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the Columbian Exposition and the centennial of Illinois's entry into the union. The current statue is twenty-four feet tall, entirely covered in gold leaf, and resting on a ten-foot pedestal. Featured on the corners of the pedestal are fasces, a bundle of twelve rods bound to an ax, which during the Roman republic signified the magistrates' power to command. However, like many of the fasces that decorate buildings in the United States, these fasces have an extra rod and lack an axe, transforming them from a symbol of authority and control

into one of the states' unity. On the statue's bosom rests a breastplate shaped like an eagle with outstretched wings, and in its right hand lies a globe with an eagle perched on top. The eagle, as the national bird, has long represented the strength and courage of our country. However, several critics of American foreign policy have compared the eagle to the one found on the military insignia of the notably martial Romans.

The *Republic* was designated a Chicago Landmark on June 5th, 2003. Surprisingly, the statue does not resonate culturally with the people of Chicago. On the contrary, to many of them it represents little more than a visually striking traffic circle ornament. Some who do know the history find its reduced size and now prosaic environment disappointing, wondering at the appropriateness of replicating a monument that was never meant to last outside of its specific context of the Court of Honor.

Nevertheless, even if its symbolism lies dormant, the replica, by its very existence, still maintains a dialogue with the original. It serves as a memorial to one of the great formative events of the city's history, a memento of a time when the nation and Chicago were sailing high and dared to entertain the dream of creating a New Rome for the New World.

Sec	Visual	Audio
0-3	Opening	Music
4-9	Zoom in on the Hayes-Richard intersection sign	If you've ever driven around the Hayes-Richard traffic circle in Jackson Park, Chicago,
10-17	Drive around the statue	then you've seen the shining figure of the Statue of the Republic. Though imposing in appearance,
18-30	 <p>The peristyle—Burns effect to focus on statue</p>	it is actually a much smaller replica of a statue displayed during the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition,
31-34	 <p>Union Stockyards, pan over</p>	which Chicago had won the honor of hosting. Resting on a booming economy and explosive urban growth,

35-40



Chicago Loop 1900, pan out

it was the city most emblematic of America's rising status. However

41-54



Meat butchering, Burns effect to focus on pigs

This rapid expansion also earned Chicago a reputation as uncultured and inhumane, a hell of a city. The exposition,

54-64



Chicago World's Fair 1893 (color painting), pan across

through the neoclassical majesty of the White City, would provide Chicago with the opportunity to rehabilitate its image

65-75



Puck cover, Pan up

while also demonstrating the legitimacy of America's claim to hold a place in the genealogy of Western civilizations and empires. Though the

76-83



War in the Apotheosis of Washington

accouterments of Roman imperial grandeur seemed antagonistic to the spirit of a republic proud of its liberty,

83-90



Jackson Statue of the Republic

the Statue of the Republic evidenced the nation's attempt to combine the two. Sculpted by Daniel Chester French, and

90-94



Athena Parthenos

drawing inspiration from the Athena Parthenos,

95-97



Statue of Liberty

and the Statue of Liberty,

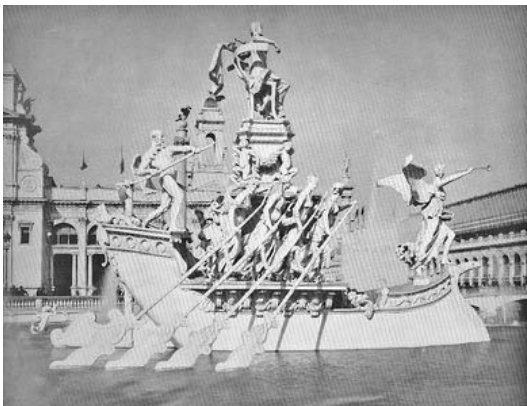
97-110



Wyman Statue of the Republic

the *Republic* served as the focal point of the fair. Having stood over 100 feet tall, it towered over the Court of Honor. Settled on the east end of the Grand Basin,

111-120



MacMonnies' Fountain

it faced the figure of Columbia perched on the Columbian fountain at the west end. The placement

121-
130



Court of Honor from Admin Building

seemed to suggest that, Columbia, America personified, was sailing towards a more perfect republic as the country reached new heights. The statue

131-
143



Looking West From the Peristyle




of the Republic infused the imperial opulence of the White City with the guidance, or at least veneer, of America's founding principles.


