

# Free essay on visit to the smithsonian museum in washington dC

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## **Visit to the Smithsonian Museum in Washington DC**

I was fortunate enough to be able to spend an afternoon at the Smithsonian Museum in Washington DC, particularly the Museum of American History where some of the best known exhibits which form part of our nation's psyche are kept. Intrinsically the first exhibit which I viewed was the Star Spangled Banner which is rather the worse for wear and this is pretty obvious since it has been in existence for almost 250 years but it is remarkably well kept also.

My initial reaction upon entering the museum was the sense of space which it conveys and which it seems to emanate. Having undergone a considerable restoration from 2005 to 2008, the wings are now much more beautifully kept and everything can be interpreted with much more clarity. I enjoyed the vast amount of free literature which is handed out to attendees but there is also a vastly improved ticketing system as well as seamless movement from room to room.

As mentioned before, I was very much enthused by the Star Spangled banner which almost comes out of the glass to greet you. My friends who accompanied me throughout the visit also found much to commend this exhibit which truly personifies everything important about American history. The flag brings to mind the great battles fought at Lexington and Concord and the crossing of the Delaware River which is also an important point in American history and is perhaps not given the sort of importance which it deserves.

The next exhibit which we observed in detail was the John Bull locomotive which demonstrates the importance of railways which actually transformed the nation with their criss cross of networks and the vast outreach into states which were only barren land just a few decades back. The locomotive is in excellent condition throughout with the machinery gleaming and is actually in good working order I was told. The interpretation panels which describe the history of the locomotive and where it plied its trade are also very well presented with clarity very much the order of the day. Again, my friends were very much thrilled by the beauty of this exhibit which demonstrates the importance of railways to American life and how this system made the United States into the nation that we are today.

There was also time to view various other exhibits throughout the museum but I would also like to focus on the Greensboro Lunch Counter which I had viewed on an earlier visit to the museum. This is the actual counter from Greensboro, North Carolina where six African American students waited to be served in the 'white' area of the restaurant and endured a torrent of abuse from the white persons in the restaurant with some even being beaten up for their pains. It is a harrowing but important incident in the life of the Civil Rights Movement and the fact that the counter is there sitting silently embodies the bravery of those students who more than 50 years ago stood up for what they felt was right.

The visit to the museum was certainly an instructive one and was full of highlights although these three exhibits mentioned perhaps rekindled the most powerful of emotions.

## **References:**

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