



ABOUT 8:30 AM SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

LOWER MANHATTAN, VIEW FROM BROOKLYN







What has 200 elevators, 1,200 restrooms, 40,000 doorknobs, 200,000 lighting fixtures, 7 million square feet of acoustical tile ceilings, more structural steel than the Verrazano Narrows Bridge — and was built for a final cost of over one billion 1970s dollars? That's right, the World Trade Center, built by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, as part of a plan conceived by the Rockefeller-led Downtown-Lower Manhattan Association, to shore up Downtown's fortunes.



Now, every weekday, 50,000 people come to work in 12 million square feet of office, hotel, and commercial space in the seven buildings in this city-within-a-city, where they are joined by 80,000 visitors passing through an enormous interior shopping mall below the 5-acre Austin J. Tobin Plaza.

The Trade Center welcomes visitors from around the world to a splendid observatory, the Top of the World on the 107th floor of Two World Trade Center. As many as 10,000 visitors in a single day ride the non-stop express elevators — from the lobby to the 107th floor in 82 seconds — to take in the spectacular views of the city and its surroundings.









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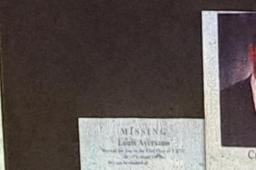














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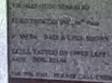


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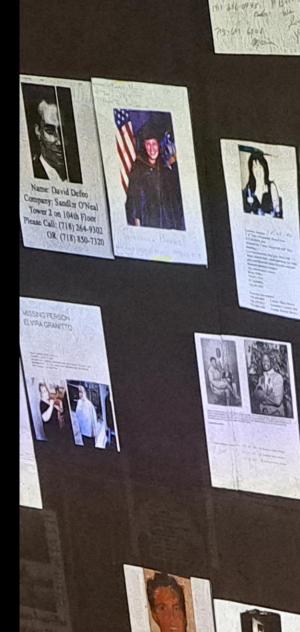


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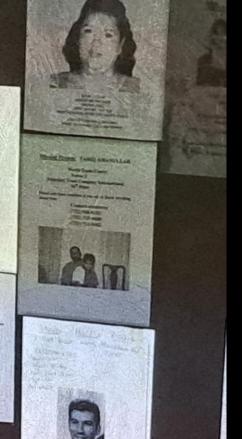
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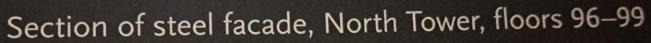
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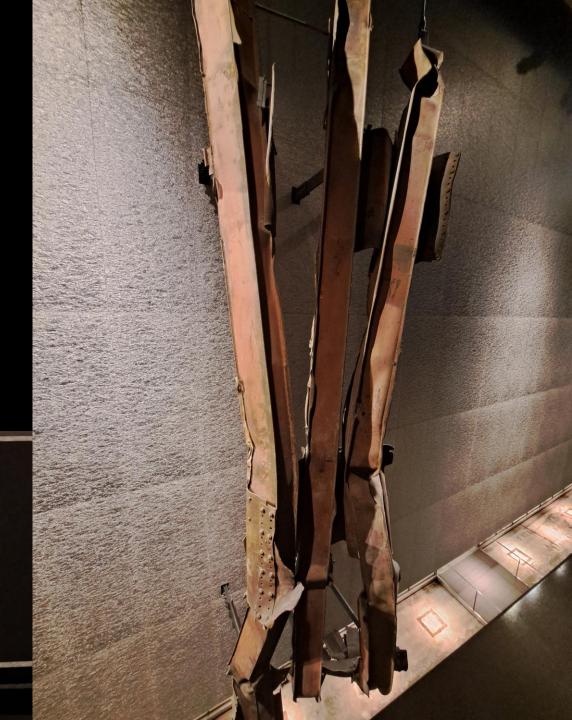


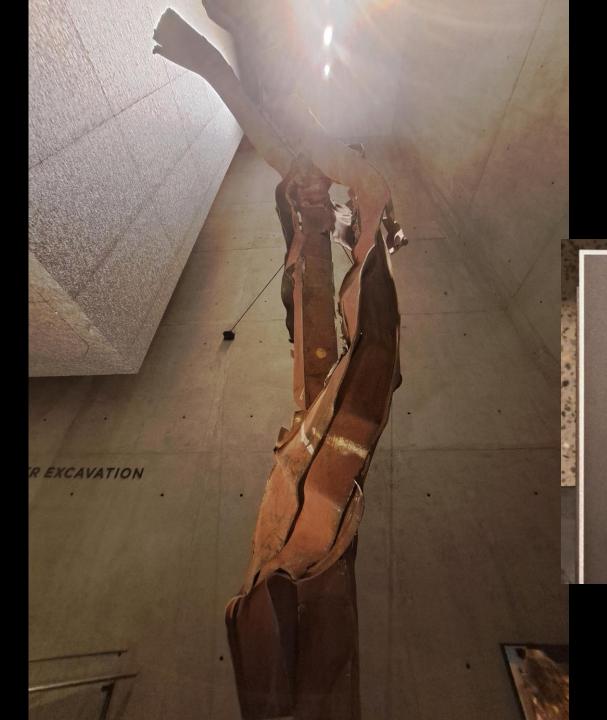




Recovered from the World Trade Center site after September 11, 2001
Collection 9/11 Memorial Museum, Courtesy of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey

This piece of steel, once part of the north facade of the North Tower, was located at the point of impact where hijacked Flight 11 pierced the building at the 93rd through the 99th floors.





Section of steel facade, North Tower, floors 93-96

Recovered from the World Trade Center site after September 11, 2001
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On 9/11, hijacked Flight 11 tore into the north facade of the North Tower, creating a gash from the 93rd through the 99th floors and tearing apart steel columns weighing many tons. The underbelly of the aircraft mangled the top of this facade segment with force sufficient to twist and shred the steel.

A companion piece of facade steel, from the North Tower's 96th through the 99th floors, is displayed in the Center Passage.



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Vesey Street stair remnant: The "Survivors' Stairs"

Recovered from the World Trade Center site after September 11, 2001
Collection 9/11 Memorial Museum, Courtesy of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey

This staircase once connected the northern edge of the World Trade Center's Austin J. Tobin Plaza to the Vesey Street sidewalk below. On September 11, 2001, the stairs and an adjacent escalator provided an unobstructed exit for hundreds seeking to escape. To reach the stairs, many had to cross the Plaza beneath treacherous debris falling from the North Tower.

Go down this set of stairs and then just run, run as fast as you can.

DAVID BRINK, LIEUTENANT, NEW YORK CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT EMERGENCY SERVICE UNIT

RECALLING WHAT HE SAID TO EVACUEES ON 9/11



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Evacuees descending the Vesey Street stairs on 9/11

Photograph by Shannon Stapleton, Reuters

On September 11, the Vesey Street stairs remained a viable exit from the World Trade Center's Austin J. Tobin Plaza even after the South Tower fell.