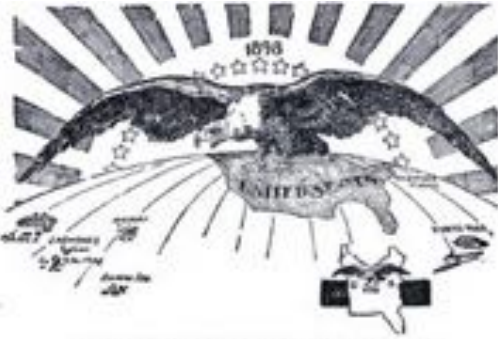

144-
157



White City on Fire

Like many of the buildings at the expo, the statue was not meant to last long. In 1896, it perished in a fire. However,

<p>157-164</p>	 <p>Thomas Moran painting</p>	<p>neither it nor the fair was forgotten. The inspiration of the White City</p>
<p>164-169</p>	 <p>Daniel Burnham picture</p>	<p>and the efforts of director of works Daniel Burnham launched the City Beautiful Movement,</p>
<p>170-178</p>	<p>Pan of Chicago skyline from Adler Planetarium</p>	<p>a campaign reflecting Chicago's hope that progress was still compatible with beauty. In 1916,</p>
<p>179-186</p>	 <p>French portrait</p>	<p>the president of the Art Institute, commissioned French to sculpt a bronze replica of the statue</p>

187-189	 <p>Newspaper headline</p>	to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the Columbian Exposition
190-210	Pan up from plaque to statue	and the centennial of Illinois's entry into the union. The current statue is twenty-four feet tall, entirely covered in gold leaf, and resting on a ten-foot pedestal. Featured on the corners of the pedestal
211-223	Pan across pedestal angle	are fasces, a bundle of twelve rods bound to an ax, which during the Roman republic signified the magistrates' power to command. However, like many
224-235	Pan up side of fasces	of the fasces that decorate buildings in the United States, these fasces have an extra rod and lack an axe, transforming them from a symbol of authority and control into one of the states' unity.
236-244	Zoom in on breastplate	On the statue's bosom rests a breastplate shaped like an eagle with outstretched wings
245-253	Pan up right arm, ending on eagle in right hand	and in its right hand lies a globe with an eagle perched on top. The eagle, as the national bird,
254-259	Zoom in eagle from left side	has long represented the strength and courage of our country. However, several critics
260-263	 <p>The thousand miles from tip to tip.—Philadelphia Press.</p> <p>10K miles</p>	of American foreign policy have compared the eagle
264-270	 <p>Roman aquila</p>	to the one found on the military insignia of the notably martial Romans.


271-287	Close pan up of statue	The <i>Republic</i> was designated a Chicago Landmark on June 5 th , 2003. Surprisingly, the statue does not resonate culturally with the people of Chicago.
288-296	Shot of traffic around statue	On the contrary, to many of them it represents little more than a visually striking traffic circle ornament. Some
297-317	Pan from statue to left	who do know the history find its reduced size and now prosaic environment disappointing, wondering at the appropriateness of replicating a monument that was never meant to last outside of its specific context of the Court of Honor. Nevertheless,
317-336	Pan from statue to road on right	even if its symbolism lies dormant, the replica, by its very existence, still maintains a dialogue with the original. It serves as a memorial to one of the great formative events of the city's history, a memento of a time when the nation and Chicago
337-349	 <p>Johnston picture of bridge in front of Administration Building</p>	were sailing high and dared to entertain the dream of creating a New Rome for the New World.
350-363	Credits	Music

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